



Youth Advocate

 PROGRAMMES IRELAND

2024

Annual Report





You only see when you leave what good it did.

It's a comfortable space to voice concerns and feel heard.



Space to Be Me
Quality Call Feedback
Space to Be Me



I appreciate having someone listen to my voice and help me.



Our kids have really enjoyed YAP, they have experienced great adventures and have kept memories of having fun times.

Contents



2-3

Foreword

4-6

YAP Services

7

Working in YAP

8-9

Evidence Based Tools

10-11

Outcomes

12-13

Participation & Consultation

14

Governance & Finance

15-16

YAP 2024 National Event

Acknowledgments

YAP Ireland would like to thank our partners and funders in particular TUSLA Child and Family Services, HSE and YAP Inc. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the Board of Directors, the Staff and Advocates who contribute to the effective running of the organisation.

Last but not least, we want to thank the children, young people and families for working with us and welcoming us into their lives - it is a privilege.

Foreword

Welcome to the YAP Ireland Annual Report for 2024. The report highlights continued growth in services for children, young people and families and the positive outcomes achieved. We saw an increase in YAPAbility referrals from HSE Disability and Mental Health services, which is very welcome supporting community-based services for these young people and their families.

Several societal issues continue to impact on the lives of the children, young people and families that we work with. Young people and families continue to struggle with poverty across the range of programmes, which greatly diminishes their capacity to achieve their goals and participate fully in society. Insecure housing and homelessness have a real impact on young people and families and urgently needs to be addressed. Waiting lists for specialist services particularly, assessments for Disability and Mental Health services continued to be a major issue. YAP Ireland joined with Mental Health Reform and other organisations to highlight the negative impact and potential solutions at a Meet and Greet in the Dáil in the Summer. We also participated in a number of Children Rights Alliance meetings with Tusla to support improvements in services for Separated Children Seeking International Protection. Young people and families participated in several consultations in 2024 using their voice to improve services.

I want to thank staff and advocates who have continued to work in a needs led, goals focused, strengths-based way despite challenges and increased demand. We have continued to attract great staff and advocates to the organisation increasing the skills and knowledge available to young people and families. The YAP model continues to guide all our work and relationships with young people and families as well as funders and stakeholders.

A big thanks to our Tusla partners across the country who have continued to work with us in partnership to ensure the best outcomes for young people and families. The relationships continue to be strong despite changes in staff in Tusla and the increased demand for Tusla services. We also enjoy positive relationships with referrers and teams across the HSE and continue to build new partnerships with staff. Oberstown Children's Detention Campus, St John of God's and St Patrick's Hospital continue to be great partners.

I want to thank the Board of YAP Ireland who always make themselves available to offer oversight, support and guidance to the organisation. Their skills and knowledge make YAP Ireland more efficient in meeting the many compliance demands on charities in Ireland today. We are in the last year of our current Strategic Plan and look forward to working with everyone to inform our new Strategic Plan throughout 2025.

My greatest thanks go to the children, young people and families who allow us to enter their lives and work with us to achieve their goals – goals they sometimes didn't realise they had or didn't believe were realistic. They have great resilience and strength and with support will go on to achieve their dreams. Like all organisations we have had change within our team of staff, bringing new skills and experience to the organisation. We continue to attract community-based advocates across the country, bringing a wealth of life experience and skills to the children, young people and families.

I want to thank all our great staff and advocates for the innovation, skills and sense of fun they bring to the organisation.



Siobhán O'Dwyer

Siobhán O'Dwyer
CEO YAP Ireland

2024 was a year full of change. The world seemed in constant flux and sometimes the noise was often hard to drown out. One way I found of dampening the noise was going to Croke Park in August to the National YAP event, where children young people and families mingle with policy and decision makers in a shared space of celebration and optimism. This event manages to create a space where young people demonstrate their strengths and resilience and model to the rest of us what it is we need to know about being a young person in Ireland in 2024.

The young people on this date created a space under the theme “space to be me”. In many ways the YAP national event embodies both the YAP model and the YAP approach, a strengths-based, inclusive event where children and young people are at the very centre and the adults present journey with them as they find their own way with support and an unconditionality that is embedded in the YAP model and way of being.

I am so proud of what YAP’s young people achieved in 2024 in their own stories. I was reminded at the National YAP Event of how much the young people and families contribute to the life force of the organisation. This enables YAP to continue on the journey to make sure that children and young people are at the centre of everything we do, ensuring that lives are changed through wraparound, strengths-based services and by creating the circumstances that young people speak up for themselves and influence change in their immediate world. The world will change for the better if we listen to young people and YAP listen.



I am also proud to play the smallest part in the amazing trajectory of YAP Ireland. The development of new and existing services and the relationships with key stakeholders such as the Mental Health Commission, Children’s Rights Alliance, Oberstown Detention Campus and St. Patrick Mental Health Service is testament to the organisations reach and commitment to children and young people across Irish society. I would like to thank TUSLA for our ongoing collaboration and co-creation of excellent services to children and young people. I would like to thank my fellow Board members who continuously demonstrate their commitment to a better society by investing their times and skills to the YAP organisation.

I would really like to thank Siobhán O’Dwyer and the executive team for their dynamism, vision passion and professionalism which I have had the honour of witnessing over the last 3 years as Chairperson of the Board. I would like to thank and acknowledge the incredible work of YAP Advocates and Staff who give so much of themselves to ensure that children, young people and families have the space to dream for themselves and with YAP’s help to dream big!

It has been an honour to be stitched into the YAP model for the last 7 years and I wish the Board, the incredible YAP team, our stakeholders and our most important asset the YAP Children, young people and families my deepest gratitude and respect for allowing me to take part in the YAP journey so far.



Réidín Dunne

Réidín Dunne
Chair

YAP Services

The YAP model is evidence-based, achieving positive outcomes with young people and families within their communities, through the employment of community based advocates.

An individual service plan based on the strengths of the young person and their family is developed and offers a wraparound approach to address the needs of the young person within their family and local community.

YAP's goal is to empower young people and their families and to put in place supports that will remain after programme involvement has ended.

The model is flexible and can be adapted to meet the needs of a wide range of client groups.



Intensive Support Programme

The 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 are primarily referred to our programme by TUSLA and those referred may be at high risk of placement in care, secure care and / or custody, (levels 3 and 4 on the Hariker Scale.) They may also be experiencing difficulties around their home, education, peer groups, behaviour and/or community.

In 2024 we worked with 534 young people and families through the Intensive Support Programme.

"It's a great programme and one of the only things I look forward to every week."

Young Person

Independent Advocacy Service (IAS)

IAS is provided to all 4 HSE child and adolescent inpatient units, St. John of God's Ginesa Suite and St. Patrick's Hospital Willow Grove. The service is also provided to community CAMHS teams in CH09, CHO2 and CH04. We provide group advocacy to young people weekly in all the units and individual support to individual young people and families through unit and community referrals.

In 2024 we provided individual support to 112 young people and families and groupwork with over 150 young people in the units.

An Independent Mental Health Advocate supports young people and families to understand the service provided to them to enhance their participation in service provision, express their views and make informed decisions regarding their recovery.

Out of Hours Service

YAP Ireland provides a 24 hour, rapid response support for young people referred by the Tusla Crisis Intervention Service to support their temporary placement and care plan when they find themselves out of home.

This is a short-term intervention with an aim to reduce the immediate risk the young person is facing. Following a needs-assessment the young person and YAP advocate identify activities that support them to stay safe while a care plan is developed.

In 2024 YAP provided support to 33 young people accessing crisis intervention services.

"I've regained a lot of confidence and find it easier to trust people."

Young Person



Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) intensive support programme

The programme provides intensive support in line with the YAP Model to young people and families referred by CAMHS community teams to support their recovery.

The strengths-based, wraparound approach leads to increased self-esteem and confidence for young people and families increasing their positive engagement in their care plan. The service supports young people and families to deal with issues that have arisen due to their clinical diagnosis and enhance their recovery. Issues such as friendships, school and family relationships are some of the main issues raised by young people.

The service is currently funded in Limerick but we hope to expand to other CAMHS teams.

Tusla Education Support Service (TESS)

YAP Ireland provide our intensive support programme to young people and families directly referred by TESS, with continued growth in the service in 2024.

Early intervention is aimed at addressing the underlying reasons that lead to school refusal, poor attendance and poor educational achievement.

In 2024 we worked with 31 young people and families and will expand the service further in 2025 due to additional funding agreed.



"My daughter is happier, she is making small changes in herself, she feels listened to for the first time in a long time."

TESS Parent



'When people are in residential services they are very ill, very vulnerable and may not feel empowered to speak up. It's important for them to be able to articulate their views about the service.'

IAS Stakeholder feedback

Separated Children Seeking International Protection (SCSIP) - Independent Advocacy Service.

We provide independent advocacy to young people where the social worker deems that age is a consideration in the assessment of eligibility for Tusla services.

The Independent Advocate supports the young person in understanding the assessment process, linking with appropriate legal and refugee services as well as practical support such as food, transport etc.

We provided IAS to 142 young people in 2024.

SCSIP Transport service: We provide a transport service for separated young people referred by Tusla to support them with appointments, meetings, health screening and movement of placements. We made 357 journeys in 2024.

SCSIP Integration Support: In 2024 the pilot programme began, and we supported 29 young people across the country. The aim is to provide Intensive Support to young people who need community-based support to improve integration and social inclusion, access to education, health and community links.



YAPAbility (Disability Intensive Support Service)

The service provides a 12-month intensive support programme for young people aged 8 to 23 and their families. The programme is designed to offer a strengths-based, needs-led approach to help participants achieve their goals within their community.

The YAPAbility Programme is tailored for young people who have mild learning difficulties, mild to moderate ASD and or a physical disability (or who are waiting for a diagnosis). The outcomes achieved are similar to those on the other Intensive support programmes with a slight reduction in peer relationships and links to the community. This could reflect the isolation and difficulties that young people with disabilities have in accessing community, educational and employment opportunities.

In 2024 we worked with 46 young people and families.

"I like the one-to-one support because if I didn't get that I couldn't get access to the community. It's important to have one-to-one, meeting with people, go shopping etc"

Young Person on the YAPAbility Programme



"I have been able to become more assertive and confident in day-to-day situations thanks to my Advocate's help."

Young Person on the YAPAbility Programme



Working in YAP

The Management at YAP Ireland are committed to listening to feedback from employees and developing an action plan to manage any suggestions for improvements.

Each year YAP Ireland conducts a Staff Opinion Survey in conjunction with Adare HRM.

In 2024 again, the response and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Below is some of the feedback:



We are always looking for new people to join our team!

If you are interested in working with YAP Ireland you can visit our careers page via this QR code.



Of Respondents agreed or agreed strongly that they are engaged with YAP.

"Taking initiative is encouraged, mistakes are used as learning opportunities, direct feedback is sought from Young People and families."

"Line manager is supportive and listens before commenting."



Of Respondents agreed or agreed strongly that YAP is an enjoyable place to work.

"I'm from a different background but I never felt any different from my colleague."



Of Respondents like to know what is going on in the organisation and are interested in YAP's future.

"Supervision monthly really helps me feel respected and empowered to say what I think."



"I have also always felt conversations with management are respectful and non-judgemental."



Evidence Based Tools



Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire

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.

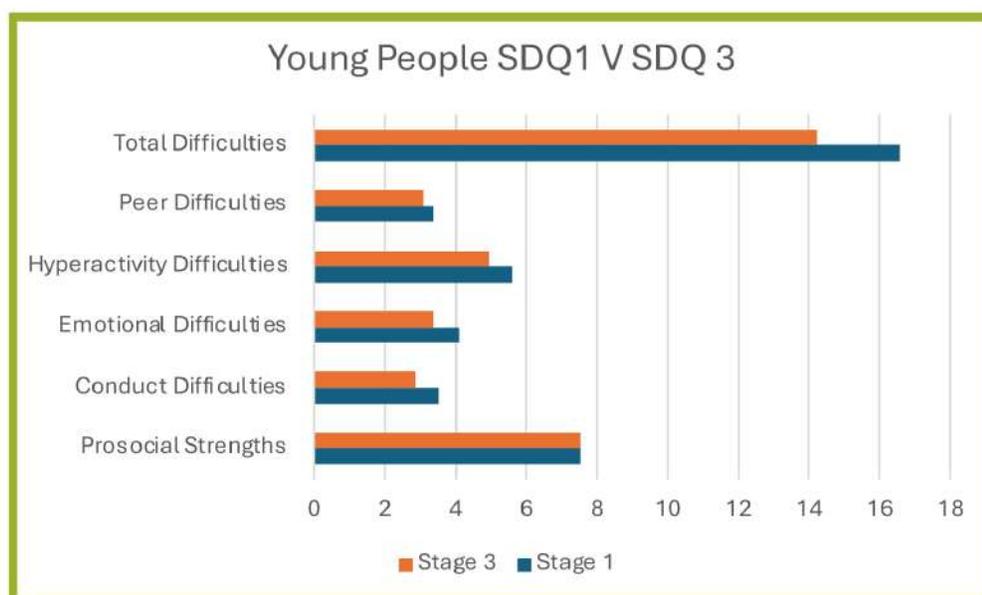
This a widely used tool that helps to identify how young people and parents/guardians view their difficulties and measures improvements over time.

5 Strengths and Difficulties measured:

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

How does it work?

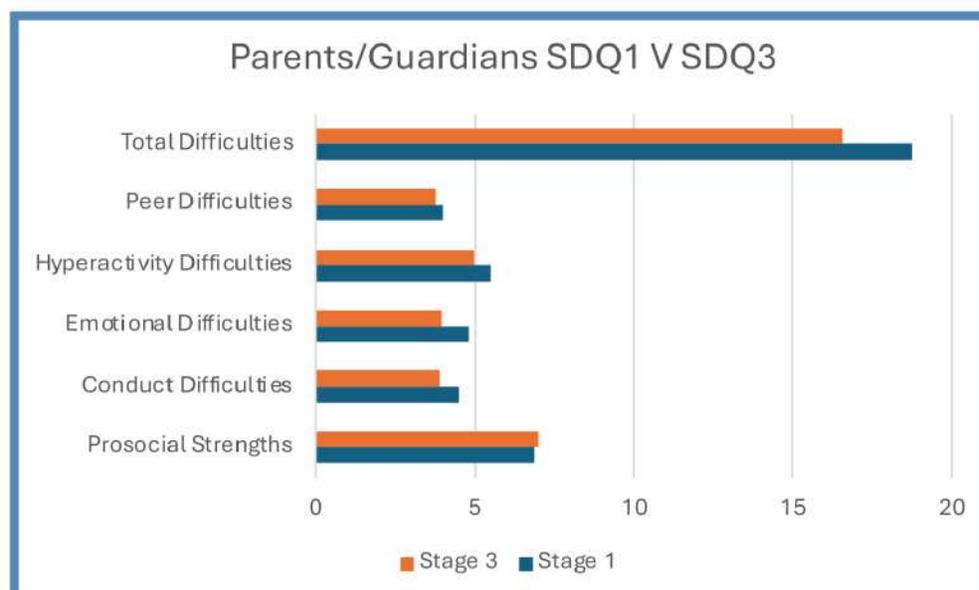
The first SDQ (SDQ1) is given to the young person and parent within the first two weeks of the programme starting. The third SDQ (SDQ3) is given to the young person and parent at the end of the programme.



This chart on the left is based on SDQs received from young people on the YAP programme.

The data demonstrates that the difficulties experienced by young people across all four areas reduced during their time with YAP.

This (right) bar graph illustrates that Parents who completed SDQ1 and SDQ3 felt the difficulties their Young People had experienced had reduced since receiving YAP support, and that their Young Person had increased their pro-social strengths.



Total no of SDQs collected from 2013 to 2024

	SDQ for Parents/Guardians	SDQ for Young People	Total
Stage 1	1446	1603	3049
Stage 2	923	1061	1984
Stage 3	648	752	1400
Grand Total	3017	3416	6433

Quality Assurance

YAP Ireland carries out quality calls and questionnaires with parents/carers & young people to evaluate their experience with the YAP service.

In 2024, 93% of young people had positive feedback and 91% of parents/carers gave YAP a satisfaction score of 4 or more out of 5.

Quotes obtained from participants as part of the Quality calls are evidenced throughout this report.

WRAPPED IN YAP

This year we decided to craft some data for the Annual Report!

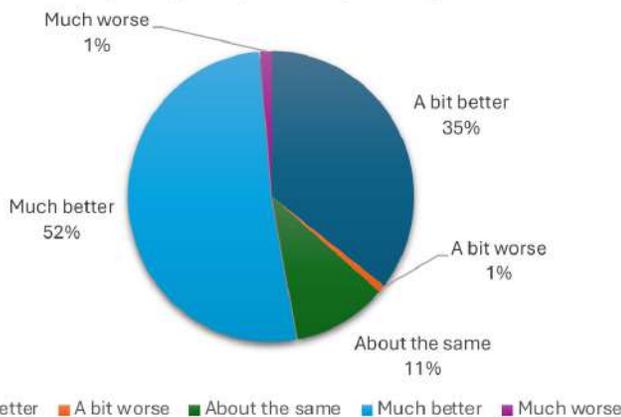
We've called the project "Wrapped in YAP", mirroring our wraparound YAP principle. Thanks to the help of wonderfully talented crafter Carol Conway and the Dublin Parent's Participation Group, we've produced a wrap made up of crochet squares where each square represents 1% of Young People's answer to the question:

"Since participating in YAP, how are your problems?"

87% of young people stated that their problems were either much better or a bit better.

The chart below represents the full answers received:

Since participating in YAP problems are..
(Young People's responses)



The purpose of this project is to make our data more accessible, tangible and more powerful.

We intend to use the final crafted product as a display item for the office, as well as bringing it to our National Event and recruitment drives.



Cohorts & Outcomes

Who we work with

In 2024, 96% of children and young people who we worked with remained at home at the end of the programme. The model continues to achieve positive outcomes for children, young people and families.

Cohort

Cohort is 3,859 young people and families who YAP Ireland have worked with across the intensive support and family support programmes between January 2011 and October 2024.

Outcomes

The national outcomes summary includes information for 3,281 young people who YAP Ireland have worked with between January 2011 and October 2024.

The outcome rating is on a scale of 1 – 9, with 1 indicating significant issues, 4 some difficulties, 5 is a medium point and 6 – 9 showing some or significant improvements. Percentage improvements represent the percentage of young people who have moved from some or significant difficulties at the outset to some or significant improvements by the end of the programme.

Ethnicity

79% were classified as Irish, with 4% being members of the Irish Travelling community. 5% were from an African or Asian background and 4% were Eastern European, while for 7% nationality was not recorded. The remaining 1% came from another nationality background.

Current Placement

62% of young people were living at home when they started the programme. 13% lived with extended family, with 16% in foster care, 4% lived in residential care or supported lodgings. 5% are living in alternative arrangements, i.e. homeless services.

Of the 1,848 living at home at the start of the programme, 1,647 (or 89%) remained at home at the end of their time with YAP, while a further 70 (4%) were living with extended family.

Many of the young people in alternative placements return to being at home while on the programme. 7% of young people in foster care, 10% of young people in residential care, 7% of young people in supported lodgings and 14% of young people living with extended family at the beginning of their programme return to being at home by the end of their programme.



Gender and Age

53% of referrals to YAP are male and 47% are female. 4% are aged <10, 19% 10-12, 50% are aged 13-15, 26% are 16-18 and 3% are aged 18+.

Education

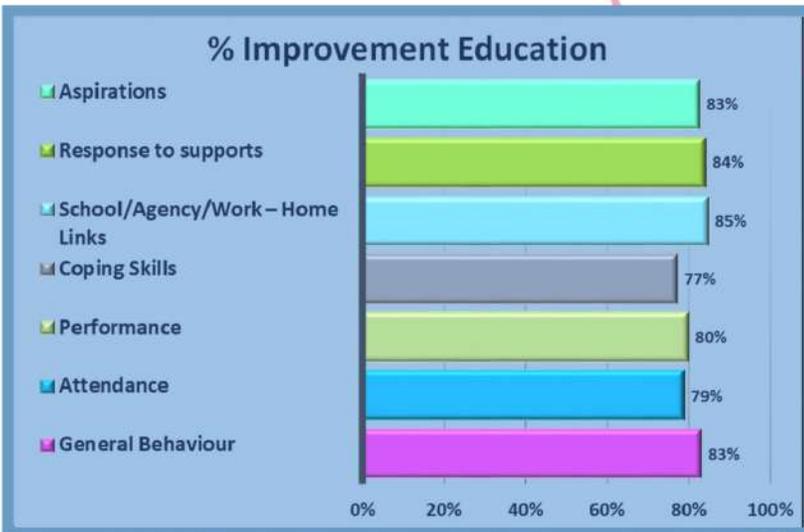
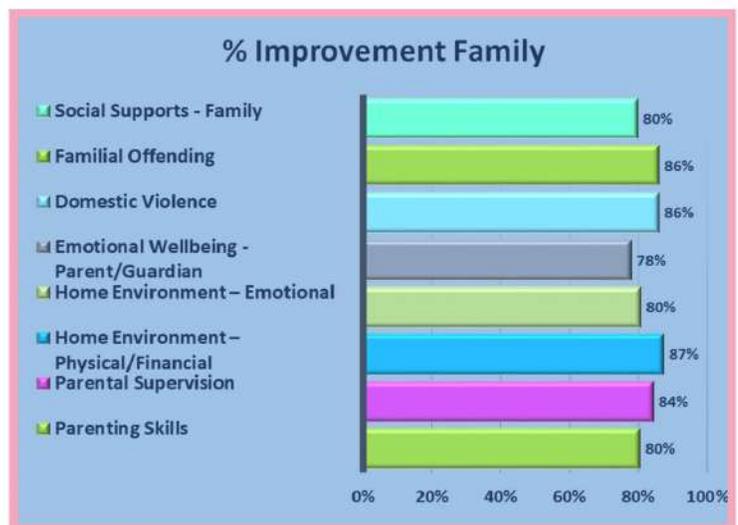
83% of young people engaged with YAP Ireland are in education while 17% are not in education. Of those in education, 67% are attending school regularly.

Mental Health Diagnosis

Mental Health/Behavioural/Autistic Spectrum: 65% of young people referred to YAP Ireland have no mental health diagnosis, with 27% having a mental health diagnosis and 8% awaiting assessment.

Household Circumstances

66% of those living at home are living in a single parent household, with 30% living in a two-parent household. 73% of primary carers have full medical cards and 5% have a GP only medical card. 46% of clients have a history of drug or alcohol misuse in their immediate family. 20% had an immediate family member convicted.



Participation & Consultation

YAP Ireland is committed to providing access to participation for all young people and families that work with us. We believe that participation provides young people and families with confidence to speak out and opportunities to have their views heard within their services and the wider community.

Participation can take many forms with young people and families setting their own agendas, choosing their own activities and themes, and deciding what they want the goals to be.



Youth Consultation

In 2024 there was a total of 93 youth participation events taking place across the country. Participation took place in Cork, Limerick, Midlands, Cavan / Monaghan, Louth / Meath, Waterford / Wexford, Dublin and Mayo.

Dublin had the highest number of events at a total of 29. Activities that took place across the different areas, tie dye, arts and crafts, roller-skating, go-karting, mental health awareness and the theme of space to be me.

Parent Forum

In 2024 the first Parents Forum took place on the 14th May in the Mullingar Park Hotel. Here the parents participated in an online safety workshop and completed some self-portraits in line with the theme for the National Event in Croke Park in August.

On the 26th November the second and final Parents Forum for 2024 took place at the Maldron Hotel in Portlaoise.

The parents participated in an activity that looked at what the young people had discussed at their youth forum in relation to what are the issues they are facing and what they felt was important to them.

Youth Forum

YAP Ireland runs a Youth Forum each year where young people from around the country come together to work on projects of their own choosing. Projects are presented by the participants at the National Event.

In 2024 we held the following events:

In March we had 68 people attend Redhills Adventure Centre where, using the theme of "Space to be Me" young people created self-portraits. In July, 84 participants attended Bay Sports in Athlone where as well as having fun and getting wet, young people collaborated on the theme for 2024 ahead of the National Event in Croke Park in August.

Our third and final Youth Forum took place in October where young people were involved in choosing a theme for 2025. It was not all work and no play, after the hard work was done, they were rewarded with a trip to Dublin Zoo.

Seed Funding Project

As part of a seed funding project in collaboration with parents who are involved in Tusla services in Dublin Southwest, a parent support group was formed.

This group facilitated a parent support group / workshops across Dublin. The group included 7 workshops with a mix of external speakers and internal training that promote assertiveness, public speaking and confidence building.

Well done to all the parents who took part!



YAP Recruiters

YAP Recruiters (formerly Young Recruiters) was rebranded in 2024 to include Parent/Carers as well as Young People. This is an initiative whereby service users are trained to sit on interview panels for all appointments to YAP Ireland. Participants are trained in the recruitment and selection process as well as interviewing skills and sitting on interview panels.

Training took place across the country at the beginning of the year to facilitate our recruitment drives into 2024. Throughout the year a total of 19 service users took part in the training with a total of 16 actually sitting on interview panels.

We would highly recommend this initiative to other organisation and cannot thank the young people and families enough for their contribution to selecting the best possible people to deliver our high-quality services.



YAP RECRUITERS

Governance & Finance

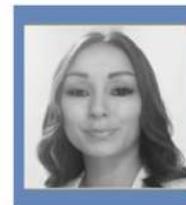
YAP Ireland is a registered charity and is signed up to the Charities Regulator Governance Code. This code outlines the minimum standards we should meet to effectively manage and control the charity. Good governance ensures that systems and processes are in place so that we achieve our charitable objectives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

YAP Ireland Board Members are volunteers and come from all walks of life, bringing with them a wide range of life experience and expertise from frontline services, financial accounting, information technology, law and education among others.

Complete Audited Accounts for YAP Ireland 2023 are available to view on our website at <https://yapireland.ie/research-publications/>

Audited Accounts for 2024 will be published in due course. YAP Ireland Accounts are prepared under charity SORP (FRS102)

YAP Board



Name	Office	Meetings Attended	Joined the Board
Réidín Dunne	Chair	3	2017
Philip O'Callaghan	Outgoing Secretary	1	2018
Danielle Erica Curtis	Director	3	2019
Laura Curran	Director	3	2019
Tremaine Teddy Reese	Director	0	2022
Janet Lincoln	Director	2	2022
Eva Gurn	Director	4	2022
Gordon Walsh	Director	4	2022
Brendan Feehan	Director	4	2023
Nives Paic	Secretary	3	2023
Melissa Lynch	Director	3	2023
Thomas Fedigan	Director	2	2023
Declan Norgrove	Incoming Director	4	2024
Ronan Connell	Incoming Director	2	2024
Sonam Prakashini Banka-Cullen	Incoming Director	1	2024

YAP National Event 2024



In August 2024 YAP Ireland held our annual National Event at Croke Park, Dublin.

Young people, parents, families, advocates, staff and stakeholders presented under our theme of 'Space to Be Me.'

The day was filled with fantastic projects, singing and jokes, as well important speeches from former advocates, board members and representatives from other organisations with a focus on improving social care across Ireland.



Headspace Toolkit

Your guide as an inpatient



The event was a great success for YAP's Young People, Families and Advocates while also helping to promote our strengths-based model and sharing important ideas and conversation with peers and stakeholders.

The Mental Health Commission, in partnership with YAP Ireland, also launched their 'Headspace Toolkit' at the event.

You can also view the presentations by YAP's regions all over the country as well as read about the event via articles published by the Irish Examiner and RTE news using the QR Code below:



HOME PAGE / NEWS

Adults must 'find what is best' for young people in mental health crisis



Young people at the Yap Ireland National Conference in Croke Park on Thursday.

THU, 22 AUG, 2024 - 17:49
NIAMH GRIFFIN, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT



Scan the QR Code above to be taken to 2024 National Event via the YAP Ireland Website.

EPIC, Empowering People in Care
22 August at 15:52

Our Senior Youth Engagement and Participation Coordinator, Aoife, and Youth Council member, Andrea, attended the YAP Ireland national event in Croke Park today. Andrea took to the stage and delivered speech on behalf of the EPIC Youth Council on the theme #SpaceToBeMe - here's a snippet!

"If I could give advice to my younger self - or to any young person out there - it would be this: Never, ever shut up. If you're angry about something, write it down, speak out, and turn that anger into action. Your voice is powerful, and it deserves to be heard. Thank you, and remember - you are all EPIC!"

#CareAware



You and 12 others

3 comments · 2 shares

I think my son has a positive relationship outside of us and it's been 100% positive. There hasn't been any ups or downs. Somebody is really there for them. It's been great for him.



Space to Be Me

Quality Call Feedback

Space to Be Me



The advocate is lovely, very good with my child. We both appreciate the help.

I found it a great service. The advocate is on my daughter's side and the little things they do for us help a lot.



Annual Report

2024

Funded by:



An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency



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Charity Number: CHY18562

www.yapireland.ie