



Youth Work Ireland

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Press Release
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“Youth Clubs need Reinvigoration and Support” after Covid Says Leading Youth Organisation

Youth Work Ireland has today submitted plans to Government about the need to support youth clubs all around Ireland post Covid as these groups have been severely hit by the restrictions on gathering and meeting over the last 15 months. Youth Clubs are an inherent part of the local community around the country and play a major role in community coherence around Ireland particularly in rural and isolated areas. The organisation has set out a business plan for how to support this critical area of activity in the future. The organisation believes it is incumbent on the Government to put additional resources into these volunteer-led youth clubs so that they can resume their provision as soon as possible once restrictions have been lifted. Young people need to get back to a sense of normality and communities need to have their youth clubs reinstated as soon as possible. This business plan puts forward a case to support the following:

- ✓ Reinvigoration of 300 plus youth clubs nationally
- ✓ 4000 volunteers supported and trained.
- ✓ 20,000 Young People will have spaces in their local communities to meet, feel safe, have active youth provision, socialise, make friends and work towards improving their social, physical, emotional and mental health.

40% of respondents to an ongoing study into the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Ireland's teenagers have suggested they are struggling with the impacts of lockdown and often feel lonely or alone. Commenting on the finding's Dr Caroline Heary, from the School of Psychology at NUI, Galway, said understanding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health and well-being of teenagers is critically important. "These prolonged periods of social distancing are occurring during a critical stage of life for our teenagers. Volunteers have reported significant concerns in relation to the young people who attended their clubs.

“The local Youth Club is where young people go to have free, unstructured, safe spaces to be with their friends with the support of adult volunteers. Since March 2020, Youth Clubs throughout the country have uniformly found that COVID-19 has seriously impacted on their ability to provide services to young people. The COVID-19 pandemic has financially impacted on their ability to reopen when restrictions ease and they are very concerned about their ability to re-engage volunteers. The impact is not just for now, this will continue for the foreseeable future. There is a collective sense that youth clubs have been left behind or forgotten about in government plans to support organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this brief business plan is to state the case for a spotlight to be put onto youth club provision and for specific resources to be directed towards their restart and reinvigoration” Said Michael Mc Loughlin from Youth Work Ireland

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