**Donegal Children & Young People’s services Committee (CYPSC)**

**Celebrating Achievement Event, 2nd March 2022**

An Grianan Hotel, Burt was the venue for the Donegal CYPSC Celebrating Achievement Event and the launch of the Donegal CYPSC Children & Young People’s Plan 2021-2023 (CYPP). This eagerly awaited event brought a host of CYPSC partner agencies together to celebrate their successful inter-agency cooperation and collaboration over the last 3 very challenging years.

Bernard Gloster, CEO Tusla Child & Family Agency describing the Children & Young people’s Plan said, “This plan is one which is already in action and making a significant difference to so many children and young people in Donegal. The collective effort of all organisations means Donegal has a collective focus on its children, their families and communities. This is the most important investment we can make in the future.”

Gerry Hone, CYPSC Chair 2018 – 2021, Acting Service Director Tusla Child & Family Agency commented “I was delighted to be part of an event celebrating 3 years of a range of supports to young people and their families to help improve health and general wellbeing.  The co-operation and collaboration that takes place within CYPSC between voluntary, community and statutory services in Co. Donegal is truly amazing and I’ve no doubt the new Children and Young People’s plan will be a resounding success given the people involved.  The focus on child and parental participation within the plan regardless of background, means young people, their carers and young adults are actually shaping the services provided to be more meaningful and relevant in their everyday lives. I wish all parties the best in the implementation of the new plan and congratulations on what CYPSC has achieved to date!”

Dr. Marie Hainsworth, Manager Donegal Domestic Violence Services launched the ‘Donegal Domestic Abuse Resource Pack’, developed by the CYPSC Safe & Secure Subcommittee. This resource provides frontline staff across agencies with the understanding and resources they need to better support clients experiencing, or traumatised by domestic abuse.

Chloe Mc Ginty, Donegal Parent & Family Support Service and Mary Walker Callaghan Lifestart Services introduced the 115 attendees to the newly designed and updated ‘Parent Hub Donegal Website’. This ‘One Stop Shop’ website is a directory of services and supports for parents and families and was developed following extensive consultation with both Parents in Donegal and all relevant agencies working with young people, parents and families in County Donegal. [www.parenthubdonegal.ie](http://www.parenthubdonegal.ie)

This was followed by a video about the Tusla and HSE funded recently established ‘Donegal Parent & Family Support Service’ based in the Finn Valley Family Resource Centre, which described in detail the supports provided and how parents and families can access them.

Trish McLaughlin, Donegal County Childcare Committee presenting the ‘Parents Own Plan’ App, (POP App), guided us through the features of this multi-lingual Diary App. Appointments are organised per child or dependant, ensuring that the Parent or Guardian is never double booked, reminders can be scheduled and a verbal reminder is also available. POP App also links the user to the ParentHub Donegal Website Directory of Services.

Networking and meeting colleagues face to face for the first time since the onset of the COVID 19 Pandemic was a central part of the event and eagerly embraced by the 25 agencies who displayed the supports and services they provide at the Information Stands.

Martin Gallen, Senior Educational Psychologist Donegal ETB and Lynn Bovaird Education Welfare Officer Tusla launched the ‘Promoting Positive School Attendance in Donegal’ Brochure. This was followed by Martin Keeney Tusla, who described the newly established ‘Donegal CYPSC Youth Participation Subcommittee, which he co-chairs with Eadaoin NicCon Uladh. Marty also introduced Eadaoin’s video ‘My Journey through Youth Participation.

Wendy McCarry, CEO of the Bluestack Special Needs Foundation described the range of services and supports provided under the Bluestack Model of Alternative Care for Children with a Disability or Additional Needs. Staff members Emer McMullan and Lenka Valkova presented the ‘Brain Food for Good Mood’ project. This Community Resilience project was developed and rolled out across 5 hubs in Donegal in response to heighted needs of young people as a result of COVID restrictions. Young people from the Bluestack Special Needs Foundation, ICARE, Spraoi agus Sport, Donegal Down Syndrome and the Refugee Resettlement Programme benefited from this project, learning a range of new skills from horticulture and nutrition to cooking and the impact of diet on our physical and mental wellbeing. Trainees from the Bluestack; Eoin Rooney, Ainé Mc Brearty, Nicole Gallagher and Stephanie Moore shared their experience of this project and what it meant to them. They engaged the entire audience in a Song of Celebration, supported by a video of the Bluestack Choir performing at the ‘Beyond Limits Event’ in the RDS in 2019. Their joyous enthusiastic performance lifted everyone’s spirit and they received a well-deserved standing ovation in appreciation.

As the Celebrating Achievement Event was drawing to a close Anne Meaney, Head of Extended Campus IT Carlow drew our attention back to business and the interagency Critical Incident Stress Management Training (CISM) which was jointly funded by Donegal CYPSC and the July Stimulus Fund. In Donegal 52 staff across 11 agencies took part. Anne Meaney presented Certificates to successful participants.

Summing up, Anne Mc Hugh, CEO Donegal ETB, who was Master of Ceremonies for the event commented,

"Our event was a fantastic and uplifting way to celebrate the very many wonderful ways in which we are contributing to our county by working collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people.  The presentations covered all of our national outcomes and are both innovative and forward thinking in how they connect to the communities of this county."

All resources launched are available from the Donegal CYPSC Office contact anne.timonymeehan@tusla.ie OR can be downloaded [www.cypsc.ie](http://www.cypsc.ie) Donegal page

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**About Donegal CYPSC**The purpose of the Children and Young People’s Services Committees (CYPSC) is to secure better outcomes for children and young people through more effective integration of existing services and interventions at local level. All CYPSCs work towards the five National Outcomes for children and young people in Ireland, which are:

1. Are Active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing
2. Are achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development
3. Are safe and protected from harm
4. Have economic security and opportunity
5. Are connected, respected and contributing to their world

The central purpose of the Donegal Children and Young Peoples Services Committee is to provide strategic direction and leadership to ensure effective interagency co-ordination and collaboration to achieve the best outcomes for all children and young people in County Donegal. Donegal CYPSC acts as the structure whereby services can work together in a systematic manner to achieve shared goals and which bridge national policy with local provision. The mandate for CYPSCs has developed from Government policy over time and is renewed in the context of Better Outcomes Better Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 – 2020.