



# Youth Work Ireland

Press Release  
Youth Work Ireland  
15 June, 2023

## **Ireland Amongst Member States Highlighted for Unequal Treatment of Young People in the Labour Market**

Youth Work Ireland has today welcomed the call by the European Economic and Social Committee for Ireland and other member states to address issues like sub-minimum wages, lower Job Seekers Allowance, and unpaid internships for young people. The organisation has long highlighted the number of young people paid less than their co-workers doing precisely the same job due to the law on “sub-minimum” wages. The organisation believes this is symbolic of the low priority given to young people in the labour market and society. The Government has previously committed to equalising the minimum wage with a “living wage” but there has been no mention of sub-minimum wages in this process. The young people on these sub-minimum wages are also those who missed out on important education years in Covid, were the last to get vaccinated and now have to work while receiving less pay than their colleagues. Similarly young people in Ireland are still subject to much lower rates of Job Seekers Allowance since the financial crash and unpaid internships are still common.

“Huge numbers of young people are working on sub-minimum wages getting paid significantly less than people working alongside them as the law provides for automatic discrimination against young people when it comes to the minimum wage. An eighteen-year-old adult will receive 80% of a 21-year-old co-worker under our current system or indeed anyone carrying out the same work. There is no “equal pay for equal work” when it comes to young people. We also have a huge issue with young people receiving lower rates of Job Seekers Allowance despite satisfying a rigorous means test at a time when we have massive budget surpluses. These were measures from the financial crisis” said Michael Mc Loughlin of Youth Work Ireland

“It is wholly unacceptable that young people are paid less for precisely the same work as older people who they could even be working alongside in the same workplace. This discrimination is based on outmoded and outdated Victorian ideas. It is predicated on the notion that young people have less responsibilities than others and this is far from clear. Such an assumption intrudes into young people’s personal lives which are not a matter for Government or employers. Remuneration and pay systems do not get into our personal circumstances. The only area where this is provided for is in relation to the minimum wage and young people” Added Martyna Pawlak (20) a young person who has been subject of sub-minimum wages

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Youth Spokespersons may be available