



Foróige Election Manifesto 2024



YOUTH WORK FOR ALL

A FORÓIGE MANIFESTO FOR THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION



The next General Election is only a few weeks away on Friday, November 29th, 2024

As we look ahead to an incoming Government, it is critical that young people are front of mind when developing policies and actions – not only as citizens of the future, but as rights holders of the present and valuable contributors to society.

Foróige wants all young people in Ireland to be able to access youth work

We know that youth work makes a real difference to young people's lives, supporting every young person to realise their full potential and fostering community connectedness. It is proven to contribute to a multitude of positive outcomes for young people, and acts to mitigate many challenges of circumstance that young people, families, and communities face.

Foróige is asking all political parties and candidates to commit to investing in Ireland's young people over the lifetime of the next Government, to make sure that no young person is left behind. In addition, we are asking that youth work is specifically named in party manifestos.

Youth work is good for young people, for families, for communities, and for society at large. By making it possible for all young people to access youth work, the next Government has the opportunity to level up Ireland's young people, which will in turn contribute to broader social and economic value for the country.

THE ROAD TO YOUTH WORK FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

Foróige wants all young people in Ireland to be able to access youth work. For this to happen we need a universal youth work ecosystem that resources youth clubs and programmes that are open to all, alongside targeted support for those who experience disadvantage and marginalisation.

A transformative investment in Ireland's young people has the potential to realise this vision. But this cannot be achieved over one budgetary cycle; it requires a longer-term commitment to provide young people with the skills, spaces, and confidence to thrive.

We can achieve a world-class youth work sector with an injection of €45 million above and beyond current youth work funding, to support the engagement of an additional 90,500 young people in youth work.

This will lay the foundation for a robust, flourishing, and agile youth work sector that has the capacity to engage more young people and adult volunteers, flex our offering to accommodate emerging needs and issues, and support community connectedness across the country. It will resource youth organisations to deliver an integrated, cohesive and joined up system of both universal and targeted supports.

We have fully costed this proposal, based on our analysis of the opportunities and challenges facing the youth work sector, current and anticipated demand on services, and the needs and interests of young people. It pivots on the creation of a joined-up youth work ecosystem through the establishment of a network of **100 Universal Youth Work Hubs**. This will allow us to quickly and effectively increase provision for young people, while capitalising on efficiency savings and economies of scale. The hubs will serve to coordinate service delivery across their catchment area.

THE ROLE OF YOUTH WORK IN PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Ireland faces a variety of challenges in the coming years – from the climate crisis, inequality, political polarisation, and international conflict, to the rising cost of living, global economic instability, a rapidly changing digital sphere, and increasing mental health concerns.

To tackle these and equip our young people to navigate a path through, we have to prioritise prevention and early intervention approaches that emphasise building the capability of individuals and communities to weather the challenges they might face.

There is a significant research base to show that engagement in youth work is a highly effective form of prevention and early intervention that cultivates a multitude of positive outcomes. Youth work develops positive skills and behaviours in young people, increases resilience and support networks, and provides a safe space to have fun and develop social skills.

In this way, youth work mitigates the effects of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage on young people, by promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, preventing risky and anti-social behaviours, and supporting educational success and employability. Further, it activates young people's pride and belonging in their communities, nurturing engagement in social and civic life and developing a sense of social responsibility that is essential to ensuring our communities thrive.

INTRODUCE VOTE AT 16

Foróige wants the introduction of the right to vote from the age of 16.

Ireland has been a world leader in developing youth participation in decision-making, through the work of the National Participation Office and Hub na nÓg. We now have a range of ways in which young people can meaningfully influence policy and decisions on the issues that affect them, at local, regional, and national level. However, these structures will only ever allow a minority of young people the opportunity to be part of decision-making.

Vote at 16 has been gathering momentum across the world, in recognition that 16 and 17 year olds have the maturity to participate in local and national democratic processes, and to add value to the national political discussion.

Introducing the right to vote from the age of 16 will enable young people to begin their engagement with civic processes in a supported way, while they are still at school, therefore promoting political participation. This will ensure that we raise successive generations of informed, proactive, and civically engaged citizens.

Contact Us

We would be delighted to engage with any political party or candidate who wishes to discuss these policy priorities in greater depth. For further information, contact

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