

## Press Release

### **YAP Ireland celebrate the Year of the European Citizen with their “I am a Citizen” event**

(Embargo Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October @ 0700hrs) On the day of its national citizenship event titled ‘I am a Citizen’, YAP Ireland will hear the views of young people and families from across Ireland through a range of creative medium on what it means to them to be a Citizen. The range of topics which will be explored include community engagement, inter generational co-operation and giving back and will lead to a report with recommendations on how young people and families who often feel excluded can really take ownership as citizens of Ireland. The event which is taking place in the Croke Park Conference centre will be addressed by Frances Fitzgerald, T.D., Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.

Speaking in advance of the event Minister Fitzgerald said: *“Across national and local government, children and young people’s participation is now viewed as an invaluable aspect of policy and service development. The most important aspect of listening to young people is ensuring that their voices are heard, taken seriously and that this leads to genuine change. Today, YAP Ireland’s participation groups are show casing activities which highlight their roles as active citizens in their communities. I would like to thank and congratulate you for contribution to the continued development and improvement of Youth Advocate Programmes throughout the country”.*

Also speaking in advance of the event Siobhán O’Dwyer, CEO of YAP Ireland said: *“YAP Ireland have a participation policy which involves young people and parents/carers in a range of creative medium to have their say on issues that affect them. The idea of Citizenship can be difficult for adults to conceptualise particularly in the current climate of recession and austerity. The young people and families have carried out practical and innovative work on what it means to be a Citizen and as always have come up with creative ways that we can all become better Citizens of our community, school, workplace and wider society. The young people and families often feel that they don’t have a voice and we are delighted that they will have the opportunity to participate at this exciting event.”*

YAP Ireland is a leading provider of intensive support programmes for young people and families. It uses a strengths based, family focused approach to deliver a one-to-one service for up to 15 hours per week over 6 months to young people with complex needs. In 2012, YAP Ireland worked with 528 young people and families.

## **ENDS**

- For further information and/ or to set up an interview with Siobhán O’Dwyer, CEO YAP Ireland, please contact 087 1200838 or 01 8689180.