

The logo for TúsLA, featuring the word 'TúsLA' in a stylized font. 'Tús' is green and 'LA' is blue. The background of the cover is bright yellow with large, hand-drawn green and blue circles. On the left side, there is a black spiral binding.

TúsLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

CHILD AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

YEARBOOK

**CHILD AND
YOUTH
PARTICIPATION**

YEARBOOK



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FOREWORD

From 2016 to 2018, Tusla, with the support of Atlantic Philanthropies, made seed funding available to develop child and youth participation initiatives nationally. Each of the 17 Tusla areas had the opportunity to submit one or a number of proposals and apply for €21,000 per area. Each proposal was endorsed by their Area Manager and their local Children and Young People's Services Committee.

The main criteria were, that the ideas came from Young People, that the application was aligned to the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making* (DCYA, 2015) and that the initiative fit with the principles of Lundy's Model of Participation incorporating Space, Voice, Audience and Influence. The successful applicants were young people working with Tusla staff, funded agencies and community partners.

This Yearbook provides a snapshot of the 45 seed funding projects, what they set out to do at the beginning of their journey and what they have managed to achieve in a relatively short space of time. Many of the seed funding sites successfully achieved the Investing in Children Membership Award™. The IiC Award celebrates imaginative and inclusive practice as well as a commitment to dialogue that leads to change.

Finally, not only have the seed funding sites delivered creative and effective initiatives in their own right but by taking into account the views and vision of the children and young people who use the services, the collaboration has surpassed all expectations. On behalf of the Child and Youth Participation Working Group we would like to commend the staff and young people involved for their exceptional talent and perseverance. As a result of their success we now have a commitment from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Tusla to continue the seed funding initiative into 2021 and allow other groups of Young People to lead the way!

Michelle Sheehan

Tusla Child and Youth Participation Working Group

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Huge thanks to the Participation and Partnership Officers in particular Avril Dooley and Jackie Concannon for their work on supporting the seed funding sites and creating the Yearbook. Thanks also to Dr Aisling Gillen, National Programme Lead for Prevention, Partnership and Family Support and Service Director, West.



YOUNG MIDLANDERS MAKE A MIGHTY DIFFERENCE



In 2016, the Social Work Department sought to hear from young service users what they were doing well and what they could change to make the service better.

They asked 10 young people from Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath to explain their views through artwork. In response, The Mighty Midlands (as they titled themselves) created art pieces to show visually 'the voice of young people'.

The finished artwork, displayed in the Tusla building in Mullingar, is a permanent reminder of the importance of child and youth participation. The group made a presentation at the official launch.

The Mighty Midlands met area management and told them what changes they'd like to see, including:

- Staff meet with the young people for fun, not only when something is wrong.
- Staff dress more informally and don't wear lanyards when visiting the young people.
- Young people are given reasons if some of their wishes cannot be met.
- Young people receive an equal level of quality service from Tusla.

Management listened to and discussed the views of the young people with them, and let them know what they might be able to enhance or provide in the future.

Time for celebration

On completion of this fantastic project, a celebration day took place at Lough Key Forest Park in summer 2018. The young people hosted an exhibition stand and facilitated a workshop at Tusla's second and third National Child and Youth Participation conferences in 2017 and 2018. They were invited to Tusla HQ in Brunel to meet Jim Gibson, Tusla's Chief Operations Officer, where they were presented with their Investing in Children Membership Award™.

The group actively participated in the changes they sought, engaged in lots of communication with services, which raised their confidence, and developed their 'work ethic'. The social workers found that the changes requested and what they'd learnt from the project benefited them, as well as the young people they were working with.

Four of the participants went for Agenda Day™ facilitator training.

Project was a collaboration between Tusla Midlands Area and Youth Advocate Programmes (YAP). Group facilitated by a Community Artist, Team Leader from YAP and a Social Care Leader from Tusla PPFS. Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

DRAMATIC SUCCESS FOR CARLOW CHILDREN



The Carlow Area Peer Engagement (CAPE) programme was established by the Children in Care Team in the Carlow Social Work Department as a peer engagement initiative. It promotes peer support for children in care, helping to create and develop inclusion, participation and opportunities for them to speak and be heard. Tusla can find out what they think of its service and what's important to them.

The programme creates experiences and increases understanding through teamwork and working together (Theraplay), develops young people's strength to influence change and provide feedback, and offers workshops geared to the needs identified by the young people and the professionals who work with them.

This project has been running for four years. In 2016, with the aid of seed funding, a drama workshop was introduced as part of the programme. This was so successful that it was continued into 2017 and 2018. Participatory practice is demonstrated through the choices the young people make in the drama workshop.

The young people devised a short performance (all their own ideas), which the facilitator pieced together, and performed it to an audience of foster carers, siblings, parents and social workers.

Standing ovation

They also attended Tusla's third National Child and Youth Participation Conference in April 2018, where they presented a workshop and performed their drama for a large audience, who gave them a standing ovation.

The group held an open day for International Children's Day where they facilitated a drumming workshop, arts and crafts and face painting. Tusla staff and young people known to the Social Work Department attended.

Thanks to this programme, the young people:

- Have become more confident and learnt how to work as part of a team.
- Have improved their social skills.
- Found a safe space to express themselves (without judgement or fear) through the group work and especially the drama.



The CAPE group was evaluated for an Investing in Children Membership Award™ in September 2017 and were awarded membership in January 2018. Those who attended the April 2018 conference received their Award Certificate on stage that day – a proud moment for them and their workers.

.....
“We all come together and share ideas about different things It’s a good way for us to get support and be listened to.”

Group member, CAPE
.....

Programme supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

HEAD HACKERS GET A GREAT HEAD START



How can young people who experience stress and anxiety be assisted, and help themselves?

A number of such young people, aged 14-18, were referred by CAMHS to the Head Hackers group, based in Ossory Youth Project, Kilkenny. The group meet every week from September to end June, and new members join along the way. The first phase focuses on group bonding and creating a space where the young people feel safe to discuss difficult issues.

The programme involves taking key lifestyle factors that help to alleviate anxiety and incorporating them into fun activities, which came out of brainstorming sessions with the group, such as immersing in nature, exploring identity and strengths, understanding the physiology of anxiety, and sharing strategies the young people have found effective.

Co-facilitation became part of the process. One boy led a session on the physiology of anxiety, an area he's well informed about. He and an older member have been identified as potential young leaders for the future.

"I have met many new friends who would share many common interests, building great friendships along the way. I share no regrets from joining Head Hackers and meeting its incredible people."

– Josh, group member

At Tusla's third National Child and Youth Participation Conference in April 2018, the group presented an exhibition centred on anxiety, featuring a piece of interactive multimedia art: a model of a human brain inside a skull, connected to a computer with wires, to represent the way the young people understand anxiety. Some of them were nervous about public speaking, so this was a powerful way to have their voice heard. Collecting their Investing in Children Membership Award™ on stage that day was a huge achievement for the group. The main benefits of this group's work were:

- Peer learning – some members were relatively comfortable about sharing their feelings, which encourages others to do so, while also finding that they're not alone in experiencing anxiety.
- Creation of positive social memories, which may empower them to seek and participate in other social spaces and expand their comfort zone.
- New skills – as Tusla's *Child and Youth Participation Strategy* says, "participation helps in developing skills useful for debate, communication, negotiation, prioritisation, leadership and decision-making".

Ossory Youth Project, Kilkenny. Programme supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

CORK COMMUNITIES SPEAK THEIR MIND



The Cork Matters project arose in 2017 because the ISPCCK wanted to identify issues facing particular communities in Co Cork, and get together both to address these and to celebrate the great things about living in these areas. Two towns where the views of residents appear not to be regularly highlighted were chosen: Youghal and Ballincollig.

ISPCCK staff spent several months listening to children, young people, parents and community members in both areas to find out more about the main strengths and challenges facing them. They also conducted group sessions and interviews, and used the Survey Monkey tool online to increase their reach.

They organised two World Cafés to enable children and young people, as well as adults, to share their views about the changes they felt would assist their areas. The ISPCCK's Children's Advisory Committee (CAC) in Cork played a key role in designing and implementing the project.

“We helped plan the World Café events and made sure that they were fun, welcoming events for people attending. At the events themselves we co-presented to the audience, took on roles of ‘Table Hosts’ and encouraged people to interact and take part... the project was very important because it gave the locals the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding issues in Youghal and Ballincollig.”

– ISPPC

At Tusla’s third National Child and Youth Participation Conference in April 2018, young people from the CAC presented a workshop on their findings from the World Café events. They were delighted to participate in the conference and got great feedback from the delegates. The CAC were awarded their Investing in Children Membership Award™ certificate onstage.

“While we are satisfied with our efforts to reach out and hear the views of children and young people, our next step is to present our findings to influential stakeholders. Success in this project would mean delivering the real tangible, positive changes identified by those living in the areas, most especially children and young people.”

– ISPPC Childhood Support Worker Sinead McKee

A Resilience Matters event was held in Cork on 8 November 2018. The ISPPC’s Cork Children’s Advisory Committee and staff team collaborated to develop an event for children and young people to explore resilience, coping mechanisms and how children keep themselves well. Building on the success of the Cork Matters study and consultation project, it was attended by children from primary and secondary schools in the Ballincollig, Youghal and Little Island areas. The event was funded by Tusla.

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

IN WATERFORD, IT'S ALL ABOUT TAKING PART



The Waterford Children and Young People's Plan highlighted the main priorities for agencies working to improve the lives of children and young people in Waterford city and county. Waterford (CYPSC) undertook to build capacity, promote participation and engage with young people and practitioners across the sectors.

The first phase of this initiative began in 2017 when a group of enthusiastic young people aged 13–17 took part in group work to develop skills and work with peers on what participation meant to them. To explore youth participation with the wider youth population, they felt that an education and consultation seminar would work best.

The group hosted and facilitated a youth forum themselves, mixing graphic harvesting and world café-style techniques to conduct the consultation. They condensed the information gathered and designed an info postcard to showcase the views of forum participants.

The second phase consisted of research, and focus groups with practitioners working with young people. The research, in the form of a literature review of current policy and theory, sought to bring together knowledge, values and skills from a cross-section of services that involve children and young people in decision-making through participatory practice. The focus-group findings were discussed and analysed in the context of current policy and theoretical frameworks.

Embedding participatory practice

A key finding was the need for meaningful participation at all levels of society, and not solely in the structures and services that support children and young people. It was recognised that this can only be achieved through embedding participatory practice cross-structurally. The report was launched, along with a showcase of young people's participation in their services and/or communities, in October 2018.

The third phase involves engaging an isolated group of young adults not in education, training or employment and give them an opportunity to develop the life skills and knowledge they need to participate in society, including communication skills, confidence and agency, planning and problem-solving, emotional intelligence, relationships, creativity and imagination, resilience and determination.

The young people, through engaging in a participatory process, will see for themselves what participation means. Workshops that blend group work with cooking will help them to develop confidence, resilience and skills in team work, communication and cookery. They will thus develop an ability to pursue their goals and engage with the support they need to do so.



Programme supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

POWERFUL PARTICIPATION BY KERRY YOUNG PEOPLE



The Kerry CYPSC Youth Participation Project had four goals for Year 1 and 2 seed funding in 2016/2017:

- Train young people from all communities in Kerry to undertake research on issues important to them
- Include the voice of young people in the work of Kerry CYPSC and its working groups, and ensure appropriate actions are developed in response to the research findings
- Share the findings of youth research projects with stakeholders via a Youth Participation Conference
- Use the findings to inform the development of Kerry CYPSC's next three-year work plan

Achievements in Year 1 included:

- 55 young people were trained as Youth Researchers by NUI Galway.
- Young people undertook seven research projects on topics such as Mental Health, Gambling, Parental Pressure, Race and Culture.
- Youth Research Day was held to review the research process and identify additional supports required.

“We found the research process informative as we had never been involved in something of this nature beforehand. Starting out our research process began with a lot of creativity... Carrying out the research required a lot of hard work and determination... but it was worth it...”

-Youth Research Group

Mounthawk Youth Research group carried out research on gambling, titled 'Against the Odds', discovering “a large amount of updated shocking facts we would not have found elsewhere”, including:

- 76% of people surveyed had placed at least one bet. “We were amazed by this as the majority of those surveyed were adolescents.”
- 7% gambled almost every day, and another 4% weekly.
- 33% were unaware that lottery and scratch cards are a form of gambling.
- 18% had gambled online.
- 62% believed that gambling is not a problem among their age group.

The Year 2 plan is to train a second cohort of young people as youth researchers and hold a Youth Participation Conference, organised by young people, to present the findings from Year 1 and 2. All key stakeholders and decision-makers will be invited. The seed funding has also supported publication of youth research projects (DVDs, leaflets, etc).

For the third round of seed funding, Kerry CYPSC will work with LGBTI+ young people to ensure inclusion and cultural diversity is reflected in its work.

Initiatives supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

A SPRINGBOARD TO SELF-ESTEEM AND RESILIENCE



The iGirls and Just for Mams programmes were initiated and developed in Cork, arising from collaboration between Springboard Family Support Services (under the auspices of Tusla), Foróige and St Vincent's School.

Both programmes sought to support teenage girls and their mothers in improving self-esteem and confidence, in line with the strengths-based ethos of Springboard professionals. They provided opportunities for peer support and mutual learning, both for participants and facilitators, and helped the participants to develop the skills, knowledge and capacity to become more resilient in their everyday lives and improve their relationships with one another and their broader networks.

iGirls programme

The team meticulously designed the iGirls programme from scratch, based on established research and observations made by the group of professionals in their daily work. The full title of the programme is: 'iGirls – building a better relationship with myself'.

It takes a systemic and holistic approach, aiming to educate and empower teenage girls living in areas deeply affected by economic and social adversities over several generations.

Just for Mams programme

Just for Mams aimed to provide an opportunity for women to explore and develop their relationships with their children and others. It was underpinned by the following principles:

- Take a strengths-based approach, centred on mothers, to help strengthen their resilience and build self-esteem.
- Recognise that being a mother can be difficult and challenging.
- Offer a safe space for mothers to come together to support and learn from each other.

Both programmes involved facilitated, semi-structured group sessions where themes such as self-care and self-compassion were explored through discussions and activities. They also provided a safe, non-judgmental space for the girls and mothers to express themselves and their concerns, and develop support mechanisms and networks.

A Just for Mams booklet was produced by Dr Dermot Casey and Elaine Breen, who designed both programmes. The parents receive a Certificate of Completion at the end of their programme.

Programmes supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

SUPPORT FOR LGBTI+ YOUNG PEOPLE IN CO WEXFORD



JUST BE YOU.

A number of school students in Co Wexford now have better understanding of LGBTI+ issues, and been empowered to effect change in their schools in an effort to improve the lives of LGBTI+ students.

It's all thanks to the Just Be You LGBTI+ Youth Programme developed by Wexford Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC), which received Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding from Tusla, via Atlantic Philanthropies, in 2016 and 2017. The funding went into developing and rolling out the programme, which was facilitated by Ferns Diocesan Youth Service (FDYS).

The initial work included gathering research, organising cluster workshops, drafting the baseline Resource Pack, and contacting two targeted schools.

The programme consisted of four sessions:

- Session 1 focused on basic information such as definitions of LGBTI+, what the young people expected, and the coming-out process.
- Session 2 focused mainly on homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and power.
- Session 3 looked at what the students could do at school, with an emphasis on the TFLAG model (Teachers and Friends of LGBTI+), to create a safe space for LGBTI+ students and friends, supported by staff and other students.
- Session 4 consisted of an evaluation: students from each of the four class groups in both schools were asked their opinion on the programme, and were also able to ask further questions and raise issues about barriers to progress.

The Just Be You programme was piloted with Transition Year students from Ramsgrange Community School. As part of the third session, they made rainbow wristbands that they wore to show solidarity with LGBTI+ young people. Numerous bands were made and distributed to staff and students.

Resource pack for schools

During the sessions, information was gathered and fed into a Resource Pack created for schools. It consists of (a) information on Anti-Bullying Policies, An A-Z of Terms, Discrimination of LGBTI+ People Facts, The History of the Rainbow Flag, A Teachers Guide to 'Just Be You', LGBTI+ FAQs, and Stonewall: A History; (b) a Coming-Out Guide, and (c) examples of rainbow stickers branded with 'Just Be You' and a USB with the 'Just Be You Programme in Full'.

The Just Be You programme was evaluated for an Investing in Children Membership Award™ in February 2018 and awarded membership in April 2018.

Programme supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

WEXFORD TEEN TALKS EVENT IS A BIG HIT



A youth participation showcase event, 'Teen Talks', was held in May 2018 in Enniscorthy, Co Wexford to highlight issues facing young people growing up in the county.

Wexford Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) was able to initiate the event thanks to a further round of Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding from Tusla, via Atlantic Philanthropies, in 2017/2018.

The event, hosted by Wexford CYPSC, was organised in collaboration with local youth community and voluntary agencies and the Prevention Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) Programme of Tusla.

Young people from all over the county were given a platform to speak about issues important to them, such as youth mental health, LGBTI+ issues, dealing with illness, and the importance of music in young people's lives.

Keynote speakers included:

- John Dwyer, who addressed issues such as cyber security in 'Let's B Safe'.
- Deborah Somorin of Focus Ireland, who looked at homelessness and teen parenthood.
- Kelvin Akpaloo and Nenji Benstowe of the National Youth Council of Ireland, who spoke about migration.
- Vanessa Lacey of TENI, who explored transgender issues.



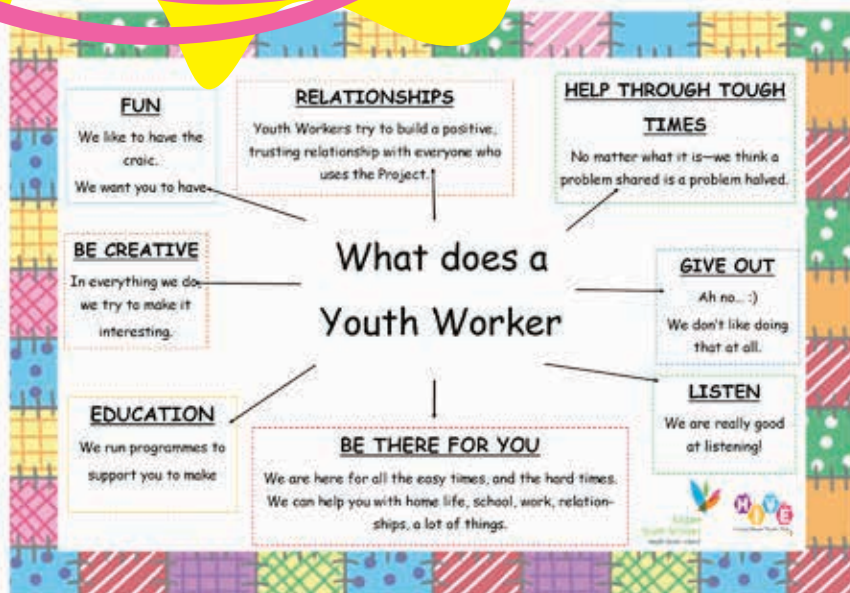
The free event was attended by young people from all around Wexford county, local politicians, professionals who work with children and young people, and representatives of organisations involved in Wexford CYPSC. The feedback from those in attendance was very positive. The inspiring speeches by a number of young people stole the show.

Wexford CYPSC hopes to build on the learning from this event and host similar events in the future. There are plans to hold a second 'Teen Talks' event in Wexford in 2019.



Initiative aided by funding through Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

SUPPORT FOR INTEGRATION OF YOUNG REFUGEES



Kildare Youth Services ran a programme for 24 children and young people, aged 10-18, residing in the Hazel Hotel Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre (EROC), to support their integration in resettlement communities.

During the programme, from October 2016 to March 2017, the team of four youth workers engaged in relationship-building and facilitated various youth work activities.

Kildare Youth Services ran four groups a week, two for young people aged 10-14, and two for those aged 15+. The orientation programme looked at their potential moves to different communities and what they might expect once they move.

In the integration element of the programme, 15 young people from communities in Kildare town participated, so the young people could learn about each other at a peer level. The youth workers facilitated a safe, fun space for the two groups to interact.

Getting rid of stereotypes

There was a strong focus on eradicating stereotypes, helping both groups to communicate their feelings and expectations to each other, and supporting the young people's integration in Ireland.

There were many benefits for the participants, including:

- the development of good peer relationships and good relationships with youth workers.
- young people playing an active role in their communities and participating in local and regional democratic structures.
- meaningful interactions between young people, adults and the wider community.

After the conclusion of the programme, and six months after the young people moved to various communities throughout Ireland, the youth work staff followed up with visits to the young people in Cork, Galway, Mayo and Limerick.

The young people made clear that they appreciated the way the youth work service helped them in their resettlement journey, as it gave them an opportunity independent of the EROC to learn, as well as offer and affirm their own skills and qualities. Later on, the youth work staff organised a meet-up in Dublin, which was well attended.

"Young people have told us that participating in youth work programmes alongside young people already living in Ireland, has showed them they have much more in common with each other than they have differences."

Aidan Farrelly, Kildare Town Youth Project

Programme jointly funded by the Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding and CYPSC Seed Funding.

YOUNG PEOPLE PAINT A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR TUSLA OFFICES



Youth Advocate
PROGRAMMES IRELAND

Tusla public office spaces should be child-friendly and reflect an organisation that is focused on children and young people.

Tusla Louth Meath area has been upgrading the social work offices in Navan, Co Meath and will be moving to new offices in Drogheda, Co Louth. Up to recently, there was limited Tusla consultation locally with children and young people about the public spaces. The current work is a perfect opportunity for them to contribute to the planning and decoration – to ensure that Tusla waiting and meeting-room spaces are less intimidating and more welcoming.

Young People's Participation groups, established in the area by the Youth Advocate Programmes (YAP) service, were invited to participate in this initiative.

The Tusla Projects Lead, who is also the gatekeeper of the local YAP referral system, met with the Meath participation group to explain the plan: a search for artwork that would help make the office spaces more representative of the work done with children. The group were invited to the offices and honestly expressed their views. Noting the drab colours and bare walls, they highlighted the need for bright colours, so a thumbs-up was given to the Tusla logo colours now being promoted and used in Tusla office furniture and décor.

Praise for artists' creativity

YAP managers and advocates, along with some talented artists, fully supported the young people in the production of some creative and thought-provoking art. The project was mentioned by the group in their presentation at the YAP national conference held in Croke Park on 26 July 2018.

The recently opened bright new Tusla waiting room in Navan hosted the launch and display of the YAP artwork on 1 November 2018, and the artists were formally thanked for their ideas, creativity and display by the area manager.

The artwork is expected to inspire staff members to further promote and improve children and young people's participation in their practice.

Throughout the year, the YAP Meath participation group provided some great ideas about Tusla office refurbishments, and, as part of a Prevention Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) seed-grant funding project, presented some fantastic artwork. A big thank you to all the young people involved.



Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

EASING YOUNG PEOPLE'S PATH INTO ADOLESCENCE...



Connect Family Resource Centre (Connect FRC) in Drogheda, Co Louth, which works with all age groups, decided to set up a targeted service to support and empower children in the area in their transitioning to adolescence.

Starting in 2016, it has worked primarily with a core group of around 12 children aged 10-13 years. The children's engagement and feedback have helped to shape the progression and content of the programme. Connect FRC has celebrated their achievements and input throughout, and all were delighted to take part in the process that resulted in Connect FRC receiving the Investing in Children Membership Award™. The project has several strands:

Supporting young people in maintaining their well-being: Connect FRC has organised educational workshops and events, and encouraged the young people to build relationships and develop their knowledge of local services in the area. They've visited the Boyne River Rescue and Drogheda Garda Station, attended information talks on positive body image (Bodywise), cyberbullying (ISPPCC) and online safety (community gardaí). Local gardaí have provided transport to the events outside of the service, which has built trust and good

relationships with the Gardaí. The young people sent in posters based on their engagement with the project to the #Well-being competition, which showcased all the entries in Dublin Castle.

What the young participants said:

.....
“They helped us with bullying, like how to deal with it.”

“How to speak up, it gives you more confidence.”

“I learned how to make friends.”
.....

Supporting young people in engaging in community activities and helping build peer relationships: The group engaged in a range of activities that enabled them to build good peer relationships, which also helps engagement with others outside the project. Some activities, such as swimming and a workshop on skin care and nail art, promoted physical health, while others focused on creativity, such as felt-making, drumming and ceramics.

The programme enables Connect FRC to build relationships with those who engage with it and ensure that they can easily seek information and advice. It also conveys to the young people that their input, opinions and feedback are valued, thus empowering them and helping them to develop self-confidence and self-esteem as they enter adolescence.



Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

O'DEVANEY GARDENS PAIR WIN YOUTH AWARD



Two young Dublin northsiders, Mark and Aoife from the MOST project were declared overall winners at the inaugural Dublin North Central Garda Youth Awards in January 2018.

The awards, held in association with Croke Park, recognise and celebrate the contribution young people are making in communities across Dublin's North Central area.

Mark and Aoife, both aged 15, were nominated by Brádóg Youth Services for their involvement in a local project capturing what life is like growing up in O'Devaney Gardens. The project consisted of creating a photodocumentary/documentary about O'Devaney Gardens.

The aim of the project is to show people the good side of what it was like growing up in O'Devaney Gardens, and to highlight the collapse of the regeneration plan for the area. As part of the project, the young people learnt about photography and developed video-editing skills, took part in sessions on public speaking and peer leadership, and developed their interpersonal and communication skills.

Their finished project will include photographs of the community and the desolate flats, and video recordings of interviews with community figures and residents.

As well as winning the Garda Youth Award, the young people exhibited at Tusla's third National Child and Youth Participation Conference in Athlone, and also in Collins Barracks (mid-January to mid-March 2019).

The Garda Youth Award judging panel were particularly impressed by the pride that Mark and Aoife have for their community and their commitment to the project.



The Stoneybatter Youth Service/MOST project is a project of the City of Dublin Youth Service Board. It supports young people to make positive choices in their lives. O'Devaney Gardens Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

LOL CHILDREN'S GROUP WINS AWARD



The Tusla Family Resource Centre (FRC) is part of the Prevention Partnership and Family Support Service (PPFS). Based in Navan, Co Meath, it offers supports and services to parents and families of all cultures and backgrounds throughout the county.

The FRC aim is to encourage, empower and support families in identifying their personal needs, and cultivating and promoting a needs-led response. It also helps to link parents of children up to age 18 into the community by providing information on services, activities and programmes available to them. It focuses on family strengths and what is working well, and supports and encourages during difficult times.

Having invited young people from families engaged in its service, the FRC held an open day in June 2016 as part of Tusla's Children and Young People's Participation Seed Funding initiative. Young people were asked what they would like to see improved in the FRC centre. They highlighted that, while there were many parenting groups in the FRC, there were no groups for young people aged 7-12; suggested improvements to the building, and recommended additional toys and equipment for the crèche and outside play area.

Open day leads to new group

In response, the young people were consulted about the décor of a room in the FRC to make it more child-friendly. CYP Participation seed funding was used to acquire new toys and equipment. The main outcome of the open day was the establishment of the LOL Children's Group for those aged 7-12, which started in September 2017 and meets every Friday afternoon.

Together, an LOL scrapbook was designed that allows the children to record what happens in the group each week; to give feedback (eg, what they liked or disliked each week, something they learned), and to make suggestions for the following week's group. The scrapbook gives them a great sense of ownership over their group, and lets them see clearly what they have achieved as a group and as individuals.

A huge success, the LOL group has greatly benefited the young people. In summer 2018, it was awarded with the Investing in Children Membership Award™, a huge achievement for the group and the facilitators. As part of their award, the young people helped design a feedback form for the group. These forms can be forwarded to services management to ensure the children's views are taken seriously and acted on, as well as help the facilitators to continually review the services provided.

When asked how they would like to celebrate the award, the children suggested a trip to Tayto Park... so PPFS brought them and their families there for a great, fun-filled day.



Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

YOUNG PEOPLE GET THE YOUTH QUEER BALL ROLLING



Youth Work Ireland Cavan Monaghan hosted an LGBTI+ Youth Queer Ball for 14-18-year-olds in November 2017 and July 2018. Fifty-five young people from Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones, Dundalk, Cavan, Drogheda and Navan attended both events.

This amazing night was the idea of one of the young people who has been attending the service for four years. Finn, who started the project as part of a Tusla-funded internship, put forward the idea for a Queer Ball at which young people could dress how they want to, hold hands with who they want to and bring a date of whichever gender they liked.

LGBTI+ youth groups from Monaghan, Meath, Cavan and Louth were invited and a youth committee was set up to plan every last detail.

Five young people sat on the committee and organised travel to and from the ball, decorations, and activities at the ball. Tickets were printed and sold to cover the extra costs, including the amazing Tusla-branded 'Wonka Bars'.

On the night, as well as music and food, a chill-out space and a changing room (for those who hadn't got dressed at home) were provided. The centre was decorated in pride flags, fairylights and banners made by the young people themselves. A professional photographer took prom-style photos of the young people with their dates and friends.

Special award

Finn also organised a special award on the night for Youth Queer of the Year, nominated by the young people, for service to the LGBTI+ community.

The young people thoroughly enjoyed the night of free expression, dancing, craic and making new friends. It was a novel experience for some of the younger participants who reported that they felt a new world of friends and positive experiences had been opened up to them.

Asked afterwards what they thought of the night, the young people said they had loved everything – and the only thing they would change would be to make it longer and hold it more often. Thanks to Tusla for the funding, the staff from each area for bringing their young people, and Finn for making it happen...

What they said:

.....
"Everyone didn't want it to be over."

"Next time, we'll try to make it longer."

"Bit more pride now, after the ball."

"We had a space to feel comfortable."
.....

'INCREDIBLE' YOUTH PROJECT IN CO MAYO



Mayo Children's and Young Person's Advisory Committee (CYPAC) was formed under the auspices of Tusla PPFS Child and Youth Participation seed funding projects to promote the participation of children and young people in service development and delivery in Mayo.

This initiative was developed in conjunction with Foróige, Comhairle na nÓg Mayo, CYPSC Mayo and Tusla. Over the past two years, this group of young people have:

- Been invited to critically review Tusla local and national information leaflets, and provided feedback on their content.
- Audited Tusla premises in Mayo to determine their suitability for children and young people.
- Been trained as youth researchers in NUI Galway and undertaken research into what young people in Mayo know about Tusla.
- Made a short film on their Youth Researchers research findings.

The group organised and hosted a conference, 'How Young People are Heard and Helped', in the Park Hotel, Kiltimagh, Co Mayo on 18 January 2018. It was attended by around 140 people, including social workers, family support staff, psychologists, the Ombudsman for Children (who also spoke at the event), teachers, gardaí and many allied professionals. The young people completed the registration, MC-ed, and organised the catering, while some spoke at the conference and others sang a song composed for the event – written, composed and performed by the young people.

CYPAC also designed a poster, launched at the conference, titled 'What Young People Want Adults to Know'. And Tusla invited them to design a poster to highlight the 'Tell Us' campaign and how young people can contact Tusla to complain or compliment. This poster was presented to Pat Osborne, National Manager Service Experience Innovation and Development, at the conference.

Based on their research, they were invited to Paris to present their findings to a packed room in UNESCO. They reflected on the results of their research and gave advice to the attendees about how to improve youth participation across the world and how to factor in cultural differences. They also achieved the Investing in Children Membership Award™ for their work.

What Chloe said:

.....

"I have only recently realised how much being part of the CYPAC and Comhairle na nÓg has changed me as a person... I have a visual impairment and... always found it difficult to mix with new groups outside of my own friends. Yet from working in a team with such an amazing group of people, it has become second-nature. I am no longer afraid to speak or give my opinion on topics that I care about. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank all of the people involved in this incredible project."

.....

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

BRILLIANT WEBSITE PROJECT GOES NATIONAL



The Dublin South East/Wicklow Child and Youth Participation Project was so successful that it has grown into a national project.

They hosted three Agenda Days™ (the first in Ireland), facilitated by six young adults who have lived experience of Tusla and its funded services. They developed a short film to talk about this experience and presented it at the Tusla Child and Youth Participation Conference in 2017.

Each Agenda Day™ brought together 20-30 young people aged 9-18 from Tusla and its funded services in an adult-free space. Here, the idea of a website for young people with information on Tusla services was born and developed. A research group of 8-10 young people aged 12-18 was formed from the wider Agenda Days™ to ensure that young people were involved at every stage of the website development.

Partners for success

Visual communication students from IADT in Dun Laoghaire worked in partnership with the group to develop the website design. Animation and film students worked on new videos to help explain what Tusla does. The group visited the college to review progress and were delighted to see all their hard work come to life. They presented a prototype of the website and videos at Tusla's third National Child and Youth Participation conference in April 2018.

Later, the film students met with Tusla staff to interview them about their role so that young people accessing the website can find out more about their work. So far, they have filmed staff from across the country and from social work, social care, residential, aftercare, fostering, family support and educational welfare. Young people from the four regions who participate in Tusla and its funded services were invited to consultations to give feedback and ensure that this content appealed to children and young people nationally.

The research group have been working with website developers and they launched their 'Changing Futures' website on 5 March 2019.



Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

CHILDREN PLANT THE SEEDS OF WELL-BEING



The Sensory Garden at Wellview Family Resource Centre in north Co Dublin was officially opened in autumn 2018.

The garden was initiated by a group of boys and girls aged 6-10, named Krafty Kids, who meet at the resource centre every Tuesday afternoon. It was their thoughts and imaginations that inspired the creation of the garden. Garden landscapers were contracted to collate their individual plans into one large garden design.

The result is an inviting, welcoming, colourful outdoor space that hosts a treehouse, a sandpit, apple trees, a water feature, musical wind-chimes and a fairy-themed area with a mural on a wall as well as lots of herbs and plants like mint and lavender.

Award for the Krafty Kids

The children involved, who received an Investing in Children Membership Award™, gave a presentation on their experiences in the project at Tusla's second and third National Child and Youth Participation Conference on 26 April 2018.

After much hard work, dedication and commitment, Wellview Family Resource Centre was delighted to officially open the gates of the garden on 21 September 2018. It was officially opened by Paul Donnelly and Caitriona Sheehan, Principal Social Worker for PPFS in Dublin North.

The event was attended by children from the Krafty Kids group, their parents and siblings, members of the Child and Family Support Network and the family support team for PPFS for Dublin North. A great afternoon was had by everyone, who admired and celebrated the work of the Krafty Kids in creating a beautiful garden space – a great addition to both the family resource centre and the community.

Given the success of the sensory garden, the Krafty Kids have moved on to their next project, creating a sculpture for the front of the building, to welcome people as they arrive at the FRC.

ROSCOMMON GROUP RESEARCH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



A group of 10 young people aged 13-17 from across the county of Roscommon are meeting regularly to work on research into mental health services.

The Co Roscommon Youth Research Panel (YRP) was established in 2017. All 10 young people completed The Youth as Researchers Training Programme, initiated by the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre. In 2018 NUIG delivered a programme on research skills to groups of young people to enable and empower them to conduct their own research.

The YRP project is to produce 'A research paper on the opinions of young people aged 13-18 years into mental health and LGBTI+ services from a rural perspective'. The group conducted a literature review and designed a survey, which has been completed by 125 young people in Co Roscommon, and are now collating this information to show key findings and recommendations.

Raising awareness

The youth researchers aim to raise awareness of mental health and LGBTI+ services in the county. Since the research began, an LGBTI+ and Allies group, new to Roscommon town, has been set up, and the YRP group have also had consultations with the CYPSC LGBTI+ Sub-Group.

The research findings will be presented to young people and service professionals in March 2019 as part of the Youth Participation Conference in The Quad Youth Centre, Roscommon town. The group are in charge of organising this event, at which they will also reveal feedback from young people in Co Roscommon.

They have also taken part in workshops on 'minding your mental health' and spoken to organisations that provide support to LGBTI+ young people.

.....
"I'm so happy to be a part of Youth Researchers to be able to work on something important, that I am very interested in."

Katie, 17

.....

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

'I BELIEVE' FOSTERS CHILDREN'S SELF-BELIEF



The 'I Believe' group was born back in 2016 when social workers in the Kildare West Wicklow fostering team decided to do something about providing support to birth children of foster carers in the area.

The working model used is Lundy's Model of Participation, which helps workers to give children a voice, space, audience and influence to ensure their full participation.

.....

"The group was set up for children who took foster children into their homes so that they can come together and have fun and discuss their life with other kids with foster families."

- Poppy

.....

'I Believe' use art and other forms of communications to build on the group members' strengths and values to help them grow socially and emotionally, and to believe in themselves. The children have gained confidence and developed resilience as a result of participating in the group.

What the young people say...

Ben: "'I Believe' is a group that began two years ago for the birth children in foster families. It started when Denise, Jean, Sarah and Sean organised for a group of us to go bowling and we were told about the group. After a little while we all met to talk about the group and what we wanted it to be about. We all agreed to name it 'I Believe'... The group is great because it allows us the opportunity to be with people who understand what it's like to have foster siblings."

Bethany and Hannah: "When the group started we were both nervous about going as we didn't know what to expect but we're so glad we did join... everyone was very welcoming and nice and easy to talk to... We think it's a very special group. We are proud to be part of it. We meet up every month to do activities and discuss future plans."

.....

"We've gone on many trips with each other like Zip It, where we went zip-lining and had a barbecue. We also went into Dublin and had dinner and went on the Viking Splash - it was so much fun. Our favourite trip was going to the Escape Rooms... We also go on important trips for our group like conferences and exhibitions."

.....

"They make us feel very important because we talk to people about what we do... The best thing about joining the group is the friendships we've made with everyone. We always have a laugh together and have amazing memories with each other and hopefully more to come."

.....

'I Believe' received the Investing in Children Membership Award™ at the National Child and Youth Participation Conference in Athlone in 2018.
Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

DUBLIN INNER CITY GETS NEW YOUTH LEADERS



A group of 10 people, aged 18 to 20, in Dublin's north inner city have great potential as leaders and role models thanks to a Youth Leadership Programme, developed by the Neighbourhood Youth Project (2).

They served as role models for younger children attending the programme while developing their own skills, which may support them in their everyday life or if they choose youth work or social care as a career option.

The programme consisted of development of skills in a number of ways:

- Formal training, e.g. Restorative Practice, Agenda Day facilitators, etc.
- Practice experience as Youth Mentors with NYP.
- Ongoing coaching and supervision by NYP staff and volunteers.
- Basic coaching skills in sport, drama and music.



As part of their role, they organised residential trips to Cavan and Wexford, where they took the lead role with support from full-time staff in planning, participation and evaluation.

New options opened up

Some young people, on reaching age 17 or 18, are still unclear about or have limited options for their future, and do not reach their full potential. Training and participation of this kind empowers them and helps to expand their range of options. Others attending the service also benefit from the young leaders' work as mentors and role models.

With the help of Child and Youth Participation seed funding, these youth leaders also trained in various skills such as first aid, lifeguarding, sports coaching (basic football and basketball skills), manual handling and safeguarding.

The project participated in the 'Building Hope for Brighter Futures' project facilitated by the National College of Ireland, for which it provided young volunteers as speakers and role models. It continues to promote and encourage the involvement of young people in local and national policy forums via local networks such as the YPAR network and the North Inner City Community Coalition.

The Neighbourhood Youth Project (2) was awarded the Investing in Children Membership Award™ in January 2018.



Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

KEY LESSONS FROM THE SCHOOLS OF ATHENRY



A youth-led research project focusing on the service needs of second-level students has been a big success.

During summer 2017, Athenry Child and Family Support Network decided it needed to work more closely with young people to find out how they thought their needs might be better met by statutory, community and voluntary service providers.

The project was implemented by Athenry Child and Family Services Network, Coláiste an Eachréidh, Clarin College, and Presentation College. Support was provided by Galway Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC).

With the support of the Tusla Seed Funding Project Galway/Roscommon 2017-2018, the Athenry network worked with a team of 33 young researchers from the Transition Year programme across three local schools. Between October 2017 and April 2018, the young researchers took part in seven facilitated workshops, and designed, developed, planned and conducted research in their schools.

All classes visited

A survey questionnaire was sent to all second-level students attending the three schools in Athenry in January 2018. The research team visited every class to encourage participation. In total, 447 responses were received, while a further 33 questionnaires were completed by young people attending services at three other sites across the county.

With the research findings analysed and written up, the research team hit the road. First, they made a presentation to the Athenry network. It compiled a document outlining the research findings to reflect the remit of member organisations, and this document is now informing the work of the network.

Next, the team attended Tusla's third National Child and Youth Participation Conference in Athlone, and then presented their findings to the Galway CYPSC, outlining 10 key lessons for service providers. The committee unanimously agreed that these lessons need to be reflected in the next Galway Children and Young People's Plan.

To give feedback to the survey respondents, the team came up with a great idea: create a movie and share it via social media. Within a week of being uploaded, the movie was viewed over 6,000 times – prompting Bank of Ireland to award the research team with a special Enterprise Award at the Bia Lover Festival in Athenry in June 2018.

.....
"It was a great experience. We were able to take charge of how young people communicated with the people who get paid to work with us. Now they know what we think. The ball is in their court."

- Researcher

.....

Tusla Research and Information Mentor Marie Gibbons, who worked closely with the group, said:

.....

"The researchers were amazing. They were so enthusiastic. They were just thankful for the opportunity to take charge of how they, and their peers, would have their say. They really gave it a go. I think they learned a little about social research and a lot about how to work together as a team."

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Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

CONNEMARA CLUB EMPOWERS TEENAGERS



The Connemara Club adolescent programme secured seed funding from 2016-2017 with an initiative targeting 'at risk' teenagers involved in Tusla services in Connemara.

The Prevention, Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) programme, along with Children's First guidelines, was the bedrock in the establishment and running of the group. The five staff involved collected the young people from all over Connemara so they could attend group activities, often starting early and finishing late at night.

The goals of the programme were to:

- Empower the teenagers in their lives.
- Equip them with the skills they need to instigate change.
- Develop a strong sense of personal identity and build resilience.
- Have mindfulness and stoicism as underpinning philosophies.

The group elected a committee, with Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and two PROs. Issues for discussion included: mental health, self-harm, respect for individuals, individuality, personal safety, boundaries, smoking, drugs and alcohol, online safety, and sex.

The activities chosen by the group included trips to outdoor adventure centres, where the teenagers could be helped to overcome their fears, work through difficult situations and use reflective techniques and self-control skills.

Activities included snorkelling, a five-day voyage on a tall ship learning sailing and social skills, trips to a youth music festival in Longford, Tayto Park and Dublin (for shopping), and a residential overnight in Louisburgh, Co Mayo. The group decided to give something back and designed and built a multi-sensory garden for the sanctuary operated by SCCUL Business Enterprise Centre, Ballybane, Galway.

At the closing night in NUIG on 6 November 2017, the young people delivered a video presentation and speeches to their family, friends and guests. They received certificates for participation and awards from external organisations; e.g. their video footage came first in a 'tech space' competition they presented in Google's HQ in Dublin.

The project has been a huge success. It was a finalist at the Irish Healthcare Centre Awards held in the Royal Marine Hotel in Dublin in March 2018, and has been awarded the Investing in Children Membership Award™ for three consecutive years. And the programme also presented a workshop at Tusla's second National Child and Youth Participation Conference in 2017 and exhibited their work in 2018 at the third National Conference.

Early on, five out of 14 of the young people were considered to be on the cusp of becoming early school-leavers. All five have been back in full-time education since September 2017.

.....
"My goal was to learn how to swim and I have done that."

"It got way better as you get to express yourself as a person and people don't judge you for it."

"When we had an idea, it was always taken into consideration and the leaders helped you with your problems."

"This project should be done in a lot more places as it helped a lot of young people become more independent."

"People don't judge you for your problems here like other places and that's what young people need more."
.....

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

DEANSRATH PROJECT GOES FULL STEAM AHEAD



With Coderdojo, a not-for-profit global coding initiative for children aged 7-17, young people learn to create games, websites and apps in a fun and safe environment.

Deansrath Family Centre established the Coderdojo initiative in 2016 so as to continue to work with young people, from an area of economic, social and educational deprivation, who had previously engaged in its therapeutic Incredible Years programmes. Coderdojo provides them with the IT skills they need to thrive in the modern workforce.

As the success of Deansrath Coderdojo grew, the young people expressed an interest in expanding the service to a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and maths) academy, which led to the establishment of Deansrath Family Centre's Young Persons Working Group, to plan the academy. Due to lack of space in Deansrath Family Centre, Coderdojo and the working group must take place in a local enterprise centre.

The Young Persons Working Group is responsible for planning and governing the academy. Each of the young people has taken on a board-of-management role. Following the Coderdojo sessions, they discuss the four pillars of Deansrath Family Centre: service provision, training and professional development, premises, and centre of excellence.

Thriving project

At the meetings, the young people have requested information on third-level education, support with CAO applications and access to counselling services.

This project continues to adapt and thrive through the leadership of the young people themselves. They have acquired the skills necessary to debate and negotiate, have a strong sense of pride and ownership in the project, and have expanded on the group's original remit, thus becoming the propagators of change.

Through the participation of the young people themselves and the support of Tusla PPS, Deansrath Family Centre's Academy will continue to develop and grow as a project that is fundamentally based on the voice of young people themselves.

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

MIDLANDS FORUM LEADS TO BETTER AFTERCARE



The Midlands Aftercare Service provides advice and support for young people aged 16 to 23 who have previously been in care. The team cover many rural communities across the counties of Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath.

The Midlands Aftercare Service established a forum to hear the views of young people to see if their feedback could identify areas for improvement. They were given the opportunity to meet independently from staff to reflect on their experiences. The forum was supported by aftercare staff, who transported them to forum meetings and group bonding activities in various locations across the Midlands.

The forum has led to several changes. Young people felt they needed more time to get to know their aftercare worker before leaving the care system; they now have access to an aftercare worker at 16 (previously 17). They also redesigned the aftercare service leaflet, as they felt it had too many contact numbers and needed more graphics.

Video disseminated nationwide

Finally, the forum produced an information video on the aftercare system and their experiences of it. This video was seen by Tusla staff throughout the country as part of the National Aftercare Briefings.

The young people presented their work at Tusla's second National Child and Youth Participation Conference in 2017, and showcased their video in Tusla HQ on National Care Day 2018, which celebrates the experiences and achievements of young people in care or with care experience. On the day they were personally thanked by the Tusla CEO and COO for creating this valuable learning tool.

The Midlands Aftercare Forum was the first aftercare service in Ireland to receive the Investing in Children Membership Award™. The young people who attend the forum feel they are listened to, and the changes that have taken place have made a real difference not only to their lives but to those of all young people in the aftercare system. Their next project is researching the barriers to participating in the forum and how to overcome those barriers.

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

NEW DESIGNS FOR FAMILY-FRIENDLY SPACES



The aim of the Unity Project, involving young people living in Co Kildare and availing of Tusla services, was to develop family-friendly spaces in local social-work departments.

The project is a Tusla Dublin South West/Kildare West Wicklow Participation Seed Funding initiative. The young people identified the need for a space where they could ‘chill out’ and feel comfortable, and that would improve the quality of family visits. The relocation of the Celbridge and Naas Social Work Departments to new buildings was the ideal opportunity to engage the young people in the project.

The young people expressed their views on what was needed to ensure child-friendly spaces, and their ideas were aired during meetings with stakeholders. Staff negotiated and advocated on their behalf and ensured that their voices were heard.

Hands-on approach

They helped to plan and design the space and took a ‘hands on’ approach, selecting products from online catalogues and making a couple of shopping trips to local stores. Both rooms are now complete, and they held a very successful official opening of their Celbridge room in September as part of Tusla’s National Child and Family Support Week.

The Unity Project was one of the first groups to receive the Investing in Children Membership Award™ for the design of a child and youth-friendly space. The fantastic work of these young people has inspired other young people and staff to rethink and redesign their spaces. Many staff from across the region who wish to replicate the project have visited the rooms for inspiration.

The Unity Project exhibited at Tusla’s third National Child and Youth Participation Conference 2018 and were hugely praised for their work.

.....
***“We felt we were listened to, our ideas were listened to.
We asked for the room to be changed and it was.”***

Group member, Unity Project
.....

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

TOOLKIT ADVANCES CHILD & YOUTH PARTICIPATION



The aim of the Young People's Participation Lab, based on interagency collaboration, was to improve services for children, young people and families by providing guidelines to look at child and youth participation in local and regional services..

Supported by the CYPSC in Sligo-Leitrim, the Project Implementation Group involved Foróige, Lifestart, both Leitrim and Sligo County Childcare Committees, and Resource House – Springboard Sligo.

Sligo Leitrim CYPSC and its subgroups sought from the start to ensure child and youth participation in preparing the first CYPSC Strategic Plan for both counties. The young people consulted in this planning phase ranged in age from 3-5, 5-12 and 12-18.

The two main Participation Lab project objectives were to:

- 1) Use both existing and new tools to enhance child and youth participation in all services, groups and organisations represented as part of Sligo Leitrim CYPSC and its subgroups.
- 2) Focus on how such tools encourage child and youth participation and provide evidence that they influence decisions made by the services.

Recommendations arising from phase one included: the need for additional consultation with children and young people as well as key organisations and staff; addressing the blocks to participation, and the need for greater recognition of the right of children and young people to have their voices heard.

Excellent resource

In phase two, a workshop on the Participation Lab was delivered at Tusla's National Child and Youth Participation Conference in April 2018. Young people took a lead role in the facilitation of this workshop. The full resource was launched in October 2018: it is a practical toolkit that can be used to assess, increase and ensure meaningful child and youth participation. It breaks down all elements of the Lundy model and provides a reflection checklist for participation.



In phase three, the receipt of an additional €5,000 led to the development of an online/digital self-assessment tool that will enable organisations, groups and services in Sligo Leitrim to assess their current practice under the four quadrants of the Lundy Model of Child and Youth Participation.

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

MAJOR DRIVE TO ENSURE YOUNG VOICES ARE HEARD



As part of Tusla's PPFS programme, Youth Work Ireland Laois and Offaly were granted seed funding to coordinate a participatory practice project to ensure the voices of young people aged 0-24 were being heard on service provision in both areas.

The project aims to capture the level of service provision along with key challenges and areas of change, as identified by the young people themselves. Working in conjunction with Laois Offaly CYPSC, the group sought to ensure that decision-makers consider how they engage with, listen to and incorporate the views of young people.

The input of many organisations working with young people across both counties was requested. The young people were asked to say what was working well and what they felt was needed, or needed to be improved.

Wide net cast

To ensure a wide, diverse and accurate picture and bring about improvements in young people's lives, input by numerous organisations was essential. In the current economic climate, it was important to ensure that the real needs of young people and gaps in provision were identified. Meetings with organisations such as the County Childcare Committee, Tusla, Family Resource Centres and youth organisations were organised to ensure that buy-in was widespread.

The initial information-gathering was conducted by the young people of Comhairle na nÓg Laois, guided and supported by Youth Work Ireland Laois (YWIL). The workshops were facilitated by the young members themselves, following facilitation skills training delivered by YWIL. Over 110 young people from Co Laois were surveyed. They also supported the design of an online survey to be sent to every youth service, school and childcare facility in the two counties.

When the information is collated, it will be shared with the children, young people, community projects and youth organisations across the counties, who will be given the option to discuss things further. The report will then be sent to Laois Offaly CYPSC for consideration.



Youth Work Ireland
LAOIS

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

DONEGAL MEITHEAL VIDEO TO GO NATIONAL



Donegal Youth Voices, a youth participation panel established by Tusla in 2017 and coordinated by Foróige, have worked on a number of projects, including having input into three Tusla building renovations in the county, presenting their work at a Tusla team meeting, and helping to launch a new Child and Family Support Network (CFSN) in North Central Donegal.

Discussions at both the Donegal CYPSC Prevention Partnership and Family Support Steering Committee and the Meitheal Chair Forum had highlighted the mixed experiences of young people engaging and participating in their Meitheal process. Providing them with information and support on entering it was seen as a priority. It was decided to explore all this with the Donegal Youth Voices (DYV) group.

A workshop with the DYV group developed an understanding of the Meitheal process, with the support of CFSN Coordinator Martin Keeney and Foróige youth worker Zia McLean. The young people participated in a consultation session on Meitheal, identifying the challenges and fears they would have entering the Meitheal process, as well as the information they would need or want if going to participate in a Meitheal meeting.

Meitheal fears

They highlighted many concerns, including embarrassment at being involved in the process and fears that the process might be very emotional, that they would feel intimidated by all the professionals involved, that they might not understand what was going on, or even know how much say they would have in the Meitheal plan agreed.

The next stage of the process looked at identifying the best multimedia format to develop a resource for young people to support them when entering Meitheal. All agreed that an animated explainer video would be best. The group developed a script and storyboard, and a professional animator advised on colour schemes, background music, and visual themes. Two young people, Ailbhe and Liam, recorded the voiceover for the video.

The 'Enter Your Meitheal Like a Pro' video was launched as part of a wider Donegal Tusla PPFS Child and Youth Participation Best Practice Seminar, held in Letterkenny in November 2018. It was organised and presented by the DYV group, who premiered their video project and showcased good practice across a range of service areas in Donegal.

In December, the group presented the video at a workshop at the national PPFS conference in Kilkenny. It's planned to place it on the new Tusla national website so that it can benefit young people nationwide.



Project established by Tusla with the support of Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding in 2017 and coordinated at local level by Foróige.

WHEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN 'PLAY' TOGETHER...



Forum Connemara CLG Adolescent Support Project ran an eight-week after-school activity programme in Clifden National School called 'What's on 4 the Kids'. The young people helped to design the programme, which involved learning through the medium of art, co-operation activities, games and fun team challenges. It followed the Department of Children and Youth Affairs Quality Standards Framework.

The forum also ran a similar, six-week programme, 'What's on 4 the Parents', to seek the parents' views and get their input into the programme. The parents also gave feedback on the care provided for their children.

It was proposed that the parents organise a joint activity for the young people and themselves, and the children plan an activity with their parents. The key theme was participation; 10 parents and 12 children took part over the six weeks, and a joint activity of bowls, held in the local community hall, was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Young people's feedback from the evaluation process included:

- It gave them and their parents a chance to talk together about a common activity.
- It might be the last time, before they went to secondary school, that they'd do an activity together.

The parents' feedback included:

- The programmes were very beneficial to their children – “they have got more confident” – largely because the activities were not competitive.
- The young people got talking socially and had time out and fun with their friends.
- It was the first time that the parents had come together as a group: “It's usually drop the kids at the gate and run”.
- The parents' own confidence had grown. One parent went back to college.

The parents group want to continue, and plan to create a parents representative group or club for other parents to join, which will reduce any isolation they experience as parents.

.....
“This should become a programme for mothers and fathers. Everyone will learn from it and be a happier person...”

.....
“I achieved more personally from the programme than I thought. I was interacting with a group of parents... through games and chats. We had a lot of fun making arts and crafts, getting to know everyone and being comfortable around them.”
.....

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

ROSCOMMON CHILDREN'S HAPPY, HEALTHY VOLCANO

Roscommon CYPSC identified the health and well-being of children as a crucial element of the overall work of improving outcomes for children in the county.

A series of consultation sessions with children aged 3-4 years in Co Roscommon in relation to their health and well-being needs were facilitated by Marie Gibbons. The sessions were conducted as part of a broader process of engaging key stakeholders concerned with the health and well-being of children.

Fifteen sessions took place in early 2017 in six preschools in Roscommon town, Ballaghaderreen, Tarmonbarry, Frenchpark and Monksland, involving 120 children, with support from services staff. The theme of the consultation was: 'What do young children in Co Roscommon think would help them to live healthier, happier and more active lives?'

The consultation process covered information-sharing, capacity-building, session planning, seeking consent and assent, and getting to know the children. Language to be used with the children was generally agreed, as were roles, materials and time-frames.

Volcanic response

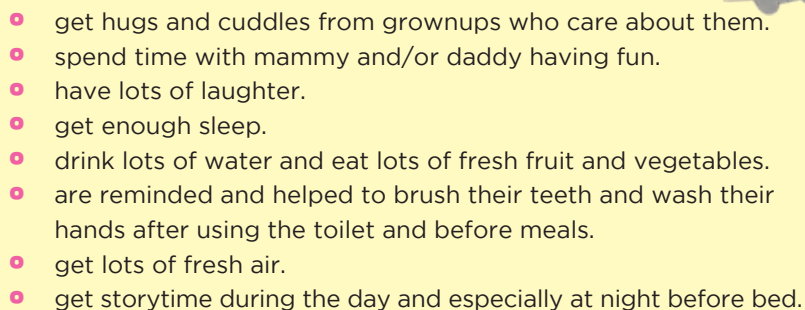
An early idea from one service to use the Food Pyramid as a template was agreed, but the children came up with the idea of the 'Happy and Healthy Volcano'. They also talked about things they like but know they shouldn't have too often – 'treats' such as drinking fizzy drinks, eating sweets and chocolate, playing on a tablet or



phone – and suggested that adults need to know they do not need them every day to be happy and healthy. They also said they need to sometimes visit the doctor and dentist.

A graphic designer worked with the ideas presented by the children and developed the Happy and Healthy Volcano. The findings from the consultations influenced the development of the first Early Years Health and Well-being Plan in Co Roscommon.

The children said they needed adults to make sure that every day, and often during the day, they:

- 
- get hugs and cuddles from grownups who care about them.
 - spend time with mammy and/or daddy having fun.
 - have lots of laughter.
 - get enough sleep.
 - drink lots of water and eat lots of fresh fruit and vegetables.
 - are reminded and helped to brush their teeth and wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals.
 - get lots of fresh air.
 - get storytime during the day and especially at night before bed.

What the children want and need as much as possible to be happy and healthy



Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

DYNAMIC YOUNG WOMEN PUT MENTAL HEALTH ON THE AGENDA



Tusla Midwest and local agencies working with children and young people established a steering committee to shape Tusla's Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding initiative.

Eleven young people were trained as Agenda Day facilitators, and 40 young people from Clare, Limerick and North Tipperary participated in an Agenda Day in June 2017 in Limerick Youth Services. From this, five practice sites were chosen to embed learning locally: Roscrea Mental Health and Wellness-themed Agenda Day in North Tipperary; Photostory project with children from Syria in North Tipperary; Clarecare; Clare Youth Service. and Limerick Youth Service.

The Roscrea Agenda Day project, supported by the NTLP Roscrea Youth Service, began in early 2017 as part of the Children and Young People's Participation strategy.

The aim was to provide a space for young people, who've been part of the youth service for some years, to develop a project that would give a voice to the larger youth population in Roscrea, concerning an issue or issues that were important to them.

The group was made up of six young women from friendship circles. Some have personal experience of Tusla services; others have family knowledge of the services and interventions available.

Because of their experience and what they saw as huge gaps in services and schools in the area of mental health and wellness, they chose as Agenda Day theme: 'Mental Health and Wellness in Roscrea – Your Opinion'.

The group, provided with seed funding through Tusla and a weekly space in the Youth Café to meet and plan, was highly enthusiastic. Some were natural leaders who took turns in leading the discussions and work, while more introverted ones found their voice and the courage to express their views.

Agenda Day success

They found that the amount of work that needs to go into a conference day is vast. After several months and loads of prep work, Roscrea's first Youth Agenda day took place in October 2017. Transport was provided to the venue and the day proved very successful. It has led to a number of initiatives in the town; some have been achieved while others are in progress.

The facilitators gained a new sense of confidence and learnt how to develop similar initiatives. They take pride in the developments now under way in the community. One of the main benefits for the group was they felt 'heard' by Department officials.

Furthermore, these young people provided a space for a larger group of young people to be heard, as can be seen in the diary they kept throughout the process, and camera and video footage. They also presented a workshop at Tusla's National Child and Youth Participation Conference in 2018.

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding

IT'S A LONG WAY FROM SYRIA TO TIPPERARY...



Some 12 Syrian families, refugees from the civil war in their country, were settled in Thurles under the state-funded Refugee Resettlement Programme in 2014. Resources were allocated in the first two years to facilitate their integration into the local community.

Youth Work Ireland Tipperary (YWIT) staff have been working with the families from the start. Most recently, they designed a short-term project, 'What's the Photostory?', to help 15 young Syrians, aged 9-21, tell their story through photographs they took themselves, representing a significant event in their lives.

This project included five participatory workshops (including local fieldtrips) facilitated by youth workers, through which images and text were created by participants, based on their everyday, subjective experiences of living in Ireland. The young people then hosted two main exhibitions of this work, one in October 2017 at the Source Arts Centre, and one in November 2017 in the Excel Theatre in Tipperary town.

Photostory exhibitions

A photostory resource pack was completed that can be used both to open dialogue with young people about the experiences of the young Syrians, and to enhance youth work processes in general.

They also got to display their exhibition at the Aviva Stadium as part of the NYCI One World Week: <http://youthworktipperary.ie/blog/whats-the-photostory-syria-tipperary/>.

The young people were filmed talking about their stories. The families enjoyed a special night in Thurles at which their children spoke about their experiences. Group work and facilitation practices followed to ensure that the young people were comfortable engaging in dialogue with staff. They were actively engaged in planning for the programme they will participate in for the coming year.

The young people's views were sought in all aspects of project design, delivery and evaluation. Projects are supported to send members to Comhairle na nÓg and each project is represented by two young people who sit on the YWIT junior board of management.

The 'What's the Photostory?' project enabled the young people to represent themselves and the organisation at a national level.



Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

CLARECARE SUPPORT SERVICE WINS AWARD



The Clarecare Springboard project, based in Harmony Row, Ennis, provides outreach services to families and children in homes, schools and community settings in the Ennis urban area.

Group supports include parenting programmes, social and emotional skills groups for children, parent and toddler groups, and summer camps.

In the past, summer camps were not run for young people aged over 12, but, at the request of the young people in this age range, a summer camp was organised for 13 young people in 2016. Feedback was very positive. The young people asked for the camp to continue, and sought involvement in the planning process.

Participants from the 2016 summer camp were invited to three planning meetings, with the venue and food provided by Clarecare. As a result of their feedback, new activities were added and the camp lasted longer.

The Springboard 2017 summer camp programme was entirely created from the collectively agreed choices of the young people involved in the planning. Clarecare Springboard Family Support became the first organisation in Co Clare to receive the Investing in Children Membership Award™ for good practice in involving young people in service planning and delivery.

Six young people were central to the planning: Naomi, Matthew, Tara, Vanessa, Katie and Alex.

Young people's feedback to the Investing in Children representative:

.....
"I felt listened to, I was comfortable in the group."

"Everybody was included, nobody was left out."

"The staff were really helpful and took our opinions."

"I enjoyed all the camp because I got to plan it from the beginning."
.....



The young people were delighted that Springboard received the award. According to Matthew, *"It was good to get the award because I don't win that many awards and I can put it in my CV"*. He was also pleased that the young people were acknowledged in the awards ceremony: *"Even though we knew Clarecare was getting an award, we never thought we'd get one"*. Tara said she was *"glad to be involved in getting the award as it made me feel useful and it was nice experiencing something new. It also felt good as Springboard deserved the award"*.

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

CLARE TEENAGERS BRIGHTEN UP CHILDREN'S SPACE



Teenagers created a series of bright, cheerful murals, depicting popular cartoon characters and superheroes, for children who use the recreational space at the Tusla offices in Ennis, Co Clare.

The initiative was part of Tusla's Child and Youth Participation seed funding provided to the Clare Youth Service Younger Voices group. The project was initiated by Younger Voices members who wanted to brighten up a space primarily used by children accessing Tusla's services.

The Mural Art Project, which features drawings of characters from the likes of 'Paw Patrol' and 'SpongeBob SquarePants', is titled 'Random Acts of Kindness' and was unveiled at the Tusla offices in River House.

Children's opinions sought

The Younger Voices members first designed a proposal for the board of Clare Youth Service to use fund-raised income to co-fund the project. Once funding had been secured, they sought the opinions of the children using the facility, who gave their ideas on what should be included, and how they would like the space to look.

A number of teenagers signed up to create a cartoon-themed story through creative murals, and worked on the project for the three months. It was launched on 29 June 2018.

Aine Mellett, PPFS Senior Manager, Tusla, thanked Clare Youth Service and young people involved for their support with this project.

.....

"Not only are the murals beautiful creations in their own right but they have been designed by young people taking into account the views and opinions of children who use our services. I commend the young people for their exceptional talent and commitment and for making the space brighter and much more welcoming."

.....

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

YOUNG PEOPLE HIGHLIGHT MENTAL HEALTH NEGATIVE TREATMENT



Young people in Limerick took part in three storytelling workshops to reflect on and share their experiences of engaging with Tusla-funded services, focusing on the area of 'Voice' in the Lundy Model.

They made it clear that they felt that mental health issues are often presented in a negative light, leading to misunderstanding and fear.

The 18 young people worked with staff to produce a video presenting the workshop discussions and material. The video is now available to Tusla for staff training and development. Limerick Youth Service received an Investing in Children award for its work.

A 'Be Well' Youth Advisory Panel was recruited from a group of young people involved in the 'Express Yourself' initiative, which provided a safe, secure space for young people with mental health issues to take part in different approaches such as confidence-building, and to learn new coping skills and strategies.

45 Be Well sessions

In 2017, 8-10 young people, aged 17-21, engaged in the Be Well panel's 45 sessions, developing, planning, implementing and evaluating programmes, activities, projects and services.

Six of them completed a communication programme and delivered four workshops at the national Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) conference to 120 JLOs, about mental health and effective strategies to engage young people.

Six members completed a training residential with the Be Well team; eight completed children's rights training at the national office of the Ombudsman for Children; three completed Tusla youth facilitator training, seven completed a drugs education/awareness programme, and six completed a self-care programme.

What the young people said:

.....
"People normally think about people 25 and over having mental health issues. With younger people, they blame teenage hormones. We have done our research. We want to bring this forward and get young people to go to counsellors."

"We got involved in organising a family fun day for Mental Health Week. Parents are happy when they see their kids happy."

"'Express yourself' was a photography project. We were into Vikings. We wanted to use this to show the 'battle with our inner demons' etc."

"We also did an 'Alice in Wonderland' one showing that 'It's ok to be weird'."

"Young people face a lot of problems today. A main factor affecting young people's mental health is social media. We learned that we can block people, etc. Life is portrayed as fabulous on the Internet."
.....

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

NOT 'WHAT'S OK?' BUT 'WHAT'S MISSING?'



Longford Westmeath CYPSC (LW CYPSC) brings together decision-makers in Longford and Westmeath, who work collectively to ensure that the services and supports needed by children and young people in the area are provided and developed.

The Child and Youth Participation Sub-group was established to increase the participation of children and young people across the counties in the development of the LW CYPSC Three-Year Strategic Plan 2019-2022. The group secured seed funding from Tusla's Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding initiative for the Participation Project.

In year one of the project, consultations were held with around 400 children and young people aged 3-24 years. One young-person facilitator explained:

"A lot of the time we ask what is OK, but it is important to ask what is missing. What the community needs. We had a voting system - what was the most important? We said, more facilities for young people and child and youth-friendly spaces. More transport."

The findings were compiled in a report and checked by children and young people to ensure their views had been represented accurately. This report was presented to the LW CYPSC and the key actions put forward by the children and young people were submitted for consideration in the strategic plan. A number of these actions have already been implemented, such as music workshops, a pet information event, mental health workshops and rotating Comhairle meetings.

Once-off becomes ongoing

Following the success of the year-one project, what was initially planned as once-off consultation has evolved into ongoing dialogue with children and young people, to inject their voice and input into the LW CYPSC itself in a meaningful way.

The 'Shout Out 4 Youth' event held in November 2018 was an opportunity to provide local, regional and national professionals with insights into how the children and young people are actively involved with their local CYPSC. More importantly, it was a celebration of all the hard work achieved to date, and an opportunity to discuss the future of the Participation Project. Young people said,

.....

"It gives you an extra push to keep going when they listen to us".

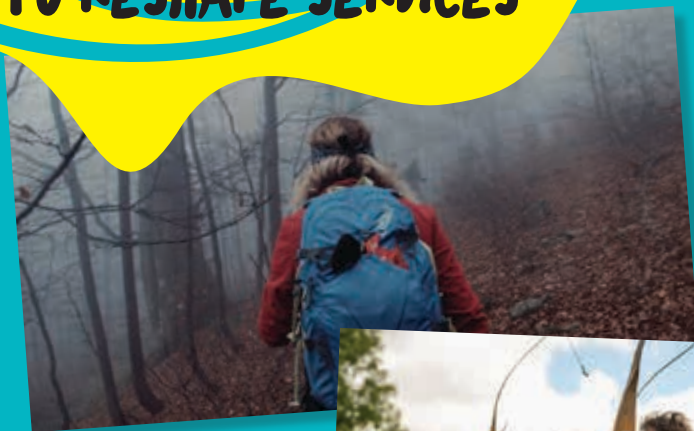
.....

The young people proposed CYPSC Youth Forums at a local level, with representatives sitting on the Child and Youth Participation Sub-group and bringing feedback to their meetings. This idea is currently being explored.

The LW CYPSC received the Investing in Children Membership Award™ on two occasions for their work, and represented their project at Tusla's third National Child and Youth Participation Conference, in Athlone 2018.

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

TUSLA CHAMPS HELP TO RESHAPE SERVICES



Tusla Champs is a leadership and development programme for young people aged 16-18 years from the Cavan Monaghan area who have experienced Tusla services either in the community or as a child in care.

The purpose of the programme, run collaboratively by Tusla, the Compass Project and Youth Advocate Programmes (YAP) Ireland, was to give a group of young people an opportunity to take part in a leadership and development programme based on the Response Ability Pathways (RAP) approach and the Circle of Courage, which focuses on the idea that experiencing a true sense of belonging, mastery, generosity and independence will help lead to a resilient person.

Tusla Champs, rooted in Lundy's Model of Participation, was funded through Tusla's Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding initiative.

The project created an open space for young people to self-direct their learning and to develop their interests in leadership. They were consulted about the programme content before it began. After each session they were asked for feedback. This led to changes in the programme content and how it was delivered.

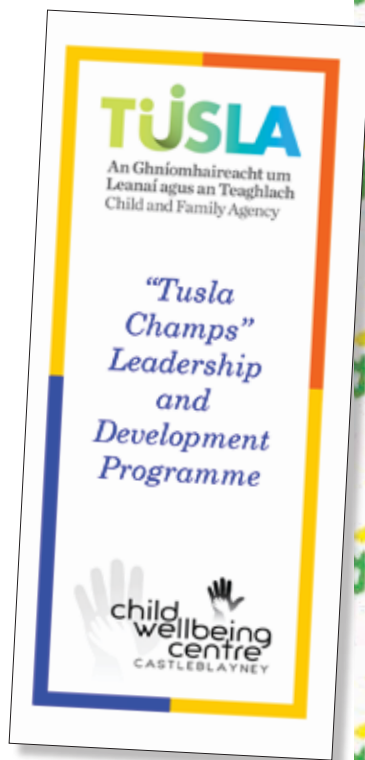
Relaxed dialogue

Tusla Champs supported the young people to meet with social work teams and senior management to inform them directly of their experience of Tusla services. They were comfortable and relaxed in the centre where the sessions were held, and thus open to engaging in dialogue with their peers, facilitators and staff.

The young people identified a need to encourage other young people to get involved. They attended training so they could facilitate Agenda Days in their local area. This also allowed them to apply their new leadership skills. They are due to meet with senior Tusla managers in an effort to reshape services based on their experiences of them.

The young people have made new friends and overcome any social anxiety, which has hugely benefited them. The opportunity to self-direct their learning helped to open up a dialogue in which they not only spoke up but also found it easier to talk about their lives and experiences.

The young people are highly invested in making the most of their time in the project and want to highlight the importance of change. Tusla Champs received the Investing in Children Membership Award™ for the project.



Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

AFTERCARE STORIES HAVE A HAPPY ENDING



The Cavan/Monaghan Participation Forum undertook an Aftercare Stories project whereby care leavers told their story of their time in care. They submitted their written stories based on three headings taken from Signs of Safety: What was good about being in care? What could have been improved? What wasn't so good about being in care?

The project ran alongside a poster and leaflet campaign. Everyone who contributed a story received €50, and all the information gathered is being used to improve services. The idea for the project came from the young adults who participate in the Participation Forum; they saw it as an opportunity to support other care leavers.

The Participation Forum, which has been running in Cavan/Monaghan for the last four years, was developed based on the needs of the young adults who attend. Guest speakers, from areas such as Money and Advice Budgeting Service (MABS), mental health, sexual health and positive relationships, have spoken to the group based on what the members felt they needed.

The group itself has enabled service users to feel supported and make connections with other people in the same situation as themselves. The forum is open to all service users and is supported by the Aftercare team.

Aftercare feedback

The Aftercare Stories project provided young adults with the opportunity to give feedback to Tusla on their experiences of care and leaving care, and how they felt Aftercare services need to change and adapt to meet the needs of children in care and care leavers. The young adults also gave input into the annual Aftercare operational plan, and reviewed and assessed the plan for the previous year.

Concerning the difficulties of leaving care at 18, the young people highlighted isolation, loneliness and a need for support, as well as the risk of homelessness. In response, the Aftercare service is developing a supported lodgings project whereby placements are provided for care leavers for as long as they need them.

Young people also spoke about the need for peer mentors for care leavers. A peer mentoring project is now in the pipeline. The care leavers will attend an accredited training programme to become peer mentors and support other young people who have left care.

The Cavan/Monaghan Participation Forum received the Investing in Children Membership Award™ for their Aftercare Stories project, and presented a workshop on their work at Tusla's third Child and Youth Participation Conference, in 2018.

GROUP PROMOTES YOUNG PEOPLE'S CYBER SAFETY



The Cyber Safety Hub in Dublin North is a project funded by the Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding initiative. A programme called 'Preparing 4 Life' was developed by young people, for young people, and was delivered by psychotherapist Kim Cromwell in conjunction with Tusla PPFS Dublin North.

The programme, delivered over two days to 12-18-year-olds, focuses on issues such as bloggers and influencers, selfie filters and photoshop, catfishing and fake profiles, sexting, fake news and clickbait, apps, chatrooms and online grooming. The workshop also covers topics on well-being, relationships and anxiety.

For the development of the programme, young people from various youth services identified core issues relating to online safety. Lots of practical discussions and Agenda Days were facilitated. Young people also conducted semi-structured interviews to tease out some of the more complex issues of sexting and cyberbullying. These discussions helped to decide the content for the two-day workshop. They also highlighted that young people want services and the community to understand online issues from their point of view.

Cyber safety video

The young people made an excellent informational video on cyber safety titled 'This is Me' for their workshop at Tusla's third National Child and Youth Participation Conference, in 2018. Available to view on YouTube, it ends with the message

***'CyberSpace is a real place, with real people,
with real feelings', and encourages people to be
'Cyber Safe, Aware, Smart and Kind'.***

As a result of their participation in the project, the young people became more aware of the negative impact of cyberbullying and sexting, and are motivated to develop their knowledge and skills to support their peers. They are also keen to develop support hubs on sites accessible to young people in their communities.

They have continued to engage with the project and have worked extremely hard. There is a noticeable change in their discourse about online issues, and no doubt about their motivation to continue to support their peers.

The Cyber Safety Hub is also rolling out cyber safety training for professionals and parents in Dublin North East over the coming months. It received the Investing in Children Membership Award™ for the project.

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

WARRIOR STUDENTS ARMED WITH MINDFULNESS



The Warrior Programme is a youth mindfulness programme that enables young people to travel a safe, mindful path on the journey from childhood to adulthood.

The project, a 10-week mindfulness project for second-year students in two schools, Longwood and Trim in Co Meath, ran for two years. At the end of the first year, they completed an evaluation of what they found most useful, what they liked, what they would change and what they had learned. The programme was amended to incorporate their feedback. At the beginning of each session, the young people are asked how their week went. The session is then shaped to deal with the issues they have raised.

The young people enjoyed the meditation and body scanning at the start of each session and felt it had helped them in their everyday lives. As a result the sessions were adapted to give them more opportunities to do this. Their knowledge and understanding of mindfulness vastly improved over the 10 weeks. Through encouragement to openly discuss their feelings and issues, they gained tools to help them in their daily lives.

A new skill for life

On the last day of their project, the young people went on a day trip to The Sanctuary, a mindfulness and meditation centre in the heart of Dublin.

Funded under the Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding initiative, the Warrior Programme was run in conjunction with Trim Family Resource Centre, the SMART Youth Justice Project and Boyne School Completion.

It not only provided opportunities for the young people to engage in dialogue, it also taught them a life skill that will change how they interact with the world. In the words of the young people: *"We learned how to know what stress is and how to deal with it, how to live in the present"*.

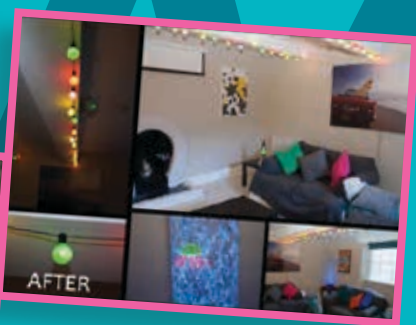
The programme, while enabling the young people to practice mindfulness, also developed wider awareness of young people's mental health and how to mind and protect it. They now know 'how to deal with things that are happening' and how to 'keep fit in the head'.

Given the success of the Warrior Programme, it is hoped to continue offering it to second-year students. It received the Investing in Children Membership Award™ for the project.



Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

OLD ART-ROOM TRANSFORMED INTO INVITING 'LAZY LOUNGE'



As the winter of 2016 approached, Extern Dublin North engaged in the exciting opportunity to work in collaboration with a family resource centre – St Helena’s in Finglas – on redesigning an old art-room in the centre as a safe and inviting space for young people.

Young people were consulted on and participated in the project so that they would have a sense of ownership. Participants were sought from the extended cohort and interested young people were identified. They were involved throughout the process, from grant application and sourcing of donations to the physical work needed to transform the art-room.

All challenges met

The young people engaged extremely well in the process, responded well to the challenges and limitations that any project raises, and learnt a lot. The progress of the project was captured through visual representation and testimonials.

The completed room, called ‘The Lazy Lounge’, opened on 22 March 2018. It is a great resource for young people in the local community. It provides a safe, welcoming space for them to discuss issues important to them, seek information and feel a sense of belonging.

The project highlighted what can be achieved through active participation. Everyone in Extern Dublin North and St Helena’s Family Resource Centre appreciated the funding received from the Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding initiative, which enabled them to undertake this project.



Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

PARTICIPATION DAY ENJOYED BY OVER 300 PEOPLE



A Participation Fun Day for both families who have experienced Tusla services and the wider community was organised in Co Monaghan in summer 2016. The planning was carried out in consultation with young people from the Cavan Monaghan participation group.

While the event was open to everyone from the community, invitations were sent to all families in the area that had been in contact with Tusla services. The aim of the day was to bridge the gap between professionals, children, young people and families.

Organised by young people who receive Tusla services, the Participation Day was held in the Castleblayney Child Well-being Centre on 26 August 2016. Over 300 children and family members attended and it was a great success.

Food was served through sponsored donations from local businesses, and games were facilitated by local youth services and their staff. Bouncy castles and activities were provided by Pelican Promotions, who also supplied the music and entertainment.

Tusla awareness

The Participation Day greatly increased public awareness of Tusla in Cavan and Monaghan. It was covered by two local papers as well as on radio.

The professionals who attended had the opportunity to network, and organised stalls to provide information to the public about their roles. This communicated a message to those in attendance that Tusla and its funded agencies work together in partnership to provide services to children, young people and their families.

The day also served as a re-focus for staff who work with children and young people, and a reminder of the importance of listening to the views of children and encouraging them to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

The feedback from the consultation and the Participation Day itself formed an integral part of the local area participation plan.

Project supported by Tusla Child and Youth Participation Seed Funding.

RYAN (11) WINS CHILD PROTECTION POSTER PRIZE




Child Protection Awareness Week

'Stronger Communities, Safer Children'

MON - 25th Sept	TUES - 26th Sept	WED - 27th Sept	THUR - 28th Sept
<p>8.30am - 10.30am Teach na nAbpóirí PRC, Caron and Wingham Family Resource Centres Launch 'Stronger Communities, Safer Children' - Child Protection Awareness week. Breakfast with the community</p> <p>11-12.30pm Launch of Fostering Monaghan Service in Lifford Castlebarrow</p> <p>FRI - 29th Sept</p> <p>10pm Teach na nAbpóirí Resource Centres, Caron Town Orange Design poster show and awareness meeting</p> <p>11am Childlessness Workshop Dr Gerald O'Connell and Co-ordinator No Reg young people debate on 'The UN rights of the Child'</p> <p>8-8.30pm Orange Theatre Reference documentary in Monaghan and Rural Discussion Topic - Focus Family Resource Centre Killyshanna - Fostering Todd Gail</p>	<p>11-12.30pm Brúnaí Integrated Refugee Resettlement Centre The protection of children in the community - Duty Social Work Service Caron and RPRC</p> <p>11-12pm Teach na nAbpóirí Talk on Child Protection and Cultural Differences</p> <p>8pm RPRC Building Monaghan (Lifford) "The Impact and Protection of Children from Child Sexual Abuse in Caron and Monaghan" - Senior U.N. Officer, UNICEF, Psychological and RPRC Monaghan</p> <p>9pm Caron Family Resource Centre Caron Senior Carers, Talk on Internet Safety (Caron Monaghan ETR) and Legal Workshop</p> <p>8pm Killyshanna PRC Continuity Debate "Parental Rights" to be investigated by the actions of their children - Focus/Young person debate</p>	<p>11 - 12pm Focus PRC Killyshanna "The Protection of Children in the Community" - Duty Social Work Team Caron and RPRC</p> <p>10-11pm in Teach na nAbpóirí Section Victims (Document) and Use Victims (Document, and Quality) - The impact of Domestic Abuse on Children and reference to family and social</p> <p>7pm Killyshanna Family Resource Centre Parent Information Session "Taking Sex to your Heart in 2021"</p> <p>10-11pm Caron Family Resource Centre No Reg Young People Open Forum for families - to look at place contact Caron Family Resource Centre 10pm Teach na nAbpóirí Family Resource Centre, Caron Town Family Fun Day 10pm Teach na nAbpóirí, PRC, Killyshanna - Fun Day 2pm FOCUS PRC Killyshanna Fun Day and Talk on "Childline" from 1pm</p>	<p>10-11.30 Children First Information Session "Implementation of Children First" - Doreen Moran Martin, takes place in Caron Library</p> <p>10-11pm Caron Library Reference Documentary Video and Panel Discussion</p> <p>Children First Information Session 2.30pm Lifford Castlebarrow "Implementation of Children First" - Doreen Moran Martin</p> <p>7pm Killyshanna Family Resource Centre Topic on internet safety (Caron Monaghan ETR)</p> <p>7pm Teach na nAbpóirí, Child Welfare Centre, Castlebarrow Keeping our arms safe - the interrelationship of "Childline" - Dr Paul Caffery, Senior Carer Protection</p>



If you are worried about the protection and welfare of a child in your community please contact Early Social Work team in Monaghan 047 40624 or Caron 043 4377346. If you would like further details on Child Protection week please contact your local Family Resource Centre or Caron Group 047 5755625



To help promote Child Protection Week, in September 2017, Cavan/Monaghan launched a poster competition in both counties. The Child Protection Week organising committee in Cavan/Monaghan felt that children and young people from the area should be central to the process of putting together the week's activities and promoting the week.

Applicants were asked to describe in a picture what a happy, inclusive community would look like to them. A brief explanation of criteria was provided.

The competition was rolled out in schools, agencies and services across Cavan/Monaghan. There were first, second and third prizes in two age categories in each county, and an overall winner.

All four of the Family Resource Centres in Cavan/Monaghan agreed to oversee the competition in their areas, including collecting the entries.

150 entries

Over 150 children took part in the competition, which was way beyond the expectations of the organising committee.

Judging the works of art was a tough job as the standard was extremely high. The overall winner was Ryan, a 11-year-old from Clones, Co Monaghan. Ryan's artwork was used on the promotion posters throughout Cavan/Monaghan to promote the week's events in both counties.

The competition aided the promotion of Child Protection Week and got communities talking about what this week might include or why such a week would benefit the community. The organising committee felt that the competition played a large part in attracting the participation of families in the events that were held throughout the week.

TEN GIRLS HELP TO TACKLE OUTBREAK OF BULLYING



Teach Oscail Family Resource Centre and the Garda Diversion 365 Project in Cavan came together to devise a programme to tackle the issue of bullying, which was causing concern in the local community.

The issue was mainly affecting a large group of girls aged between 10 and 13 living in a large housing estate in Cavan town. The schools that the girls attended had also reported concerns and the bullying was having a negative impact on the whole school community.

Teach Oscail and the Garda Diversion staff came together to plan and develop a programme that would allow each participant an opportunity for self-development and help them to look at bullying through the eyes of both the victim and the bully.

20-week programme

It was decided to run the programme for 20 weeks: 10 weeks on self-development and 10 weeks creating an art or drama production portraying the effects of bullying on both victim and bully.

The Garda Diversion and Teach Oscail staff delivered the 10-week self-development programme. A drama facilitator facilitated the 10-week art and drama programme.

Ten girls took part in the programme and attended to completion. They planned, developed, filmed and produced a short drama in their local community that told the story of the impact of bullying on both the victim and the bully. To date, the film has been shown to the local community and at the launch of Child Protection Week 2017.

All the girls felt they had gained a lot of skills and knowledge from the project. They now peer-lead an anti-bullying campaign in their schools, and are always available to talk about their experiences and their new understanding of bullying and the effects it has on everyone.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

