

NIAPP

The National Interagency Prevention Programme (NIAPP) is a multidisciplinary service working with children and young people who have engaged in problematic/harmful or abusive sexual behaviour towards any person directly and/or online. The age of those who can access the service are from 3 years old up to referral of their 18th birthday. Treatment/Interventions can vary from group or 1:1 work with children and their parents/carers. We view parent/carer's involvement as pivotal in all processes with children and young people from assessment to planning and intervention

What is NIAPP?

NIAPP is a Tusla service providing support to young people referred from age 3 up to their 18th birthday who have engaged in problematic, harmful, or abusive sexual behaviour. Young people may live in the community, residential care, and detention centres. NIAPP accept referrals from within Tusla, and any other relevant professionals once concern has been notified to local Tusla Social Work Department.

How we are staffed

We work on a "core and cluster" model. This means that we have a dedicated team of staff along with staff released from other services within and external to Tusla.

It must be noted that there may be local variance in the range of service availability depending on resources.

Referral Criteria for NIAPP

In circumstances where there your child denies the behaviours, there must be a professional consensus that problematic, harmful, or abusive sexual behaviour has occurred for a referral to be made to NIAPP. Denial by a child is quite common as they may struggle to accept responsibility at the early stages.

What to Expect

A professional will have referred you to NIAPP for assessment as there is concern you have/are engaging in problematic, harmful, or abusive sexual behaviour online or in person. Your case will also have been referred to the Social Work Department and An Garda Síochána as it is a Child Protection concern.

You and your child will be invited to attend NIAPP for appointments. The service will be explained to you as well as the process of assessment and options for treatment/intervention.

Once the referral is accepted by NIAPP, the Assessment Team allocated to your family will meet with you and your child separately to discuss the overall situation. We will explore your family background, what happened; what else was going on at the time; the impact of abuse on the victim(s), your child or young person and the families involved.

The Process

The Assessment is quite comprehensive and usually requires four - six appointments in order to complete. A comprehensive NIAPP Assessment includes interviews with parents/carers, the young person, psychometric questionnaires, a structured assessment framework and considers any previous relevant assessments your child may have undertaken.

Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers often want to believe that “it will never happen again.” Often, parents/carers are concerned that in some way they will be ‘blamed’ for their young person’s harmful sexual behaviours. By providing the assessment team with your full family history; you are helping to ensure your child gets the help they need for a better future.

Feedback and Recommendations

At the end of the process, the assessment report including treatment plan and recommendations are shared with the young person and their parents/carers in a feedback appointment.

The report and recommendations are also shared with the Social Work Department and Referrer.

Intervention

Intervention for young people in the community may be a group or individual programme for parents/carers and young people depending on the service available in the local area. Intervention typically lasts 2 years.

Intervention with younger children may vary depending on their needs and the family circumstances.

Other Interventions may be recommended following assessment to meet the particular needs of a young person.

What Parents/Carers said...

Parents talked about feeling isolated and judged and how important it was to know that they were not alone and that there is help.

“I’d be lying if I said that I wasn’t worried or concerned about how other people would see it and how other people would judge him and maybe judge me or judge us about what happened as well.” (Alex)

“I suppose one of the things is realizing that you’re not actually alone. Neither you nor your child are alone in in this. When we heard about it first, we thought ‘Jesus, 5 million people in Ireland and we’re the only ones that have this problem’”. (Ian)

“You’re not on your own there are other families out there in the same situation. NIAPP helped us to realise that we are not on our own and there is support available.” (John)

“Because of the help we received from NIAPP and the social workers, my son’s life and mine is in a much better place.” (Sandra)

“Thanks to NIAPP I can talk to my [teenager] and other children now about problems and that it’s never too late to change them problems.” (Jennifer)

Parents described finding out as,

“the most traumatic thing that could happen in a family...just off the scale in terms of seriousness.” (Peter)

“I thought I’d never smile again, that I’d never laugh again...all these things that you just felt like, I suppose you felt like your life’s over, all of us” (Jane).

“couldn’t speak to, couldn’t look at [him]...a feeling of panic...I wanted to punch, I wanted to kill him.” (Esther)

They talked about choosing to support their child and getting help for them.

Parents describe how NIAPP helped them to understand their young person’s behaviour,

“To be honest, it wasn’t the abusive actions of our child that brought us to NIAPP, it was the unconditional love for our child; it was the desire to support, help, and protect our child and to prevent this ever happening again that brought us here.” (Ann)

“there’s a reason there, and it may not be a logical reason or a proper reason but there’s a reason why they did it and we have to get to that reason and find out why and make sure that they don’t ever do it again.” (Mary)

“I’ve always felt that my son isn’t a bad person... I think he’s a good kid...and it happened at a particular time, but I don’t think he’s a bad kid.” (Paul)

“I think he’s a good kid...and it happened at a particular time, but I don’t think he’s a bad kid.” (Chris)