

Supporting protective health factors for children and young people experiencing homelessness in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and in Cork



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PRESENTATION STRUCTURE

Instructions for the
creative activity

Overview of DLR
CYPSC project

Overview of Cork
CYPSC Project

Paired Activity

Group Activity

Questions/Comments

IDENTIFIED UNMET HEALTH & WELLBEING NEEDS OF CHILDREN LIVING IN EMERGENCY HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION

The DLR CYPSC Needs Analysis 2017-2018 identified the following service concerns in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown:

- **Risks to normative child physical development due to lack appropriate play spaces** *"I'm worried about babies and toddlers being strapped into buggies and car seats in front of TVs for long periods of time because parents think it's the only way to keep them safe in a very small space all day"* (Homelessness Service Practitioner)
- **Risks to normative learning and educational due to very low levels of access to early years education and care services** for the homeless child population despite government incentives – *"Location, transport, place availability, support needs, childcare, parental mental health etc are all affecting very poor access to ECCE services"*. (ECCE Service Practitioner)
- **Risks to nutritional health** due to family food poverty and *'Restricted times of access to kitchen cooking facilities, communal eating facilities and a lack of storage facilities and utensils for food can negatively influence children's dietary intake e.g. supplementing their diets with takeaway foods like noodles, instant pasta, chicken and chips and pizza.'* (Share, M. & Hennessy, M. 2017)
- **Risks to parent-child attachment, bonding and healthy relationships** due to high levels of parental stress, depression and social isolation
- **Risks to children's needs not being identified or met due to an exclusive focus on housing** *"Children in homeless families are currently at the bottom of my to do pile, I know it's awful, they should be at the top, but their parents are in such crisis they take up all of my available time...I would love to join an effort to do something to help the youngest ones"* (Homelessness Service practitioner)



Supporting Parents –
Access to cooking on a
tight budget course &
social peer support



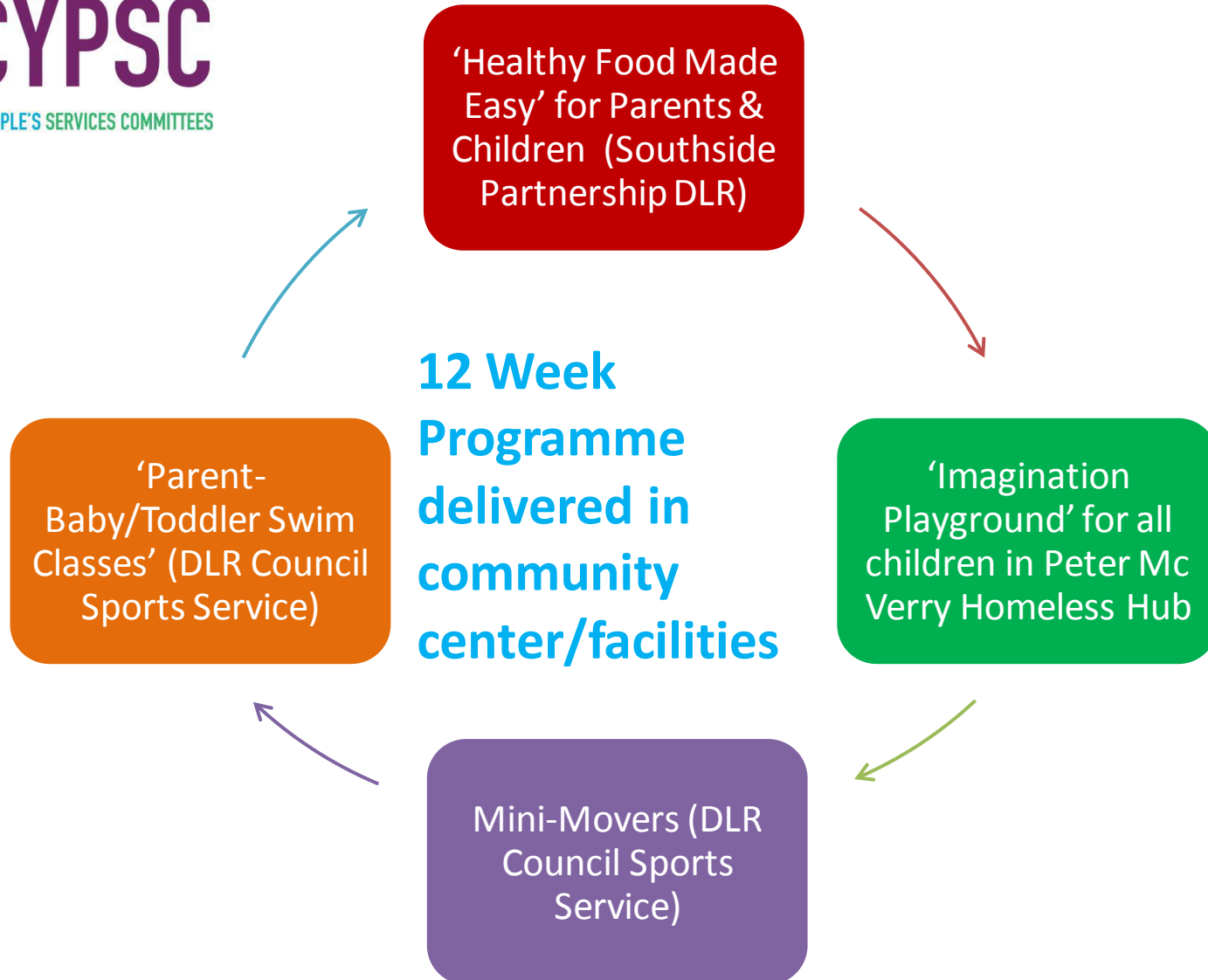
Interagency Collaboration –
joint programme planning by
3 different homeless service
providers , referral & delivery

- Delivery input from DLR
County Council (Housing);
Southside Partnership DLR &
Crosscare Youth Services

Protective Factors Targeted (BOBF, 2014)

**Early Intervention &
Prevention-**
Movement & play
opportunities for
babies, toddlers;
Sensory, imaginary
& physical play for
preschoolers;
Promote Attachment

Ensuring Quality Services –
Encouraging staff presence from
each homeless service at each
programme to support relationship
& capacity building



Targeted recruitment via three homelessness service providers in DLR –Peter McVerry, Focus Ireland & Sophia Housing



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#CYPSC2018



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Mobile: 087 1602436, Phone: 017060100

Free!



Outcomes of DLR CYPSC Interagency Project – As reported by Independent Researcher Dr Louise Kinlen

- ✓ 'Participating children benefited through **increased access to physical, creative and social play activities** offered by both structured and free play activities.'
- ✓ 'Case workers and the parents observed the **babies and toddlers greatly enjoyed the swimming with their parents**' ('Water Babies')
- ✓ 'Case workers and the parents observed the **pre-schoolers greatly enjoyed the physical exercise classes**' ('Mini Movers').
- ✓ 'Staff in the homeless hub reported that **parents and children play and socialise more frequently** due to the provision of the mobile playground.'
- ✓ 'Parents' increased knowledge of healthy nutrition and healthy exercise may also offer **longer term health benefits** for the participating children'



Outcomes of DLR CYPSC Interagency Project – From CYPSC perspective

- ✓ Has **strengthened the interagency relationship between the 3 homelessness service providers** in DLR – Focus Ireland, Peter McVerry Trust & Sophia Housing'
- ✓ Has resulted in **sustainable service provision** for very young children and their parents in the Homeless Hub e.g. free access to swimming class & toddler movement sessions via the DLR County Council Sports Service
- ✓ Has resulted in **additional collaboration between CYPSC & PMV homeless hub and the DLR County Council Arts Office** to bring artists in to offer imaginative play to children, parents and staff
- ✓ Has resulted in the inclusion of 'homelessness' as a **key priority for the DLR CYPSC Safety Subgroup** to respond to in the 3 year plan 2019-2021



Outcomes of DLR CYPSC Interagency Project – From Peter McVerry Hub perspective

Interagency Group launch the mobile playground

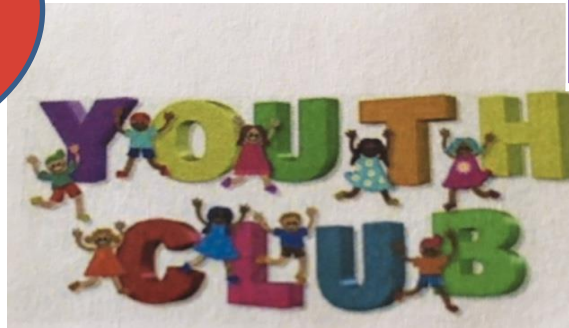


Health & Wellbeing of Children Living in Emergency Accommodation

National Outcome 1

Active &
Healthy
Physical &
Mental
Wellbeing

Social And
Emotional
Wellbeing



Spring Board, Good Shepherd Cork

Enabling Interagency Collaborative Action – The Process



IDENTIFYING THE NEED

Socio Demographic Profile

Audit of Services '*Each One Matters*'

Highlighting Homelessness

Healthy Ireland
Application

Presentation to Cork CYPSC on Progress of Homeless Outreach
Programme/ 'Youth Club' Initiative by Springboard Cork

Second Healthy Ireland Application



The Homeless Outreach Program



A Child Centered Interagency Collaboration between Springboard, Edel House and Foróige



Overview

A weekly Youth Club for children residing in emergency homeless accommodation in the Cork City area. At the heart of this program is a child centred and child led approach based on an early intervention model. This has significantly contributed to the success of the program and in providing a seamless, wrap around the child and family even when they are experiencing significant disruption.

This program provides a creative, flexible and structured support to these children. The Youth Club occurs one night per week and consists of games, activities and recreational excursions to provide entertainment and social support. It is principally a group intervention but also involves one to one work with children experiencing significant difficulties.

Interagency Collaboration

Central to the success of this program is the interagency collaboration between Springboard, Edel House and Foróige.

The program has developed a unique 'Pod' system of working. The Pod consists of a multi disciplinary team including social care, social work, psychology, counselling, youth work and childcare. It operates from a theoretical framework largely based on the Winnicottian concept of a "Facilitating Environment". The Pod has a collaborative and consistent approach which allows for the Youth Club to be totally child centred and child informed. This program offers a stable frame for children to thrive in very difficult circumstances.

A key feature of the Pod is the flexible and adaptable working style of the team along with their passion and enthusiasm for the project.

Children with Complex Needs

This project focuses exclusively on homelessness, therefore the children are among the most vulnerable and because of their multiple and complex needs. Subsequently, there are significant risks of them entering the alternative care system.

This is a high needs environment where there are significant mental health and wellbeing risks to the children as a result of being homeless and the stress, isolation and stigma that comes with it.

Conclusions

A systematic evaluation of the program is currently being carried out. So far the program has proved tremendously successful in terms of child participation and in reduction in behavioral difficulties in Edel House itself, as evidenced by parents and professional staff working with these families.

"I like to get outside and not have to worry about making noise"

"It's really nice to get out of the building and have some fun"

"Tuesday is my favorite night because we have youth club"



Springboard

Child and Family Agency
New Link Point Building
Harbour View Road
Knocknaheeny
Cork.
Tel No. 021 4204706

Edel House

Edel House Emergency
Accommodation
Grattan Street
Cork
Tel No. 021 427 4249
Email: edelhouse@edelhousepod.ie



An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Impact/Outcomes

- **Improvement in Children's emotional, physical and nutritional wellbeing**
- **Reduction in Behavioural issues**
- **Reduction in Child Protection Referrals**
- **Support to Parents social and emotional Wellbeing**



Audio piece

- Voices of children and staff

Your turn! Write & share leaves (15 mins)

Strengths (5 mins)

- What part of these CYPSC projects and processes did you find useful or interesting?

Ideas (5 mins)

- Is there any part of these projects or processes that you could use to respond to child/youth homelessness in your area?

Post your leaves on
the 'Ketso' mat

Question /Discussion
Time (5 minutes)