



**Submission to Minister Katherine
Zappone T.D.**

On Youth Work Funding Levels 2005-2019

Comhairle Náisiúnta na nÓg

National Youth Council of Ireland

3 Montague Street

Dublin 2

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Introduction:

Funding for youth work services from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) declined significantly between 2008 and 2014, while there has been some recovery since then, funding for youth work is below pre-crisis levels and not in line with overall Governmental expenditure and DYCA expenditure since 2014.

Background:

Funding for Youth Work from Youth Affairs Unit (Office of Minister for Youth Affairs) stood at €73.1m prior to the onset of the economic crisis in 2008 and cuts in public expenditure. Over the next eight years to 2014, youth work funding from DCYA was cut to €49.8m or a decrease of 31.8%. While there have been an increase in funding since 2014, notably in 2017, overall funding for youth work stands at €60.4m in 2019, still €12.7m (17.4%) below 2008 levels, not taking inflation into account.

Table 1

Year	2008	2014	2019
DCYA Funding for Youth Work	€73.1m	€49.8m	€60.4m
% Decrease		-31.8%	-17.4%

Funding Levels since DCYA established

We acknowledge that all aspects of public spending was cut in the period 2008-2014, however youth work suffered deep cuts in that period. The severe cutbacks in that period left significant deficits and have put substantial strain on volunteers, staff and organisations to deliver quality youth services and supports for the increasing number of young people, against a background of increased governance and compliance requirements. While youth work funding has increased in recent years, an analysis of Government spending since 2011 indicates that while overall public expenditure has increased by 12%, youth work funding has only increased by 0.3%. This data confirms that as our economy and public finances recover, young people in youth work services have not received their fair share.

Table 2 Current Spending 2011-2019

Year	2011	2019	% change +/-
Total Government Spending ¹	€52.8bn	€59.3bn	+12%
Total Youth Work Spending ²	€60.2m	€60.4m	+0.3%

¹ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Question 242, 8th May 2019
<https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2019-05-08a.645>

² Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions 1363-1366, 8th May 2019,

Likewise an analysis of funding allocations within the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, indicate significant spending increases of €511m or 51% between 2014 and 2019. We acknowledge that as a new entity, DCYA inherited programmes and schemes from other Departments and also developed new policies and programmes with significant budgets, however we are concerned and disappointed that of these additional monies, only 2% or €10.6m was allocated to youth work. This needs to be addressed in Budget 2020.

Table 3 Current Spending 2014-2019

Year	2014	2019	€ change +/-
Total DCYA Spending ³	€999m	€1510m	+€511m
Total Youth Work Spending ⁴	€49.8m	€60.4m	+€10.6m

Youth Service Grant Scheme

NYCI has also undertaken an analysis of individual youth work funding schemes, such as the Youth Service Grant Scheme (YSGS). The YSGS supports 30 national and regional youth organisations, including NYCI. It provides the core funding which enables youth organisations to deliver mainstream youth work and support local groups, branches and units in every community in Ireland. Our analysis (see Table 4) demonstrates that funding in 2019 in schemes such as the YSGS, despite some increases in recent years is still at 2005 levels. In 2005, the funding allocation to the YSGS was €10.96m, in 2019 it stands at €11.12m, or just €160,000 (1.4%) more. Between January 2005 and December 2018 the rate of inflation has been 15.7%⁵, therefore if the YSGS was increased just to meet cost of living increases since then the total allocation would be €12.7m. The fact that the funds available to youth organisations from the YSGS in 2019 are static when compared with 2005 and well below when inflation is taken into account encapsulates the reason why voluntary youth organisations are under such strain. It is unsurprising that youth organisations are struggling to provide services to an increased and more diverse cohort of young people and also manage the significant increase in regulation and compliance requirements. This has led to an unsustainable situation and is why NYCI is calling on DCYA to allocate an additional €3m to the YSGS in Budget 2020.

https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2019-05-08/1363/#pg_1363

³ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Question 1371, 8th May 2019

<https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2019-05-08a.3711>

⁴ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions 1363-1366, 8th May 2019,

https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2019-05-08/1363/#pg_1363

⁵ CSO CPI Inflation Calculator <https://www.cso.ie/en/interactivezone/visualisationtools/cpiinflationcalculator/>

Table 4 Youth Service Grant Scheme Funding 2005-2019

Year	2005	2019
Youth Service Grant Scheme Funding	€10.96m	€11.12
Increase in funding 2005-2019		+0.16m
Increase in funding 2005-2019 %		+1.4%
Inflation Jan 2005-Dec 2018		+15.7%

Budget 2020

The Government urgently needs to address the overall funding deficits in Budget 2020. The youth work sector suffered significant cuts since 2008, what this paper demonstrates is that not only did the youth sector endure deep cuts between 2008 and 2014, but that since then the youth sector has not got its fair share of resources as our society and economy recover and more public funding is available. Overall Government spending is up 12% since 2011, while investment in youth work has only increased by 0.3%. As a result many voluntary youth organisations are reaching a crisis point as they stretch already diminished budgets to meet ever growing governance and compliance requirements such as Children First, the National Quality Standards Framework (NQS) for the Youth Work Sector, vetting, charities regulation, the companies act, lobbying regulation, GDPR, etc. while also responding to the changing and growing needs of young people in their programmes and activities. Furthermore, if we are to achieve the outcomes set out in the National Youth Strategy, to cater for the increased youth population and to meet the new regulatory demands it is vital and urgent that the Government invests significantly in young people and youth work.

That is why NYCI is calling on Government in Budget 2020 to allocate an additional €16.6m investment in youth work services, to strengthen voluntary youth work organisations to provide more supports and activities for young people and to meet the needs of a growing youth population, including an investment of €3m in the Youth Service Grant Scheme (YSGS).