



Participation & Voice

Practical & Fun

Choice

Hope

*No Reject
No Eject*

Community - Based

Youth Advocate

PROGRAMMES IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Empowerment

Non-Judgemental

Never Give Up

Inclusion



YAP Services

Intensive Support Programme

Intensive Support Programme provides intensive support of up to 15 hours a week for a 6 month period to young people (8 – 18 years old) and their families to help them achieve their goals. Young people referred to our programme may be at high risk of placement in care, secure care and/or custody (Levels 3 and 4 on the Hardiker Scale). They may also be experiencing difficulties around their home, education, peer groups, behaviour and/or community.

Family Support Programme

Family Support Programme provides support of 10 hours a week for 6 months to families in need of time-limited, focused support (Levels 3 and 4 on the Hardiker Scale). The clients are the parents/carers and we work with them around reducing risk to children in the home, improved parenting skills and achieving their goals.

Disability and Mental Health Intensive Support Service

Disability and Mental Health Intensive Support Service provides a 12 month programme to Young People aged 10 – 21 years and their families who require support in achieving their goals. This service enhances independence, self-esteem and confidence, supporting the young person to participate fully in the community. Many of the young people will have diagnoses of Autism, Asperger's or be living with a mental health diagnosis. Tusla and the HSE jointly fund places in this programme in Cavan / Monaghan.

Irish Youth Justice

We provide intensive support for young people referred by Oberstown Children's Detention Campus to support their integration into the community upon release.

Crisis Intervention / Emergency Response Service

The Crisis Intervention Service offers a rapid response to support young people who are at immediate risk of out of home placement or those who are out of home in an emergency. We can provide an advocate as soon as possible to support the young person whether in the home or in temporary placement and engage them in meaningful activities to reduce further risk.

Independent Advocacy Service

The Independent Advocacy Service is provided to Child and Adolescent Mental Health services and adolescent in-patient units by supporting the young person to self-advocate, meet with staff and attend meetings if required. The Independent Advocate supports a CAMHS service user or parent in the community.

Aftercare Support Service

Aftercare Support Programme provides support of 8 hours a week for 6 months, to support the transition from care to independent living to young people aged between 17 and 21 years.

Out of Hours Service

We provide emergency support for young people referred by the Tusla Crisis Intervention Service to support them in a temporary placement and work towards achieving a positive outcome.

Peer Mentoring - Pilot Programme

We facilitate a peer mentoring service whereby previous care leavers offer peer support to young people who will be leaving the care system. We offer training, support and supervision to peer mentors who will be matched with care leavers. This programme is provided in partnership with Tusla Cavan and Monaghan.

2019 at a Glance

YCP
serviced 22
counties in
2019



YCP worked with 527 Young
People and Families in 2019

78%

improvement
in School
Attendance



82%
improvement
in Self -
Esteem and
Confidence

81% improvement
in Relationship
with peers

"They understand.
They don't look
down on you.
They're very
supportive, they're
not only supportive
on the job, but
they're supportive of
me". (Parent NUIG
focus Group)



What we DO

The YAP Model

The YAP model is a strengths-based, needs-led, wraparound, intensive support service for young people and families who are struggling with a range of issues in their lives. The model is evidence-based, achieving positive outcomes with young people and families within their communities, through the use of community-based advocates.



Vision

A society where all young people and families are confident and connected with their communities.

Mission

Changing the lives of children, young people and families in need of support by providing community-based, strengths-focused, inclusive, flexible services empowering them to achieve their own goals.



Who we work with

YAP Ireland worked with 527 children, young people and families in 2019 including 333 children and young people who were referred to us for the first time.

These young people are primarily referred to YAP Ireland by Tusla social work teams to address a range of complex issues in their lives. Of the 198 children and young people at home when referred to us 180 remained at home by the end of their programme throughout 2019. The model continues to achieve positive outcomes for children, young people and families. This is further evidenced by NUIG research completed in 2019.

In 2019, our Independent Advocacy Service has significantly grown and we are now providing service to St Patrick's Hospital, St John of Gods Hospital, Linn Dara Inpatient Unit and the CAMHS CHO2 area. YAP Ireland are working with the HSE and Oberstown CDC to increase the numbers accessing our services.

NUIG UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre

The Strengths and Challenges of the YAP Community Based Advocates Model: Research Study



The relationship that they had with the Advocate was one that I probably haven't seen before, that they had built up such strong bonds and a real trust where they felt like they could actually confide in her. (Referrer)

In early 2019, YAP Ireland commissioned the UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre from NUI Galway to conduct research into the YAP Ireland Programme. The purpose of the research was to examine the unique aspects of the YAP Programme, specifically the strengths and challenges of the Community Based Advocate model to improve the lives of young people and their families.

Before this started my daughter was very withdrawn and she'd no self-esteem and sometimes she wouldn't feel comfortable around people or whatever the situation was. It's helped her through it like. Yeah I thought it was brilliant now. She seems more confident now I think. (Parent)

The findings of the study are very positive overall indicating that young people, parents, advocates, staff, board members and referrers believe strongly in the YAP model and are enthusiastic about its unique strengths as an approach to working with vulnerable young people and their families.

This study found that

- 1)** The development of a supportive relationship between the advocate and the young person is an essential part of the YAP process and acts as a basis from which progress can be made in meeting the identified needs of the young person and change can occur.
- 2)** Advocates investing time to develop a trusting relationship with the young person and their parents is noted as a unique aspect and foundation of the programme.
- 3)** The focus on the positive aspects and strengths of the young person and their families is an essential characteristic of the YAP Model.
- 4)** Strong evidence that the advocates and team leaders use a needs-led approach and that the young person is placed at the centre of the planning process and supported to articulate what he or she wants or needs.
- 5)** Facilitating young people to access local community resources is a key component of the YAP model and this study has emphasised its centrality to the success of the intervention.
- 6)** Listening to the voice of the young person and their family and ensuring their centrality on deciding on an appropriate supportive response is achieved in a range of ways.
- 7)** YAP have in place a range of processes to monitor the effectiveness of the programme delivery.

Because it just feels that they're interested in what you want to say and like it just makes you want to tell them. She's funny and like just listens to you when you need to say something. (Young person)

A full copy of the research report is available on the YAP Ireland Website.

Strategic Goal 1

To Provide Quality Services to Young People and Families in line with the YAP model

The national outcomes summary includes information for 2873 young people who YAP Ireland have worked with between January 2011 and October 2019. The longitudinal figures show the programme remains effective in all the main factors with very little variation. The system measures the views of young people, families, referrers, advocates and managers when matched and then again when the young person completes the 6 month programme.

Gender and Age

56% of referrals to YAP are male and 44% are female. 19% are aged <10-12, 50% are aged 13-15 and 31% are aged 16-18+.

Ethnicity

87% were classified as Irish, with an additional 5% being members of the Irish Travelling community. 4% were from an African or Asian background and 3% were Eastern European.

Current Placement

66% of young people were living at home when they started the programme. 12% lived with extended family, with 14% in foster care. 4% lived in residential care or supported lodgings. Of 1276 living at home at the start of the programme, (95%), 1215 remained at home at the end of their time with YAP.

Household Circumstances

53% of those living at home are living in a single parent household, with 28% living in a two parent household. 75% of families have full medical cards and 46% have a family history of drug or alcohol misuse.

Education

80% of young people engaged with YAP Ireland are in education with 62% of those attending school regularly and 20% not in education.

Mental Health Diagnosis

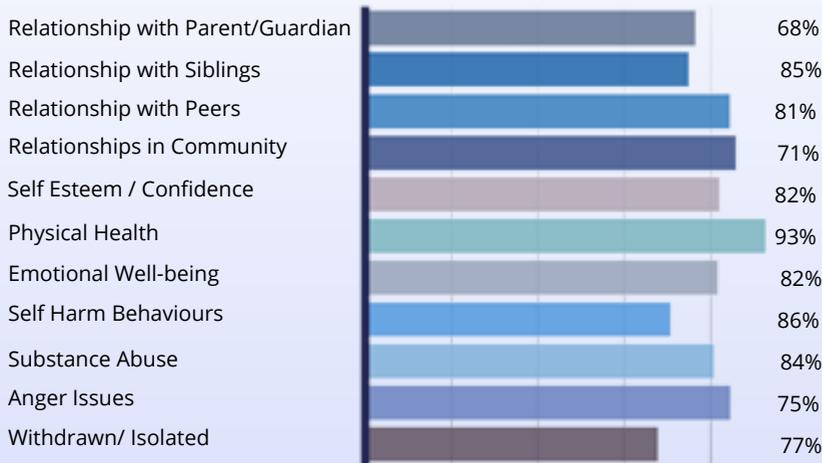
74% of young people referred to YAP Ireland have no mental health diagnosis, with 19% having a mental health diagnosis and 7% awaiting assessment.

Goals Achieved

Another way of measuring the achievements of children, young people and families is the Goals Achieved Record. This tool provides great insight on the interventions used by Team Leaders and Advocates with children, young people and families and the main goals achieved, choosing from a list of goals based on the YAP Model. There were a total of 227 cases with goals recorded for them in 2019. 81% showed improvements in self-confidence, self-esteem and coping skills. 64% of the young people are also recorded as having engaged in one or more Participation Event. The vast majority of these young people were involved in local participation initiatives, while 64 attended the National Conference with 24 actually presenting on the day. As part of YAP Ireland's ongoing Participation Strategy, 24 of these young people were also involved in interview panels in 2019.

Strategic Goal 1

The following graphs show the percentage of Young People who have moved from 'some or significant risk' at referral to 'less or minimal risk' by the end of the YAP programme.



Percentage improvement of Young People who presented at risk to self

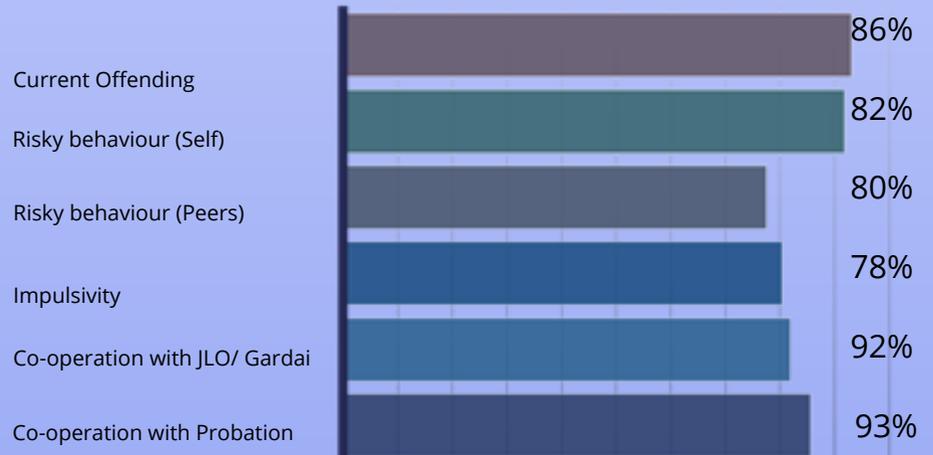
Percentage improvement of Families who presented as at risk



Percentage improvement of Young People who presented as at risk of dropping out of Education



Percentage improvement of Young People who presented as engaging in risk taking behavior



Strategic Goal 1

Strengths and Difficulty Questionnaires (SDQs)

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a brief emotional and behavioural screening questionnaire for young people and parents/carers. The 25 questions in the SDQ measure 5 different types of strengths and difficulties. This a widely used tool that helps to identify how young people and parents/guardians view their difficulties and measures improvements over time.

The five Strengths and Difficulties measured are;

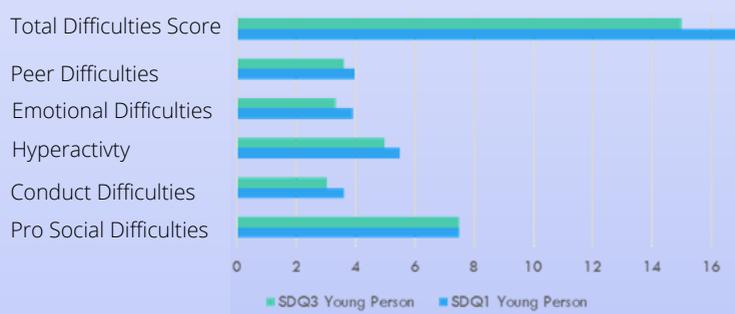
Pro-social Behaviours
Conduct Problems
Hyperactivity
Emotional Symptoms
Peer Problems.

How does it work?

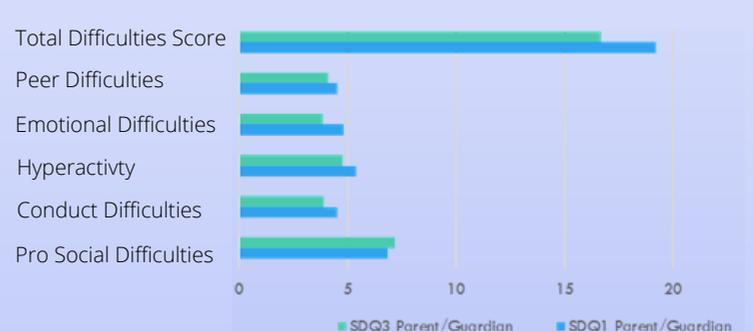
The first SDQ (SDQ1) is given to the young person and parent within the first two weeks of the programme starting. The third SDQ (SDQ3) is given to the young person and parent at the end of the programme.

What did we find when we examined the SDQs?

Young People SDQ1 vs SDQ3



Parents/Guardians SDQ1 vs SDQ3



What did we find?

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires from young people and their parents/guardians on the YAP programme were analysed. The analysis shows that there is a decrease in young people's difficulties scores across the four difficulties themes and an increase in pro-social strengths scores at the end of the YAP programme when compared with the start of the programme.

Similarly, the above graph demonstrates an improvement in parents'/guardians' ratings of the difficulties that young people experienced at the beginning of the YAP programme. Again, we can see a consistent decrease in difficulties from the beginning of the YAP programme to the end. Furthermore, there is an increase in prosocial strengths scores at the end of the YAP programme.

By using the SPSS programme, statistical tests determined that the decreases in the total difficulties scores between SDQ1 and SDQ3 for both young people and parents are statistically significant, which means that these differences in scores is not due to chance

Standing over a quality service for the young person highlights how much they matter to people. Their needs are a priority, to validate this for a young person by asking them how are they getting on, what would they change, what do they like/dislike – and for this to be changed based on the answer is very powerful for a young person. Their voice, their family's voice matters and is heard. (Staff survey respondent, NUIG Research)

Strategic Goal 1

YAP Ireland's Independent Advocacy Service

YAP Ireland have been delivering Independent Advocacy Services since 2017. We offer services in The Ginesa Suite in St. John of God's, Willow Grove Inpatient unit and in St. Patrick's Hospital, Dublin. We are also in the second year of a pilot programme with the HSE, CHO-West, where we deliver a service to the adolescent inpatient units in Merlin Park, Linn Dara and to the community teams in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.

The IAS service strives to help young people have a stronger voice and increase their participation in their care. The independent advocate supports the young person to explore a problem or an area they may need support with. This may mean supporting the young person to get more information, help them to have their voice heard and to get their views across effectively.

An Independent Advocate's role is not only to advocate for a person's rights but also to support a person to be confident to advocate for themselves and having their voice heard. In our work to date some of the following themes have emerged from supporting young people, parents or groups to work through

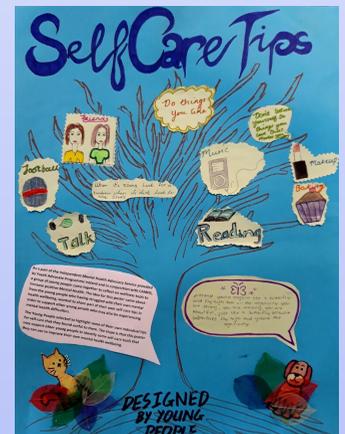
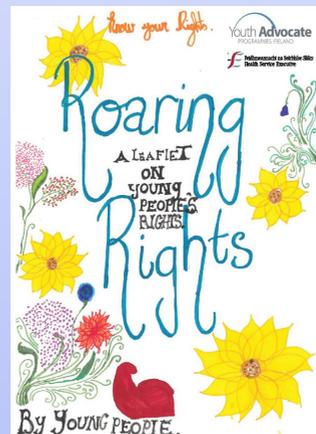


Group work completed by young people in the CAMHS CHO2 Area

YAP Ireland's Visit to YAP Inc. USA

In November this year we invested in three of our staff to visit USA to attend YAP Inc's Directors meeting in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. This trip was a mutual exchange of learning and knowledge from projects on both sides of the Atlantic. Our staff delivered a workshop on YAP Participation and VOICE.

The presentation detailed YAP Ireland's experience and expertise in developing young people and parents' participation structures that ensure that the voice of the users of our services are always heard. The presentation was delivered to staff and parents in a fun and interactive way that included a virtual Parents Exchange between YAP Inc & Irish parents. Our staff met with young people receiving services and their workers who were inspired with the impact the services were having on the young people. The opportunity to exchange knowledge, expertise and share insights on YAP projects in Ireland and America was extremely successful and we hope to find more ways to amplify YAP's impact in the future.



Strategic Goal 2

To Amplify the Voice of Young People and Parents/Carers in Society Participation in 2019

Participation and voice are an integral part of the YAP model. Local and national participation groups and events support this. Some of the 2019 Participation highlights include:

The 'Up Stylers'

Our Midlands Participation Group joined together with young people from Tusla who received seed funding to form the 'Up Stylers'. This group came together over the summer to redesign the garden of Tullamore Primary Care Centre. The group were given a very small budget and with the help of donations from the public and a local artist, Aubrey Claffey, they transformed the dull space into a special garden for families and young people. The garden includes a buddy bench, dream catcher and 'Dream Big' sign to remind those who visit to always dream big!



Child Talks 2019

Wednesday November 20th marked #WorldChildrensDay and the 30th Anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. To celebrate this the Ombudsman for Children's Office held #ChildTalks2019 in Dublin Castle on the theme of 'living your best life'. YAP Ireland young person Leanne Scanlon was chosen from a large number of entries to be a key note speaker. Leanne spoke about how she advocates on behalf of her younger sister Emily who has a diagnosis of Autism and how she cannot reach her full potential without the correct services. Along with her YAP advocate Christine, Leanne has worked hard over the last few months preparing her speech for the day, which she delivered powerfully. Leanne was chosen to appear on the RTÉ 6 One News that evening.



Parent's Forum 2019

2019 saw YAP Ireland introduce the concept of a Parent's Forum, bringing together parents from all over the country whose own children or the children in their care have access YAP Services. Hosted by YAP managers, the Forums are fantastic days of learning, fun and laughter. For the first time parents from all over the country come together to share their experiences, learn from each other and express their views. The group identified that they felt there was not a strong enough Garda presence in their communities. They decided to come together to write a letter to their local community Garda Stations to ask for increased presence. Due to the success of our Parents Forum YAP have expanded the parents group to Kildare and South Dublin. We now have four active parents groups who meet on a weekly / fortnightly basis.



Strategic Goal 2

Youth CEO Group

The YAP Youth CEOs are a group of young people on the YAP programme who are interested in taking a leadership role in the organisation. The group take part in various activities throughout the year including sitting on interview panels, hosting the National Event and conducting a project around a social issue. This year the group decided that the social issue they wanted to address was Homelessness. In 2019, Ireland had over 10,000 people registered as homeless.



The group met with leading homeless charities such as Focus Ireland and Feed our Homeless to learn about what services available and what they could do to help those without a home. They chose to run a collection for hygiene items within YAP and form care packages in partnership with Feed our Homeless. RTÉ News2Day heard about their donation drive and featured the group on their news programme highlighting the homeless crisis and how young people with good intentions can make powerful changes in the lives of those in need. The group surveyed all young people and staff within YAP regarding homelessness and created a report based on their findings and experiences of those who have been without a place to call home. The group also participated in the Collective Complaint by Children's Rights Alliance & The Mercy Law Centre on family homelessness and its' impact on children. This was a very important contribution to help effect positive change in policy.



National Event

On August 22nd 2019 YAP Ireland hosted our National Event in Croke Park, titled 'Connected Communities'. This event brought together Young People and Families from all around Ireland who are on the YAP programme, to discuss the importance of Community in our lives.



On the day, our nationwide participation groups took to the stage to speak out about the importance of connecting with your local community and to showcase all of their project work from the previous year. Our audience witnessed presentations on the environment, up-cycling, community spirit and services available in our localities. We were also entertained by some wonderful singing performances when our young people had the opportunity to display their unique talents.



282 Young People
attended Participation
in 2019

YAP held 187
Participation events
in 2019



Since I've started YAP I've met loads of new people and I came a long way since I started YAP and I'm much more confident. Young Person

Strategic Goal 2

Investing in Children

'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.' Tanya Ward, CEO, Children's Rights Alliance

The Investing in Children award recognises imaginative practice and the active inclusion of children and young people in dialogue that leads to change. To achieve the Investing in Children Membership Award, services must demonstrate that this is an inclusive process and that no young people are excluded from making a contribution.



In YAP Ireland we are committed to ensuring the young people engaged with our services have a say that results in real change, and we are proud to say that in 2019, we were awarded the Investing in Children Membership Award for the sixth consecutive year. As part of the assessment for this award, young people were interviewed to ensure they agree their voices are heard. Below are some quotes from these interviews.

"Seeing my advocate regularly enables me to discuss my problems and frustrations which makes family life better."

"It's good craic, we get to go to loads of places and talk about loads of things".

"I can talk to my advocate about anything, and I know they will listen and try to help me."

"My advocate is amazing! We do cool things together. Knowing I have someone to talk to really helps me with my behaviour".

YAP is also privileged to be the assessors for the Investing in Children Award Scheme in Ireland, in conjunction with Voices of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) in Northern Ireland. We are working with a range of organisations in Ireland towards them achieving the Investing in Children Membership Award. If you are interested in finding out more information about the Investing in Children Award please contact us by email at info@yapireland.ie or by phone on (01) 8689180.

The Investing in Children Award proved useful to our school as it was important to have an outside evaluation. The students were able to speak freely and concentrate fully on what their needs were with the help of the staff of YAP. The IIC award has promoted and nurtured the partnership between staff and students in our school and we hope to see this relationship grow in the future. - Katie Chapple, Laurel Hill Coláiste FCJ, Limerick.

YAP Louth / Meath, TUSLA joint seed funding project

In July 2019, we were approached by TUSLA in Louth/Meath to support their participation seed funding project as they wanted to consult with young people in the area who have experienced social work. The initiative came about as a follow on to the recommendations from YAP Ireland's Youth CEO Group Report published and distributed to all social work departments in 2018. The key messages that the group came up with were 'We Need You', 'Be on Time', 'Work with us' and 'Smile'. The group developed a small pack for Social Workers that includes a key ring, pen and a sticker for social worker to put in their diary or office so they always remember the important messages from the young people they work with.



Strategic Goal 3

Organisational Effectiveness - We Do What We Say We Will Do

Financial Information

Complete audited accounts for YAP Ireland for 2018 are available to view on our website at www.yapireland.ie. Audited accounts for 2019 will be published in due course. YAP Ireland accounts are prepared under Chartry SORP (FRS102).



YAP Ireland was proud to be one of the first signatories of the Governance Code the Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in Ireland. We are now preparing to meet the Charity Regulator's Governance Code.

Siobhán O'Dwyer, CEO is now a member of the Meath Foster Care Committee, providing support and governance to a partner organisation.

The YAP Board

| Name | Post | Meetings Attended | Year Joined |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Donncha Hughes | Chair | 4 | 2016 |
| Edel Quinn | Vice Chair Out-Going | 1 | 2014 |
| Grey O'Leary | Secretary | 3 | 2017 |
| Barry Martin | Director | 3 | 2018 |
| Lynette Brown Sow | Director | 1 | 2013 |
| Vivian Sanks-King | Director | 1 | 2014 |
| Philip O'Callaghan | Director | 4 | 2018 |
| Réidin Dunne | Director | 2 | 2017 |
| Donal Murphy | Director | 4 | 2018 |
| Danielle Curtis | Director | 2 | 2019 |
| Laura Curran | Director | 2 | 2019 |
| Ian Mullins | Director | 2 | 2019 |

"YAP Ireland take their monitoring and governance very seriously. Firstly, we are a fully funded model, and most of our funds through Tusla come from public money. It is crucial that we can show how we put our funding to use and how our services operates. Secondly, the safeguarding of our children and the protection of our staff is extremely important. Through monitoring and quality assurance, we can watch our cases closely and know exactly how YAP Ireland is working for them and how we can work better for our clients". (Staff survey respondent NUIG Research)

Strategic Goal 3

Internal Evaluation - Quality Assurance

YAP Ireland carries out quality questionnaires with parents/carers, young people and referring agencies to evaluate their experience with the YAP service. In 2019, Quality Officers contacted Parent/Carers and Young People associated with 128 cases. We also received feedback from 57 social workers. Feedback is used to ensure that we keep on doing what people think we do well, and to review and improve services and to respond to suggestions for change. The feedback we received is overwhelmingly positive. Here are just a few of the quotes:

"I was hanging around the house doing nothing with my life and when my advocate came in she just turned things around for me. I've gotten a job and basically am on the straight and narrow, so my life is changed." - Young Person



"I have had more of an open mind about doing new things since starting YAP". - Young Person



"The work the advocate does with my child is great and he treats him as equal. He's never told what to do. He's always asked what he wants." - Parent



"It's making the kids comfortable, they have someone to trust and someone new to talk to. It's also great for parents." - Parent

"The YAP service is excellent as it addresses the needs of the young person from their perspective, whilst consulting widely with the services supporting the young person. It is also excellent that the service works very much around the young person's needs and is outcome-focused". - Referrer



Strategic Goal 3

YAP Ireland Recruitment and Training

Each year YAP Ireland recruits and trains up to 200 amazing community based people for our Advocate panel. Once on the panel, Advocates are matched with young people throughout the year, where there is a suitable referral. In 2019 we had over 1,000 people apply for the role of Advocate nationwide, eventually placing 185 onto the Advocate panel. Also in 2019, 178 people were trained in the YAP Model through our 4-day Core Module Training and 1-day Child Safeguarding Awareness Training. As well as providing employment in the communities that we work in, we are also proud to be training people to work with Young People in a strengths-based way, many of whom go on to work in TUSLA, the HSE and various Community Projects. Many of our Advocates also come back to work as Team Leaders and Service Managers with YAP Ireland.

"They may not have a professional degree, but they are highly trained and there is continuous training in addition to having the right personality and ability to work with young people and their families, as well as with other service providers. (Staff survey respondent NUIG Research)

Siobhán O'Dwyer, CEO YAP Ireland



2019 was an exciting year for YAP Ireland. We worked with an increased number of clients, extended our Independent Advocacy Service, responded to a growing number of emergency referrals and embarked on a research project with the UNESCO Child and Family Centre at NUI Galway to look at the impact of the community based advocate model. The research found that the YAP Model works and emphasises the importance of components of the model which lead to better outcomes for children, young people and families.

The ability to respond to emergency crisis situations in partnership with Tusla social work services is an added benefit of the service and means that we are available to support the most vulnerable children, young people and families who are facing a major crisis in their lives. I want to thank the Board, staff, funders and partners who believe in the YAP Model and support us in delivering this unique service every day. A special thanks as always goes to the children, young people and families who allow us into their lives and who embrace the strengths-based Model to make the changes they want to make in their lives.

Donncha Hughes, Chairperson YAP Ireland



I am honoured to be Chair of YAP Ireland and to be part of an organisation that creates fantastic outcomes for young people across 22 counties in Ireland. Speaking with the CEO recently, we both agreed that one of YAP Ireland's biggest gifts is 'Hope'. I am heartened by the NUIG research which confirms the value of the YAP Model of community based advocates. The real stories, of what young people have achieved by embracing the model, are testament to the value delivered by YAP Ireland.

I am delighted with the strengthening ties with our partners outlined in this report particularly in mental health and youth justice. However, the Board remain fully cognisant of the increasing demands being placed on YAP Ireland particularly in the areas of crisis intervention and our emergency response service. I wish to acknowledge the CEO and staff of YAP Ireland for their continued dedication, passion and drive in delivering our mission. I also thank my fellow Board members for their work and continued commitment. We look forward to a busy 2020 when YAP Ireland will continue to deliver intensive support programmes for young people and families. It is a very rewarding journey for all involved.




Youth Advocate

PROGRAMMES IRELAND

Funded By:



In Partnership With:



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