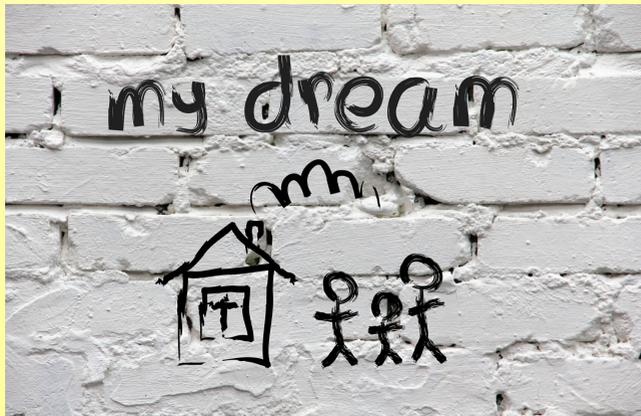


# 2019 Youth CEO Group



# Homelessness An Irish Crisis

*Build More Homes*



## Foreward by YAP Ireland CEO Siobhán O'Dwyer

The YAP Ireland Youth CEO Group started as an idea in 2014 with the purpose of working with me on improving the YAP Ireland service and impacting on issues that effect young people and families in wider society. The Youth CEO Groups since then have been a real bonus for the organisation and for society.

They have undertaken projects, contributed to policy consultations, carried out action research and highlighted social issues. The group of young people in 2019 chose homelessness as the area that they wanted to highlight and make a contribution to resolving. This report highlights the work they carried out and the real empathy and care that they felt about this really important issue. I am very proud of all the young people and thank them for working with me, Martha Sarah and Shannon all year. They have helped to keep me "real" and strengthened my belief in the strengths based model of ensuring that we see the potential for good and change in everyone.



### Who we are



## Why Homelessness?

Homelessness is an epidemic today in Irish society. According to Focus Ireland's latest figures there were 10,338 people across the country homeless between 25th July 2019 and August 19th 2019 . The number of homeless families has increased by 348% since August 2014. More than one in three people in emergency accommodation is a child (Focus Ireland, 2019). Within our group we already had a good understanding of what homelessness is like in Ireland as unfortunately many of us have directly experienced it or know family members who have. We want the Irish Government to do more for our citizens who are experiencing homelessness and listen to the voices of young people who have experienced it directly.

**3,873 children  
accessed  
emergency  
accommodation in  
Ireland throughout  
September 2019**

**There is a 110%  
increase in young  
adults aged 18-24  
becoming  
homeless since  
2014**

# What We Done

Firstly, we decided we needed to educate ourselves more on the important work homeless charities in Ireland are doing to help those in need. We wrote letters to Focus Ireland and Feed our Homeless and asked their CEO's to meet with our group to find out how we could help them. As many of the members of our group have experienced homelessness "first-hand" we wanted to share our stories. We provided our voices to The Children's Rights Alliance as 'Lived Experiences' and testimonials to help with their collective complaint calling on Government officials to pledge their support to eradicate youth poverty.

We were invited into the Focus Ireland offices in Christchurch to meet with Faye from the Advocacy team. She taught us about the great work Focus Ireland do for the homeless community. We also learned about their campaign #EndYouthHomelessness which aims to prevent young people from becoming homeless with emphasis on young LGBTQ+ people and those leaving state care who are at the highest risk of becoming homeless. We all had the opportunity to sign their petition which received over 11,000 signatures and was delivered to Dáil Éireann in October 2019.



We then met with Kiera from Feed our Homeless who are a charity established in Dublin in 2016 and operate 6 days a week feeding those who may be living on the street. Kiera explained that they are funded 100% by charitable donations and receive no Government funding. We knew we had to do something to help these people and decided to collect hygiene products for Feed our Homeless to distribute to the people who access their service.

We created a poster asking staff and young people in YAP to donate new and unused hygiene products to our collection. We wrote letters to each regional YAP office and asked the team leaders to encourage their young people and advocates who visited their offices to drop in some donations. Within two months we had collected hundreds of products for both men and women who do not have the money to buy these basic products that everyone should have a right to.



RTÉ, our national broadcaster heard about our collection drive and were extremely impressed by this initiative and our own stories. News2Day and presenter Cillian Sherlock came out to meet us and film our group handing over our care packages to Feed Our Homeless. This was an amazing experience to be on the news and to show our families, friends and the nation what exactly we have been doing in YAP and in the Youth CEO Group.



# What Homelessness Looks like in YAP

We decided to find out more about the experiences and opinions of young people, families and staff in YAP. We created a survey of questions that looked at homelessness from both the perspective of someone who has experienced homelessness and the opinions of those who have not directly experienced it. Below are the results of the survey, showing the impact of homelessness on Young People and Children. There are also direct quotes from those who have been homeless themselves.

## The impact of Homelessness on Children and Young People

REDUCED SELF ESTEEM  
INCREASED BULLYING  
NOT FEELING SAFE  
EMBARRASSMENT  
LONELINESS  
RISK OF DEPRESSION

Limited access to food & malnourishment  
Education impacted negatively – access to schools, not meeting potential.  
Life skills impacted as limited access to resources to practice – washing, cooking, cleaning, managing finances.

*'I was away from my friends a lot and I had no heating or basic housing'*

**"Not having a home to call our own"**

***"Hoping that they stay safe and they have somewhere to go"***

"I had to wake up at 5.30 AM to get 3 buses for school from where I was staying in a Family Hub to my hometown in Kildare".

**"Being cold, the fights and the drugs"**

# A look at our activities this year



# What we created

We felt that it was really important to communicate the purpose of our project to those outside of our group. We created this poster that was circulated to every YAP office in Ireland and in the weekly newsletter throughout the summer.

We then decided we needed to amplify our voices to the wider society and raise awareness for homelessness in Ireland. We created a YouTube video that explains what our group means and why we care about the housing crisis in Ireland. You can view our video by visiting the YAP Ireland YouTube Channel.

## Can You Help YAP's Youth CEO Group Help The Homeless?



The YAP Youth CEO Group have decided to collect Sanitary and personal Hygiene items for the Homeless in Ireland. Please donate items to collection boxes in all of YAP's offices around the country throughout the months of July and August. All donations welcome. Give a little to help a lot!

**Toothbrush, Toothpaste, Wipes, Deodorant, Hairbrush, Sun-cream, Shower Gel, Shampoo, Tampons, Sanitary Pads, Water proof Ponchos & Socks**

**Please only donate new, unused items.**



### YAP Ireland Youth CEO Survey – Youth Homelessness

1: Have you or a family member ever been homeless? YES NO

If NO, What do you think the is the biggest issue causing homelessness?

\_\_\_\_\_

2: What was the biggest issue you or a Family member faces while homeless ?

\_\_\_\_\_

3: Who or What helped you while you were homeless?

\_\_\_\_\_

4: Would you be willing to talk face to face / phone/ email about your experience? YES NO

\_\_\_\_\_

5: Would you allow us to use your story to highlight the issues facing people that are homeless? YES NO

*\*Your story would be kept anonymous unless you consent otherwise*

*If you wish to share your story please write your name and Advocate name below*

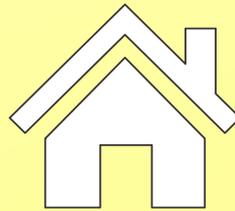
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Thank you Sincerely for participating

YAP Ireland Youth CEO Group

Our Message is Simple:

# BUILD MORE HOMES



*YAP Ireland Youth CEO Group 2019*

Funded By:

In Partnership With:

**TUSLA**



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