



Youth Work Ireland

Press Release
Youth Work Ireland
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“Sugar Tax Delay a Licence for Lobbying Industry to Ramp Up Opposition to Public Health Measure” Says Leading Youth Organisation

Youth Work Ireland has today said the decision to delay the introduction of a sugar tax for up to two years is a licence for further industry lobbying to prevent a public health measure which is all too common in this area. The organisation was reacting to the announcement in the Budget Statement today where the Finance Minister established a consultation and review process. The youth group, whose members deliver a range of public health measures, believe the delay is similar to long delays in other public health areas like alcohol which allow industry interests increase their lobbying and campaigning work which prioritise private gain over the public interest. Youth Work Ireland had called for the introduction of the tax in its pre-budget submission.

“Research and policy work from within the Government itself has suggested this measure yet it could not be delivered on budget day, unfortunately this is all too common in Government policy where the most basic measures promoting public health are stymied by reluctance and delay. This then allows the lobbying industry increase its efforts to snuff them out before they become law. One need only cast a glance at the registration of lobbyists to see how active the major corporate interests, their associations and associated lobbyists are in the field of public health with several meetings with the relevant ministers and others clearly aimed at frustrating and stopping measures in the public interest. Government needs to be fully committed to measures to combat the obesity crisis particularly amongst the young and this delay does the opposite by inviting more organised and well financed opposition” said Michael Mc Loughlin of Youth Work Ireland

“The Growing Up In Ireland Survey has found that 75% of nine-year-olds in the study were defined as being of healthy BMI, 19% were overweight and 7% were obese. Girls are more likely to be defined as being overweight (22%) or obese (8%) than boys (17% and 5%); thus a total of 30% of girls and 22% of boys are defined as overweight/obese. There are pronounced social-class inequalities in the prevalence of overweight and obesity among nine-year-olds. These rates are high by international standards. This should be enough of a call to action for the Government” Mc Loughlin added

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