



To: DCYA Stakeholders, funded youth services and organisations

2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020

**Re: Guidance for Youth Organisations on Resuming Full Services after Covid-19;  
Covid-19 Financial Impacts 2020**

Dear all,

I hope you are keeping well and staying safe.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, youth services have innovated, adapted and worked hard to maintain supports, particularly to vulnerable young people most in need. Thank you for all you have done and all you are doing in this regard.

I now write to draw your attention to the *Guidance for Youth Organisations on Resuming Full Services after Covid-19* which is being published by the Minister this afternoon.

This document provides high level guidance for the phased re-introduction of full service provision. It includes a sequence of actions for the youth sector to consider at each of the five phases set out in the Government's *Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business*. The guidance also includes a suite of templates to assist youth organisations. We hope that the guidance is helpful to youth organisations and services, and provides a framework for the development of their own individual protocols.

Importantly, the guidance is intended to be a living document that will be updated as wider Government advice is received. It is emphasised throughout the document that actions at all phases should be carried out in line with public health advice, including social distancing measures, as advised by Government.

The Department will continue to meet with sectoral representatives to review and update the guidance as we progress through the phases set out in the Government's *Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business*. DCYA officials are also continuing to work with sector representatives and colleagues in other Government Departments on issues such as training supports for the sector, access to facilities, the further contribution of the youth sector to the overall Government well-being initiative as it relates to young people, and ongoing review of the guidance.



We are deeply grateful to the Oversight Group which gave so generously of its time, expertise and resources in order to aid the production of this guidance. I would also like to thank everyone who provided timely and valuable feedback as part of the consultation process.

Youth work is a vital service, especially to many vulnerable children and young people who have been even more marginalised in the past months. There is an opportunity for the youth sector to play a key role over the summer in terms of services and programmes that offer purpose, structure, social connectedness, and enhanced health and wellbeing, as well as overall social and emotional development for young people. The *Guidance for Youth Organisations on Resuming Full Services after Covid-19* is intended to support the sector in planning ahead and achieving this purpose.

### **Covid-19 Financial Impacts**

You will all be aware of the extraordinary cost to the Exchequer of the current crisis and the need for careful management of resources to maintain public services and minimise the medium to long term impact of this pandemic on the economy and on society as a whole. Therefore, while reiterating previous assurances around the intention to continue funding to the youth sector in line with 2020 allocations, I must also request the Boards and management of all funded youth organisations to undertake an in-depth review of their funding requirement for 2020 to identify areas where the requirement may have reduced in light of the current ongoing circumstances. I am aware that similar reviews are being undertaken across the public service and that a number of youth organisations have already undertaken or commenced such reviews.

Accordingly, I am asking that each youth organisation review its utilisation of State funding for 2020 to identify all instances where services are not being delivered for a period, or a reduced service is being delivered. In this context it is understood that many services are seeking to maintain full service delivery through alternate means and this should be documented and detailed as part of this review. We are also aware that the phased resumption of full service provision may entail new costs associated with adhering to public health requirements and return to work protocols, and that these will need to be factored into any review of costs for the remainder of 2020.

In the event that any organisation considers that it has either not utilised its full allocation to date, or will require less funding for the coming period, then we are asking that you please reduce your Quarter 3 drawdown request accordingly. While no specific format or template is being imposed for this review we consider that, at a minimum, it would include a full line by line breakdown of State funding and an assessment of how this funding is or isn't being utilised to meet agreed outcomes.

The outcome of individual service reviews should be shared with the relevant funding intermediary (ETB or National Organisation head office) and any reduction in requirement agreed with them. While it is not necessary to submit any reviews to DCYA as part of this process, the full documented process should be retained in the host organisation with a copy sent to the funding intermediary. This documentation may be the subject of future examination as part of the regular compliance cycle.



In requesting this review, I should stress that any unused funding in 2020 will not carry forward as a reduction in baseline funding for future years. Government decisions on funding for 2021 and beyond will take place as part of the annual Estimates process and will undoubtedly be very difficult in the current circumstances but they will in no way be influenced by this more immediate review process.

We are aware that a number of youth organisations have suffered a loss of funding from non-Exchequer sources (philanthropy, private sector support etc). The Department has also received some enquiries regarding increases to allocations in 2020 to meet priorities in these difficult times. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to meet any such requests. The drain on Exchequer resources is of such an order of magnitude that it continues to be a very significant achievement to have even maintained existing levels of funding. However, we have worked with colleagues across Government in relation to the Stability Fund announced on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and will continue to support this work.

In conclusion, I would like to again reassure you that there is no intention to apply general cuts to any youth services. The purpose of this financial review is to identify where legitimate savings are accruing due to shut downs or restrictions.

I would also like to again acknowledge with gratitude the immense and invaluable work that is going on throughout the sector to ensure the continuation of services to young people at this time to the greatest extent possible.

Yours sincerely,

Laura McGarrigle,  
Assistant Secretary,  
Department of Children and Youth Affairs.