



Youth Work Ireland

Press Release
Youth Work Ireland
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"Young Peoples Voice Must be Central to Exam Decisions" Says Leading Youth Organisation

Youth Work Ireland today welcomed the Irish Second Level Students Union survey on students' attitudes towards the state exams and has called on the Government to listen carefully to what the survey is saying. The organisation, whose members offer a number of supports to the most educationally disadvantaged, believes that clarity is needed on the state exams as soon as possible and the continued closure of schools is causing major disruption to student's lives. Similarly the group has previously pointed out that the most disadvantaged students may be falling further behind every day schools are closed and are increasingly being put at a potential disadvantage when it comes to state exams due to lack of support at home and limited access to other supports and online facilities.

"The second level students have taken an important initiative here and it is now critical that their voices are heard. The survey is extremely widespread and thus representative. It of course shows that there are different views but increasingly students and parents are worried and are looking for certainty from Government. It is a difficult time and the Government has a lot on its plate, but decisions are getting made in a speedy fashion about other economic, cultural and sporting events. In the economic area all the stops have been pulled out to deal with crisis which is right and proper. In all fields professional and representative bodies and the needs of those they speak for have been involved in decision making. This is a critical aspect of our youth policy and it is vital that young people's voices be heard in the decisions which need to be taken and taken soon. This survey is a hugely important element in moving the situation forward and its findings must be listened to" Said Michael Mc Loughlin, Head of Advocacy with Youth Work Ireland

"Schools were the first to close from March 12th but we have not heard enough about young people's educational needs since then, there is clearly growing uncertainty about the feasibility of holding state exams and the UK have already made a call on this. Young people need clarity and for those in exam classes key decisions about third level and other career options depend on these exams. If alternative arrangements are to be put in place a lot of work will have to be done, students may effectively be required to repeat a year and backlogs, or congestion could arise for future years. A lot of thought, planning and discussion is needed around this question and young people and parents need to be involved. There may be ways of delivering the Leaving Cert only but increasingly some students are going to be disadvantaged compared to others" Mr. Mc Loughlin added.

ENDS

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