



Youth Work Ireland

Press Release
Youth Work Ireland
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“Leaving Cert Decision, a Step Back in Critical Reform of Education System” Says Leading Youth Organisation

Today’s announcement on the Leaving Cert Exam has been criticised by Youth Work Ireland as a missed opportunity to move towards important reforms in the exam. The organisation, whose members provide educational and employment interventions for many disadvantaged young people, also said that there was still a long way to go to ensure decision makers had a connection and understanding of issues relating to young people and their concerns. The organisation cited the views expressed by the ISSU and others on the state exams. The organisation has warned that there will be a number of other challenges relating to young people emerging in the post Covid 19 environment which the Government will also need to focus on.

“The critical certainty needed for young people who are already under enormous stress in exam year has been provided which is of course welcome however we need to learn lessons from this situation and decision makers need to be closer and more connected to young people and their lives. The second level students’ union were laying out research and options very early, but their voices seemed to go unnoticed. Our education system can be slow and inflexible to change as witnessed in the slow pace of curriculum reform. The Government must now turn its attention to these matters and connect better with young people” said Michael Mc Loughlin of Youth Work Ireland

“Young people have developed enormous resilience through this process and the class of 2020 and 2021 may go on to prove that many of our systems of assessment and evaluation in formal education were long overdue for change. It may be like many other areas that a new improved future will emerge after Covid 19 where the stress and dysfunctionality of our final exam system can be put behind us. Very little attention was paid in this debate to the number of very disadvantaged young people who are out of school and how this crisis may impact on our continuing problem of educational disadvantage. This must now also become a major focus of societies efforts both in recovery and beyond. Many young people will come through this saga and out the other side but those who struggle most in our education system may unfortunately struggle as much after this announcement and we hope the education partners will remember this”. Mc Loughlin added

ENDS

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