



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the summer 2017 issue of the Limerick CYPSC newsletter. The first half of 2017 has been a busy one for Limerick CYPSC and our partner organisations—inside you will be able to read about some of the highlights.



We introduce the idea of Child Friendly Limerick. We have been working with our partners to develop this initiative, and now we would like to hear from you. What do you think the benefits could be for the children of Limerick and how might you play a part? We'd love to hear your ideas.

We held a number of very successful events including a Research and Data "Think-In" in March. Following from this, Limerick CYPSC Research Sub-group is working on updating the needs analysis of children and families across Limerick City and County as well as updating the mapping of services. We hope that this will be available to all services by the end of the year to support the integrated planning of services.

Parenting Limerick held a Positive Parenting Event focusing on Parental Health and Well-being in April as part of the population approach to positive parenting. The group is planning a number of events across Limerick City and County to build on this. Inside is more information on the event itself and some of the other activities that are part of the population approach.

The ABC Start Right Programme is going strong with interesting work underway around mainstreaming and sustainability. In this issue, you can read about the most recent development in the Programme: the recruitment of an Infant Mental Health Specialist.

The Homemaker Family Support Service shares the findings from its recent service evaluation with some very promising findings.

As part of its commitment to increase the participation of children and young people in shaping its services, Tusla Mid-West held an "Agenda Day" in June in the Northside Youth Space to hear the views of young people across the Mid-West and to find out what is important to them. Young people highlighted a number of areas including having appropriate spaces where they are not moved on, being heard, peer influence and need for education in areas such as alcohol, addiction and sexual development. Tusla will continue to develop this area of child and youth participation, and there will be further consultations in particular areas and on specific themes.

Special points of interest:

- Tusla "Agency Day"
- "Think-In" Research Seminar
- Parenting Limerick Positive Parenting Event
- Homemakers Evaluation
- Jigsaw
- Southill Club2gether

We share the very welcome news that Jigsaw Limerick is now up and running—this will be a great resource for children and young people, ages 12-25 across Limerick. And, finally, Southill Club2gether shares their recent film to combat smoking as part of the Irish Cancer Society's Xhale Competition. Congratulations to the group on winning the on-line award!

I hope you are all enjoying the final days of summer. As ever, please continue to share your news and information with us so we can include it in future issues of the newsletter.

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



Child Friendly Limerick

Limerick CYPSC is working toward making Limerick Child Friendly. This means that Limerick is a great place to grow, develop and live as a child and young person. It means listening to children and young people and ensuring that their voices have a real influence on how the city and county develop. It means making sure that the spaces and places around the city and county are welcoming to children and young people and are places that they want to go. It means ensuring that all children and families have access to the high quality services that they need. Above all, it is a commitment to the idea that *all* children should have the chance to reach their full potential.



We know that cities and counties that are good for children and families are also great places to live, to visit and to do business. So we see everyone (businesses, parents, children, state services, community groups, voluntary agencies, civic organisations) as potential partners.

We're already doing a great deal in Limerick that *is* Child Friendly from accessible and inclusive playgrounds and parks to services that listen to and respond to the expressed needs of children and young people. We know, however, that a small, but significant minority of children in Limerick don't have the opportunities to meet their full potential so there is more work to be done.



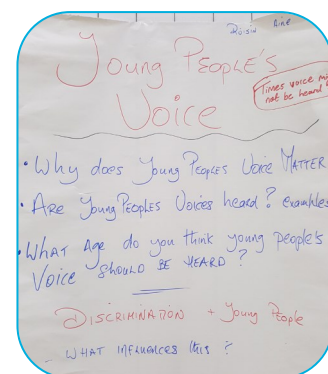
This is just the start of a conversation about what we can achieve if we all work together to make Limerick Child Friendly—we'd now like to hear from you! Let us know about your child friendly initiative and how you might work with us to make Limerick a great place to grow and develop as a child. Please send ideas to margaret.mastriani@tusla.ie.

Hearing the Voices of Young People: Tusla's Agenda Day

Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, is making a commitment to ensuring that children and young people's views are taken into account in relation to decisions that affect their lives. As part of this commitment, an Agenda Day was held on June 28th in the Limerick Northside Youth Space to hear the voices of young people in the Mid-West. One of the most important features of the Agenda Day is that it is an adult free space, where young people can share their honest opinions. Over forty young people from Clare, Limerick and North Tipperary attended the day, which was facilitated by other young people who had received facilitation training. This is the first step, with other local agenda days and further consultations being planned.

Young people highlighted a number of areas including having appropriate spaces where they are not moved on, being heard, peer influence and the need for education in areas such as alcohol, addiction and sexual development.

- ◆ *'When I'm listened to I feel accepted in this World'*
- ◆ *'We can't create a good future if our voices aren't heard'*
- ◆ *'Having my voice heard helps when I'm upset'*
- ◆ *'Adults need to hear from young people about young people'*





Tusla, Mid-West would like to extend its warm thanks to the young people who facilitated the group and those that participated—it was great to be able to hear your thoughts on your lives and what is important to you. Tusla would also like to thank the Limerick Youth Service for hosting the day along with the other members of the organizing group who supported young people to attend: Clare Youth Service, Youth Work Tipperary, North Tipperary Leadership Partnership, ClareCare and the Youth Advocate Programme.

Time for a THINK IN

"Understanding the Needs; Assessing the Outcomes: Using Data and Research to Plan and Evaluate Services for Children and Families"

Limerick CYPSC would like to invite you to participate in a "Think-In" to bring together those working across the Children's Sector in Limerick to share information and work toward developing an integrated understanding of the needs of children and families in Limerick.

Purpose: To encourage a dialogue among service providers and planners, academics and researchers on identifying key indicators and data sets on the needs and expectations of children and families in Limerick. In order to support integrated, child-centred service planning.

When: Friday, March 3rd, 9.30-1.00, followed by a light lunch

Where: Absolute Hotel, 200 Harry's Mill, Limerick

Agenda:
 Welcome and Registration
 Round Discussion on Available Data
 Round table discussions on use of data and indicators, gaps and deficiencies, and how to improve/improve collaboration
 Lunch

We ask that each person attending would review the attached documentation before the seminar and bring any relevant information/data that is available and used regularly by their agency/organisation.

We look forward to seeing you on March 3rd. Please register your attendance on the link below by February 28th.

Please contact Margaret Mastriani at margaret.mastriani@cypsc.ie or 081-483483 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Research "Think-In"

Limerick CYPSC held a "Think-In" entitled, *Understanding the Needs; Assessing the Outcomes: Using Data and Research to Plan and Evaluate Services for Children and Families* on Friday, March 3, 2017 in the Absolute Hotel, Limerick. The seminar was attended by a broad range of participants from across the children's sector.

In order to support informed and integrated planning, Limerick CYPSC has committed to developing a robust evidence-base on the needs of children and families and the services available to them. In 2012, Limerick CYPSC published *How are Our Kids: Experiences and Needs of Children and Families in Limerick City with a Particular Emphasis on Limerick's Regeneration Areas*. Limerick CYPSC also undertook a service mapping exercise at this time. The "Think-In" is the first step in bringing stakeholders together to build on and update this previous work.

Ger Brophy, Chair of Limerick CYPSC and Area Manager, Tusla, Mid-West, welcomed the participants and noted that, "Limerick CYPSC recognises the need for high quality data on children and families across Limerick so that we can plan and evaluate our services effectively. It is heartening to see so many people from a diverse range of services here this morning to start this important conversation about what we already know about the needs of children, what we need to know and how we can collectively develop a holistic understanding of the needs of children and families across Limerick."

The morning included three informative presentations: Professor Des Mc Cafferty, Mary Immaculate College, spoke about the relevant data available through the Central Statistics Office (CSO); Professor James Williams, Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and the Principal Investigator with *Growing Up in Ireland*, Skyped in with an engaging overview of the data available in *Growing Up in Ireland* and how this might serve as a valuable point of comparison to local research and evaluation; Dr. Eileen Humphreys, Limerick City and County Council, closed the first session with a comprehensive discussion of "Other Data Sources: What is available and How Useful is It?"

This was followed by lively roundtable discussions on data: what is available, how it is used and the gaps and limitations. The "Think-In" was an important first step in developing a shared understanding of how we can use data collectively to improve outcomes for children across Limerick. A full report on the event will be available shortly.



Limerick CYPSC Research Sub-Group: Helen Fitzgerald, Ger Brophy, Eileen Humphreys, Margaret Mastriani, Des McCafferty, Patricia Sheehan, Ann Higgins and Maria O'Dwyer

Parenting Limerick's Positive Parenting Event

*Parenting Limerick hosts a Parent's Health and Well-Being Morning because...
Nurturing Your Child's Health Starts with Your Own.*

Parenting Limerick, hosted a morning on Parental Health and Well-being on Wednesday, April 5th in the South Court Hotel as part of a campaign to bring information and support on positive parenting to all parents across Limerick. Marie Grace, recently featured on RTE's Operation Transformation, and Brian McNulty, author of *Embracing Sanity: One Man's Footsteps* shared their own personal journeys toward health and well-being.

Parents then had the opportunity to explore a wide variety of stands with information on getting healthy, active and connected. The stands ranged from getting in touch with your creativity and woodworking to getting active and eating healthily.

Ger Brophy, Area Manager with Tusla, Mid-West and Chair of Limerick Children and Young People's Services Committee, welcomed everyone to the event noting that "We know that parents need to mind themselves in order to mind their children, but parents often put everyone else first. The purpose of today is to remind parents of the importance of taking the time to look after themselves and to offer some ideas of how to do this."

Echoing this, Marie Grace said that, "Taking thirty minutes to focus on yourself and exercise will not affect your children in any way, but not looking after yourself might." She advised parents to follow her example and keep a "damage limitation" pack on hand with healthy snacks such as fruit, nuts and water to resist the temptation to go for unhealthy snacks.

Feedback from participants was very positive with one parent observing that the event was, "Very interesting, loads of information. Really enjoyed all the talks and meeting new people. Greatly organised". Another said that, "The speakers were an absolute inspiration." The event was held in partnership with HSE Mid-West Health and Well-being and the Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival.



Parenting Limerick is a network of organisations from across Limerick City and County that provide parenting and family support. Parenting Limerick is a sub-group of Limerick CYPSC.

More information on Parenting Limerick and Positive Parenting along with a range of information on parenting and parenting supports can be found on www.loveparenting.ie.

ABC Start Right appoints Infant Mental Health Specialist

ABC Start Right is delighted to announce the appointment of Helen Ryan, Infant Mental Health Specialist, as the newest member of the ABC Start Right team. Helen brings a wealth of experience, having worked in the UK as a child protection social worker and as a social worker in Crumlin Hospital's Child Sexual Abuse Unit. Helen was previously the Coordinator of the Barnardos Family Support Project in Moyross. Her most recent role involved working with early childcare and education students in Mary Immaculate College, with a particular focus on child health and wellbeing and children under the age of three. As a trainer, Helen has most recently been involved with the Healthy Ireland Smart Start Programme.



Infant mental health and wellbeing is all about the wellbeing of babies and young children under three and extends to include children under six. **The first 1000 days of life** (UNICEF) and the child's early years are a critical period of brain growth during which the foundations for wellbeing are laid. Interactions between a baby and their parent / carer, such as responding to a baby's behavioural cues, following the baby's lead, holding and soothing the baby and appropriate touch all contribute to warm positive relationships between the baby and parent/carer. This provides a secure base, from which the child explores, develops, forms positive attachments and learns about the world with confidence.

Many factors, such as growing up in an environment where parental mental health issues exist, substance misuse, domestic violence, frequent change of main caregiver, living with experiences of poverty and disadvantage and indeed parents' own experiences of being parented can impact on the quality of the child's attachments and subsequent wellbeing.

When the mental health and wellbeing of a young child is affected, difficulties may be seen in play, communication, ability to self sooth, age appropriate levels of independence, low self-esteem and poor emotional resilience.

As part of the **ABC Start Right team**, Helen is looking forward to working in partnership with parents, carers, parent and toddler groups, Community Mothers, Public Health Nurses, Early Years Staff, Speech and Language Therapists and other practitioners to enhance their understanding and capacity to support positive infant mental health. Helen has described the work as strengthening early caring relationships and attachment e.g. **building bonds with baby bumps!** and deepening early understanding of the communication and emotional needs of babies and young children.

Initiatives under ABC Start Right's Population approach will also aim to promote key infant mental health and wellbeing messages to the wider community.

Helen can be contacted at hryan@paulpartnership.ie
061 419388





Evaluation of Homemaker Service: Home-based, Goal-Based and Professional

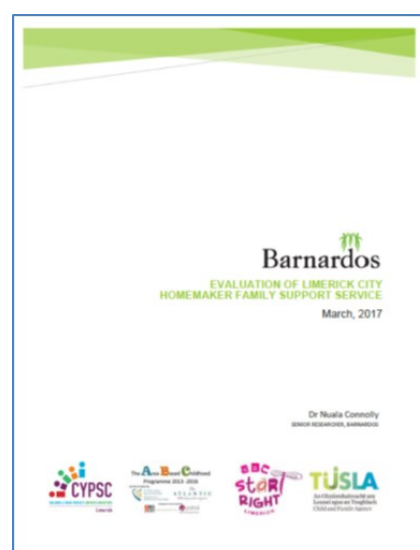
Barnardos recently completed an evaluation of the Homemaker Family Support Service, which was undertaken by Dr. Nuala Connolly, Senior Researcher with Barnardos. The purpose of the evaluation was to establish whether the Homemaker Family Support Service is an effective early intervention service; and whether the Service improves parental capacity, thereby contributing to positive outcomes for children and parents.

The evaluation involved secondary data analysis on outcomes data collected and collated by Barnardos' staff and a questionnaire to all agencies that refer in to Homemakers. It concluded that, *"The Homemaker Family Support Service is an effective early intervention support service. Outcomes data from closure forms, in addition to referrer commentary, confirms the success of the programme in improving child and family trajectory and self-efficacy across a range of domains. In addition, the evidence demonstrates that the Homemaker Family Support Service improves parental capacity across a number of domains, contributing to positive outcomes for both parents and children."*

Both parents and professionals responded very positively toward the service with one parent noting that, *"Everything changed from working with Barnardos - I got the chance to do things better"*. A professional who makes referrals to the service echoed this, stating that *"It's practical and hands on, and meets parents where they are at. It's a partnership model, so it's experienced as supportive and empowering"*.

The service is being evaluated further as part of the ABC Programme (Area Based Child Poverty Programme), and we look forward to seeing the results.

The full report and executive summary can be viewed on www.barnardos.ie/resources-advice/research/homemaker-family-support-service-research.html or www.cypsc.ie/limerick/resources.372.html



JIGSAW LIMERICK

Young people's
health in mind

Jigsaw Limerick is a newly opened youth mental health service, that works with young

people from the ages 12 – 25 from Limerick County and City, who may be struggling with different stresses and challenges in their lives. We are based in Arthur's Quay House in the heart of Limerick City. We are a team of 7 that includes an administrator, three clinical support workers, a youth and community engagement worker, the clinical coordinator and a project manager. Our clinicians are from various professions such as social work, psychology and occupational therapy.

Jigsaw has three different aspects to our work:

- **Therapeutic Support.** Jigsaw Limerick operates a free service that welcomes referrals from the young person themselves, parents or other services/professionals. This one to one work is framed around an early intervention, solution focused and strengths based approach. We work with young people around setting and achieving goals with up to 8 sessions of intervention.
- **Engagement** Our youth and community engagement worker is currently working on creating a Youth Advisory Panel (YAP). The Jigsaw Youth Advisory Panel is a volunteer opportunity for young people between 16-25 years of age who have an interest in Youth Mental Health. YAP members will work together with the local Jigsaw team to determine how they can influence and support Youth Mental Health in the region.

Jigsaw Limerick

- **Promotion of good mental health and wellbeing** in the community and in schools. We facilitate workshops with other professionals who are working with young people about minding young people's mental health. Our community based work has an overarching theme of changing how Ireland thinks about and supports youth mental health. One key message for communities is the message of 'one good adult' which emphasises how supportive that can be for a young person. The one good adult message is as a result of a piece of research conducted by Jigsaw called the My World Survey. The findings of this indicated that one of the most significant protectors for young people and their mental health is having an adult in their lives who is supportive and who they can turn to when they are in difficulty.

Setting up a new service in Limerick has been an interesting journey that has made us aware of the need for important communications between services and of collaboration with our work. The team has been getting to know Limerick's established services for young people and other mental health organisations, which will be key to providing a continuum of support in Limerick. We hope to work well with fellow community services and are already looking forward to the up and coming Limerick Mental Health Week in October.



Picture 1: Tony Bates visits the service. Maeve Ginnell Clinical Support Worker, Alex O'Keeffe Regional Manager, Sheena Buttimer Senior Clinical Support Worker, Tony Bates Director of Innovations, Eileen Hanley Administrator, Tanya O'Sullivan Youth and Community Engagement Worker. **Picture 2:** Jan and Kathleen visit Jigsaw Limerick. Jan O'Sullivan Labour TD, Cian Aherne Clinical Coordinator, Kathleen Lynch Labour Spokesperson, Gerry Linnane Project Manager. **Picture 3:** Team Building hike in Killaloe (Tanya O'Sullivan, Sheena Buttimer, Katy Anchell, Eileen Hanley, Maeve Ginnell).



Southill Club 2gether: Raising Awareness & Working towards a Smoke Free Generation

A youth group based in the Southill Area Centre scripted, directed, filmed and starred in a short movie that highlights the negative effects of smoking. This movie was then entered into the national XHALE competition with 39 other entries from youth groups from around Ireland. The Irish Cancer Society notes that, "X-hale is an initiative of the Irish Cancer Society that aims to empower young people to tackle smoking in their communities and raise awareness about the dangers of smoking among their peers."

The Xhale competition is an innovative programme designed to engage young people in skills based and educational programmes. The educational programme covered 'attitudes towards smoking, peer pressure, health effects, cost of smoking, power of the tobacco industry, and the local and global impact of tobacco'. The skills based programme included drama workshops facilitated by Monica Spencer of 'The Gaff', which covered script writing, creating characters, camera skills and having loads of fun.

On July 6th 2017, Xhale hosted their national youth awards in the Odeon 'Point Village' Dublin. This event saw young people from across the country descend on the capital in a bid to win an award. There were 15 awards in total, including an online award for the most views on YouTube and a community campaign. These were judged between June 7th when movies went live until June 28th.

As part of our community campaign, young people have been hanging up posters and sharing information online on the negative effects of smoking to deter their peers from smoking cigarettes. We hosted a screening of our movie on Wednesday 21st of June for young people, their parents and local organisations. With over 1 600 view on YouTube, Southill Club2gether won the prestigious 'online award'.

If you would like to view our movie, please go onto YouTube and search for '**smoking ruins your life Southill!**' or follow this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnDWxWRWeY8>



Picture 1: Suzi Cronin, Southill Club2gether with Jackson Morey, Gearóid Malone and Joe Cannole.
Picture 2: Jackson Morey and Joe Cannole receiving their award from John McCormack, CEO of the Irish Cancer Society.

LOVE PARENTING.IE



The members of Parenting Limerick are working hard to get out the message on positive parenting. The web-site, www.loveparenting.ie, continues to grow and develop. We have been nominated for "Best Parenting Blog" in the Boot's Maternity & Infant Awards for the second year running. You can vote for loveparenting.ie up until 31st August via [https://maternityandinfant.secure-](https://maternityandinfant.secure-platform.com/a/gallery/rounds/56/details/14538)

[platform.com/a/gallery/rounds/56/details/14538](https://maternityandinfant.secure-platform.com/a/gallery/rounds/56/details/14538)

We now have a Facebook page and a weekly column in the Limerick Chronicle. We also make the occasional appearance on Live 95 FM! Check out Loveparenting.ie for upcoming events and workshops in Limerick City and County. This is all part of the population approach to positive parenting —trying to engage with parents and provide information in as many ways as possible.



Maria O'Dwyer (ABC Start Right), Joe Nash (Live 95FM Joe Nash Show) & Margaret Mastriani (Limerick CYPSC)



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

Margaret Mastriani

On 061-483453 or margaret.mastriani@tusla.ie