

## Press Release

### **475 young people at high risk of care and custody, received one-to-one support from cost-effective HSE-funded YAP Ireland Programme in 2011**

**- 82% showed an improvement in risky behaviour and 79% in school attendance -**

(Embargo Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July @ 0700hrs) YAP (Youth Advocate Programmes) Ireland, which operates in 12 counties across the country providing intensive focused support to young people in the community, is an extremely cost effective alternative to the high financial and emotional costs of residential and foster care placements. An average YAP place for six months costs approx. €10,200 – €11,200 in comparison to approx. €80k per year for private foster care and up to €4k per week for private residential placements. Therefore, if a young person remains safely at home for six months while on the YAP Programme the savings to the HSE on foster care will be €29k and for 12 months will be €58k, while the savings on private residential will be €93k for six months and €197k for 12 months. These figures and data relating to the positive impact of the service were released at the launch of the YAP Ireland 2011 Annual Report in Dublin today by Peter Fitzpatrick, TD, Louth. The YAP Ireland Intensive Support Programme is provided for young people aged 10 -18 at high risk of placement in care, secure care and custody. Intensive support of up to 15 hours a week for 6 months with the young person and family is provided by a trained community advocate. The YAP Ireland Annual Report showed that 475 young people and families received an intensive support service in 2011 and the profile of 299 of these young people showed that;

78% of young people referred to YAP Ireland by the HSE were living at home with 40% of those at high risk of entry to the care system

75% of young people were in school and 13% were not in education, employment or training

34% had a mental health or disability diagnosis

65% were not linking into any services

32% had been arrested, 10% had one or more convictions and 22% had a family member who had been convicted.

Out of 253 cases a little over half of the parents/carers (53%) were responsible for home duties/caring for family, 25% were employed or self-employed, 5% were carers, 5% were long term sick or disabled and 9% were unemployed.

A high percentage of families have a family history of drug or alcohol misuse (58% of cases).

Speaking in advance of the launch of the annual report, Frances Fitzgerald TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs said “Recent child protection reports have highlighted the need for more effective and joined-up approaches to addressing the needs of at-risk children and young people. The YAP model has proved to be a unique way of providing highly cost effective intensive, focused support to children, young people and families with more complex needs.”

Also speaking in advance of the launch, Siobhán O’Dwyer, CEO YAP Ireland said “*For young people in Ireland, growing up is complex where issues such as poverty, problem drinking, financial stress and the prevalence of youth suicide are having an enormous impact on their lives. It is well documented that receiving support from a special adult is important to the mental health of young people. It has a positive impact on their self-belief, confidence, coping skills and optimism about the future.*”

*“The HSE invested in bringing the YAP model to Ireland in 2002 because of the proven effectiveness of the model in the US. The key to the success for young people and families is the strengths based approach, the flexibility, the one-to-one relationships, the belief in them and their abilities, the hope for their future and the ‘never give up’ attitude. The use of paid, trained community based advocates ensures that the service is grounded in local communities, is professional without being threatening and is a source of local employment. The services also reduce the case-load for social workers and reduce expensive placements for young people.”* continued Siobhán O’Dwyer.

YAP Ireland measures outcomes with young people, families, staff and referrers at the beginning and end of the service across four domains; Self, Family, Education/Employment or Training and Safety/Offending Behaviour. In 2011, YAP had initial and final outcomes for 283 young people, 105 females (37%) and 178 males (63%). 19% aged 10-12; 52% aged 13-15 and 30% aged 16-18+. The outcomes data showed that:

- SELF: 77% of the young people showed an improvement in Relationship with Mother; 88% in Relationship with Peers; 86% in Self Esteem/Confidence and 84% in Withdrawn/Isolated.
- FAMILY: 76% showed an improvement in Parenting Skills; 82% in Social Supports /Family and 85% in Home Environment – Physical/Financial.
- EDUCATION: 94% showed an improvement in General Behaviour; 79% in Attendance and 78% in Aspirations.
- SAFETY/OFFENDING: 82% showed an improvement in Risky Behaviour and 91% in Co-operation with JLO/ Garda

**ENDS**