



Youth Work Ireland

Press Release
Youth Work Ireland
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“Results Day Illustrates Exam System Can be Changed Despite Challenges” Says Leading Youth Organisation

Youth Work Ireland today reiterated its call for widespread reform of the Leaving Cert following the unprecedented 2020 Results. The group has said that there is a lot more to the matter than just the unique situation arising from COVID 19. The organisation, whose members run many educational disadvantage initiatives around the country, has long called for radical overhaul of the exam particularly to combat the points race, early school leaving and the regimented learning style in schools. Youth Work Ireland has said there have been several reports and 2020 has shown that the system can be changed when there is a will. The group believes reform also needs to look at the exam and syllabus in the broadest possible way and focus on the interests of young people by involving all of them in any changes.

“Now more than ever people see the need for the reform of this major element of the educational system. Many do well out of the Leaving Certificate and this year will be no exception, but the enormous build-up of pressure coupled with our persistently high dropout rates must spur on reform drawing on the lessons of change in 2020. This must be kept on the agenda, widespread reform is needed as opposed to seeing 2020 as some exceptional year, rather 2020 showed how assessment methods could cope with not having a terminal exam. There is a need for a much wider debate involving continuous assessment, credit systems, team working, critical thinking and industry linkage. Young people should be involved in any reform process through student councils and education centres outside the mainstream such as Youth Reach Centres and Community Training Centres” said Michael Mc Loughlin of Youth Work Ireland

“Our members work with many young people who have been failed by the formal mainstream education system. The youth service is often seen as been there to pick up the pieces from the mainstream academic system, this cannot be tolerated. Previous reforms such as the Leaving Cert Applied, Vocational and transition year have shown that mainstream schools can be adapted to serve all young people. This year has shown, despite its unique nature, that the over reliance on one terminal exam is not as essential as has been thought and rapid change is possible. This should be a core principle for reform in the future” He concluded

ENDS

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