

# Youth Advocate

PROGRAMMES IRELAND



## Annual Report

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# 2025





## Young Person Case Study: TUSLA Education Support Service (TESS)



## Overview

- 15-year-old; living at home with parents and 2 siblings.
- Non-attendance at school for two years due to high levels of anxiety.
- Unable to leave the family home and join the community in two years.
- Knock on effect of increased stress in the family home.
- Required support to return to education.
- Required support in identifying social outlets.
- Required support to reduce anxiety and build on self-esteem and self confidence.
- Support to improve family relationships.

## Interventions

Appealed to young persons interests and hobbies.

Encouragement, emotional support and help with hurdles.

Breaking down sessions and activities to small achievable steps.

Building a trusting relationship to support young persons confidence and aid in reducing anxiety.

Explored alternative educational options with the young person and listened to their wishes.

Supported the young person in enrolling and attending alternative education.

Supported the young person in recognising and reducing anxiety by delveloping coping mechanisms.

## Outcomes

Regained confidence in leaving the family home

Reintegration into the community, reducing social isolation

Identified alternative educational placement

Enrolled in alternative educational placement

Anxiety levels reduced

Reduced stress levels in the family home and improved communication

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**Acknowledgements**

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.

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# Foreword

I am delighted to present the YAP Ireland Annual Report for 2025. The report shows the amazing and innovative work carried out across the country in 2025 using the strengths based, needs-led model. The young people and families achieved their outcomes in a range of areas and worked hard to achieve their goals. They continue to inspire me with their resilience, fun and willingness to embrace positive change in their lives.

2025 was a year of developing our new Strategic Plan while celebrating the achievement of many of the 2023 – 2025 Strategic Plan goals. Stakeholders, staff, the Board and young people and families all gave their input to the plan, and we thank everyone for their support and good ideas.

The 2026 – 2029 Strategic Plan was accepted by the Board in December 2025, and we are working hard on the tasks to ensure that YAP Ireland continues to improve and enhance our services for young people and families while remaining true to our model.

We were privileged to travel to the United States in November 2025 for the YAP Inc 50th Birthday Celebrations and Conference. I spoke at events with amazing speakers from across the US and the world.

It was a delight to learn about the different services across the US and how the model can deliver real change for diverse groups.

Thanks again to Gary Ivory, CEO of YAP Inc, Diana Matteson and Janet Lincoln for their hospitality and friendship.



I would like to thank all our amazing staff for their hard work and commitment to the young people and families. YAP Ireland staff believe in a strengths-based approach not only in the direct work but across all aspects of the organisation which makes it a pleasure to work here.

I also want to thank our partners in Tusla who despite many pressures continue to work with us in partnership to achieve the best outcomes for young people and families. We continue to build strong relationships with the HSE with growth in several programmes this year. Oberstown Childrens Detention Campus, St John of God's Hospital and St Patrick's Hospital work with us in a positive partnership.

I want to thank Reidin Dunne our former Chair of the Board for all her support, guidance and insight during her tenure and welcome Gordon Walsh, our new Chair. The Board of YAP Ireland continue to provide outstanding oversight and support in a very professional manner.

I look forward to 2026 and the new opportunities that await us.

**Siobhán O'Dwyer**  
CEO YAP Ireland

As someone who loves numbers and statistics, I took immense satisfaction in reviewing the figures in this report. At a time when truth itself can seem open to interpretation in the wider world, it is refreshing (and deeply encouraging) to find that the numbers here simply speak for themselves. 92% of children and young people working with YAP Ireland remained at home at the end of their programme. We see clear and consistent improvements in behaviour across the full spectrum, as well as meaningful gains in school attendance, academic engagement and overall wellbeing. The data does not just support the work of YAP Ireland, it reinforces it.

But behind every statistic is a young person, a family, and a team of dedicated staff who made it possible. That is what this report truly represents — thousands of individual moments of change, achieved through the consistent application of YAP Ireland's strengths-based, needs-led model. The young people and families we work with are navigating real challenges: pressures at home, difficulties in school, complex family circumstances.

They deserve an organisation that meets them with belief, skill and persistence. That is exactly what YAP Ireland delivers.

2025 was also a landmark year for our organisation's future. The development of our 2026–2029 Strategic Plan was a genuinely inclusive process, drawing on the insights of young people and families, staff, partners and the Board. Its adoption in December 2025 gives us a clear, ambitious direction and one that builds on what works while ensuring we remain responsive to the needs of those we serve.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to Reidin Dunne, our former Chair, for her outstanding leadership and commitment to YAP Ireland. The organisation is stronger for her tenure, and I am proud to build on the foundations she helped establish. (The fact that she has now returned to the organisation in a full-time capacity in the meantime is also very exciting and encouraging). I also want to thank Siobhán and the entire team at YAP Ireland for their ongoing diligence, dedication and relentless focus on achieving positive outcomes.

My thanks also go to our partners in Tusla, the HSE, and across our wider network — collaboration is at the heart of what makes this model work.

Most of all, I want to acknowledge the young people and families at the centre of everything we do. It is an honour to serve an organisation so fully committed to your potential.

As we look ahead to 2026, I do so with real confidence. The foundations are strong, the strategy is set, and I have never felt more confident in what YAP Ireland can achieve.

**Gordon Walsh**  
YAP Ireland Board 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 2025 we worked with 379 young people and families through the Intensive Support Programme.

## 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 2025 we worked with 53 young people and families and will expand the service further in 2025 due to additional funding agreed.

## 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 2025 we provided individual support to 83 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 2025 YAP provided support to 28 young people accessing crisis intervention services.



## YAPAbility

### 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 2025 we worked with 51 young people and families.

## 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 within the service.



## YAPWorx

### YAPWorx Support Service)

## 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 159 young people in 2025.

**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 40 journeys in 2025.

**SCSIP Integration Support:** In 2025 we supported 49 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.

# 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.

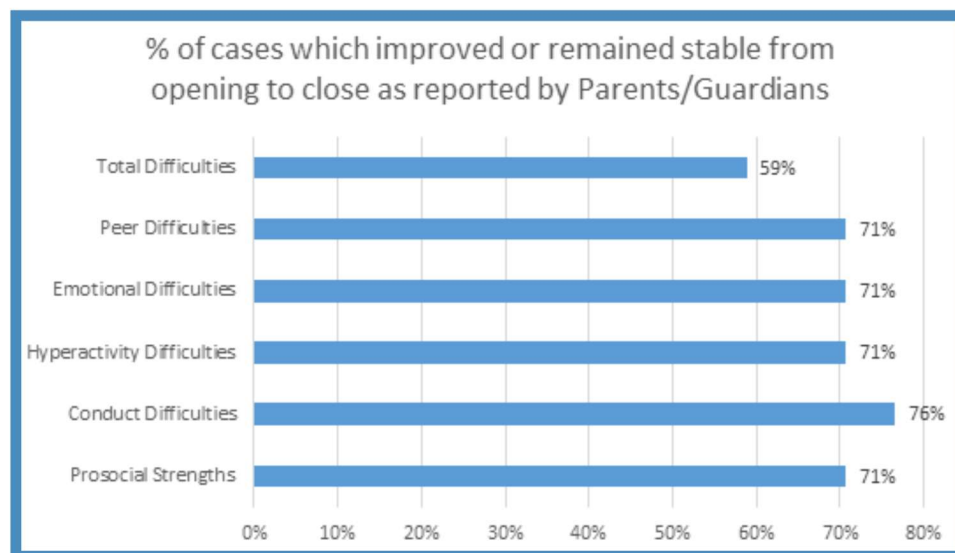
### 5 Strengths and Difficulties measured: How does it work?

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

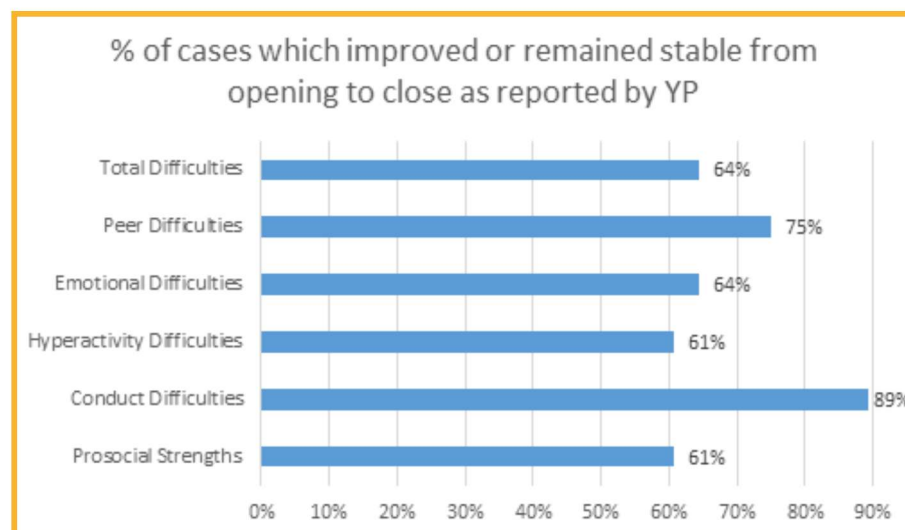
The first SDQ (SDQ1) is given to the young person and parent within the first two weeks of the programme starting. The third SDQ (SDQ3) is given to the young person and parent at the end of the programme.

### What did we find?

The graph (below) shows where parents or guardians reported an improvement or stability from the opening of a case (SDQ1) to the closing of a case (SDQ3) under six categories.



The graph (right) shows where young people reported an improvement or stability from the opening of a case (SDQ1) to the closing of a case (SDQ3) under six categories.



## Quality Assurance

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

In 2025, **94%** of young people had positive feedback and **91%** of parents/carers gave YAP a satisfaction score of **4 or more out of 5**.

The fact that my daughter is coming back to herself, great for my whole family, we all adore the advocate.

YAP Parent

I think YAP is an amazing programme, it offers young people so many opportunities and my advocate is wonderful, making my experience with YAP even better. Thank you to YAP and my advocate for everything they have done.

YAP Young Person

Many great things have happened since I took part in the programme, but some of my favourites were going to the zoo, the cinema trips, looking in second hand shops and watching the planes fly at the airport.

YAP Young Person

I have more confidence, I talk about more stuff that I never talked about before.

YAP Young Person

My grandson never left his room and never left the house, but since engaging with YAP, the advocate is very supportive, he is going for walks, hikes and he is loves it.

YAP Guardian

My daughter has started to trust people. She was shut up and not communicating, she wasn't in school before. She listens to what the advocate says, she believes and trusts her.

YAP Parent

The girls are a lot more open, find it easier to talk to us as they will have already spoken to the advocate first, every family could do with it, to break down the barrier between adults and adolescence.

YAP Parent

# Cohorts & Outcomes

## Who we work with

In 2025, **92%** 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 **4,122** young people and families who YAP Ireland have worked with across the intensive support and family support programmes between January 2011 and October 2025.

## Outcomes

The national outcomes summary includes information for **3,456** young people who YAP Ireland have worked with between January 2011 and October 2025.

## Ethnicity

**86%** were classified as Irish, with **4%** being members of the Irish Travelling community. **3%** were from an African or Asian background and **2%** were Eastern European, while for **1%** nationality was not recorded. The remaining **4%** 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 **17%** in foster care, **4%** lived in residential care or supported lodgings. **4%** are living in alternative arrangements, i.e. homeless services.

Of the **1,956** living at home at the start of the programme, **1,747** (or **89%**) remained at home at the end of their time with YAP, while a further **73** (**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, **6%** 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

**52.5%** of referrals to YAP are male, **47.2%** are female and **0.3%** are other. **4%** are aged <10, **19%** 10-12, **50%** are aged 13-15, **24%** are 16-18 and **3%** are aged 18+.

## Education

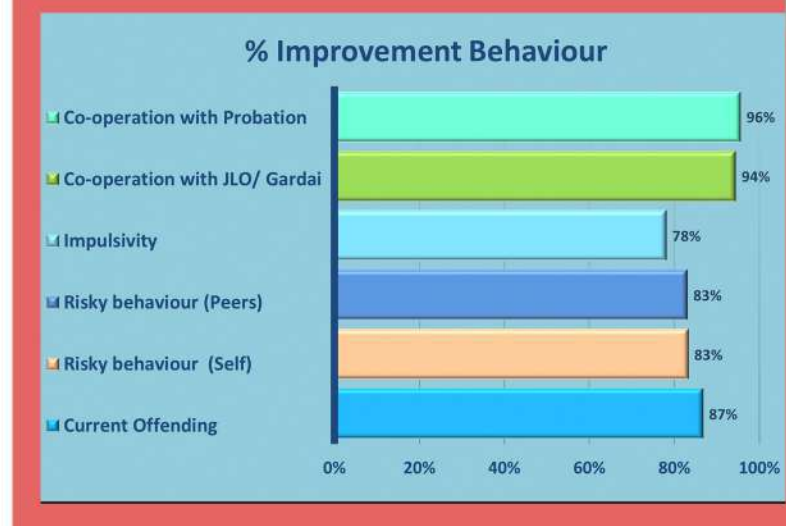
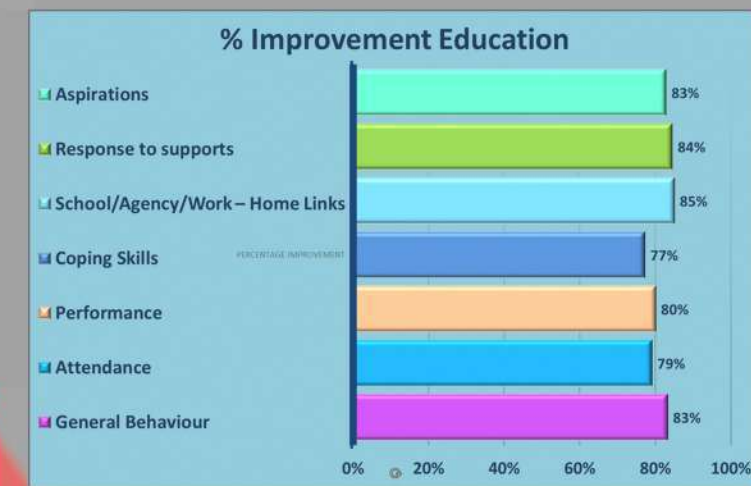
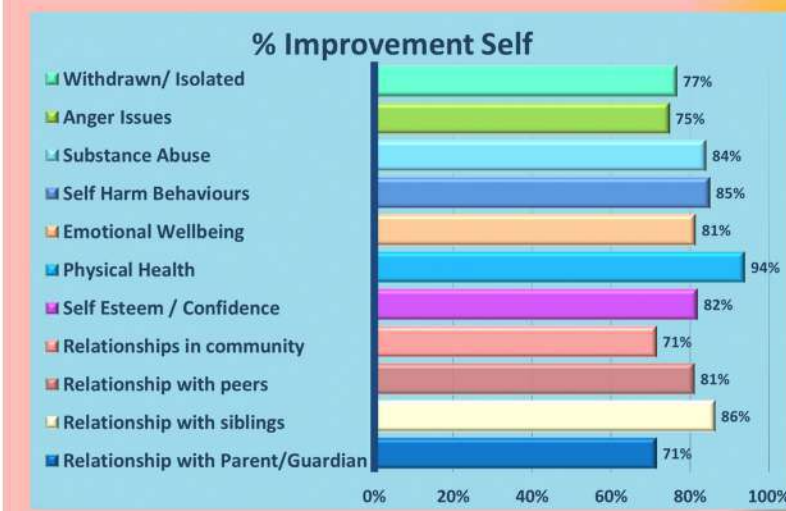
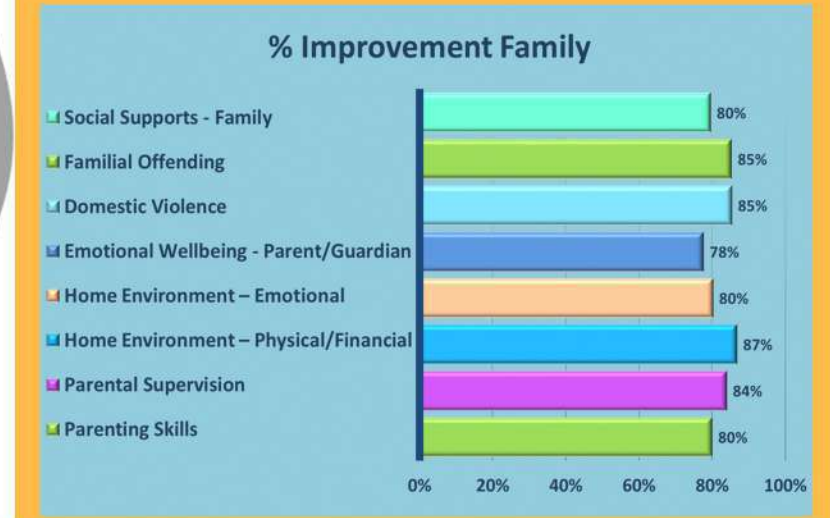
**83%** of young people engaged with YAP Ireland are in education while **17%** are not in education. Of those in education, **64%** are attending school regularly.

## Mental Health Diagnosis

Mental Health/Behavioural/Autistic Spectrum: **64%** 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

**64%** of those living at home are living in a single parent household, with **30%** living in a two-parent household. **69%** 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

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.

There were **162 different participation events** held across the country in 2025, including **Young People Forums and Participation Groups** as well as social, sporting, educational and career development activities.



## YAP National Event 2025

In **August 2025** YAP Ireland held our annual National Event at Croke Park, Dublin.

Young people, parents, families, advocates, staff and stakeholders presented participation projects under our theme "My Story", the theme was developed by young people themselves.

The day was filled with fantastic projects, poetry, singing and jokes from our young people and parents, as well as important speeches from former advocates, board members and representatives from other organisations with a focus on amplifying the voice of the young person.



You can view presentations from the day, including collaborations with Fighting Words, via the QR Code to our Youtube channel:



# 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 2025 again, the response and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Below is some of the feedback:

99% of people agree that in terms of their performance, they know what is expected of them

96% of people agree that YAP lives up to its values

97% of people agree that their manager conducts regular supervision meetings with them

95% of people agree that they have a positive working relationship with their manager

92% of people agree that YAP is an enjoyable place to work

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.



# 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.

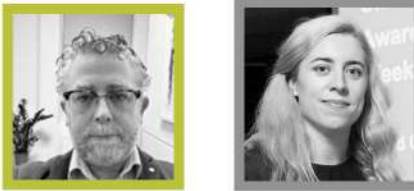
Complete Audited Accounts for YAP Ireland 2024 are available to view on our website at:

<https://yapireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/YAP-Ireland-2024-Signed-Financial-Statements.pdf>

Audited Accounts for 2025 will be published in due course. YAP Ireland Accounts are prepared under charity SORP (FRS102)

Name	Office	Meetings Attended	Joined the Board
Gordon Walsh	Chair	4	2022
Eva Gurn	Outgoing Director	0	2022
Brendan Feehan	Director	3	2023
Nives Paic	Secretary	3	2023
Melissa Lynch	Director	4	2023
Thomas Fedigan	Director	0	2023
Declan Norgrove	Director	4	2024
Ronan Connell	Director	2	2024
Sonam Prakashini Banka-Cullen	Director	4	2024
Janet Lincoln	Director	4	2022
Siobhán Laffey	Incoming Director	1	2025
Réidín Dunne	Outgoing Chair	1	2017
Danielle Erica Curtis	Outgoing Director	1	2019
Laura Curran	Outgoing Director	1	2019
Tremaine Teddy Reese	Outgoing Director	1	2022

## YAP Board



**Young Person Case Study:  
Intensive Support Service**

### Referral :

- 12 year old
- Domestic Violence in past, absent parent
- Mental health and general health issues across the family
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour with peers
- Bullied, attacked
- Out of school for a year
- Isolated, fearful
- FRC, CARI involved

### Actions taken:

- Anti-bullying, assertiveness coaching
- Engagement with school, CARI, Meitheal
- Community, interests – badminton, choir
- School transition
- Building empathy

### Outcomes:

- Secured full-time employment within 10 weeks.
- Transitioned to foster care placement supported by social care leader.
- Increased confidence, self advocacy, and community connection.

### Learnings:

- Highlights power of consistent advocacy and trusting relationships.
- Reflects EPIC findings (2025) on the importance of supportive professionals.





# Annual Report

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## 2025



An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

