

**YOUTH
WORK
CHANGES
LIVES**



NYCI PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 2021



PROVIDING THE PATHWAY

Supporting young people and youth work and restoring hope and opportunity, based on a new, equitable and sustainable economic, social and environmental model

JUNE 2020

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National Youth Council of Ireland
The National Youth Council of Ireland is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. We use our collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people.

www.youth.ie

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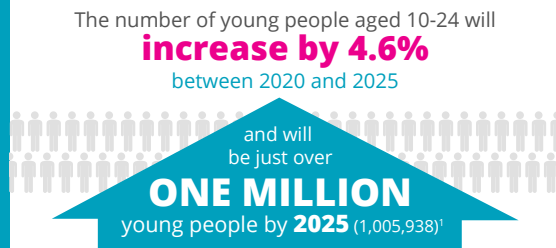
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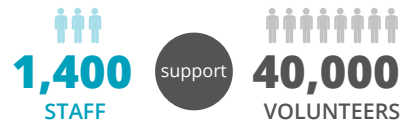
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There are a million good reasons to invest in our youth population

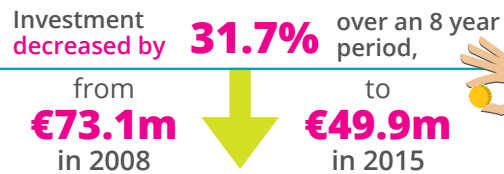


The Youth Work sector has the scale to support it...



to reach over **383,000 YOUNG PEOPLE** in almost every community in Ireland

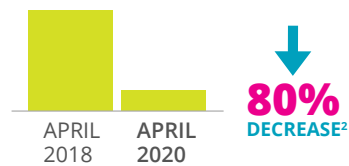
...but investment in Youth Work is still 15% less than 12 years ago...



While funding for youth work from DCYA had recovered to €61.8m by 2020, it is still 15% below that of a decade ago.

Young people's well-being also much more affected by COVID-19 than other age groups

OVERALL LIFE SATISFACTION in young adults aged 18-24

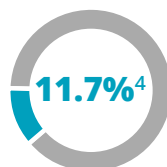


Young Workers have been hit hard by COVID-19, youth unemployment stands at **45.4%**³



While we hope numbers will decline as society and economy reopens, many young people will **NEED HELP TO GET BACK TO WORK**

While young people under 25 years comprise **11.7%**⁴ of the labour force,



they make up **22%**⁵ of those on the **Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP)**



¹ E3003, Population 2011-2016 by Single Year of Age, Sex, County and City, CSO, <https://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=E3003&PLanguage=0>

² Social Impact of COVID-19 by Age Group, CSO <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/br/b-csi/socialimpactofcovid-19byagegroupapril2020/>

³ Monthly Unemployment, CSO, June 2020 <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/mue/monthlyunemploymentjune2020/>

⁴ CSO, Labour Force Survey, Q1 2020 <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/labourmarket/labourforcesurveyq1/>

⁵ Detailed COVID-19 Income Supports and Live Register Tables, CSO, June 2020 <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/labourmarket/liveregister/detailedcovid-19incomesupportandliveregistertables/>

Summary of costed recommendations



In this submission, NYCI recommends to Government the following priorities for investment in Budget 2021.

1

INVEST IN VOLUNTARY YOUTH ORGANISATIONS AND YOUTH WORK SERVICES

In Budget 2021 invest an additional €4.7m in youth work services in 2021, to provide more supports and activities for young people and meet the needs of a growing youth population and to strengthen voluntary youth organisations.

INVESTMENT
€4.7m

2

ADDRESS THE HIGH LEVELS OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

In Budget 2021 invest a net €27m (gross €191.1m) to support an additional 28,000 education, training, apprenticeship and job subsidy places for young jobseekers to address the high levels of youth unemployment.

INVESTMENT
€27m

3

EQUALITY FOR YOUNG JOBSEEKERS

In Budget 2021 take the first of two steps to restoring the full rate of Jobseeker's Allowance to young people aged 18-24, by increasing the rate by €45.15 to €157.85 per week with a view to completing the restoration in Budget 2022.

INVESTMENT
€35m

4

TACKLING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

In Budget 2021 allocate €3m in Budget 2021 to resource and implement the National Youth Homelessness Strategy.

INVESTMENT
€3m

5

CLIMATE ACTION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE - SUPPORTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

In Budget 2021 allocate €1m to support the establishment of a Climate Action Empowerment, Advocacy and Participation Fund, administered and managed by a non-statutory agency to support the participation of young people in policy making and to support actions and activities by young people and youth groups on climate action.

INVESTMENT
€1m

Background

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the representative body for 55 voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. Our member organisations work with and for up to 380,000 young people aged 10 to 24 years in every community in Ireland, with the support of 40,000 volunteers and 1,400 paid staff. NYCI functions to represent the interests of young people and youth organisations. NYCI's role is recognised in legislation (Youth Work Act, 2001) and is represented on the National Economic and Social Council. The work of NYCI is based on principles of equality, social justice and equal participation for all. In achieving these aims, the NYCI seeks the emergence of a society in which young people are valued citizens who can make a meaningful contribution to their community.

INTRODUCTION

Budget 2021 will be one of the most important and challenging ever drafted by an incoming administration. It is imperative that the next Government mitigates against the fallout and impact of the coronavirus, but also provides hope and opportunity for the young people of Ireland. **We welcome the commitment of the incoming administration to put “recovery and renewal” at the heart of their programme, we believe that young people can be the drivers of that agenda with the right supports and investment in Budget 2021.**

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people have endured significant disruption to their education, employment, family and social life, as well as the impact on their well-being, future careers and life plans as a result of the pandemic. National and International reports indicate that young people have been affected disproportionately. **A CSO report published in June 2020 indicated that there has been an 80% decrease in the number of young adults aged 18-34 who rated their overall life satisfaction as high in April 2020 compared to 2018.**⁶ The report also found that over four in ten younger adults reported that the pandemic had a negative financial impact on them, which was higher than other age cohorts. An EU-wide survey by Eurofound⁷ in April 2020 reported that almost a quarter of this age group in Ireland felt lonely all or most of the time over the two-week period prior to interview, this is the second highest rate in the 17 EU countries for which data was available. Eurofound noted that the lowest levels of mental well-being are reported among young people and those looking for work. Loneliness is emerging as a key aspect of mental health with one-fifth of young Europeans feeling the strong impact of pandemic restrictions⁸. **An OECD report stated that ‘COVID-19 has the potential for long-term effects on youth unemployment, based on previous large economic shocks’.**⁹

⁶ Social Impact of COVID-19 by Age Group, <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/br/b-csi/socialimpactofcovid-19byagegroupapril2020/> CSO, June 2020

⁷ Living, Working and Covid-19 <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/covid-19> Eurofound, June 2020

⁸ Living, Working and Covid-19 <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/covid-19> Eurofound, June 2020

⁹ Covid-19: Protecting People and Societies <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/covid-19-protecting-people-and-societies-e5c9de1a/#figure-d1e216> OECD, June 2020

YOUNG PEOPLE PLAYING THEIR PART

Many young people have played their part in saving lives and in making short-term sacrifices for the longer-term health of our society by working on the front-line and by adhering to the government's public health guidelines. Many young nurses and doctors have given up their jobs abroad to respond to Ireland's call to work in our hospitals. **Even before the current crisis, many young people wanted a different future. There is now an opportunity for a new beginning which prioritises economic and social justice and environmental sustainability.** In the last number of months we have seen the value of people working together, of community and solidarity and of the vital role of public services provided by the state and through non-governmental organisations. The youth work sector has also contributed during the crisis using technology to support and continue to engage with young people, including many vulnerable young people and will continue to do so in the coming months and years. The young people of Ireland have responded to the health emergency and now it is up to the new Government to recognise that contribution by supporting young people and providing the pathway to a better future.

DEMOGRAPHIC BENEFIT NOT DEFICIT

As we emerge from the pandemic Ireland has advantages to capitalise on. While many other countries are grappling with a declining youth population, Ireland has a growing youth population. The results of Census 2016¹⁰ confirmed that Ireland has one of the youngest populations in Europe with one-third aged less than 25 years. The CSO¹¹ found that Ireland had the highest number of young people in the 0-14 age cohort in the EU. **The 2016 census results indicate that the number of young people aged 10-24 will increase by 4.6% (Table 1) between 2020 and 2025 and by 2025 will reach over one million young people (1,005,938).**¹² This provides us with a unique opportunity to invest in young people, as we have a demographic benefit rather than a deficit. If the next Government makes the right decisions, Ireland has a bright future, despite the current and ongoing challenges created by COVID-19.

TABLE 1:

YEAR	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	% + or -
10-24 POP	961789	977853	991116	997898	1002898	1005938	+4.6%

¹⁰ Census 2016, Central Statistics Office, <http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=EY007&PLanguage=0>

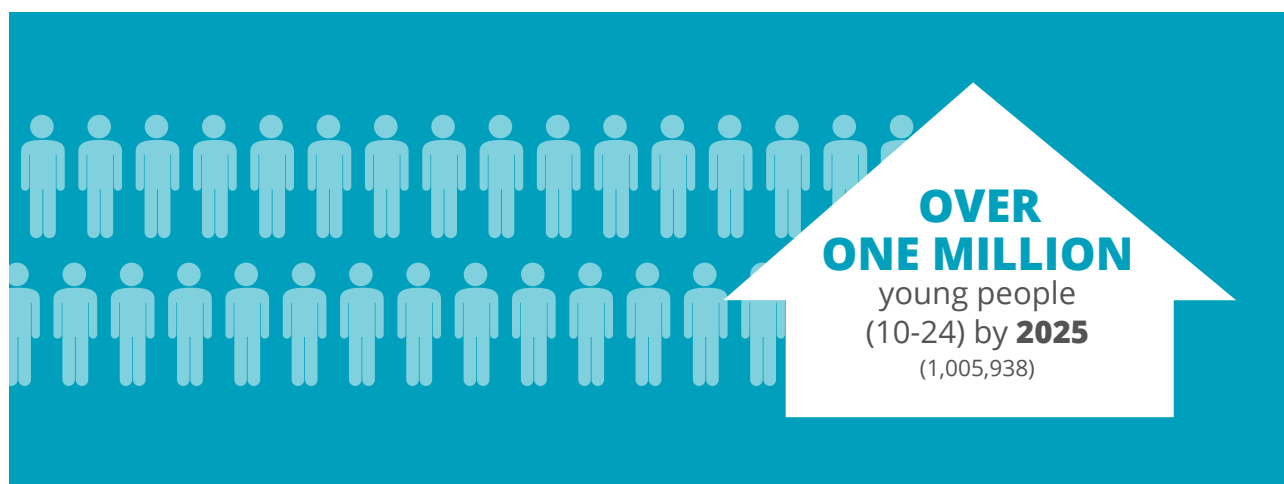
¹¹ Measuring Ireland's Progress <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-mip/mip2015/introduction/>

¹² E3003, Population 2011-2016 by Single Year of Age, Sex, County and City, CSO <https://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=E3003&PLanguage=0>

PROVIDING THE PATHWAY

While the last three months have been devastating for our country and it will take time for our people, society and economy to recover, we can rebound and grasp the opportunity to deliver economic equality, social justice and environmental sustainability. While we know that the initial impact of the virus has abated, it has not been eliminated and challenges lie ahead. NYCI is calling on Government to implement a number of recommendations and policies in Budget 2021, to meet the needs of young people and support them to achieve their full potential and ensure Ireland's long-term prosperity. **This Pre-Budget Submission is entitled *Providing the Pathway* as it is a clarion call to the Government to invest in policies and measures in Budget 2021 to support young people now and into the future as we emerge from this current challenging period for our country.**

NYCI calls on the new Government to support policies and actions to address the social injustices and economic inequalities affecting young people. We urge the Government to take the urgent climate change decisions and implement the required policy measures to save our planet. We are also calling on the incoming administration to invest in services and in particular, youth work services, which are making such a positive difference in the lives of so many young people, especially at this difficult time.



RECOMMENDATIONS



Youth Work Services

RECOMMENDATION:

Increased Investment in Voluntary Youth Work Organisations and Youth Work Services

RATIONALE:

NYCI welcomes the commitment in the 2020 Programme for Government with regard to youth work, which states that the incoming administration will:

“Continue to invest in community and voluntary family support services and youth work, recognising their value in preventing harm and in responding to the needs of vulnerable families”¹³

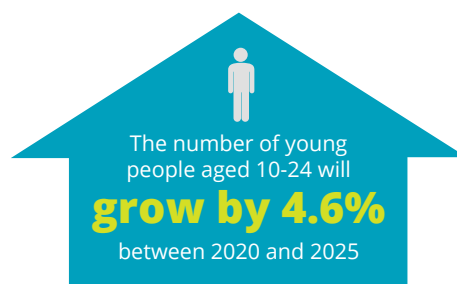
It is vital that we see evidence of this commitment in Budget 2021. Additional investment in youth work is crucial in supporting the sector to meet the needs of the growing number of young people, particularly the most vulnerable. This is even more important now as we emerge from COVID-19, because the new way of working which many youth organisations have developed to engage with young people, while meeting the social distancing requirements will be more staff and cost intensive. The need was there prior to COVID-19, but is now greater as many young people have been significantly impacted by the pandemic.

One of the positive indicators in Ireland is our growing youth population. Census 2016 shows that the number of young people aged 10-24 will grow by 4.6% between 2020 and 2025.¹⁴

Although this a positive development, it will also create challenges. With adequate resources, voluntary youth work organisations are well placed to support young people to reach their potential and make Ireland the best country in the world to be a young person.

Voluntary youth organisations are active in almost every community reaching over 383,000 young people. They are particularly active in supporting young people from economically or socially disadvantaged communities, with 53.3% of all participants coming from these areas.¹⁵

One of the
positive indicators
in Ireland is our
growing youth population.



¹³ Programme for Government, 2020 <https://static.rasset.ie/documents/news/2020/06/draft-programme-for-govt.pdf> P81

¹⁴ E3003, Population 2011-2016 by Single Year of Age, Sex, County and City, CSO, <https://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/Define.asp?maintable=E3003&PLanguage=0>

¹⁵ Assessment of the Economic Value of Youth Work by Indecon Economic Consultants, pp 49 November 2012

YOUTH WORK SECTOR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Many of these young people have been severely impacted by COVID-19 and the supports and services by our member organisations will be even more invaluable. **The youth work sector contributed during the crisis using technology and other means to support and continue to engage with young people, including many vulnerable young people and will continue to do so in the coming months and years.** Voluntary youth organisations work in a broad range of areas such as promoting active citizenship, social and political education, and supporting the participation of young people in education and training. They also deliver programmes to promote positive mental health, school completion and employability and run projects in youth justice, equality and alcohol and drug awareness. Voluntary youth organisations also organise international exchange programmes for young people, allowing them to meet, engage and work with young people from other countries and cultures. The track record, credibility and reach of the youth sector is also demonstrated by the fact that we have the highest level of involvement in youth services in the EU, with 26% of young people active in a youth club/organisation.¹⁶

One of the unique features of youth work services in Ireland, is the contribution of the over 40,000 adult volunteers who work with and for young people. These volunteers bring their life experiences and expertise and provide a critical resource to organisations in the sector and considerable savings to the State. **In 2012, Indecon estimated that the annual economic value of youth work-related volunteering at €47.7m.**¹⁷ Too often the State has viewed the work of recruiting, training and maintaining volunteers as being cost neutral, when in fact voluntary youth organisations have to invest staff time and resources in gaining new and supporting existing volunteers.

We acknowledge that youth work funding has increased in the last number of years, however it is important to state that the sector endured very steep cuts in the 2008-2014 period. In that seven-year period, investment in youth work services from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) decreased by 31.8%, from €73.1m in 2008 to €49.8m in 2014. Since then the investment from DCYA has increased. In 2020 it stood at €61.8m, however, this means that financial support for youth work is still €11.3m or over 15% below that of over a decade ago, which does not take inflation in that period or the increased number of young people in our population and in need of youth services. The data also indicates that young people and the youth work sector has not been adequately resourced compared to other sectors, given the increased resources available in the 2014-2020 period. **Our analysis shows that while overall Government expenditure has increased by 17% between 2011 and 2020, youth work funding has increased by 2.7%. (See Table 2)**

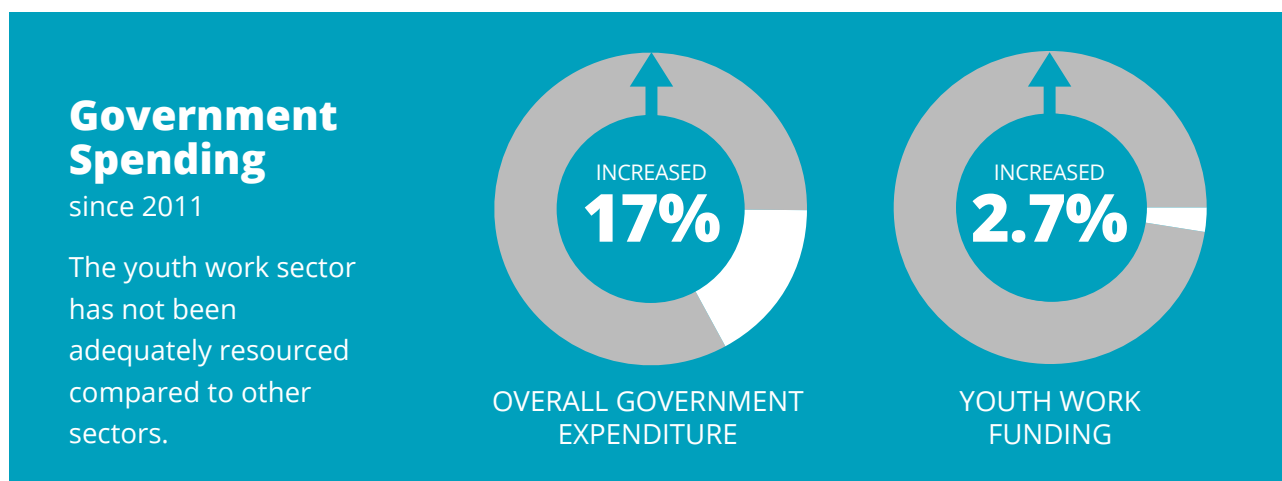


¹⁶ European Commission 2011, "Youth on the Move" - Analytical Report of Flash Eurobarometer Number 319a

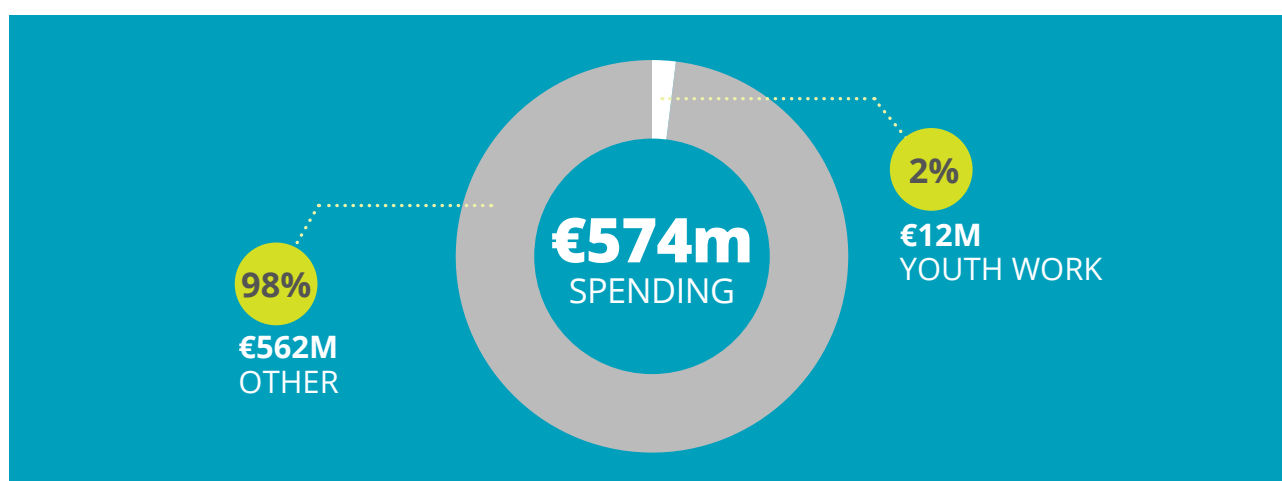
¹⁷ Assessment of the Economic Value of Youth Work by Indecon Economic Consultants, November 2012

TABLE 2: CURRENT SPENDING 2011-2020

YEAR	2011	2020	% CHANGE +/-
TOTAL GOVERNMENT SPENDING ¹⁸	€52.8bn	€61.9bn	+17%
TOTAL YOUTH WORK SPENDING ¹⁹	€60.2m	€61.8m	+2.7%



Likewise, an analysis of funding allocations within the then Department of Children and Youth Affairs, indicated significant spending increases of €574m or 57% between 2014 and 2020. **Of these additional monies, only 2% or €12m was allocated to youth work.** (See Table 3). These financial shortfalls must be addressed in Budget 2021.



¹⁸ Gross Voted Expenditure 2019-2021, Part 2, Budget 2020, P2 [http://www.budget.gov.ie/Budgets/2020/Documents/Budget/Part%2011%20-%20Expenditure%20Allocations%202020-22%20\(A\).pdf](http://www.budget.gov.ie/Budgets/2020/Documents/Budget/Part%2011%20-%20Expenditure%20Allocations%202020-22%20(A).pdf)

¹⁹ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions 745, 23rd June 2020, https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2020-06-23/745/#pq_745

TABLE 3: CURRENT SPENDING 2014-2020

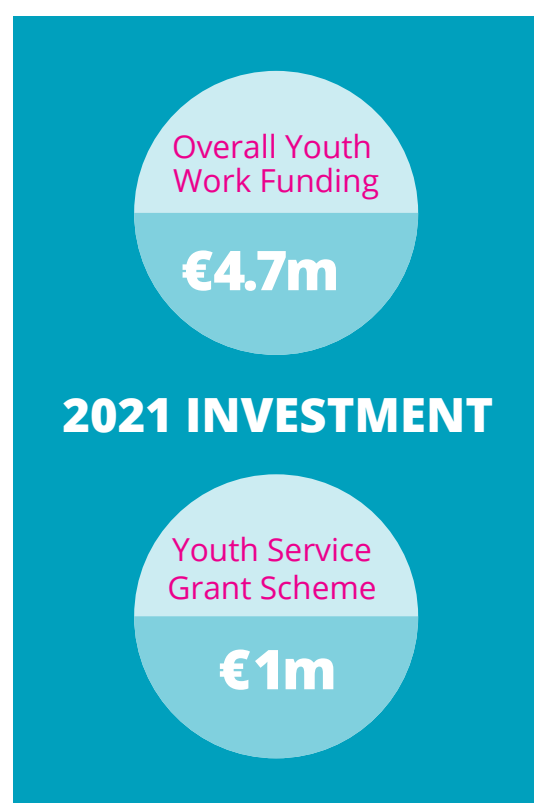
YEAR	2014	2020	€ CHANGE +/-	% CHANGE +/-
TOTAL DCYA SPENDING ²⁰	€999m	€1573m	€574m	+57%
TOTAL YOUTH WORK SPENDING ²¹	€49.8m	€61.8m	€12m	+24%

The severe cutbacks between 2008 and 2014 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 there has been some increase in funding since 2015, the data outlined above illustrates that as our economy and public finances recover, youth work services have not received their fair share.

The Government urgently needs to address the overall funding deficits in Budget 2021.

Even before the pandemic, many voluntary youth organisations were already under pressure, as they stretched already diminished budgets to meet ever growing governance and compliance requirements such as Children First, the National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF) 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.

An analysis of the per capita funding provided to the voluntary youth sector to engage with young people makes for stark reading. In 2008, the investment in youth work services was €76 per young person per annum. By 2014, this had collapsed to €58 per young person. As outlined earlier, while there has been an increase in funding, the youth population is also growing significantly; therefore the actual investment in 2020²² comes to just €64 per young person per year or just €1.23 per young person per week. The results of Census 2016 indicate that there will be 977,853 young people aged between 10-24 years in 2021. We propose that investment in youth work services should be increased to €68 per young person by 2021, which amounts to €66.5m. In order to achieve this, Government must invest an additional funding allocation €4.7m in current expenditure in the upcoming budget.



²⁰ Gross Voted Expenditure 2019-2021, Part 2, Budget 2020, P4 [http://www.budget.gov.ie/Budgets/2020/Documents/Budget/Part%20I%20-%20Expenditure%20Allocations%202020-22%20\(A\).pdf](http://www.budget.gov.ie/Budgets/2020/Documents/Budget/Part%20I%20-%20Expenditure%20Allocations%202020-22%20(A).pdf)

²¹ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions 745, 23rd June 2020, https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2020-06-23/745/#pq_745

²² Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions 745, 23rd June 2020, https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2020-06-23/745/#pq_745

YOUTH WORK SECTOR CONTRIBUTION TO IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

We welcome the commitment in the Programme for Government²³ to develop a new national youth strategy and support greater youth participation;

“We will publish and implement a successor to Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People and will develop mechanisms, through a new youth strategy, for the voice and views of young people to be part of decision-making at community, county and national levels.”

While ambitious, the last National Youth Strategy failed to live up to expectations, arising from a lack of implementation. A properly resourced youth work sector can contribute to the implementation of any future strategy and work with young people and Government on delivering the agreed commitments, including measures to enhance youth participation.

ALLOCATION OF INVESTMENT

A €4.7m increased allocation would represent a 7.5% uplift on 2020. It would be important that any additional funding is allocated across the spectrum to support the different strands of youth work, such as targeted youth work, mainstream youth work, youth information and local voluntary youth clubs. Therefore, NYCI proposes an even spread of any additional funding pro rata to these various funding schemes as outlined below in Table 4. NYCI would welcome the opportunity to engage further with the Department on these figures.

TABLE 4: RECOMMENDED ALLOCATIONS OF 2021 FUNDING FOR YOUTH WORK

NAME OF SCHEME	2020 FUNDING	FUNDING INCREASE	2021 FUNDING
Youth Service Grant Scheme	€11.6m	€1m	€12.6m
Local Youth Club Grant Scheme	€2.1m	€0.15m	€2.25m
Targeted Youth Funding Scheme/UBU Your Place Your Space ²⁴	€38.8m	€2.9m	€41.7m
Youth Work Function and Technical Assistance	€4.1m	€0.3m	€4.4m
Youth Information Centres	€1.3m	€0.10m	€1.4m
Other National Youth Organisations and Youth Initiatives	€2.3m	€0.15m	€2.45m
Internal Policy/Youth Officers/ Technical Support	€1.6m	€0.10m	€1.7m
TOTALS	€61.8m	€4.7m	€66.5m

²³ “Programme for Government-Our Shared Future”, June 2020, P81

²⁴ The Targeted Youth Funding Scheme is the amalgamation of 4 previous schemes, i.e.; Special Projects for Youth, Young People’s Facilities and Services Fund Round 1 & 2 and the Local Drugs Task Force Projects Scheme) into a single scheme

This additional investment is also justified on the basis that youth work has not received a proportionate share of the additional resources available in recent years, despite the recovery in the economy and public finances. This investment would meet Ireland’s commitment under Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

RECOMMENDATION

€4.7m additional 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 €1m in the Youth Service Grant Scheme as detailed in Table 4.

RESPONSIBILITY

Department of Children, Disability, Equality and Integration



Youth Unemployment

2

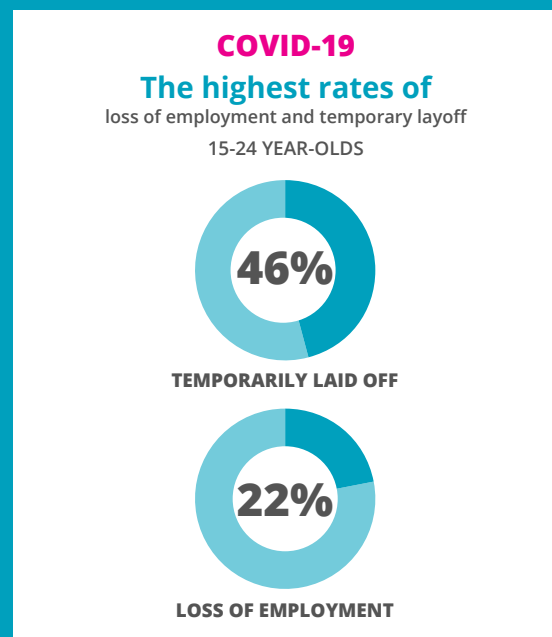
RECOMMENDATION:

Urgent stimulus package to support young jobseekers into education, training, apprenticeships and employment

RATIONALE:

Young workers are always disproportionately badly affected by recessions and shocks to the economy, as demonstrated by the last recession when youth unemployment reached over 31% in 2012, even when the safety valve of emigration was available. All the evidence to date indicates that the impact of the measures necessary to protect public health have been devastating for young people in the labour force.

Data from the CSO indicates a COVID-19 adjusted rate of youth unemployment of 45.4%²⁵ in June 2020. The DEASP Working Paper²⁶ also states that “those who have lost their job due to the COVID-19 pandemic, or who have been temporarily laid-off, are more likely to be young, low-skilled, female and part-time than the population average”. An OECD report²⁷ stated that “COVID-19 has the potential for long-term effects on youth unemployment, based on previous large economic shocks”. **The findings of a further CSO report²⁸ on COVID-19, found that 15-24 year-olds experienced the highest rates of loss of employment and temporary layoff, with 46% of 15-24 year-olds temporarily laid off and over a fifth (22%) experiencing loss of employment.**



²⁵ Monthly Unemployment, CSO, June 2020

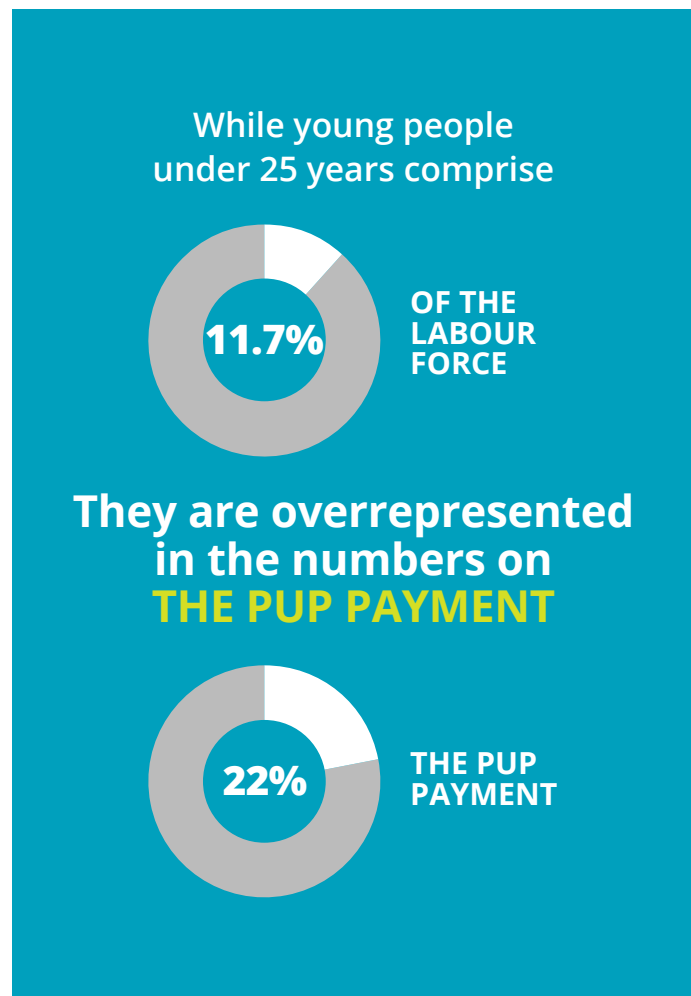
<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/mue/monthlyunemploymentjune2020/>

²⁶ “The Initial Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Ireland’s Labour Market”, Irish Government Economic & Evaluation Service, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, May 2020

²⁷ Covid-19: Protecting People and Societies <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/covid-19-protecting-people-and-societies-e5c9de1a/#figure-d1e216> OECD, June 2020

²⁸ Employment and Life Effects of Covid-19 <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/elec19/employmentandlifeeffectsofcovid-19/> CSO, June 2020

At its peak in early May data from the CSO indicated that 122,214²⁹ young people under the age of 25 were on the Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP). We welcome the fact that since then the numbers of young people on the PUP payment has declined by 26.7% (-32,670) to 89,544 in early July as the economy reopens. **However, while young people under 25 years comprise 11.7%³⁰ of the labour force, they are over-represented in the numbers on the PUP payment at 22%³¹.** It is of further concern that the percentage decrease in young people returning to work and leaving the PUP (-26.7%) in the eight weeks between early May and early July is lower than the overall rate of decline of -31% or among certain other older worker cohorts (aged 35-44) of -35%. This could indicate that job losses among the young will be higher or that employers are planning to recall younger workers later, if at all, which might indicate that younger workers may experience longer spells of unemployment. In addition to the young people on the PUP, there are in June 2020, 29,579 young people aged 18-24 signing on the live register,³² an increase of 8,031 (or 38%) on the figures from June 2019.



PRE-COVID YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Even before the onset of the pandemic and welcome job growth in the Irish economy, youth unemployment in December 2019 stood at 12.6%.³³ The rate of youth unemployment (15-24 years) was also more than three times that of those aged 25-74 years which stood at 3.7%. In addition, there are also 20,413 young people on Disability Allowance³⁴. Another area of concern before the pandemic struck is the continued high number of young people 'not in education, employment and training' (NEET). In 2017, Ireland's NEET rate among 15-29 year olds was 13.1%.³⁵ In our view it is vital that the new Government supports the young workers made unemployed due to the pandemic, but it is also important that we do not forget the young people who were unemployed prior to the current crisis.

²⁹ Detailed COVID-19 Income Supports and Live Register Tables, CSO, June 2020 <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/labourmarket/liveregister/detailedcovid-19incomesupportandliveregistertables/>

³⁰ CSO, Labour Force Survey, Q1 2020 <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/labourmarket/labourforcesurveylfs/>

³¹ Detailed COVID-19 Income Supports and Live Register Tables, CSO, June 2020 <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/labourmarket/liveregister/detailedcovid-19incomesupportandliveregistertables/>

³² Live Register, CSO, June 2020 <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/lr/liveregisterjune2020/>

³³ CSO, Monthly Unemployment Report, December 2019 <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/mue/monthlyunemploymentdecember2019/>

³⁴ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Question 1131 June 3rd 2020 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2020-06-03a.3213&s=%22under+25%22#g3214.q>

³⁵ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions 591, 26th March 2019 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2019-03-26a.1416>

TABLE 5: SNAPSHOT OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT DATA JUNE 2020

Youth (U25) Unemployment Rate December 2020	12.6%
Youth (U25) Unemployment Rate (Upper Range) June 2020	45.4% (+38.4%)
Number (U25) on Pandemic Employment Payment (PUP) 5th May 2020	122,214
Number (U25) on Pandemic Employment Payment (PUP) 5th July 2020	89,544 (-26%)
Percentage of U25 in Labour Force Quarter 1 2020	11.7%
Percentage of U25 on Pandemic Unemployment Payment 5th July 2020	22%
Number of U25 signing on Live Register June 2019	21,548
Number of U25 signing on Live Register June 2020	29,579 (+38%)
Number of U25 on Disability Allowance May 2020	20,413
Not in Education, Employment, Training (NEET) rate (15-29) (2017)	13.1%
References to Youth Employment/Unemployment in Programme for Govt	0

NYCI and its member organisations have been working to support young people to access the labour market for many years. We are very concerned at the impact of this crisis on jobseekers, particularly for those furthest from the labour market. It is vital that the incoming Government develop a youth employment plan, so as to inform a credible and costed stimulus package to support young jobseekers into education, training, apprenticeships and ultimately employment as our society and economy recover. On July 1st the EU Commission launched “Youth Employment Support”³⁶, we urge the Government to engage with the EU Commission to source funding to support measures to reduce youth unemployment in Ireland.

PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

We welcome the commitments in the Programme for Government to publish a July Jobs Initiative, a National Economic Plan and other proposals to support people back into work, retrain and upskill for the labour market. We were disappointed, however, by the lack of focus and attention in the document on youth unemployment, given the impact of the crisis on young jobseekers. The lack of attention on young people in any economic/employment plans has the potential to repeat the mistakes of the past and leave young people lingering on the dole queues for many years.

The number of young people on the PUP since the peak in early May has declined by over 32,000, this is very welcome, and we hope it continues to decline further. However, the reality is that even if half the current number on the payment exit, that would still leave 45,000 young out of work. **As a society and an economy, we cannot afford to make the mistakes of the past, where young people were left to linger on the dole queues for years on end and the Governmental response was slow and inadequate.** That is why NYCI is calling for action and an investment of €191m now. We acknowledge

³⁶ Commission launches Youth Employment Support: a bridge to jobs for the next generation”, July 2020
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1193

that this may appear a large sum, but the cost of leaving 28,000 young people on the dole for a year would be €164m, so the net cost of the measures we are proposing would be just €27m. This of course does not take into account the social and financial benefits of the proposed measures for young people, their families, communities and Irish society as a whole. By comparison, in early July, the UK Government announced a €2bn fund to tackle youth unemployment.

It makes sense now to invest in a targeted stimulus package now to support young people back into work. The Pandemic Unemployment Payment for the 89,544 young people currently in receipt of it is costing €31m³⁷ per week. NYCI wants young people in work rather than in receipt of benefits and that is why we are calling on the incoming Government in Budget 2021 to commit to a package of measures (in addition to current provision) to support up to 28,000 young people under 25 years into education, training, apprenticeship and ultimately employment. All the evidence confirms that it is far better to support young people to engage in active labour market measures to enhance their skills and employability and keep them close to the jobs market. Even though the package of measures outlined below, may on first review appear to require significant investment, when the alternative cost of doing nothing and leaving young people on the live register and unemployment payments is taken into account, these actions would be very cost effective. **We estimate that an investment in 28,000 education, training, apprenticeship and employment support measures and places would cost a gross €191.1m, however when the actual cost of welfare payments are taken into account the net financial cost would only be an additional €27m.**

Investment in support measures and places

would cost a gross

€191.1m

when the **actual cost** of welfare payments are taken into account the net financial cost



€27m

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our proposal for a package of measures would include the following;

- **Quadruple number of places on Training Programmes for Unemployed (U25)**
- **Enhance take up of Back to Education Scheme (BTEA)**
- **Support increased take up of Jobs Plus Youth by young jobseekers and employers**
- **Investment in a National Access to Apprenticeship Scheme**
- **Increased investment in the Youth Employment Support Scheme**

For full details on numbers and costings, see Table 6 on the next page.

³⁷ €350 x 89,544 young people on PUP = €31m per week

TABLE 6: NYCI BUDGET 2021 YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROPOSALS

NAME OF SCHEME	NEW PLACE	COST PER PLACE	INVESTMENT
Training Programmes for Unemployed (U25)	16,000	€6,628 ³⁸	€106m
Additional Places on BTEA	5,000	€10,556 ³⁹	€52.7m
Additional Places on JobsPlus Youth	5,000	€4,485 ⁴⁰	€22.4m
National Access to Apprenticeship	1,000	€5,000	€5m
Increased Investment in YESS	1,000	€5,000	€5m
Total investment required	28,000		€191.1m
Cost of leaving U25 on Jobseekers' Allowance	28,000	€5,860.40	-€164.1m
NET INVESTMENT			€27m

TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

SOLAS funds a range of education and training programmes for those seeking employment, which are primarily delivered by the sixteen Education and Training Boards, such as Bridging and Foundation training, Specific Skills Training, Blended Learning, the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme, Community Training Workshops, the Local Training Initiative and Traineeships. **The criteria for each programme is aimed at different cohorts and the nature, focus, duration of the training programmes varies in accordance with the upskilling and training needs.** According to data provided by the Department of Education, the current number of young people supported by these measures in 2020 is 5,208 at an average cost of €6,628 per participant.

We are proposing a significant increase in provision of 16,000 in 2020/2021 as this programme area covers a range of education/training measures which can be adapted to the needs of young jobseekers and the needs of the employment market. The cost of the additional places on these programmes will be €106m in 2021.

³⁸ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions 252-263, June 23rd 2020 https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2020-06-23/252/#pq_252

³⁹ Young participants on BTEA get full rate of JA (€203) instead of lower rate (€112.70), annual additional cost of €10,556 x 5,000 = €23.5m

⁴⁰ Average cost per participant per annum €4,485 x 5,000 additional participants, ESF evaluation <https://www.esf.ie/en/imagelibrary/repository/files/yei-evaluation.pdf> P45

BACK TO EDUCATION ALLOWANCE

The BTEA is an educational opportunities scheme which facilitates those in receipt of social welfare payments to retain welfare supports while undertaking an educational programme at second or third level. To qualify for the allowance while pursuing a second level course of education, the applicant must have been on a qualifying welfare payment, such as Jobseeker's Allowance or Disability Allowance for 3 months, while also pursuing a third level course. The qualifying period is 9 months. In general, participants have to be aged 21 years or over to qualify for BTEA and over 24 years if applying for a post-graduate course. If a young person aged 18-20 years has been out of formal education for two years, however, they may be approved for inclusion on the BTEA. Young people under 25 years on the lower rate of Jobseeker's Allowance will receive the full rate of €203 if approved for BTEA.

The current criteria which requires that participants have to be nine months unemployed to be eligible for third level course option will prevent young people made unemployed due to the pandemic in March/April being eligible this year. That is why NYCI is proposing that the Government allow a once off derogation for young people on the PUP for 4 months or more, which would allow those who lost their jobs due to the pandemic to take up an educational opportunity. This would allow young people laid off in March/April to avail of third level programmes commencing in the autumn.

The BTEA scheme would be an excellent vehicle to support young people who were laid off and are unlikely to be rehired to upskill and improve their chances of decent employment. At present 1,300 young people⁴¹ under the age of 25 are on the BTEA scheme. We believe with a revised criteria for eligibility and increased awareness and promotion, and that the high number of young unemployed people could be reduced. We propose that the Department should aim to increase the number of unemployed young people on BTEA by 5,000 to 6,000 in 2021. At present young people under 25 years get €112.70 per week on Jobseekers' Allowance, when they transition to the BTEA scheme they receive the full rate of €203 per week, so there is a net cost to the Exchequer of just €90.30 a week or €4,695 per student per annum. Therefore, we estimate that this measure would cost €52.7m gross, but in net terms just €23.5m.

JOBSPLUS YOUTH

JobsPlus Youth is an employer incentive which encourages and rewards employers who recruit young jobseekers under the age of 25 on the live register. Employers who recruit a young person under 25 years on the live register for 4 months (104 days) over the previous 6 months will receive a €7,500 subsidy over 2 years. JobsPlus Youth is available to all employers in the private, community, not for profit and voluntary sectors. The job must be full time employment of at least 30 hours a week over 4 days. Since 2015, 4,183⁴² young people have benefitted from the scheme, although the numbers have declined in recent years as youth unemployment has fallen. Given the impact of the pandemic and the sharp increase in youth unemployment, we believe action to enhance take-up of the scheme should be taken. We believe greater promotion and awareness among young jobseekers and employers should be undertaken with the aim of supporting 5,000 unemployed young people in the 2021.

⁴¹ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Question 1024, June 16th 2020 https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2020-06-16/1024/#pq_1024

⁴² Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Question 384, December 5th 2019 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2019-12-05a.975>

This would assist many more young jobseekers, currently on the pandemic unemployment payment who are unlikely to be rehired by their old employer. It would also support businesses that are recovering from the impact of COVID-19. We estimate based on figures available from a European Social Fund evaluation of the scheme that the investment required for 5,000 additional participants in 2021 would be in the region of €22.4m.⁴³

NATIONAL ACCESS TO APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

We welcome the commitment in the Programme for Government to;

“Publish an updated Apprenticeship Action Plan to look at new ways of structuring, funding, and promoting apprenticeships. It will have specific targets for the uptake of apprenticeships by women, people with disabilities and disadvantaged groups”⁴⁴

We welcome the expansion and growth in apprenticeships in the last number of years. The number of apprentices in training in May 2020 was 18,079⁴⁵ up from 10,445 in 2016.⁴⁶ Funding has also increased by 131% from €52.7m in 2014 to €169m in 2020.⁴⁷ We support the overall commitments in the Programme for Government to increase the number of new entrants, expand apprenticeships into new sectors and increase access to under-represented groups, such as young women, people with disabilities and disadvantaged groups. The most recent data indicated that only 2% of apprentices are young women and 2.8% have a disability. There is no data available on other categories such as young people who are socially and economically disadvantaged or those from a minority ethnic background. **As we expand the number and range of apprenticeships, it is vital that these opportunities remain open to all young people, especially disadvantaged and under-represented groups.** In that context, the review of pathways to participation in apprenticeships by SOLAS in 2018 was welcome.⁴⁸ Any policy or measures to increase participation by under-represented groups will require investment. In 2019, the funding for SOLAS pre-apprentice programmes was €873,000 which is less than 0.5% of the overall apprenticeship budget, with no direct State funding for access to apprenticeship programmes. NYCI endorses programmes such as the TU Dublin Access to Apprenticeship⁴⁹ (ATA) programme funded by the private sector that supports young people aged 16-24 from disadvantaged backgrounds, and with limited educational qualifications in Dublin City. The TU Dublin ATA programme supports the participants over a 12-week period to sample a range of apprenticeship opportunities, assists with CV and interview preparation and also includes two weeks work experience. NYCI supports the proposal to implement this model nationwide involving the key stakeholders, such as SOLAS, the local Education and Training Boards, Institutes of Technology, local employers and the local youth and community sector. This programme provides supports and tackles barriers, which may prevent disadvantaged young people from opting for and being able to sustain an apprenticeship, with a particular focus on the long-term unemployed. The anticipated costs of such a national ATA scheme in 2021 is €5m based on a 1,000 places at a cost of €5,000 per place.

⁴³ Average cost per participant per annum €4,485 x 5,000 additional participants, ESF evaluation <https://www.esf.ie/en/imagelibrary/repository/files/yei-evaluation.pdf> P45

⁴⁴ Programme for Government, 2020 <https://static.rasset.ie/documents/news/2020/06/draft-programme-for-govt.pdf> P21/99

⁴⁵ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions 119-123, June 23rd 2020 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2019-05-08a.1001>

⁴⁶ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions 114, 117-119, 18th January 2018 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-01-18a.295>

⁴⁷ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions 114, 117-119, 18th January 2018 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2018-01-18a.295>

⁴⁸ <https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/fb640012f5/pathwaysapprenticeshippreviewnov18.pdf>

⁴⁹ <https://www.dit.ie/colleges/collegeofengineeringbuiltenvironment/accesstoapprenticeship/>

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SCHEME

We welcomed the announcement in Budget 2018 of the new Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS)⁵⁰ which is targeted at young people aged 18 to 24 who are long-term unemployed or who face barriers to employment. We note that YESS is designed to provide the long-term unemployed with the opportunity to learn basic work and social skills in a supportive environment while on a work placement. YESS is designed to serve as a replacement for JobBridge, which was abolished in October 2016. We are disappointed with the slow rate of progress and implementation, as it took almost twelve months to set up the scheme⁵¹ and to date only 797 young people have commenced on the YESS, with 149 young jobseekers on the programme prior to COVID-19⁵². **As this scheme is targeted at young people furthest from the labour market, it is vital that more young people are supported to take up this option.** We are calling on Government to invest an additional €5m in this scheme to support an extra 1,000 participants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Invest a net **€27m** to support an additional 28,000 education, training, apprenticeship and job subsidy places for young jobseekers, made up of:

- **16,000** additional places on the training programmes for the unemployed
- **5,000** additional places on the Back to Education Scheme (BTEA)
- **5,000** additional jobs to be supported under the JobsPlus Youth Scheme
- **1,000** additional places on a new Access to Apprentices Scheme
- **1,000** additional places on the Youth Employment Support Scheme

RESPONSIBILITY

Department of Social Protection, Community and Rural Development and the Islands / Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment / Department for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

⁵⁰ Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Budgetary Measures, October 2017, <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/cbaea2-minister-doherty-announces-social-welfare-budget-for-2018/>

⁵¹ Launch of Youth Employment Support Scheme, September 2018 <http://www.dsfa.ie/en/pressoffice/Pages/pr240918.aspx>

⁵² Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Question 799, June 23rd 2020 https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2020-06-23/799/#pq_799

Social Protection for Young Jobseekers

3

RECOMMENDATION:

Equality for young people on Jobseekers Allowance

RATIONALE:

NYCI welcomes the commitment in the Programme for Government to;
“Improve jobseeker supports for people aged under 24 over the lifetime of the Government”⁵³

NYCI supports full equality for young people. We opposed the decision of previous Governments to reduce welfare payments to young unemployed persons under 26 years of age and we want the full rates to be restored. We have been advocating on this issue for many years and acknowledge and welcome the decision of the then Government in Budget 2020, to restore the full rate of €203 to young people aged 25, this change currently benefits 2,996 young people.⁵⁴ Also in Budget 2017 in line with a proposal made by NYCI since 2014, the Government restored the full adult rate to young people who were engaged in education, training and work experience. It is still unacceptable, however, that young people aged 18-24 years are on a lower rate of weekly support. We believe the imposition of lower rates on young jobseekers is contrary to the provisions of Article 40.1 of the Irish Constitution,⁵⁵ which dictates that all citizens should be treated equally and must be addressed.



The most recent data indicates that 85% or 12,997 of the 15,163 young people aged 18-24 years in receipt of Jobseekers’ Allowance (JA) in April 2020 were on up to €112.70 a week, with the balance on between €112.70 and €203 per week.⁵⁶

⁵³ Programme for Government, 2020 <https://static.rasset.ie/documents/news/2020/06/draft-programme-for-govt.pdf> P74

⁵⁴ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Question 1031, June 16th 2020 https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2020-06-16/1031/#pq_1031

⁵⁵ Irish Constitution http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Historical_Information/The_Constitution/February_2015_-_Constitution_of_Ireland_.pdf

⁵⁶ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions 1130, June 3rd 2020 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2020-06-03a.3210&s=%22%E2%82%AC112.70%22#g3211.q>

TABLE 7: DATA ON JOBSEEKER'S ALLOWANCE PAYMENTS TO YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 18-24 YEARS

Young persons under the age of 25 in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance in April 2020 by rate.

RATE	RECIPIENTS	%
Up to €112.70	12,997	85%
€112.70 to €203	2,166	15%
TOTAL	15,613	100%

The impact of these reduced payments is confirmed by the statistics on the rate of consistent poverty among young people aged 15-24.⁵⁷ The consistent poverty rate for young people aged 15-24 years in 2015 was 15.6%, which is almost double the overall rate of 8.7% and the highest of all age cohorts. The percentage of young people aged 15-24 years in consistent poverty has increased by 73% between 2010 and 2015, compared to the overall increase of 40% over the same period. In addition to the data there is compelling anecdotal evidence that the cuts are leading to youth homelessness.

NYCI commissioned the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice (VPSJ) to do detailed analysis of the Minimum Essential Standard of Living for young people on Jobseekers' Allowance aged 18-24 years in 2018. The VPSJ's Minimum Essential Standard of Living (MESL) budget standards details the minimum income needed to live and take part in the social and economic life in Ireland. The research places an emphasis on 'needs, not wants', and produces comprehensive, transparent, itemised lists (of over 2,000 items, goods and services) detailing what is required to meet minimum needs and enable an acceptable minimum standard of living. From this, budgets specifying the actual average weekly cost of a minimum acceptable standard (the Minimum Essential Standard of Living) are compiled, producing MESL budgets for 90% of households across urban and rural Ireland. This understanding of an acceptable minimum standard of living, embodies the concepts which underpin the human right to an adequate standard of living, and reflect the Irish Government definition of poverty which emphasises the ability to have a "standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally" and to participate in normal activities. The results from the MESL of young people aged 18-24 years indicates that the current levels of Jobseekers' Allowance payments create economic poverty, hardship and social exclusion.

⁵⁷ Social Inclusion Monitor 2015, Department of Social Protection pp42 <https://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/SocialInclusionMonitor2015.pdf>

TABLE 8: LIVING ALONE-AVERAGE MARKET RENT

EXPENSES	18-24 YEARS URBAN	18-24 YEARS RURAL
MESL Core	€213.38	€253.63
Housing Costs	€252.65	€89.32
Total MESL	€466.03	€342.95
INCOME	18-24 YEARS URBAN	18-24 YEARS RURAL
Jobseeker's Allowance	€112.70	€112.70
Income adequacy	-€353.33	-€230.25
JA as % of adequacy	24%	33%

Urban

Young people aged 18-24 have less than a quarter of income for minimum essential standard of living

**Rural**

Young people aged 18-24 have less than a third of income for minimum essential standard of living

**TABLE 9: LIVING ALONE-WITH HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT**

EXPENSES	18-24 YEARS URBAN	18-24 YEARS RURAL
MESL Core	€213.38	€253.63
Housing Costs	€93.28	€17
Total MESL	€306.66	€270.63
INCOME	18-24 YEARS URBAN	18-24 YEARS RURAL
Jobseeker's Allowance	€112.70	€112.70
Income adequacy	-€193.96	-€157.93
JA as % of adequacy	37%	42%

TABLE 10: LIVING IN PARENTAL HOME

EXPENSES	18-24 YEARS URBAN	18-24 YEARS RURAL
MESL Core	€149.05	€137.24
Housing Costs	—	—
Total MESL	€149.05	€137.24

INCOME	18-24 YEARS URBAN	18-24 YEARS RURAL
Jobseeker's Allowance	€112.70	€112.70
Income adequacy	-€36.35	-€24.54
JA as % of adequacy	76%	82%

The analysis by VPSJ demonstrates that for all those aged 18-24 years on the lower rates of Jobseeker's Allowance, the current payments are wholly inadequate. For the vast majority of recipients, the current payments are a fraction of what is required to live with dignity.

NYCI is calling on the incoming Government to reverse these cuts over the next two Budgets, beginning in Budget 2021. This proposal, if implemented, would contribute to Ireland's commitment under Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

In Budget 2021, NYCI calls on Government in the first of two steps in eliminating the age-related difference in payment by increasing the Jobseeker's Allowance rate for 18-24 year olds by €45.10 per week from €112.70 to €157.80. According to data provided previously by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, this measure would cost €35m based on current numbers in a full calendar year⁵⁸.

RECOMMENDATION

€35m investment as the first of two steps to restore young people to full adult Jobseeker's Allowance rate.

RESPONSIBILITY

Department of Social Protection, Community and Rural Development and the Islands



⁵⁸ Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Questions 1039, June 16th 2020 <https://www.kildarestreet.com/wrans/?id=2020-06-16a.2770&s=%22under+25%22#g2771.q>

Youth Homelessness

4

RECOMMENDATION: Tackling Youth Homelessness

RATIONALE:

NYCI welcomes the commitment in the Programme for Government to:

“Develop a National Youth Homelessness Strategy”⁵⁹

In May 2020, 8,876⁶⁰ people were recorded as homeless, which included 6,089 adults and 2,787 children under 18 years. The number of young people aged 18-24 recorded as homeless in May 2020 was 709, representing a fall of 19% on the numbers recorded as homeless in May 2019.

We welcome the decline in the numbers who are recorded as homeless, however much more needs to be done to ensure that the 8,876 adults and children who are without a secure home have one.

The commitment in the Programme for Government to develop a National Youth Homelessness Strategy is welcome and we look forward to working with the new administration on it, however, without resources it is likely to fail and that is why we are calling for ringfenced funding to be provided for implementation in Budget 2021.

While there are many reasons a young person can experience homelessness, issues such as reduced social welfare supports, young people being a lower priority on housing waiting lists, unsuitable emergency accommodation and inadequate support services, especially for those leaving care are major contributory factors.

We welcome the decline in the numbers who are homeless, however

much more needs to be done to ensure that the **8,876 adults and children**

who are without a secure home have one.



⁵⁹ Programme for Government, 2020, <https://static.rasset.ie/documents/news/2020/06/draft-programme-for-govt.pdf> P55

⁶⁰ The Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government Homelessness Report May 2020, https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/homelessness_report_-_may_2020.pdf

Many young people have difficulty accessing affordable and quality housing in the private rental market and/or social housing sector. The current levels of youth unemployment and cuts in social welfare for young people in successive budgets has made it increasingly difficult for many to be able to afford to leave home and live independently. Furthermore, these cuts and lack of supply have made it very challenging for young people leaving care to access housing.

As previously referenced, the cuts in welfare payments have particularly impacted on young people at risk of homelessness. Between 2007 and 2015 the rate of severe deprivation amongst 18 to 24 year-olds increased by almost 157% (4.6% to 11.8%), twice that of the general population.⁶¹ The policy has yet to be reversed despite improvements in the national finances in recent years. It is welcome that Government have previously protected young people leaving care aged 18-24 years from the reduced welfare rates, where they have been in care any time in the previous 12 months before the age of 18. We also welcomed the decision of the Government in Budget 2020 to restore the full rate of Jobseekers' Allowance payment of €203 per week for those aged 25 years of age who are living independently and in receipt of State housing supports including rent supplement and the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP). The Department is not in a position to identify how many young people have benefited from this policy change, it notes that 185 young persons under 25 have transitioned to the higher rate since January 2020, but this could be for a number of reasons⁶². Therefore, it would appear that while welcome this measure is still limited and does not fully address the needs of all young people who are homeless.



NYCI is calling on Government to ringfence €3m in Budget 2021 to resource and implement the National Youth Homelessness Strategy. There are numerous reasons why young people end up homeless and therefore we need a package of measures to end youth homelessness. This investment is worthwhile, because a situation where a young person has become entrenched in homelessness, is not only detrimental for the young person involved, it is also costly for the state. Supporting young people in homeless accommodation is very expensive. A Mazars report⁶³ estimated that the average cost of supporting a person experiencing homelessness in 2014 was €19,179 per annum.

RECOMMENDATION

€3m allocation in Budget 2021 to resource and implement the National Youth Homelessness Strategy.

RESPONSIBILITY

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage / Department of Social Protection, Community and Rural Development and the Islands.



⁶¹ European Survey of Income and Living Condition 2016. Eurostat Indicator: ilc_mddd11

⁶² Dáil Éireann, Parliamentary Question 1041, June 16th 2020 https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2020-06-16/1041/#pq_1041

⁶³ Independent Review of Homeless Services, Mazars for the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government, December 2015 https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/publications/files/independent_review_of_homless_services_-_mazars.pdf

Climate Action and Social Justice

5

RECOMMENDATION:

Supporting the Participation of Young People

RATIONALE:

NYCI welcomes the commitment in the Programme for Government to:

“Develop a new National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-making 2021-2025”⁶⁴

Ireland must work towards a climate or carbon-neutral⁶⁵ economy society in a short-time period. While the move towards a low carbon economy will create opportunities and benefits, it will also be disruptive and costly for many people and sectors, at least in the short-term. In many instances, there is a danger that it will be those in Ireland and globally on the lowest incomes with fewer opportunities and alternatives and a lack of political voice and influence that will endure the heaviest burden of these changes. Apart from the social and environmental cost on individuals, families and communities, Ireland will have to pay EU fines of €7bn⁶⁶ if we fail to meet our climate change targets.

Young people at home and abroad have led and shaped the debate and taken direct civic action through marches, school strikes, online advocacy and a range of other actions on climate change and climate justice.

Young people have led and shaped the debate and



TAKEN DIRECT CIVIC ACTION THROUGH MARCHES, SCHOOL STRIKES, ONLINE ADVOCACY and a range of other actions

⁶⁴ Programme for Government, 2020, <https://static.rasset.ie/documents/news/2020/06/draft-programme-for-govt.pdf> P121

⁶⁵ NESCI “A Vision for 2050” Evaluating the Options, Paper 7, 2012, http://files.nesci.ie/nesci_secretariat_papers/ccbg_No7_A_Vision_for_2050.pdf

⁶⁶ In-depth Q & A: Why Ireland is nowhere near meeting its climate change goals, June 2019, <http://www.climatechange.ie/in-depth-qa-why-ireland-is-nowhere-near-meeting-its-climate-change-goals/>

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Young people have rightly become frustrated by the foot-dragging of Governments and institutions in tackling the climate crisis. They have also been active in keeping social justice to the forefront of all policies, decisions and actions on climate change. The last Government developed policies and set up a range of structures and mechanisms to develop and progress measures and actions at national and regional level to address climate change. These include the development of a Climate Action Plan with 183 actions, the establishment of the National Dialogue on Climate Action and Climate Action Delivery Board, the appointment of a Just Transition Commissioner and a Just Transition Review Team. At regional level, the Government has appointed the Midlands Regional Transition Team and four Climate Action Regional Offices. All this indicates a lot of activity on the issue, however, the extent to which this action is real and meaningful has yet to be determined. We note the new Government has committed to ambitious targets in addressing our climate change challenge as set out in the Programme for Government. We welcomed the decision of the outgoing Government to establish a Youth Climate Action Fund in 2020⁶⁷ to support national youth organisations and we support the continuation of this funding.

NYCI welcomes the commitment in the Programme for Government to support the participation of young people in decision making. We welcome the ongoing inclusion and invitations from Government Departments and statutory agencies for young people to participate in some of these structures, so that their voice and views feed into and influence the decision-making process. At present, this work by young people is undertaken on their own time and at their own cost. In most cases everyone else in the room is paid to be there as a salaried employee, while the young person is expected to attend and contribute at their own cost, and in many cases forego education and paid work. Therefore, the participation of young people should be financially supported, by compensating them for travelling, subsistence costs and participation costs and in supporting the input and feedback from other young people to those representing their view through supports for meetings/ networks.

The Government's Climate Action Plan aims to enhance the effectiveness of climate-related communications, network building and deliberative capacity within and through the National Dialogue on Climate Action. This, in our view, can best be achieved through empowering and supporting local groups and networks, in particular local youth groups and networks. At present, many young people are actively campaigning and organising activities on the issues of climate change, climate action and social justice online and via networks and organisations. The vast majority of these have little or no access to funding or resources. NYCI believes such youth groups and networks should have access to funding to support their work. To support young people to participate in official structures and mechanisms and to support youth groups and networks to undertake activities and actions to promote and advance climate action and social justice, NYCI calls on the next Government to establish a Climate Action Youth Empowerment, Advocacy and Participation Fund.

Many young people involved in climate action and social justice work are wary of seeking or securing funding from Governments. They fear that such funding will come with conditions attached, which will inhibit their independence and work or will be onerous and bureaucratic. Therefore, NYCI proposes that an intermediary agency or non-statutory body should manage the fund; this agency must be independent of and at arm's length from Government. The role of the intermediary agency will be

⁶⁷ "Minister Zappone opens Youth Climate Action Fund", March 2020 <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/bfe6bc-minister-katherine-zappone-launches-youth-climate-justice-fund/>

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to ensure that the allocations of funding are fair, open and transparent and provide assurance to Government that all public funding is properly spent and accounted for. The agency should operate in such a way as to minimise bureaucracy and fund within its budget a range of activities and actions by young people and youth groups, which come within the broad remit of empowerment, advocacy and participation.

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RECOMMENDATION

€1m allocation in Budget 2021 to support the establishment of a Climate Action Empowerment, Advocacy and Participation Fund.

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RESPONSIBILITY

Department of Climate Action, Communications Networks and Transport / Department of Children, Equality, Disability and Integration.

Conclusion

While the last number of months have been very difficult for our people and country and it will take time for our society and economy to recover, we can rebound and grasp the opportunity to deliver economic equality, social justice and environmental sustainability. We acknowledge that Budget 2021 will be one of the most challenging ever drafted by an incoming administration. It is vital that the new Government follows through on its commitment to put “recovery and renewal” at the heart of their programme with clear policies, measures and investment in young people and the youth sector, who with support can be the drivers of that agenda.

In this Pre-Budget Submission, NYCI is calling on Government to implement a number of recommendations and policies to meet the needs of young people and support them to achieve their full potential and ensure Ireland’s recovery and long-term prosperity. NYCI calls on the new Government to support policies and actions to address the social injustices and economic inequalities affecting young people. We urge the Government to take the urgent climate change decisions and implement the required policy measures to save our planet. We are also calling on the incoming administration to invest in services and in particular, youth work services, which are making such a positive difference in the lives of so many young people, especially at this difficult time. **This submission has been entitled *Providing the Pathway* as it is a clarion call to the Government to invest in policies and proposals in Budget 2021, which support young people now and into the future as we emerge from this current challenging period for our country.**

WE CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO MAKE THAT CHOICE IN BUDGET 2021.



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