

Value for Money and Policy Review of the Youth Programmes that target disadvantaged young people

The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr. James Reilly, T.D., has announced the publication of *Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes* on his Department's website www.dcy.gov.ie

The review involved an in-depth scrutiny of three major funding programmes that target young people that are disadvantaged and that are administered by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

The review makes recommendations for the future operation of the youth schemes and their development in the years ahead to ensure effective, value for money services that are evidence based and designed to secure the best outcomes for young people. In particular, it recommends that one targeted scheme should replace the existing three schemes and that this new scheme should be based on evidence of what works and clear objectives to be achieved for young people. It recommends the types of outcomes that front-line staff in the youth services throughout the country should try to achieve with young people.

The Minister said that the review's findings and recommendations are important to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs reform agenda. He said that his Department is committed to implementing these necessary reforms, working collaboratively with the youth organisations and services throughout the country in order to secure the best possible outcomes for young people. The youth sector, national and local youth organisations and youth officers were engaged in the review process. The recommendations of the review, for a single unified scheme and a focus on quality evidenced based services for young people, have been well received by the main providers of services.

The Minister intends that the review's recommendations will be progressed through the forthcoming National Youth Strategy, due to be completed in January, 2015. The new National Youth Strategy will be a universal strategy for all young people aged 10 to 24 years, while having particular regard to those young people who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing the poorest outcomes and, therefore, in most need of support.' A consultation on the emerging priorities for young people for the new strategy is underway. The recommendations of the Value for Money and Policy Review will be discussed in detail by youth workers, youth organisations and young people themselves in this context at planned seminars and workshops around the country and through an online forum which will take place over the coming weeks.

The three schemes that were the subject of the Value for Money and Policy Review are; the Special Projects for Youth Scheme, the Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund (1 and 2) and the Local Drugs Task Force Projects scheme. Together, the schemes involved expenditure of almost €34m in 2014. The Minister said that, under Budget 2015, the overall allocation provided to the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to support the youth services throughout the country remains unchanged. There will be no reduction in the provision for these youth services in the coming year and €34m would again be provided for the schemes that target disadvantaged young people in 2015.