

Press Release

86% improvement in Self Esteem and Confidence of Young People on YAP Programmes – a major indicator of improved mental health and wellbeing.

(Embargo Wednesday 27th March @ 0700hrs) On the day of its 2012 Annual Report launch, YAP (Youth Advocate Programmes) Ireland announced an 86% improvement in the self esteem and confidence of young people on YAP Programmes. This is a major indicator of the improved mental health and wellbeing of young people who availed of the YAP service. YAP Ireland supports young people to deal with many negative life issues such as mental health difficulties, bullying and cyber-bullying, access to education, and suicidal thoughts. By promoting positive mental health and wellbeing of young people referred to the service, YAP Ireland provides an invaluable support for young people in creating a better future for themselves in their local communities.

In 2012, 32% of the young people referred to YAP Ireland had a mental health difficulty or disability and all the young people had significant difficulties across a range of issues in their lives. The good news is that participation on YAP Programmes showed major improvements for young people across the factors that contribute best to increasing resilience, improving confidence and providing hope.

The Headstrong research published in 2012 showed that the presence of 'One Good Adult' is a key indicator of how well a young person is connected with their community, are self-confident, future looking and can cope with problems – YAP provides exactly that to young people and families by matching young people with trained community based Advocates on a one-to-one basis.

528 young people and families received one-to-one support from cost-effective HSE-funded YAP Ireland Programmes in 16 counties across Ireland in 2012. YAP Ireland is an extremely cost-effective alternative to the high financial and emotional costs of care, secure and custodial settings while achieving good outcomes for young people and families and indeed, as an alternative to residential care the service has the potential to save the State in the region of €8.8million in costs.

These figures and data relating to the cost effectiveness of the service and the positive impact of the service on mental health and well-being were released at the launch of the YAP Ireland 2012 Annual Report in Dublin today by Peter Fitzpatrick, T.D.

Speaking in advance of the launch, Siobhán O'Dwyer, CEO YAP Ireland said *"YAP Ireland staff embody the strengths based values on which the YAP model is based and have supported young people with a range of difficulties in their lives to achieve major improvements in the goals they set themselves, building hope in their future and increasing their belief in themselves. The young people are a credit to themselves and will go on to play a major role in Irish society in the future."*

"In YAP Ireland's work with 528 families in 2012, we saw a positive improvement in their mental health and wellbeing using a strengths based rather than a deficit approach. The YAP model with our focus on strengths, needs and never give up approach works well with young people in supporting them to access appropriate services." continued Siobhan O'Dwyer.

Also speaking in advance of the launch Peter Fitzpatrick, T.D. stated: *“Ensuring that our young people are equipped to meet life's challenges is essential to allowing them to reach their full potential. Youth Advocate Programmes provide young people, and their families, with the support they need to meet those challenges. By matching our youngsters, who are in need of help, with Advocates, they can avail of the advice and guidance of a skilled Advocate, who is best placed to assist and guide them through the tough times. Our children are our most precious commodity. Protecting their mental health and self esteem should be our primary focus. Enabling families to stay together is also key to developing communities and helping our young people to build more secure futures and ultimately to develop a strong belief in themselves and what they can achieve.”*

YAP Ireland outcomes data showed improvements across a range of factors:

- Self: 86% improvement in Self-esteem/Confidence; 82% in Relationship with Peers; 84% in Mental Health and 84% in Withdrawn/Isolated.
- Family: 76% improvement in Parenting Skills, 85% in Home Environment –Physical/ Financial and 80% in Social Supports Family.
- Education: 80% improvement in General Behaviour, 79% in Attendance and 78% in Aspirations.
- Safety/ Offending: 83% improvement in Risky Behaviour/ Self, 82% in Impulsivity and 90% in Co-operation with JLO/Gardaí.

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