

Empowerment

Non- Judgemental



Voluntary

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Hope

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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YAP SERVICES

Intensive Support Programme

The 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

The 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.

YAPAbility (Disability and Mental Health Intensive Support Service)

The YAPAbility Porgramme 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 and 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.

Independent Advocacy Service

The Independent Advocacy Service is provided to Child and Adolescent Mental Health services and adolescent inpatient units by supporting the young person to self-advocate, meet with staff and attend meetings if required. An Independent Mental Health Advocate supports young people and their families to understand the service provided to them both in inpatient units and in the community, and to enhance their participation in service provision, express their views, and make informed decisions.

Aftercare Support Service

The Aftercare Support Programme provides support of 8 hours a week for 6 months to support the transition from care to independent living for 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. 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.

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.

2021 AT A GLANCE

"My Team Leader and my Advocate have helped me through extremely hard times and I got to be on an interview panel" - Young Person

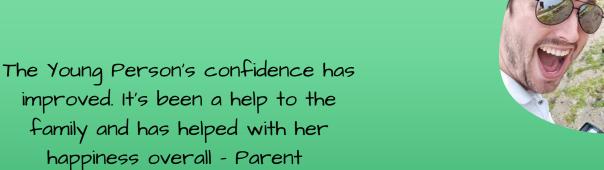
In 2021 YAP Ireland worked with 548 Young People and Families.







"It was nice to feel like your problems were heard and valued". -Young Person, IAS service 130 Young
People
attended a
participation
event in 2021





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 to 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.

The Closet And Me by Milo

I've been in here for years, Others knowing is what I fear, I do my best to hide away, For I am colourful and they are grey.

For where others naturally fit in, I have to hide what's within, What I crave is acceptance, But instead I'll be sentenced

Sentenced to a life of hate, All because I'm not straight, Sentenced to a life of fighting, To avoid it I keep lying.

Lying to myself and others, Lying to my sister and brothers, All because I fear their reaction, All because they might not treat me with compassion.

Until one day I was given advice, My eyes went wide when I realised, I can't live for others to accept me, Only then can I truly be free



Poem written by young person Milo regarding their personal experience

Who we work with

Covid 19 continued to have a major impact on service delivery throughout 2021 and despite this, we increased the numbers of children, young people and families we worked with. YAP Ireland worked with 548 young people and families in 2021, 149 carried forward from 2020 and 399 matched for the first time. The majority of our referrals are for Intensive and Family Support and are referred by Tusla social work teams to address a range of complex issues in their lives. In 2021, 88% of children and young people who we worked with remained at home at the end of the programme and 7% returned home from an alternative placement. We also saw an increase in young people referred for emergency support through the Tusla Crisis Intervention Service and social work teams as services struggled to meet the increased need for appropriate placements for these most vulnerable young people.

The Independent Advocacy Service delivered group advocacy to 757 young people, with the main themes emerging: Communication and having a voice, education, Children's rights, input into activities, routines and unit policies. We delivered 120 individual 1:1 consultations to young people and parents, with the main themes: seeking support to attend meetings, information about their care plan and support around education. The Independent Advocacy Services have been successful in enhancing the voice and participation by young people and families to ensure ownership and involvement in decision making

The innovative Peer Mentoring service in Cavan Monaghan successfully worked with 7 young people despite the many difficulties presented by Covid 19.

We do what we say we will do - deliver high quality services in line with all legislative, financial and regulatory frameworks.

The national outcomes summary includes information for 2506 young people who YAP Ireland have worked with on the intensive support programme between January 2011 and October 2021. 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. The Cohort is 3458 young people and families who YAP Ireland have worked with across all programmes between January 2011 and December 2021.

Cohorts

Gender and Age

55% of referrals to YAP are male and 45% are female. 20% are aged <10-12, 48% are aged 13-15 and 32% are aged 16-18+.

Ethnicity

86% 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

64% of young people were living at home when they started the programme. 12% lived with extended family, with 14% in foster care, 5% lived in residential care or supported lodgings. Of the 1540 living at home at the start of the programme, (88%), 1362 remained at home at the end of their time with YAP, a further 7% returned home from alternative placements.

Education

80% of young people engaged with YAP Ireland are in education with 63% of those attending school regularly and 20% not in education.

Mental Health Diagnosis

Mental Health/Behavioural/Autistic Spectrum: 73% of young people referred to YAP Ireland have no mental health diagnosis, with 20% having a mental health diagnosis and 7% awaiting assessment.

Household Circumstances

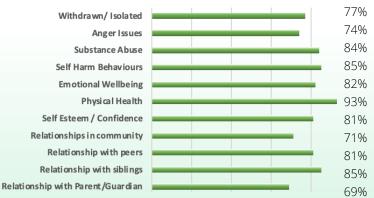
66% of those living at home are living in a single parent household, with 34% living in a two-parent household. 74% of families have full medical cards and 45% have a family history of drug or alcohol misuse.

Goals Achieved

The YAP Model is goal focused and we gather information on goals achieved and the interventions most used at the end of each case alongside the Outcomes and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires. In 2021 there were 828 interventions used whilst working with young people and families to support them to achieve their goals. The most regular interventions highlighted were role modelling positive behaviour and, being given space to express emotions and accessing/researching community services. This led to 91% of young people achieving one or all of their goals. This included 77% reporting improved self-confidence and coping skills, 53% exploring their personal identity and 55% enhanced pro-social choices. The young people and families that we work with showed a huge commitment to their programme and have worked hard to achieve their goals.

Outcomes Achieved

Percentage improvement in Outcomes for Young People -Self



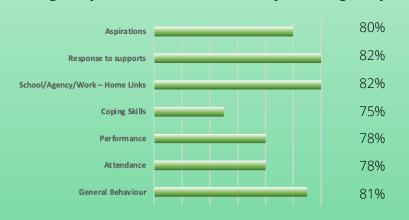
YAP utilises Outcomes to measure Young Peoples Progress on the programme. These graphs show the percentage improvements for Young People who have moved from 'some or significant risk' at referral to 'less or minimal risk' by the end of the YAP programme.

Percentage improvement in Outcomes for Parent / Carers





Percentage improvement in Outcomes for Young People - Education





Percentage improvement in Outcomes for Young People - Offending Behaviour



Co-operation with Probation			9	93%
Co-operation with JLO/ Gardai			9	92%
Impulsivity			-,	77%
Risky behavi our (Peers)			8	31%
Risky behaviour (Self)			3	32%
Current Offending			3	36%

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 5 Strengths and Difficulties measured are:

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

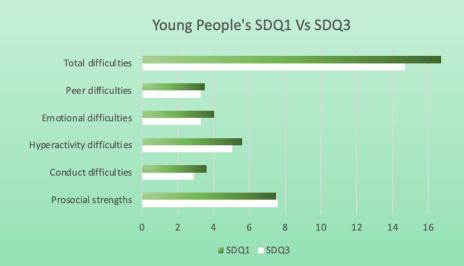


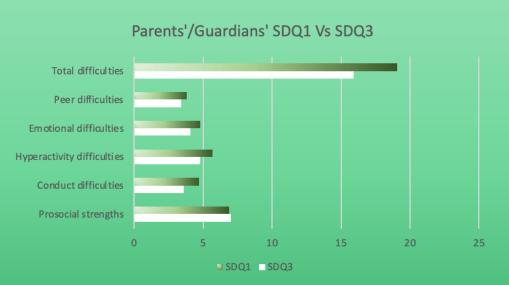
How does it work?

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?

The Strengths and Difficulties
Questionnaires from 574 young people
and their parents/guardians on the YAP
programme from 2013 to 2021 were
analysed. The analysis shows that there
is a decrease in young people's
difficulties scores across all of the
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 second 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.

To ensure that children, young people and parents/carers views make an impact in YAP Ireland and wider society.

YAPAbility Service Relaunch

In November 2021 we relaunched our Disability Intensive support Service as the 'YAPAbility Programme' as Part of our webinar YAPAbility 'Reaching your full potential'.

We were joined by many of our stakeholders from Tusla, HSE Mental Health & Disability, Daughters of Charity, the Department of Children, Equality, Disability and Youth and the Office for the Ombudsman for Children and of course our own YAP Staff, Board members, international colleagues and young people and family. YAPAbility is a 6-12 month Intensive Support Programme.

We felt that the YAPAbility title is more inclusive and in line with YAP's strengths-based model, harnessing the importance of voice, participation and working in partnership. Over the last 10 years we have worked with thousands of young people and families who present with a range of needs, over 800 of which have a recognised disability, mental health diagnosis or who are awaiting a diagnosis. We look forward to growing this programme further in the coming year. For information on referrals please see:

www.yapireland.ie/what-we-do-yap-ireland/our-services-yap-ireland/disability-support-service/

YAP Webinar Series 2021

In 2021 YAP Ireland continued to promote our services, connect with our partners and stakeholders and celebrate our young people and families through our webinar series strategy. Throughout the year we hosted three very successful webinars; 'Change Through Voice and Advocacy', 'Working Together to put Children and Young People First' and 'YAPAbility Reach your Full Potential'.

We were delighted to welcome so many stakeholders and partners as panellists to join all of these webinars and work collaboratively towards our shared goals. We were lucky enough to have Minister for Children Roderic O'Gorman, Minister for State Anne Rabbitte, Secretary General FERGAL Lynch, Bernard Gloster CEO of Tusla, Dr Tracey Monson CEO of Daughters of Charity, Suzanne Connolly CEO of Barnardos and Michael Ryan HSE, to name just a few who joined us throughout the year. The webinar series has given our young people and families an additional platform to have their voices heard and to connect with decision makers who can sometimes be seen as hard to reach. One of our young people was invited to speak by the Children's Rights Alliance to a panel of TD's about education as a service user representative. Regardless of government restrictions YAP Ireland will continue to use our webinar strategy to amplify the voice of young people and families in the future.





Launch of the NUIG Research Participation Report

Conceptualising Participation Practices within YAP

In 2021 YAP Ireland launched our most recent piece of research independently conducted by the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre of NUI Galway. This research project looked at the way that the practice of participation happens within Youth Advocate Programmes.

The researchers interviewed and conducted focus groups (mostly over Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions), with a wide range of stakeholders including board members, full-time employees, advocates, young people and their families. During these interviews and focus groups, the researchers discussed what participation looks like within YAP, with all of these key informants. What the researchers found is summarised in the following 6 key findings:



Key Finding 1: A commitment to participation is woven through policy, culture and practice in YAP Ireland.

Key finding 2: Participation is beneficial for young people, parents and service providers.

Key Finding 3: Relationships are critical in participatory practice.

Key Finding 4: Scaffolding practices are of crucial importance in ensuring meaningful participation.

Key finding 5: Participation can present challenges.

Key Finding 6: There are opportunities to further enhance and develop participatory practice within YAP Ireland and beyond.

YAP International

The International Peer Forum brings together staff members from Ireland, America, Australia, Guatemala, and Sierra Leone who all practice the strengths-based, needs-led work that YAP is known for. Each month the members discuss many aspects of their work such as challenges they may face, share success stories, and discuss the many different aspects their work takes, all using the YAP model. In 2021 the forum heard how YAP Inc based in Pennsylvania, USA, delivers many different services to a wide variety of people. This includes the YAPWORX program, which gives young people opportunities to develop job skills and positive work habits through transitional job experience.

As the forum and relationships have developed so have opportunities. The forum has worked collaboratively on a number of international projects, such as the Global Youth Voices Initiative. During this initiative, young people from each area were welcome to take part in a number of different events and celebrations and express their voice on a global level. In March 2021, YAP Ireland hosted an event for International Women's Day in the form of a Global Youth Café with guest speaker Dr. Lucy Michael. Participants of the café spoke about Leadership in different contexts and how girls and women can be empowered to have their voices heard and be confident in their ability and support one another. It is the aim of the International Peer Forum to continue to develop and learn in 2022.

YAP Participation Strategy

The purpose of participation work in YAP Ireland is to allow our young people and families an opportunity to have their voices heard, to impact on existing systems and having their views taken seriously by policy makers and services. Despite the restrictions which the Covid-19 pandemic placed on allowing us to bring young people and families together a total of 133 participation events took place last year with over 1,500 attendees. The use of technology, outdoor and community spaces allowed us to maintain a high level of engagement with young people and families throughout such challenging times when maintaining connections was a struggle for us all. The challenges of the past year have allowed YAP Ireland to strengthen participatory practices and create opportunities for young people and families to express their views and effect change both individually and on a wider national scale which we will continue into the future.

Youth Forums 2021

In 2021 YAP Ireland hosted three National Youth Forums bringing together young people and advocates from around the country to focus on the theme of 'This is me, This is us". Our first youth forum was held virtually over zoom where the group came together to host an online discussion. This online youth focused meet up was specifically set to empower young people and give them a voice when communicating. They also attended a mindfulness session which provided calm relaxing tips and tricks to feel more control in their day-to-day life. The second youth forum was held on a sunny day in August in Castlecomer Discovery Park Kilkenny, where all of our young people and advocates had the opportunity to meet in person. The day consisted of outdoor team building activities and adventure tasks including a forest zipline. The topic of the year, 'This is me This is us' was discussed and summed up in pictures and words regarding what being on the YAP programme meant to the young people. The third and final Youth Forum took place in Cabra Park Side, Dublin. We had a mix of team building activities, laugher and competitiveness when the obstacle course was on.

In groups, the young people reviewed the HIQA Draft National Standards for Children's Services. and gave their valuable views on each one. The young people spent some time discussing the YAP theme for next year. We asked the young people what was relevant to them and where they could have an impact.

Dublin Parents Group

Although the public health restrictions curtailed group gatherings in the beginning of 2021 the Dublin Parents Group managed to host 45 participations group sessions and a parents forum throughout the year.







To begin the year the parents set themselves a walking challenge for the month of January. They met up outdoors in small groups with support of the team leaders and advocates and completed One Million Steps as a group! Following this, they held a celebration picnic to mark this achievement. In April the Parents completed a 'Restorative Parenting Course' in partnership with the Early Learning Initiative and The National College of Ireland. Later in the year the group was invited to participate in a focus group for HIQA, The Health Information Quality Authority. The parents were asked to give feedback on the Overarching National Standards for the Care and Support of Children using Health and Social Care Services Principle 1: A Children's Rights-based Approach. Their suggestions and feedback were greatly appreciated and brought forward by HIQA. Along with a parents forum, participation in webinars, a flower-arranging course and a trip to Kilkenny the Parents dedication shone throughout the year and the group prevailed throughout all obstacles thrown in their way.

Ensure more children, young people and families receive services in line with the YAP Model by diversifying funding streams.

Complete audited accounts for YAP Ireland for 2020 are available to view on our website at www.yapireland.ie. Audited accounts for 2021 will be published in due course. YAP Ireland accounts are prepared under Chairty SORP (FRS102).

Charities Regulator Governance Code

The Board of Directors are delighted to report that YAP Ireland is signed up to the Charities Regulator Governance Code. This code outlines the minimum standards we should meet to effectively manage and control the charity. Good governance ensures that systems and processes are in place so that we achieve our charitable objectives with integrity and to ensure that the organisation is managed in an effective, accountable, and transparent way.

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				
Barry Martin	Vice-Chair	3	2018				
Greg O'Leary	Secretary	3	2017				
Lynette Brown Sow	Director	3	2013				
Vivian Sanks-King	Director	1	2014				
Philip O'Callaghan	Director	4	2018				
Réidin Dunne	Director	4	2017				
Donal Murphy	Director	4	2018				
Danielle Curtis	Director	2	2019				
Laura Curran	Director	3	2019				
Ian Mullins	Director	3	2019				

Young Recruiters

For several years YAP Ireland has successfully operated a client-centred recruitment policy where young people from our programmes are invited to train and then sit on interview panels across all roles in YAP Ireland. The Young Recruiters Programme is a pilot scheme whereby YAP Ireland offer training and guidance to both organisations and their clients regarding client-centred recruitment and hiring.

Benefits of including young people in your interview panel:

Young People: Being part of the selection process for people who will work with young people both directly and indirectly, allows those young people to be more involved in the decision-making processes that affects them and their service.

Hiring Managers: Having the expertise of a young person on the panel is invaluable when choosing the right person to work with young people.

Candidates: Being interviewed by a young person sets the scene for candidates applying to work with YAP. It demonstrates to them that YAP place young people at the centre of their services and include them in the decisions that affect them.

Urgent Technology Assistance Fund

In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic YAP recognised the challenges facing some young people and families when online home schooling was introduced in 2020. In response to this YAP launched the Urgent Technology Fund. We were delighted to be able to continue this support in 2021 with 40 young people and families receiving the much needed technology to help them with home schooling and online learning throughout 2021. This totalled €14,246.45.



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 2021, 95% of parents/carers gave YAP a satisfaction score of 4 or more out of 5, 89% of young people had positive feedback and 100% of Social Workers said they would recommend YAP to a colleague. 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:



When I am with my advocate it's easier to talk about stuff and we have the same interests.

- Young Person

Young Person has broadened his horizons. Being out with the Advocate has allowed him to see that there are more people in the world outside of his family and friends. He's opening up to new possibilities. Being with someone he didn't know prior has greatly benefited - Social Worker

Yap have a great way of working and supporting young people. One of the best things about the way Yap work is that they can tailor their service to suit the individual and in my experience this has the best outcomes.

-Social Worker





The programme has been a positive thing for the family. Getting the kids out of the house after the Covid lockdowns has been very good for them.

-Parent

20 Years of YAP Ireland

In 2022 YAP Ireland will celebrate our 20th Anniversary of providing services to young people and families in Ireland. In 2002 YAP Ireland was introduced to counties Dublin, Galway and Roscommon as a pilot project managed by YAP Inc the original USA based parent organisation of YAP Ireland. Jeff Fleischer, YAP Inc Founder and CEO has provided his account of the beginning days of YAP Ireland and how things looked at the start.

Twenty years ago, YAP USA was providing alternatives to detention, youth prison and out of home placement in six states in the USA. Dr Bill Lockhart, well-known mediator and peacemaker in Northern Ireland as well as the Republic of Ireland who read about YAP Inc's work and began the connection with YAP Inc and Ireland. 13 officials traveled to the states to tour our programs in Texas. A later delegation visited NY and included Seamus Manion and Alex Maclean and then Minister for Children, Mary Hanafin. Finally, a decision was made to bring YAP to Ireland and programmes in Dublin, Galway and Roscommon began in September 2002.

Mary Hargadon, Kieran Smyth, Dora Hennessy, Seamus Manion and Alex Maclean, Kevin O'Farrell were champions in supporting YAP Ireland's founding. Bill Lockhart agreed to be YAP's sponsor and YAP returned the generous favour by providing training in our model to key youth workers in the North.





We hired our first YAP Ireland Programme Managers; Fiona Duignan for Dublin and Mark Kane for Galway. True pioneers, Fiona and Mark were excellent, passionate, energetic and resourceful leaders who quickly won the hearts and minds of the human service sector in their regions. Dr Pat Dolan of University of Ireland, Galway, was contracted to do the first evaluation of the program and results were very positive. YAP Ireland was up and running, and eventually YAP became a part of the vernacular throughout Ireland social service workers. In 2008, and as promised, YAP USA turned the operation over to YAP Ireland and they formed their own Board of Directors. Today, YAP Ireland operates programmes in all Ireland's counties on behalf of youth and their families with the most complex needs.

Congratulations to Siobhan and Donncha, to the Board, the Leadership, the Staff and all the youth and families of YAP/Ireland! Here's to another wonderful 20 years of strengthening families and creating a family centered human service system that builds on strengths of the people in each community and leaves no one behind. - Jeff Felischer

Siobhán O'Dwyer, CEO YAP Ireland



2021 has been another year of surviving and thriving during the global Covid 19 pandemic. YAP Ireland provided frontline, essential services throughout the past year despite the uncertainty, sadness and fear. We not only kept going but we continued to adapt to ensure that the needs of the children, young people and families that we work with achieved their goals and navigated the pandemic as best they could. I want to thank all the staff for their commitment, humour and adaptability throughout the year and the Board for supporting us at all stages. The advocates and team leaders worked within the community throughout the pandemic and provided huge levels of support to children, young people and families – often the only service fully active. We have seen an increase in demand for support with the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable children, young people and families becoming clearer as we start to move out of this phase.

The inequality in Irish society and indeed, across the world, has become more apparent and YAP Ireland will continue to advocate for real policy change across Government to address this. Putting the child and young person at the centre of services was our theme throughout the year and we will continue to advocate for strengths based, needs led, wraparound services where the voice of children, young people and families is really heard and acted upon. I want to thank our partners in Tusla, the HSE, Oberstown Children's Detention Campus, St. John of God's and St. Patrick's Hospitals for their support and adaptability throughout the year. I have a particular thanks for our partners in the community and voluntary sector who worked so well together to offer support and practical answers to many of the difficulties that arose across society. I look forward to 2022 with renewed hope that we will continue to make a real difference to the lives of children, young people and families we work with and will ensure their voices are heard by those responsible for improving the society we live in.

Donncha Hughes, Chairperson YAP Ireland



YAP Ireland is a brilliant organisation. Since joining the Board in June 2016, this is a message I have heard directly and repeatedly from Board members, parents, advocates, staff operating at all levels of the organisation, and most importantly the young people which YAP Ireland strives to support and empower using a strengths based approach. As I prepare to hand over the chairperson role of YAP Ireland in June, I am very confident of the organisation's bright future. There are three reasons for this confidence. Firstly, the YAP model, inherited and adapted from the US 20 years ago, continues to prove that it is the best approach providing measurable and hugely positive outcomes. Secondly, the staff are fantastic, compassionate, caring and professional, none more so than our wonderful CEO, Siobhán O'Dwyer whose leadership is to be commended particularly over the last two very stressful years.

As Ireland moves beyond Covid, Siobhán and her team have a very important role to play in delivering on YAP's mission as there is significant pent up demand and system gaps particularly in the areas of crisis intervention and the state's emergency response service. Thirdly, I recognise and acknowledge the value of our Board and each individual board member for their contribution to making YAP Ireland the organisation that it is. In a time of increased scrutiny YAP Ireland's Board works closely with the Executive to provide much valued oversight and strategic direction in terms of governance, finance, staffing and operations to deliver on our mission to support vulnerable young people and their families. Ní neart go cur le chéile - *There is no strength without unity*.





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In Partnership With:







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