Youth Work Ireland

Press Release
Youth Work Ireland
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"ASBOs have little to offer in youth justice system" says Leading Youth Organisation

Youth Work Ireland today said that Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) have little to offer in dealing with young people in the justice system. The organisation has pointed to the paltry number of ASBOs issued down the years and has contrasted this with the claims made by many politicians when the scheme was introduced.

The group has said that ASBOs conflate criminal and non-criminal behaviour and have unresolved legal issues. The youth organisation, whose members run a large number of Garda Diversion Projects, believe a greater emphasis is needed on community policing and earmarking more Gardai as Juvenile Liaison Officers. The group has also called for young people to be consulted on these issues given the negative images often created about them in these debates.

"The ASBOs were introduced with some fanfare a number of years ago yet only a handful have been issued and less to young people. This obviously shows the limited impact of these measures. It seems also to indicate that Gardai have not been totally comfortable with the ASBOs and the whole process surrounding it. There remains a lot of legal uncertainty about ASBOs and there seems very little to distinguish them from other legal instruments such as public order legislation apart from the stronger due process in other measures" said Michael Mc Loughlin spokesperson for Youth Work Ireland

"Young people have not been consulted or involved in any of these decisions despite the fact that they will be impacted on by the outcome. The Government should involve young people in these decisions consistently with their own policies. In the end of the day communities and young people would be better served by improved community policing and more Juvenile Liaison Officers and this is the direction any review should go to ensure proper policing on the ground" Mc Loughlin concluded.

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