

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

Youth Advocate Programmes (YAP) Ireland

Thursday 4th March 2021

YAP IRELAND REPORTS SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE YAP PROGRAMME DESPITE INFLUENCE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Youth Advocate Programmes (YAP) Ireland have reported significant improvements in a range of outcomes for the young people they work with at the virtual launch of their Annual Report 2020. Significant findings in the report include that 81% of young people reported an improvement in their self-esteem and confidence, 86% in self-harm behaviours, 82% in risky behaviour and 86% in Home Environment - Physical/Financial. 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.

The theme of today's webinar launch was 'Change through Voice and Advocacy' where young people and families on the YAP programme were joined by staff and the board, professionals, stakeholders and invited guests, to host an important conversation on the importance of implementing real change through voice and advocacy. YAP Ireland highlighted the wide range of participation and voice projects that young people and parents/carers have taken part in over the years and the impact that their work has had on their confidence and courage to speak up as well as the commitment they have to impacting wider societal change. Guest speakers on the day included Marissa Ryan, CEO of EPIC Ireland and John Farrelly, CEO of The Mental Health Commission who offered valuable insights into their important work and how they amplify the voices of their clients.

Siobhán O'Dwyer, CEO of YAP Ireland speaking at the virtual launch said, "The Annual Report for YAP Ireland for 2020 shows that despite the impact of the pandemic, YAP Ireland staff continued to provide services to vulnerable children, young people and families as a frontline service. The young people and families have been impacted greatly by the pandemic emotionally, financially and educationally and we must continue to work together with all services to ensure that they are supported to achieve their goals as we come out of the pandemic."

These outcomes are based on data for 3127 young people worked with between January 2011 and October 2020, with views of the young people, families, referrers and staff measured when the young people enter the programme and then again when they complete the 6 month programme. In 2020, YAP Ireland worked with 450 young people and families throughout Ireland, including 347 young people who were referred to YAP for the first time. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic YAP Ireland

continued to provide frontline services in partnership with Tusla, the HSE and community and voluntary services.

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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 36 full-time staff and approximately 150 advocates. In 2020, 450 young people and their families participated on the YAP programmes, including 347 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.*
- *In 2020 YAP Ireland continued to provide frontline services using both digital and ongoing face to face support in line with HSE guidance.*