

**\*\*\*Press Release\*\*\***

Youth Advocate Programmes (YAP) Ireland

*February 19<sup>th</sup> 2020*

**IN A SOCIETY WHERE MANY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE AT RISK, YAP IRELAND REPORTS SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES**

Youth Advocate Programmes (YAP) Ireland have reported significant improvements in a range of outcomes for the young people they work with at the launch of their Annual Report 2019 in Dublin today. Recent research published by NUI Galway UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, also launched today, prove that these positive outcomes in the lives of young people and families are related to the practice of a community-based advocate model.

Significant findings in the Annual Report include that 82% of the young people on the programme reported an improvement in confidence and self-esteem, 82% reported an improvement in emotional well-being, 80% reported an improvement in relationships with their siblings and 80% reported an improvement in educational aspirations. 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. Under the YAP model, children, young people and families with a range of complex needs are provided with intensive, focused support for 6 months through developing a strong, trust-based relationship with a community-based Advocate.

Speaking ahead of the event YAP Ireland's CEO Siobhán O'Dwyer said: "YAP Ireland continues to achieve very positive outcomes for children, young people and families through the community advocate based model supporting them to achieve their goals and participate fully and productively in society. The outcomes show that targeted, community-based services can make a big difference despite the many difficult social circumstances, gang related violence and the absence of specialist services that children, young people and families face every day.

Secretary General of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Fergal Lynch said "Supportive and trusting relationships between Youth Advocates and young people is well recognised as having a very significant positive impact on young people's lives. I very much look forward to hearing more from the NUIG team on their findings from this very valuable piece of research."

These outcomes are based on data for 2873 young people who YAP worked with between January 2011 and October 2019 with views of the young people, families, referrers and staff

measured when the young people enter the programme and then again when the young person completes the 6 month programme. In 2019, YAP Ireland worked with 527 young people and families in 22 counties throughout Ireland, including 333 young people who were referred to YAP for the first time.

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For further information, please contact Shannon Reilly, Communications Officer, YAP Ireland at sreilly@yapireland.ie or 087-2312111.

Siobhán O'Dwyer is available for interview.

Notes for the editor:

- YAP Ireland was founded in 2002 and Today is operating in 22 counties across Ireland. YAP Ireland employs 34 permanent staff and approximately 150 advocates. In 2019, 527 young people and their families participated on the YAP programmes, including 333 referred for the first time.
- YAP Ireland is a leading provider of intensive support programmes for young people and families. It uses a strengths-based, family focused approach delivering intensive support over 6 months to young people with complex needs helping them to achieve their goals. For more information, please visit [www.yapireland.ie](http://www.yapireland.ie)