



## Youth Work Ireland

Press Release  
Youth Work Ireland  
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### **Mental Health and Alcohol Still Major Issues for Teens says Leading Youth Organisation in Response to Latest Growing Up In Ireland Survey**

Youth Work Ireland has said that improved efforts and joined up work by Government is needed to address the ongoing issues of mental health and alcohol misuse highlighted in the latest Growing up in Ireland Survey. The organisation is particularly concerned that one-third were classified as risky or hazardous drinkers and 20% were considered 'likely to be depressed'. The group believes the Government needs to redouble its efforts to deliver on its substance misuse policies and existing mental health commitments set out in the Vision for Change and the Youth Mental Health Strategies. The youth organisation also highlighted the potential significant impact of Covid 19 on young people with schools and educational establishments being closed and economic opportunities denied in traditional service jobs.

"The latest Growing up in Ireland Survey shows a relatively positive picture of the lives of 18 year olds however there is a familiar feel to some of the more worrying findings particularly in the areas of substance misuse and mental health. It is also fair to assume that the Covid 19 pandemic will further intensify these problems due to the significant dislocation it has created in young people's lives. In both the areas of mental health and substance misuse, the Government has key policies but they have not been delivered in an optimum way and today's figures need to serve as another reminder of the need to double down on efforts for the new Government" Said Michael Mc Loughlin of Youth Work Ireland

"The Governments substance misuse policy and specifically its approach to the regulation of alcohol have been criticised by many groups for their slow implementation and lack of resources and the results of this survey bear this out. Years after the initiation of legislation important measures on alcohol pricing, labelling, advertising and promotion have not yet been implemented and there has been critical pressure during the Covid 19 crisis to lower alcohol prices regardless of the public health impact of such a measure. Thousands of young people with mental health concerns continue to be on waiting lists for community and psychology supports. These services, which focus on prevention, assessment and detection for children in difficulty, are considered vital in providing effective early intervention. So in the key areas of concern outlined in the Growing up in Ireland Survey there are real and tangible policy actions that a new Government can prioritise" Mr Mc Loughlin concluded

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