



# Limerick Children & Young People's Services Committee Newsletter

Issue 9 December 2016



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

WELCOME TO THE 2016 ISSUE OF THE LIMERICK CYPSC NEWSLETTER.

In this issue, we provide news from existing Limerick CYPSC Initiatives, such as ABC Start Right, Parenting Limerick, the Homemaker Family Support Service and Restorative Practices. We are particularly delighted with the [www.loveparenting.ie](http://www.loveparenting.ie) web-site, developed by Parenting Limerick and ABC Start, which won two awards at the recent Littlewoods Ireland Blog Award. We also feature a relatively new service to the Mid-West—EPIC is a voluntary organisation that work to support young people who are or who have been in care. Finally, we have news from some of our partners including the LCETB Youth Work Committee and Ballyhoura

Development.

Limerick CYPSC is delighted to note that the CYPSC Initiative is continuing to expand and develop across the country—there are now CYPSCs or immediate plans to develop CYPSCs in twenty-five local authority areas. This development means that CYPSCs are able to engage in a more meaningful way in national policy discussions and to make meaningful proposals on the implementation of national policy. TUSLA has also directly employed all CYPSC Co-ordinators including our co-ordinator Margaret Mastriani. Thanks to Paul Partnership for hosting and supporting this post to now.

The Limerick CYPSC has continued to change and develop. The Committee has expanded to include both city and county. We would like to welcome our new members from the County: Shay Riordan, West Limerick Resources, Catherine Smyth, Ballyhoura Development and Mary McGrath, Hospital Family Resource Centre. We would also like to welcome a number of members who have joined in the past year: Carmel Kirby from Limerick City and County Council, Darren Broomfield from Young Person's Probation, Sinead Hickey from Tusla, Teresa Crawford from LCETB, Jacinta McNamara from the IPPN and St. Mary's National School and Stephanie Whyte, Barnardos.

Limerick CYPSC benefited from an investment by Atlantic Philanthropies from 2013-2015 as part of the Programme Innovation and Development Fund (PIDF). This allowed the development of a number of key initiatives, and developed the capacity of all partners to plan and deliver services in an integrated, child-friendly way. Limerick CYPSC is working to build on the learning and achievements of this programme to develop a Limerick where the needs and views of children and families are at the heart of all planning and delivery of services.

Thanks to the hard work and innovation of many services we continue to make progress and improve the supports for the children in Limerick.

Ger Brophy– Chair, Limerick Children & Young People's Services Committee, Area Manager, Midwest, Tusla Child & Family Agency.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

ABC Start Right.....2

Homemakers.....3

Restorative

Practice.....4

Loveparenting.ie.....4

EPIC.....5

LCETB.....6

Ballyhoura

Development.....7

Plans for my first maternity leave were admittedly delusional. Aspirations to finally catch up on academic

publications and meet long-neglected friends were soon quashed by the realities of caring for a baby. Some days getting dressed felt like a major achievement and on others, the simple act of getting out of the house was an achievement. It is the part of parenthood that I was the most unprepared for; the slow realisation that time was no longer my own. That is why one of my favourite components of ABC Start Right is the Parent & Baby/Toddler Groups. Parents, carers and children are welcomed into a space that recognises the importance of shared experiences and peer support. The Community Wraparound Team supports 5 such groups - Garryowen, Central Buildings, St. Mary’s, St. Lelia’s and Limerick Social Service Council - and this work is seen as pivotal to the Community Wraparound model.

Implementation science is very clear: Children and Families cannot benefit from interventions they don’t experience. We can’t expect parents and carers to actively engage with interventions just because a policy or research somewhere has decided that they should. Instead, we need to meet them where they are. While a Parent and Baby/Toddler group is often an intervention in itself, its greatest strength is that it acts as a springboard to further (more explicit) interventions and supports. For some parents, the weekly catch-up and opportunity to learn about play or language development is enough. For others, the understated hand-holding and support makes them that bit more confident in their parenting role. That is the critical juncture for nurturing positive parenting patterns.

Being at home with a baby or demanding toddler, often alone for most of the day, is challenging. Parent and Baby/Toddler groups offer parents the opportunity to share experiences and, often as importantly, a reason to get dressed and out of the house. The quote used in the title came from a father who attends one of the groups, who expressed disappointment that there is a week between sessions. For him, as a single parent, he has found a safe and collegial space, where his questions are answered, his tips are shared and his toddler benefits from a now familiar structure. Essentially it’s the equivalent of on-line fora that have gained popularity in recent years, but with real company and a cup of tea!

To invite or expect a parent to participate in a more structured support programme such as Incredible Years or Strengthening Families without having had some kind of informal engagement is to disregard the contexts that we all operate within. Would we be happy to start a new job without any induction process? How out of our depth would we feel? For prevention and early intervention in the early years, meeting parents ante-natally provides the optimal opportunity for better outcomes for their children. While ABC Start Right is lucky enough to be able to do that with lots of parents, Parent and Baby/Toddler groups are the next best thing. They provide a weekly space that has a subtle structure – for example, free play, craft activity, tidy-up, snack, story and song – which allows both the child and parent or carer to meet friends, explore new things and learn. The value of that is unquantifiable in the context of early engagement, sustained contact and better outcomes.



*Maria O’Dwyer  
ABC Start Right  
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## HOMEMAKER FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE FEATURED AS A CYPSC STORY

The Homemaker Family Support Service was recently featured on the National Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) web-site (CYPSC story) as an example of what strong partnership working and multi-agency collaboration can achieve.

The Homemaker Family Support Service, managed and operated by Barnardos, is a home based family support service that helps parents in a practical way with their parenting capacity and household routines. It is available to parents with at least one child age eight and under living in Limerick City and its environs. The service works in partnership with the family, focussing on needs identified and shared outcomes. Referrals can come from any service and self-referrals are welcomed.

During 2016, Homemakers worked with 66 families including 100 parents and 150 children.

In the CYPSC feature, Homemaker Coordinator, Melinda Hughes notes, that "The home based nature of the service and the practical support it provides helps create less stress for families as we tell them that they don't need to be "ready" for us to call. We come in and work at the times that cause the stress rather than talk about those times later. We come in at mealtimes, or on school mornings or at homework time, depending on the needs of a family. It is not unusual to be talking about routines while drying the dishes. Almost every family reports less stress."

For more information on the Homemaker Family Support Service Melinda on 061-493587/493588 or [homemaker.limerick@barnardos.ie](mailto:homemaker.limerick@barnardos.ie).

A number of parents also commented on the benefits of the service:

*"..they are someone to bounce ideas off. Homemaker gave me the confidence to trust the thoughts in my head."*

Emma

*"...without support I would be drowning every day. I was forgetting the important things for my kids like spending time with them and getting them active every day."*

Gloria

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**Limerick Children & Young People's Service Committee would like to wish all of those working with children, young people and families in Limerick City a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**



# LIMERICK CYPSC RESTORATIVE PRACTICES PROJECT SUPPORT “IN FAIRNESS”



The Limerick CYPSC Restorative Practices Project, in partnership with The Hunt Museum, worked with a number of Limerick community and youth groups to create a Communities of Culture project called 'In Fairness'.

We wanted to build connections with the community and hear their ideas. To do this, we focused the project on one of the key elements of restorative practices, fair process. We also modelled other key restorative approaches like circles and the FRESH principles (Fair, Respectful, Engaging, Safe, Honest).

The project started with eight intergenerational groups from Moyross, Ballynanty and Southill (including local youth clubs, a youth probation group and a youth direct provision group) all exploring the same question: what would make our communities more fair? Their ideas formed the basis for three weeks of events at the Hunt Museum.

The events covered conversation, debate, skills-sharing, capacity-building, and networking across a variety of topics, from effectively communicating issues you care about, to making use of abandoned spaces in Limerick, to relationships between the community and the Gardaí. Across the three weeks, over 1000 decision-makers, agencies, civil society groups, community / youth representatives, and members of the public attended.

Another event facilitated by Music Generation brought together Limerick beat-boxers, rappers and musicians in a workshop on how to raise issues young people care about through music and voice. Young people throughout 'In Fairness' also contributed to a collective ideas wallpaper and decorated pledges for making their communities more fair.

One problem that young asylum seekers raised has already seen some improvement as a result of this project – the renovation of the kids' room in their Centre. This highlights how crucial it is to create genuine opportunities for children and young people to voice their concerns, as they are the experts of their own experience.

For more information on the Restorative Practices Programme please contact Caitlin Lewis at

[respracdevoff@gmail.com](mailto:respracdevoff@gmail.com)



## LOVEPARENTING.IE HAS WON TWO BLOGGING AWARDS!



Loveparenting.ie won two awards at the Littlewoods Ireland Blog Awards 2016– First for Best Blog Post (Pregnancy Diary) and Bronze for best blog (website)!

Congratulations to the team involved and thanks to everyone who voted for us. For a website that isn't 2 years old yet, its averaging 1500+ hits a month so is proving to be a very beneficial parenting support resource. Your ongoing support is much appreciated.



Loveparenting.ie was developed by Parenting Limerick, a partnership of organizations that provide parenting and family support and a sub-group of Limerick CYPSC and ABC Start Right. The purpose of Love parenting is to provide parents across Limerick with high quality information and support on parenting and child development. The development of the web-site is part of Limerick CYPSC's Parenting Support Strategy and ABC Start Right's development of innovative, needs-led parenting supports.

## What is EPIC?



EPIC works throughout the Republic of Ireland with and for children and young people who are currently living in care or who have had an experience of living in care. This includes those in residential care, foster care, hostel, high support and special care. EPIC also works with young people preparing to leave care and in aftercare.

EPIC has developed to become nationally recognised and respected organisation with expertise, skills and experience regarding all aspects of the care system. The mission of EPIC is to empower young people to speak out, be heard and to make change in their own lives and in the care system.

## How does EPIC work?

EPIC currently has the following areas of work.

- The National Advocacy Service
- Youth Engagement
- Research
- Policy

Each of the four areas inform each strand of our work in a unified strategy to positively affect policy and practice change and to achieve better outcomes for young people in care and aftercare.

In January of this year EPIC appointed an Advocacy Officer for the Mid- West. The successful candidate, Joe Walsh, works towards

- Providing information and advice to young people in care in relation to their Rights
- Assisting young people in getting the services they need and helping to guide them through the systems
- Attending decision making fora with the young person
- Empowering young people to speak out about decisions which affect them and support them in participating in meeting
- Supporting the Mid- West For a.

## What is the Mid-West Fora?

The Mid-West Fora group consists of young people from 13-17 years of age. The group supports young people to explore their experiences and perceptions of the social work services they are engaged in and for their views to make a difference to current practice and policy.

The Forum met three times this year and is planning on undertaking a drama production to highlight and create awareness of the issues faced by them during their time in care.

The young people have identified various issues e.g. the emotional trauma/ experience of being taken from their parents and put into care, child in care reviews and the feeling of being different/ separate to their foster families. They are working hard at the moment on coming up with ways that they can depict this on stage to ensure professionals around them think of what these experiences must be like for the young person.

Members of the Forum also spent an overnight together in Boland's Meadows to gain further insight into how they would like to depict their experiences on stage and what emotions they would like the audience to feel and understand.

They have also identified that they would like their drama piece to highlight their various transitions through care and right up to where they are now. Each young person has identified that overall they are in a happier place with more opportunities afforded to them that they may not have had a chance to experience at home.

To find out more about the work of EPIC please log onto [www.epiconline.ie](http://www.epiconline.ie). Alternatively if you would like to find out more about the role of EPIC in the Mid-West or would like more information about how to make a referral please contact Joe Walsh by email on [joewalsh@epiconline.ie](mailto:joewalsh@epiconline.ie) or by mobile on 087-2428440.



Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) is delighted to welcome the newly formed LCETB Youth Work Committee. Youth work plays a valuable and important role in the social and personal development of young people in communities across Clare and Limerick.

The Youth Work Act 2001 defines youth work as:

“a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is: complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training; and provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations”.

The Youth Work Committee was established under the Education and Training Board Act 2013 (Section 44-1b), to support LCETB’s youth work functions of supporting the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of youth work in the region. This will happen by facilitating discussion and developing a youth work plan for the region.

The committee comprises of a variety of representative organisations who have an interest in or who are working in the area of Youth Work.

Members include the following:

- Foróige
- Limerick Youth Service
- Clare Youth Service
- Scouting Ireland
- Irish Girl Guides
- Tusla Child and Family Agency
- Limerick City and County Council
- Ennis Garda - Juvenile Liaison Officer
- Comhairle na nÓg
- City Wide Youth Forum

The committee meets quarterly to support the strategic development of youth work programmes and services in the region and is keen to link with and support all youth work in the Mid-west area – for further information on the Youth Work committee please contact your local youth officer, Cora Foley (Limerick City), Jackie Dwane (Limerick County) and Seamus Bane (Clare).



## INCREDIBLE YEARS TRAINING

Incredible Years Limerick are offering the following programme training:

- **Dina In The Classroom** 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017 TBC
- **Basic Parent Training** 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> Jan & 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017  
Limerick Education Centre  
1st Floor, Marshal House, Dooradoyle Road, Limerick
- **Infant Programme Training** 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017

Limerick Education Centre, 1st Floor Marshal House Dooradoyle Road Limerick

For further information and to book a place please contact: Barry Kelly, PAUL Partnership

Tel: 061 419388 | Fax: 061 418098

E-mail: iyadmin@paulpartnership.ie

Ballyhoura Development is the Local Development Company which supports communities and individuals across the Ballyhoura area of East Co Limerick and North East Co Cork. One of the Programmes which Ballyhoura Development delivers is SICAP (Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme), which aims to reduce poverty, promote social inclusion and equality and to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are marginalised, through community development approaches, targeted supports and interagency collaboration.

One of the key objectives of the Programme is to support the well-being and development of children in disadvantaged areas, by working directly with the children and with their parents/guardians on early intervention and family support. We have found that one of the most effective ways of building relationships with children and their parents is by engaging with them through a range of seasonal activities, particularly summer camps for children of primary school age.

In the summer of 2016, Ballyhoura Development facilitated 11 Summer camps throughout rural communities in East Co Limerick - in Castleconnell, Cappamore, Doon, Pallasgreen, Caherconlish, Kilmallock, Kilfinane, Ballylanders, Bruff, Bruree and Fedamore. All Camps were free of charge, and gave priority to children who might be at risk of exclusion.

The Summer Camps take place over 2 days and support children to develop physical, social, team work and self care skills, while, most importantly, having fun!. We try to include activities which the children may not be familiar with – yoga, athletics -

as well as more traditional activities like arts & crafts and soccer.

In 2016, over 400 children participated in these Camps. Feedback from parents and children was very positive. Children's participation in the camps not only provides them with two days of fun, but it helps us as an organisation to build better relationships with the children and their parents. We get to know them better and can support them to engage in other programmes such as Strengthening Families, personal development and Life skills training programmes, supports for children such as Homework Clubs, skills-based training for parents and guardians.

For further information on supports which Ballyhoura Development provides to children and families, please contact:

Olivia O'Brien ([oobrien@ballyhoura.org](mailto:oobrien@ballyhoura.org)) on 061 387 042 Or Eileen O'Keeffe ([eokeeffe@ballyhoura.org](mailto:eokeeffe@ballyhoura.org)) on 063 20510



*Delivered in East Co Limerick since 2012 by Hospital Family Resource Centre, in collaboration with the Mid West Regional Drugs Task Force, Ballyhoura Development, Tusla, Limerick ETB, CSMT, Limerick Youth Service, HSE, local schools and other key stakeholders.*

## FAREWELL CHRIS!

*“When you start on your journey to Ithaca,  
then pray that the road is long,  
full of adventure, full of knowledge.”*

(excerpt from K. P. Kavafis (C. P. Cavafy), translation by Rae Dalven; Chris recited this at his retirement party to sum up his feelings at the end of this part of his career)



Most of us working across Child and Family Services and Community Development in Limerick know that Chris Sheridan, Principal Community Development Worker with Tusla, retired in June. Many colleagues from throughout Chris's career turned up at his retirement party on June 10<sup>th</sup> to pay tribute to Chris and to wish him well in this new phase.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Chris for his dedication and service. We wish him the very best as he continues the journey.



Limerick Children & Young People's Service Committee  
would like to thank all of those who contributed to this newsletter.

We hope that this newsletter will provide an opportunity for all of those working with children, young people and families in Limerick City & County to share information about their services, programmes and practices. If you would like to submit an article or information on upcoming events or training programmes, please contact

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