

TÜSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency



Child & Youth Participation Awards 2024



CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS
ALLIANCE



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



GAISCE
THE PRESIDENT'S
AWARD



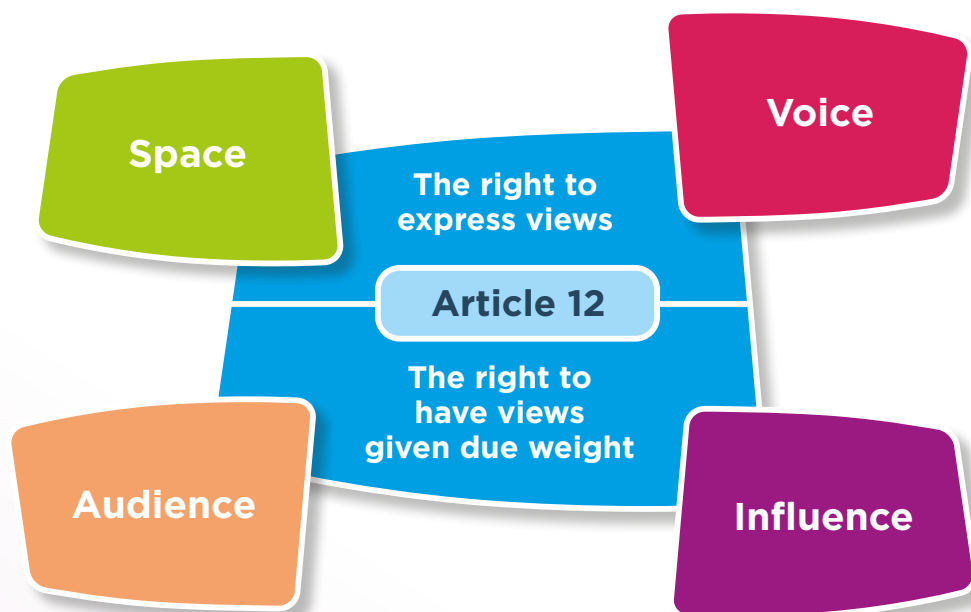
ombudsman
do leanaí
for children



In 2024 Tusla partnered with Gaisce, the Children’s Rights Alliance, DCEDIY, the Office of the Children’s Ombudsman, and Hub na nÓg to for the Child & Youth Participation Award process. Under Article 12 of the UNCRC, all children have a right to have their voice heard in any decision that affects them.

The CYPA partners wanted to develop an award that would give recognition to services and projects who have demonstrated a commitment to ensuring that this right is upheld for those who use their service. The CYPA process involves services making an application for an award based on a participatory project that they have completed alongside young people or children in their service. Services are assessed under criteria that has been guided by the Lundy Model of Child & Youth Participation (2007) and need to show that their work meets these criteria in an age-appropriate way.

Following a site visit by a Participation & Partnership Officer, and review by the CYPA Evaluation Committee, 29 services achieved an award in 2024 for their outstanding work to ensure young people’s voices were captured in decision-making processes. This document lists all 29 services who achieved an award in 2024 and provides a brief overview of each project. Each project had a huge impact on young people’s ability to participate in decision-making, and many can be easily replicated by other services. If you would like further information on any of the projects included here, please contact your regional participation officer.



Lundy Model of Participation (2007)

Further information on the CYPA and how to apply for an award can be found [here](#) or by contacting your regional Participation Officer.

Regional Participation and Partnership Officers:

Dublin Mid Leinster:

Email: cathal.smyth@tusla.ie

Dubin Northeast:

Email: davidj.obrien@tusla.ie

South East:

Email: claire.redmond1@tusla.ie



DUBLIN MID LEINSTER

Daughters of Charity, Cherry Orchard - Tree of ideas

DOC, Cherry Orchard supported young people who use their service to develop a young person's committee to drive positive changes in the centre. One of the committees' ideas was the 'Tree of Ideas' which was an excellent way for them to capture the voice of all young people who use the service. One of the significant changes that came from this initiative included development of a new sensory garden that was designed based on feedback from the committee and views that other young people shared on the 'Tree of Ideas'.

Barnardos, TLC Kidz Project - Care Packs

This programme for children and mothers who are impacted by domestic violence and abuse supported children who engaged with the service to create care packs for other young people who have experienced violence in the home. The children worked with staff to decide on the items that would help to make children feel safe in times of difficulty. They decided it was important to include a letter of support from the children in the group, along with one from the facilitator as an introduction. They also picked all the items that they liked such as snacks, fidget toys, McDonalds vouchers and a squishmallow. The packs were distributed to DV workers across the area and provided to new participants in the TLC Kidz programme.

The Marian Centre - Our Space

The service was provided with a permanent room in the community centre for their after-school group. This allowed them to plan to make changes to the space. The service engaged with children who attend to plan for the changes. The children all worked together and decided that brightening up the space with fresh colors, a Lego area and a library were all priorities to make the space what they needed it to be.



Tusla, Ballydowd Special Care Unit - Chill Out Room

Young people in this special care service highlighted that one of the areas was not fit for purpose for young people their age. They brought their views to the managers meeting and were provided with funding to redesign the room to how they wanted it to be. Young people were involved in repainting the room and purchasing new equipment and furniture. The space is now more age appropriate for young people in the service and is used frequently.

Tusla, Rosebrook Residential Service - The Music Room

Young people in Rosebrook wanted to renovate an old unused gym space in their house. The young person who took the lead on this project gutted the space, repainted it and chose all the equipment that was purchased for the room. The room is now a welcoming space young people can bring their friends to visit and for band practice.

Tusla, Family Support, Bridge House - Family Mornings

The Bridge House Family Support team host family mornings in various locations around DSC. They used the Lundy model to influence how they operate which resulted in some significant changes such as moving to a bigger space, opening in more locations, and opening the group in the summer months. Lots of other changes also came because of their consultations.

DUBLIN NORTHEAST

Dublin North City - Tusla, Aftercare & Social Work

Young people in aftercare in conjunction with Tusla Aftercare DNC put together a day of celebration to mark Care Day on Friday February 16th, 2024. The aim of this celebratory day was to bring young people with care and aftercare experiences together to share their experiences, build positive relationships amongst peers and professionals. The day involved numerous football matches in TUD Grangegorman with teams from Tusla, Don Bosco Care, Sport Against Racism Ireland, Crosscare and TUD we. Also present were former Irish International Keith Treacy and former football manager and author Roddy Collins. Bohemian's F.C and the Ombudsman for Children. Celebrations afterward enticed the young people in aftercare to consider the possibilities and opportunities and to showcase what college life could be like for them if they were to choose that option.

**Tusla, Fostering Team, Cavan - CAMRY**

The fostering team social work leader in Cavan & Monaghan along with other volunteer's support children and young people in the Cavan and Monaghan Rainbow Youth group. Through the support the CYP receive, they have received acceptance, understanding and advice for young people, parents and siblings. Advocacy is also provided on their behalf with schools, other services and professionals. Additionally, the service promotes LGBTQI rights within schools and services and liaises with national services on the young people's behalf. The group has had many events through which they express their voices. 'Knowing Me knowing You' was one such network event in Cavan Monaghan welcoming 150 professionals and educating them on being an LGBTQI ally. They are now working on developing a diversity committee in schools in Cavan in 2024.

Tusla, Fostering Team, Monaghan - Children who Care

As part of the fostering process children of foster carers play a vital part in the fostering process. These children and young people also require ongoing supports given that they share the living space of a child in foster care, their experiences are crucial to successful placements.

The 'children who care' group which is composed of children and young people who foster were invited by their Tusla fostering staff to take part in creative workshops and to create a logo or symbol that reflects their voices and experiences of being 'children who care.' The children and young people collaborated with an artist to create a logo that they thought fitted their concept of being 'children who care.'

Dowra Resource Centre, Cavan - Dowra Afterschool Service

Dowra Afterschool Service has been operational for eighteen years; the service caters for twenty-five children ranging in age from 5 to 12yrs old. The service provides supervised homework supports, snacks and food and child led activities focussed on play. There is also an outdoor play area for the children. The service wished to conduct a meaningful review of their service and requested the children to discuss what they liked, disliked or what they wanted to change about their service. The process was referred to start, stop, or continue and was successfully completed with minor changes demonstrating the influence of the children's voices.



Daughters of Charity, Santry, Dublin - Lisdeel Family Centre, Child & Family Service

Lisdeel Family Centre (DOC) is a not-for-profit voluntary organisation who provides support to children up to 18 years of age and to their parents and guardians. The service caters for fifty-two children and decided to ask all children what they liked, disliked, and wanted to change about their service. The children were happy to take part and created their own survey for their peers. They developed a feedback process, thanked their peers for engaging in the survey and fed back the results which were implemented by the service. They have also created a survey of ideas for a rock garden for children who are ending their time with the service. The plan is to leave an enduring message in their garden.

St. Eithne's Girls National School, Edenmore Dublin 5 - Student School Council

The cornerstone of youth participation in St. Eithne's school are the student council. Students in fifth and sixth class (11- 12 year-olds) generally meet once monthly to discuss ideas, suggestions, or changes that general population of pupils of the school have proposed. The student council provides a voice for all students, over the years various projects have been completed some of which have enhanced the school grounds. Students have had fundraising days they have also assisted with wellbeing week. One of the many achievements which the student council has been instrumental in is changes to school policies on the uniform.

SOUTHEAST

Kilkenny CFSN's and Foroige - Finding your way in the Wild Wild Web

A group of approximately 20 young people from Co. Kilkenny, ranging from schoolchildren, young people from the Travelling Community and young people with additional needs, participated in an Agenda Day, where they were asked their views about internet safety. It was an adult-free space, and the young people devised how they would like important messages to be communicated. A final animation piece was developed using all the input from the young people, including a voiceover. 'Finding Your Way in the Wild Wild Web' is an initiative that highlights the importance of internet safety and provides such useful tips as block and report functions to keep you safe from internet predators. The animation has been shown in local schools and at the participation awards. They are currently campaigning to have it shown in cinemas before the movie presentation.



Ossory Youth, Kilkenny - The culture of the service

Ossory youth service put forward the culture of their service for evaluation. Many young people ranging in age from 11 to 18 years old attend the service. Ossory youth keep two spaces on their board of directors for young people giving them a direct influence on decision making. Young people are consulted on the organisations statement of strategy and there is a “have your say” box in the building where the young people are encouraged to provide feedback, suggestions or recommendations for their groups or for the organisation. Participation is entirely voluntary in Ossory youth and young people chose what groups they attend depending on their interest. Young people are responsible for the establishment of new groups such as the Saturday Drop-in, started in response to them expressing concern about a lack of places for young people to go on a Saturday in the city.

First Steps Creche, Baile Beag, Waterford - Changing the culture of the service

Having completed child and youth participation training this year the staff at Ballybeg were inspired to change the culture of the creche and adopt a more participatory type of practice with the children. Beginning with changing the creche policy to reflect this value they then supported the children to help write a mission statement. Along with this they provide two more examples of their new participatory drive in action; child participation in First Aid at the creche and in reviewing and revising the menu for the creche.

South Tipperary County Council - Consultation with children and young people for Quality of life in Clonmel

To carry out the consultation Tipperary County Council sought to collaborate with TUS and the South Tipperary Arts Centre. Focus groups were held with children and young people of varying ages. From a virtual bus ride around the town the development of a questionnaire and the collating of postcards detailing potential changes sent to decision makers in the council, young people report many positive changes in the town. Transport links have improved, parks have been upgraded and a youth festival will now be held yearly. Child friendly coffee shops have also been suggested.



SOUTHWEST

Glasheen Boys National School, Cork - The Nurture Room

Glasheen Boys National School is in the suburbs of Cork City. There are currently 411 number of pupils attending the school. School staff recognised that some of the pupils were not always emotionally ready to learn when they came to school and required an increased level of support to ready them to access the wider curriculum. For this reason, a Nurture Room (The Den) was established. Many small projects were then undertaken in the nurture room and influenced the wider school environment. One example provided was the extension of breakfast club to the whole school as requested by the pupils attending the nurture room.

WEST NORTHWEST

Tubbercurry Family Resource Centre - Let's Play

This preschool project saw Tubbercurry FRC engage with children who attend the service as part of the services improvement plan. The children wanted to upgrade the playground as it was unusable for much of the year in its current condition. The children were supported to identify the equipment for the new playground. They were involved in all the planning including site meetings with builders and suppliers. The result was a fantastic new playground that met all the needs highlighted by the children during the consultations.



Sligo Community Training - There's no plan Bee

In 2023 Sligo Community training centre were contacted by Young Social Innovators to take part in a pilot programme. Up to this point Young Social Innovators had only been accessible in a formal education setting. A consultation was held with a group of voluntary young people at the centre, and they agreed to participate in a pilot programme (to support YSI's inclusion of alternative education and training).

They called the project "there's no plan bee". After identifying their area of special interest, the group took time to research the topic and then came together to share ideas about how they would go about completing their goal. The group researched the project on-line, meet and consulted with a beekeeper, visited a local men's shed and spoke with the gardeners there. The young people made their own aprons using upcycled material from the hairdressing department. They created, planted, and maintained an outdoor bee garden, created a vegetable patch, planted herbs and made herbal tea. The tutors supported them to contact the local IDA where the centre is located, and the trainees successfully appealed for "No Mow May". The creation of an information display board was within the centre helped to raise awareness among all the attendees at the centre and the information was also displayed digitally within the centre.

Sligo Family Resource Centre - Halloween Party

On completion of CYP training the staff at the service created some tools to enhance Child and youth participation in their general intervention work. They also worked to improve the collective child and youth participation of the service by introducing a Halloween celebration, giving the children a voice in the planning of the party and ensuring accessibility for all.

Sligo Home Youth Liaison Service - Children's Fora Puppet Show

Young people in the service wanted to share their experience of living in care through a puppet show. The service provided workshops where the children learned how to make their own puppets. They were then supported to write a script to tell their stories. They then designed a set that and recorded their show. The video was shared with professional networks, foster carers and foster children in the area.



Tusla, Fostering Department, Sligo - A Bright Light

The fostering team wanted to enhance the voices of children whose parents are foster carers. Therefore, an invite went out to up to fifty children of foster carers who were invited to tell their stories and create a book that conveys their personal experiences. A smaller number of children and young people engaged in the project and went on to also create stop-motion animations to artistically share their experiences. The service engaged an associate writer and an associate artist from a Publishing company to assist the children & young people with their work. All children named in this project have pseudonyms, and their experiences were added to a book they created called 'A Bright light'.

Midwest

Clarecare - Children Supporting Children

The group of pupils from Scoil Chríost Rí worked together to produce four unique pieces of artwork which conveyed positive mental health messages to children engaging with the Clarecare service. They produced 4 pieces of work which were presented to Clarecare for use in their service. The work produced by the students went on to be used on the walls inside the service as well as on merchandise that was provided to people in the local community.

Foroige West Limerick Youth Initiative - The Gaggles Podcast

For the young people in Foroige West Limerick writing and recording music is one of their favourite ways to get their voices heard. With the arrival of new recording equipment, the young people set about making a podcast for their peers. Four episodes to date have focused on issues of importance such as the school system, autism awareness etc. Plans continue for its growth and parents are lining up to be interviewed. The young people attending the West Limerick Youth Initiative have a captive audience in the group facilitators and their parents who are confident in the ideas and commitment of the group. Being led by the interests of the young people the staff have upskilled in all things digital.



Tusla, PPFS & Home School Liaison Services, Limerick - Buddy Reading Programme Consultation

The Buddy Reading Programme was developed in March 2020 as a Tusla seed funding project. The rationale for the project can be traced back to Covid 19, when schools closed due to the government measures introduced to curtail the spread of the disease. This led to significant disruption in children's education. In some schools, the core areas of literacy, mathematics and wellbeing were moved to an online platform which required a large degree of parental involvement and capacity.

In March 2023, Tusla commissioned an external consultant, to capture key learning from the project. The primary research took place over 3 months and involved front-line engagement with primary school children, Transitions Year students, school staff and the programme funders. 16 transition year students, 18 primary school children, 6 school staff and 3 staff from Tusla PPFS took part. Many changes occurred in the programme based on this consultation. The young people now have complete autonomy over the books they choose to read. Young people can also choose whether participate post induction. The social aspect of the programme is now being recognised as equally important as the reading to the young people by the teachers.

Clare Youth Service - Hear our Voice

"Hear my Voice" is an example of participatory work that took place in Clare Youth service with the young people. The work developed organically from an initial conversation that was had with the young people in the group about participation. The young people expressed to the youth workers that they often find it hard to get their thoughts and opinion out there to others but that they do feel that there are messages that they would like to communicate to others. Hear my Voice is the result of this work - a short film created by the young people that communicates an important message to other young people; we all make mistakes; we all act impulsively but there is support out there for everyone and you can turn things around. The film was shown to an audience of their peer at a weekend youth festival over the Summer.



NATIONAL SERVICES

Barnardos, National - Childhood Domestic Violence & Abuse Project

The Empower Kids project was set up in 2020 to engage children to support them in their lived experience of domestic violence and abuse. The project wished to raise awareness and understanding of children and young people as victims and to give voice to them to validate their voices through shaping policies, services and the responses of services to them.

Empower kids worked with an Ad agency in 2024 to create their national campaign. The Empower children and young people stressed that they wanted to be listened to by services the public, judges, gardai and social workers. They launched a national campaign involving radio ads and social medial posts on domestic violence. The campaign also focussed on judges and gardai. The project built an extravaganza event, developed postcards with the children and young people and to highlight their message to people of importance.

Chime - The Magic within Our Ears

Children and young people availing of the Chime service worked closely with the service staff to create a truly inspiring book. Young people who participated had the opportunity to have their story heard in their own way. Chime facilitated workshops and liaised with a publisher who supported them in Creating 'The Magic Within Our Ears'. The book was launched by the young people in their local libraries. It is also available in bookshops and through the Chime website with profits going directly back into supporting the organization's services.

Creative Schools - The creative schools' programme

Creative schools support primary and post-primary schools and Youthreach centres across Ireland to put arts and creativity at the hearts of children's and young people's lives. Schools and Youthreach centres that join the programme take part in a two-year guided journey to develop a Creative Schools Plan unique to their own school, and to put it into action. Children and young people's involvement in planning, decision-making and reflection is central to the journey. The example of the programme being rolled out in Our Lady of Fatima School in Wexford town was provided. A beautiful marine mural on the school wall was unveiled at a ceremony showing the culmination of the two years creative work led by the pupils.

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