

Irish Girl Guides press release

Irish Girl Guides calls for €4.7m increased youth investment in Budget 2021

- 'Youth services have been a lifeline for young people during the pandemic' –

- 'Youth investment is needed now more than ever' –

Monday 5 October 2020: Irish Girl Guides is calling for an additional €4.7 million in youth investment in the upcoming budget.

The organisation, which has 11,000 youth members throughout the 26 counties, is joining with other member organisations of the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) in its Youth Work Changes Lives campaign urging the Government to prioritise youth work services in Budget 2021.

Irish Girl Guides (IGG) Chief Executive Officer, Claire Barkey, says increased investment is essential in order to provide more supports and activities for young people, to meet the needs of a growing youth population and to strengthen voluntary youth organisations.

“Youth investment is needed now more than ever,” says Ms Barkey. “Young people have, in many ways, been hardest hit by the pandemic – in terms of interruption to education, employment, support from friends and networks and missing out on key life landmarks and experiences – all of which will have impacted mental health.”

Like other youth organisations, IGG quickly adapted its services for children and young people when the pandemic hit. “Our volunteer leaders continued to work with our youth members in their local units in many creative and innovative ways,” says Ms Barkey. “Some quickly switched to holding online meetings while others kept in touch via WhatsApp or text or by personally delivering activity packs to keep the young people engaged in Guiding activities and challenges.

“Our Camp At Home events, in particular, proved hugely popular with thousands taking part, as did our challenge to older girls to complete a virtual summit of Ben Nevis by running up and down their stairs over 500 times!”

Ms Barkey says IGG’s services – and the services of other youth organisations - have been a lifeline for young people since the start of the pandemic. “It is essential that we can continue to meet the needs of young people where they’re at,” she says. “Youth services will be needed more than ever over the coming months and years, which is why increased investment is essential.

“Ireland has the youngest population in Europe with one third under 25 years old,” she continues. “According to the Central Statistics Office, the number of young people is expected to grow by 4.6% between now and 2025, reaching over one million young people.

“An increase of €4.7m is only a 7.5% increase per organisation, so it is not an unreasonable ask. By granting that additional funding, politicians will not only be recognising and supporting the valuable work of youth organisations, like IGG, but will also be sending an important message to young people, saying, ‘We value you, we empathise with you and we want to support you and to give you every chance for a fulfilling future.’”

You can follow NYCI’s Budget 2021 campaign on social media with the hashtag #YouthWorkChangesLives. Also, check out Irish Girl Guides on social media, especially the ‘Girl Guides

Changes Lives' video on its YouTube channel, to see how girls and young women benefit from their involvement in Guiding.

IGG welcomes new youth members from age 5-30 and volunteer Leaders from age 18+. No previous Guiding experience is necessary and training and ongoing support is provided. To find out more, see www.irishgirlguides.ie or tel: 01 6683898.

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Photo caption:

Irish Girl Guides' Chief Executive Officer, Claire Barkey, is calling for an increase of €4.7m in youth investment in the upcoming budget

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Notes for editors:

Irish Girl Guides has around 11,000 members and operates throughout the 26 counties with 1,500 volunteer leaders providing an informal educational programme of fun and challenging activities that foster confidence and leadership skills in girls and young women, enabling them to develop to their full potential and to become responsible citizens. Girls from age 5+ can choose to earn a wide range of badges, including Aviation, Climate Action, Community Action, Cultural Diversity, Disability Awareness, Drug Awareness, Engineering, Europe, Responsible Consumerism, Science Investigator, STEM and Global Traveller. Ladybirds is the branch for 5-7 year olds, Brownies 7-10 year olds, Guides 10-14 year olds and Senior Branch 14-30 year olds.