

Press Release

YAP Ireland in Partnership with VOYPIC Launch Investing in Children Membership Award Scheme in Ireland

On 23rd September YAP Ireland in partnership with VOYPIC will launch the Investing in Children membership award scheme. The membership scheme recognises and celebrates examples of imaginative and inclusive practice and gives organisations the opportunity to award services that can demonstrate a commitment to dialogue with young people that leads to change. The launch will take place in YAP Ireland's Head Office, 3rd Floor Park House, North Circular Road, Dublin 7 at 12pm. Key speakers at the launch include Tanya Ward, Chief Executive of Children's Rights Alliance and Liam Cairns, Director of Investing in Children, UK.

Investing in Children (IiC) was created in 1995 by a partnership between Durham County Council and the NHS and promotes the human rights of children and young people. IiC tries to create spaces for children and young people to come together and come up with good ideas, and by working with adults who want to listen and do something about it. Investing in Children work alongside children and young people, and adults who provide services to them, to create a range of effective ways in which they can exercise their right to have a say, often resulting in improvements in the services themselves. An Investing in Children membership gives organisations national recognition for the good practice and active inclusion of children and young people in dialogue and change. One of the young people involved in evaluating the membership process previously stated: *"We as children and young people are reassured when we visit somewhere and see an Investing in Children certificate that there will be someone there who actually listens to you and you will be able to put forward ideas"*.

Organisations that have achieved Investing in Children Membership have used their award to demonstrate that they recognise the rights of children and young people; provide evidence that their service is used and respected by young people themselves and support applications for funding by providing externally validated quality assurance.

Speaking in advance of the launch Siobhán O'Dwyer, CEO YAP Ireland said: *"In 2013, YAP Ireland became involved with UK based Investing in Children. We felt that this was a good opportunity for YAP to put our commitment to involving young people in all aspects of our work to the test by achieving Investing in Children Membership. The IiC assessor came to Ireland to meet with young people involved in our programmes around the country. In December 2013, YAP Ireland received our membership for centres across the country and became a certified Investing in Children Partner. Investing in Children, the organisation, asked YAP to become assessors in Ireland for other Irish organisations that would like to be approved as Investing in Children members. YAP Ireland, VOYPIC and Investing in Children are launching the membership scheme today and we look forward to working with many organisations to achieve the membership award."*

Also speaking in advance of the launch Tanya Ward, CEO Children's Rights Alliance said: *"For Ireland to truly value children, we all must recognise and respect children as individuals with their own rights. We must leave behind the dark days when children were neither seen nor heard. We must listen to children and young people and allow them to be part of decision-making. The 'Investing in Children membership scheme' is an innovative project that will celebrate and acknowledge the work of organisations who listen to children and young people and make real their rights."*

Also speaking in advance of the launch, Liam Cairns, Director, Investing in Children said: *"I am delighted that we have partnered up with YAP and VOYPIC. We believe that the liC membership scheme makes an important contribution to the continuing struggle to translate children's rights from rhetoric to reality and we look forward to learning from children, young people and colleagues about the new and imaginative ways that the scheme will be used in Ireland. We are also excited by the collaboration between our three agencies which we anticipate will be mutually stimulating and inspiring"*

For more information on the Investing in Children Membership Award Scheme, please contact Youth Advocate Programmes Ireland on +353 (1) 8689180 or visit www.yapireland.ie or VOYPIC on (+44) (0)28 90244888 or visit www.voypic.org and visit the Investing in Children website: www.investinginchildren.net

ENDS

For further information and/ or to set up an interview with Siobhán O'Dwyer, CEO of YAP Ireland or Andrew Chapple, Service Manager YAP Ireland, please contact 087 7382278 or 01 8689180.

Editor's notes

The YAP Model is a unique way of providing intensive, focused support to children, young people and families with a range of needs referred by the Child and Family Agency Social Work teams. The YAP model is based upon the development of a trust relationship built between a supportive, trained, skilled adult advocate, the young person and their family. An individual service plan based on the strengths of the young person and their family is developed and offers a wraparound approach to address all aspects of the needs of the young person within their family and local community. YAP's goal is to empower young people and their families with supports that will remain in place after programme involvement has ended. The YAP Intensive Support Programme is provided for young people aged 10 -18 with very complex needs who are at high risk of placement in care, secure care and custody using a strengths based, family focused approach. 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.

Please see www.yapireland.ie