



DUBLIN CITY NORTH CYPSC PROJECTS 2021

DUBLIN CITY NORTH
Children and Young People's Services Committee
February 2022
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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Dublin City North CYPSC Projects overview for 2021. The report summarises the key activities undertaken through interagency collaboration over the year to improve outcomes for children and young people.

With our first 3-year plan completed in 2020, the priorities for the year were set out in our Annual Programme of Work, as an Interim measure. Despite ongoing pandemic restrictions, the focus for CYPSC targeted several responses towards the most marginalized children, including those affected by domestic violence and abuse, Traveller and Roma, and children living in direct provision reception centre (Balseskin) and children with additional needs.

These targeted responses enabled us to build capacity and capital with projects to support children and young people, and coordinate interventions to journey through another year of uncertainty. With support from a range of agencies, we estimate that over 3000 children and young people have benefited from these interventions.

A review with CYPSC members in December 2021 reflected on and celebrated the work of the first 3 year plan, recognizing the significant interagency cooperation that supported the projects over that time. Moving forward, the members are considering how best to respond to a post-pandemic world and impacts of 2 years of restrictions and altered lives. The Committee is endeavoring a new revised consultation process in 2022 to support a new 3 year plan and look forward to engaging with existing and new members in that process.

For further information or queries, please contact:

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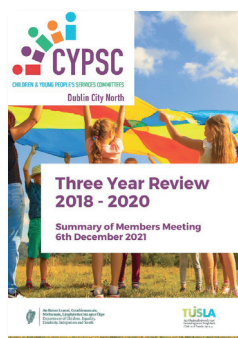
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DUBLIN CITY NORTH CYPSC PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

CYPSC Review of First 3-Year Plan (2018-2020)



A review of our first 3-Year Children and Young People's Plan (2018-2020) brought over 40 members from subgroups and Main CYPSC Committee together to reflect on achievements, challenges and way forward. Throughout the review, there was recognition of the work that CYPSC has accomplished with and for children and young people in the area through interagency collaboration. The review also highlighted the need for CYPSC to further work towards greater equality and access to services particularly those services with long waiting lists; to increase our impact in the early years sector; to increase attention to specific populations such as New Communities; and to increase opportunities to engage the voice of children and young people.

Mental Health and Wellbeing "Resilience and Recovery"



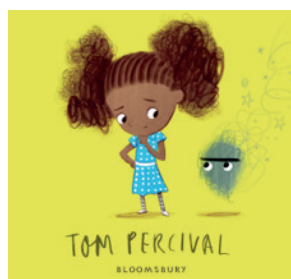
Mental health continued to be a recurring theme, particularly in light of the ongoing pandemic and restrictions during 2021. A significant interagency effort once again went into developing a Mental Health Awareness Month Campaign in October to align with World Mental Health Day. Our theme for 2021 was **Resilience and Recovery**, sponsored by the Mental Health & Wellbeing, and Child and Youth Participation Subgroups. Throughout the month, a series of events and activities were organised for practitioners, parents and children and young people.



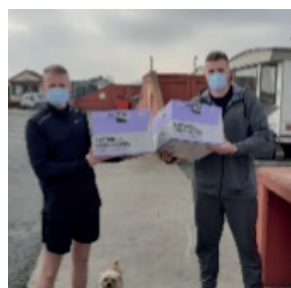
Our **Connect and Learn** Series offered online inputs to parents, and young people, covering a range of topics across **Parenting Support and Information; Exercise, Sleep and Nutrition; and Understanding and Promoting Resilience** across the month. A social media campaign supported the month and highlighted key messages, publications and sponsored initiatives. **Over 250 parents, children and young people took part across the month with**

interagency partners.

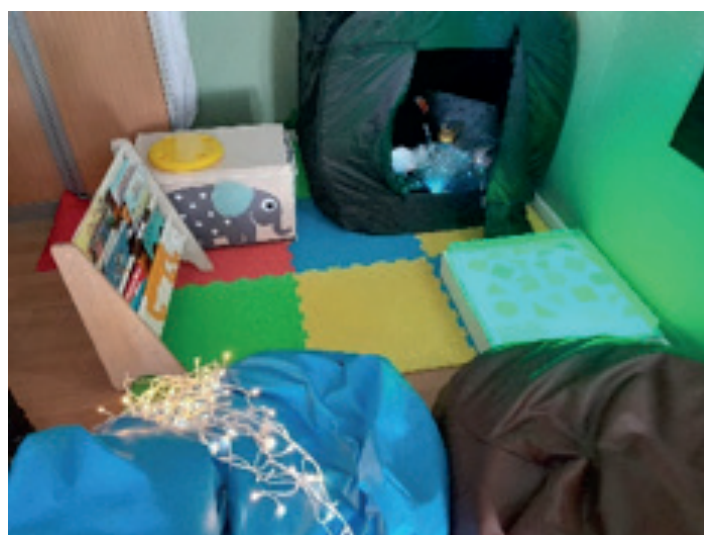
Dublin City North CYPSC Sponsored Initiatives throughout the month established activities and events with children and young people including:



All 111 Primary Schools across the Dublin City North area each received the children's picture book **"Ruby's Worry"** by **Tom Percival** to encourage children to talk about their worries. Led by St. Marys Primary School, Dorset Street, every school was invited to take part through pre-prepared lesson and assembly plans.



Mental health workshops were delivered with twenty (20) **young Traveller and Roma men** in local schools. The workshops included the role of healthy lifestyles for our wellbeing, and nutritious food packs were delivered to participants. (Northside Partnership Supporting Traveller and Roma (STAR))



A series of supports were delivered with children, young people and families in **Balseskin Reception Centre (International Protection Accommodation)** through a collaboration with Jesuit Refugee Service, HSE, and Barnardos. Family Wellness Workshops took place on-site at Balseskin Reception Centre with 42 parents and children. Eight (8) young people engaged with a "Street Art" workshop to highlight wellbeing, and design and develop an art mural for the Fáilte Room onsite. Later in the year, DCN CYPSC continued consultation with children and young people, and from feedback funded the development of sensory, art, toy and creative spaces for children's wellbeing while residing in the centre.

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Given the increasing concern around anxiety, Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service designed bookmarks that promoted self-regulation techniques through breathing and mindfulness. DCN CYPSC funded a regional print and distribution to primary schools in partnership with School Completion Programmes, Child and Family Support Networks and local schools.

Resilience Kits were provided to the Mind-It Project (Sphere17 RYS and Cabra for Youth) including sand play therapy equipment and materials; teen discussion games; and mindfulness materials. The materials complement traditional counselling modalities and offers

young people multiple ways to communicate and engage in the sessions with counsellors.



The **Zen Den** in Ballymun Regional Youth Resource is a space of calm, relaxation and safety for young people using sensory equipment and materials. Co-Funded by HSE Mental Health Services and Dublin City North CYPSC, it has been developed for young people with additional needs attending their service. It has been a huge success with both young people and staff (!).

A SUMMER OF PLAY 2021



In partnership with Dublin City Council and Dublin City South CYPSC, *A Summer of Play in Dublin City* emphasized the importance of play and play spaces for children. Collectively, over 1000 Summer Play Packs including skipping rope, frisbee, bubbles, chalk and yo-yo's were delivered to children across Dublin City. Dublin City North CYPSC partnered directly with Northside Partnership Supporting Traveller and Roma (STAR) project and Barnardos Finglas West Family Resource Centre to ensure targeted children received these packs.

"It was so much fun and exercise as well as family time" (Parent)

To support outdoor play for children living in domestic violence refuges, Dublin City North CYPSC also partnered with Sonas and Aoihneas Domestic Abuse services to supply fun, large garden games such as Snakes and Ladders, Tumbling Towers and Dominoes for use in their residences. The feedback from children and families has been very positive, encouraging a fun space for recreation and play.



NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE (NVR) TRAINING AND WEBINAR

DCN CYPSC collaborated with Tusla Prevention, Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) under the Safe and Protected from Harm subgroup to continue development of the Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) programme in Dublin City North. *NVR supports parents with skills to respond to violent, aggressive, and threatening behaviour directed towards the parent/caregiver by the child.* An information webinar "Responding to Child to Parent Violence" was hosted in September to increase awareness of the programme for potential referral agents, and services interested in further training, attended by more than 90 professionals. Following this, thirty-three (33) practitioners across DCN were trained up as NVR facilitators in addition to the 22 trained in 2019 with CYPSC funding. **Ninety (90) referrals were recorded and responded to in 2021 by Tusla PPFS with agency partners in the Dublin City North CYPSC area.** The programme has seen a steady increase in referrals since 2018 (28 referrals) to 2021 (61 referrals) in Dublin North City alone¹ suggesting increased recognition of Child to Parent Violence and increased demand for support.

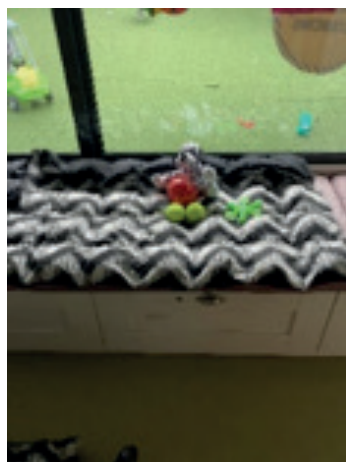
¹Referrals recorded with Tusla PPFS Dublin North City only, does not include other data sources including individual agencies responses.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Following the publication and launch of our **Domestic Abuse Resource Pack** in December 2020, Dublin City North CYPSC partnered with Aoibhneas and Sonas Domestic Violence Charities to provide half-day workshops to support frontline practitioners skills to *Recognise, Respond and Refer* to domestic violence and abuse in their daily roles. Two skills workshops were held and covered a range of topics. Evaluations showed that participants increased in knowledge and awareness and confidence in recognizing domestic violence and abuse, how to respond, and where to refer to.

"Increased awareness of DV, which will help[s] me to recognise & more effectively respond to clients who are experiencing DV".

"Keep Well" Community Resilience Campaign



With thanks to Healthy Ireland and Sláintecare fund, Dublin City North CYPSC partnered with Sonas and Aoibhneas domestic violence charities, and STAR to promote mental health and mood enhancing supports. Combined these activities reached over **100 targeted children and young people**. The compilation of activities took place over a number of months and included a range of Self-Care and Wellbeing sessions with over 50 young Traveller women and men; established child-friendly sensory spaces in two local domestic violence refuges; and supported embodiment activities to help children regulate their emotions, benefitting over 60 children.

Sport and Physical Activity for Girls and Young Women (2020 – 2021)



Dublin City North CYPSC continued its partnership with the Healthy Ireland Fund into 2021 under our Health and Wellbeing Action Plan. As part of a 2-year programme of work (2020-2021), **the targeted theme was young girls and women in sport, led by key partners – Fun Direction, Barnardos, Dublin City Sport and Wellbeing Partnership, and Ballymun Regional Youth Resource.**

The themed **focus** aimed to increase accessible physical activity in a fun and interactive way. Taking a cross age-range approach, the actions targeted 5 – 21 years, and was aligned with the focus on the 20x20 Women in Sport Campaign.

Fun Direction Physical Literacy for 5-9 years



In collaboration with Barnardos, Fun Direction targeted **120 young girls aged 5-9 years** across Dublin City North. The goal was to support physical literacy skills alongside motivation that puts young girls on a pathway towards lifelong participation in sport and physical activity. Throughout 2021 the programme has worked hard to break down the barriers of access to sport for girls aged 5-9 by introducing them to fun activities to develop their physical movement and literacy skills and open their eyes to the fun and healthy elements that sport can bring them. **Seven (7) targeted after-school clubs** have received training in the Fun Direction model, supported by a bespoke **Coaching Handbook** - outlining weekly fun activities over a minimum of 20 weeks. Coaching in the model has helped build sustainability of practice within the projects along with **sports equipment for each site**. To further enhance the effects of the programme, **nutrition workshops** emphasized healthy lifestyle choices; and **attendance at elite sporting events** such as FAI international soccer games in Aviva Stadium and All Ireland Camogie Club Final in Croke Park have exposed young participants to positive female role models in sport. Fitness and movement were further enhanced with positive family activities such as ice skating. As the programme comes to an end in March 2022, all 120 young girls will take part in a Fun Direction multi-sport blitz - relay races, high jump, long jump and will be supported in all areas of sport so they can get a sense of what they enjoy and look towards future connections in sports associations to build their skills in physical literacy.

Getting All Girls Active (GAGA) for 12-15 years



Coordinated by the Dublin City Sports and Wellbeing Partnership, this fun exercise programme has benefited **two hundred and fifty (250) teenage girls** aged 12-15 years. Fitness Coaches delivered a combination of Dancefit, Zumba and Bootcamp across the schools, and promoted healthy lifestyle choices and healthy eating as part of the programme. To encourage engagement, each participant was equipped with a backpack containing water bottle, t-shirt, healthy snacks and booklets/leaflets, PPE including face masks, alongside advice on healthy eating and exercise.

Young Women, Leadership and Sport for 14-18 years



Led by Ballymun Regional Youth Resource, this action focused on engaging young women in sports and fitness, culminating in a group end of programme blitz. The collaboration included seven youth services across Dublin City North engaging a total of **160 young women (14-18 years)** in two sports and fitness programmes over 8-12 weeks each. The project focussed on engaging young women who would not normally see sport as part of their lives. Removing barriers to engagement was a key attribute of this project - providing sports attire and exercise equipment for at-home fitness during restrictions. Sports equipment was also provided to participating youth services to build capacity for further engagement with young people in the longer term. Youth services reported high retention and engagement, particularly after long periods of lock down throughout the pandemic restrictions and young women demonstrated enthusiasm for the opportunity to participate in the programme citing impacts such as "getting fitter", "new skills", and "providing structure" to "get outside". Young women were also introduced to high profile female sports figures to promote the leadership of women in sport; 20 young people took part in accredited leadership development training, and others used their fitness programme towards a Bronze Gaisce Award.

Safe Play in Finglas North A



A continuation of a named action in our 3-year CYPP to support over **200 children living in Finglas**, additional funding provided by Healthy Ireland has afforded the opportunity to expand and progress projects and implement actions recommended in the 2019 research "Safe Play in Finglas North A". In 2021, a focus on child-friendly spaces saw

a *A Playful City* co-designing a **mini-golf course with children**, the development of which will begin in 2022; **colourful play markings** for Traveller children in Avila Park were installed; and Dublin City North CYPSC and Tusla part-funded **the Creative Connections Project** which set a **colourful art installation on the grounds surrounding St. Kevin's BNS**. The project has further developed a range of important, participative initiatives including a **sensory garden** with children in ASD classes of St Fergal's BNS and St Brigid's GNS; themed **community celebrations** remotely or in-person; **wellness workshops** for children up to 12 years; healthy food workshops; and purchased physical activity/exercise equipment for a local school. **Community Resilience and Trauma Healing research** ("We all have a role to Play") documented international trauma research and models, and recommendations for Finglas West to work towards developing a trauma informed community continues to be refined and implemented.

Mind-It Project – Counselling and Wellbeing Service for Young People 12-21 years



Funded by the Community Mental Health Fund, and supported by Department of Health, the Mind-It Project has worked with over 100 young people, offering up to 9 counselling sessions free of charge. Coordinated by Sphere17 Regional Youth Service (RYS) in collaboration with Cabra Youth Project and supported by DCN CYPSC and HSE Mental Health Services, the project expanded in 2021 to pilot a school based initiative to offer counselling on-site in 4 local schools. An evaluation of the project is underway to record the learning and journey.

Supporting Learning Transitions - from Primary to Post-Primary



Following long periods of school closures due to pandemic restrictions, the Learning and Development Subgroup hosted a webinar for parents on supporting their child's transition to post primary education. In partnership with Tusla Education Support Service, National Parents Council, schools and local projects including Supporting Traveller and Roma project (STAR), this webinar was attended by approximately 20 parents. The recorded session available at <https://youtu.be/pOoFNHuXvQ4>.