


limerick youth service 

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023 – 2027



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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

We are delighted to introduce Limerick Youth Service Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027. Our plan sets out the priorities, aims, objectives and actions that will guide us in supporting young people to reach their full potential. It follows from our previous Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021 in prioritising high quality youth work, education, training & employability provision and supporting volunteers in their work with young people.

This plan has emerged from an extensive review of policy and research, and from consultations undertaken with young people, volunteers, staff, board members, parents, funders, partners, and collaborators. Consultation findings validate the research which outlines the destructive impact that the Covid 19 pandemic has had on the lives of young people in terms of their health, wellbeing, education, and development. Covid 19 has deepened existing inequality with already vulnerable young people more at risk of poorer physical and mental health, learning losses and social isolation. Consultations have also identified further challenges experienced by young people including rural isolation and economic deprivation.

While addressing the challenges, our plan also recognises and builds on positive achievements and on young people's strengths and abilities as emphasised throughout our consultations. Ireland's young people demonstrated strength and resilience throughout the COVID 19 pandemic, adapting to a situation that caused severe disruption to their daily lives while showing empathy and compassion to those more vulnerable members of society. Awareness and understanding of youth mental health has improved along with educational access, equity, and choice. Young people are accessing diverse recreational opportunities including youth clubs, cafes and youth groups. Young people enjoy their freedom, creativity, are open to learning and new experiences. Their voice and contribution to political and cultural life is increasingly

prioritised and technological developments such as social media are enabling connectivity and the development of diverse networks of friendships.

Over the next 4 years, Limerick Youth Service will build on these positives and support young people in facing the challenges. We will continue to place young people at the centre of all that we do, facilitate an integrated and collaborative approach to our work, prioritise learning, creativity and innovation and embed equality, inclusion, and diversity. We will realise our mission through youth work provision which empowers young people to enhance their personal and social development; the delivery of education, training and employment opportunities that enable young people to fully integrate and participate in society, and through supporting volunteers so that they may positively contribute to improving the lives of young people.

This plan is underpinned by monitoring and evaluation processes that will capture outcomes and maintain accountability and transparency. To ensure the success of this plan, Limerick Youth Service will sustain effective and efficient governance and management systems and structures, provide safe, accessible and youth friendly premises and facilities, develop resources and enhance our communication and promotion.

In 2023, Limerick Youth Service will be 50 years old. Our founder Sr. Joan Bowles vision was to create a place of hope and encouragement for all young people. This strategic plan set out an ambitious framework to deliver on that vision and achieve the greatest possible outcomes for young people. We hope you share our excitement in the possibilities for the next chapter of our story as part of the lives of young people in Limerick City & County.

Audrey Fehily

Chairperson

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027

MISSION

'Connecting with young people and supporting them to reach their full potential'

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

YOUTH WORK

Deliver high quality youth work that fosters meaningful outcomes for young people

EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYABILITY

Provide Further Education, Training & Employability opportunities that empower young people to fully integrate and participate in society

VOLUNTEERS

Attract, support and sustain volunteers so that they may positively contribute to improving the lives of young people

DELIVERING OUR STRATEGY

Build a strong organisation that is open to learning, responsive to change and committed to its ongoing development.

VALUES

- Young People at the centre of all that we do
- Community based, integrated and collaborative Learning,
 - Creativity & innovation
- Equality, inclusion & diversity

ABOUT LIMERICK YOUTH SERVICE

Limerick Youth Service (LYS) was founded in 1973 and is a provider of youth work, education, training and employability programmes to young people aged 10 to 25 years in Limerick City & County. We are a registered charity and a member of Youth Work Ireland. We are registered as a Scheme of Incorporation by the Commissioners of Charitable Donations & Bequests in Ireland, under Section 2 of the Charities Act 1973. LYS is governed by a Voluntary Board which is responsible for the overall governance of the Organisation.

LYS services and supports are delivered within the following dedicated, safe, accessible and youth friendly spaces across Limerick City & County::

1. Limerick Youth Service Headquarters, Lwr. Glentworth St., Limerick
2. Community Training Centre, Lwr. Glentworth St., Limerick
3. The Factory, Southside Youth Space, Galvone Business Park, Limerick
4. Northside Youth Space, Ballynanty, Limerick
5. Rathkeale Youth Space, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick
6. Nicholas St. Youth Space, Kings Island, Limerick
7. East Limerick Youth Space, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick
8. Garryowen Youth Together Project, Garryowen, Limerick
9. Youth Diversion Project, John's Square, Limerick

Working in partnership with local communities, LYS also facilitates youth clubs and programmes in community venues and facilities across Limerick City and County including provision in more isolated rural communities.



OUR MISSION AND VALUES

OUR MISSION

*‘Connecting with young people and supporting them
to reach their full potential’*

OUR VALUES

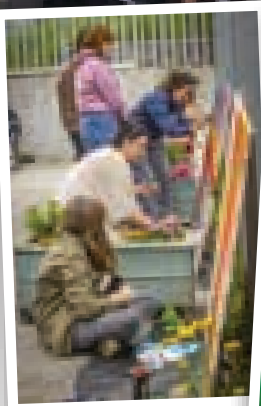
Value	We will achieve this by:
Young People at the Centre of all that we do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising the welfare of young people and protecting them from harm • Placing young people at the heart of the design, delivery, and review of our services • Responding to the strengths and needs of young people • Nurturing empowering and supportive relationships with young people • Ensuring positive difference in the lives of young people
Community based, integrated and collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing local and accessible services that engage families and support community cohesion • Facilitating integrated provision in meeting the needs of the ‘whole’ young person • Supporting local, regional and national collaboration amongst community, voluntary and statutory groups and organisations
Learning, Creativity & Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing new ways of working, embracing connections and sharing ideas • Embedding theoretical and practical foundations, effective methodologies and adopting best practice • Gathering data, critically reflecting on our work and learning from our experiences
Equality Inclusion & Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing open access services for all young people in addition to targeted services for more vulnerable young people • Embedding specialised supports within all settings and activities • Developing & promoting policies, programmes and practices which prioritise diversity, equality, and inclusiveness • Striving to ensure the diversity in our community is reflected in those who engage in and work in our organisation

WHAT WE DO AND HOW WE DO IT

Our mission is 'Connecting with young people and supporting them to reach their full potential'.

We do this by delivering:

1. Youth work supports, services and programmes
2. Education, training & employability opportunities & initiatives
3. Volunteer opportunities & support



1. YOUTH WORK

LYS works both outside and alongside the formal education sector. Section 3 of 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 services'.

LYS Youth work provision across Limerick City and County incorporates:

- Youth Diversion Projects
- Youth Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Youth and Family Support
- Youth Information
- International Youth Work
- Youth Cafes
- Volunteer - Led Youth Clubs
- Your Place Your Space (UBU) Targeted Youth Work Programmes
- Structured Youth Work Programmes/ Workshops
- Youth Voice & Participation Initiatives



DEFINING FEATURES

- Our theoretical approach recognises both individual and environmental factors in nurturing young people's personal and social capacities and competencies (Bronfenbrenner, 1974)
- Our evidence-based methodologies include detached youth work, one to one mentoring and coaching, group work, drop-in youth cafes, advocacy, outreach, therapeutic counselling and the delivery of evidence-based informal educational programmes and workshops
- Our focus is on fun and based on voluntary participation
- Our youth work is young person centred, supports families, and promotes community cohesion
- We prioritise collaborative practice and our integrated model facilitates access to a diverse range of LYS services and supports including therapeutic counselling, education, training & employability opportunities, safe, accessible & youth friendly spaces and family supports
- We conduct research, critically reflect, document learning and contribute to best practice
- We plan, monitor, and evaluate all aspects of our provision to ensure continuous quality and improvement
- We recognise that some marginalised, excluded, and vulnerable young people require additional and specialised supports, delivered in a non- stigmatising way

2. EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYABILITY

LYS' Education Training & Employability initiatives provide young people between the ages of 16 and 21 years with the opportunity to return to education and learning, to gain new skills and awards, to progress to employment or to Further and Higher Education and Training opportunities including PLC courses, apprenticeships, and traineeships.

Our expert staff successfully deliver an extensive range of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Awards Level 3-4 in interesting and innovative programmes including: Construction Skills, Creative Media Technology, Catering Skills, Music Production, Photography, Retail, Pathway to Progression, Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), FDQ Level 2 Certificate/Diploma in Professional Bakery, EHOA Food Safety Certificate and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

DEFINING FEATURES

- LYS provides safe, welcoming, respectful, and non-judgemental learning environments where young people experience a sense of belonging, connection, and inclusion
- Young people are encouraged to have an active voice and real influence in setting and steering their own learning and professional pathway
- Our educational pedagogies include coaching, constructive feedback, peer learning, critical reflection and enquiry-based learning, using technology wherever appropriate and a range of blended and online options. Our offering is work and/or practice based and facilitates learning by doing/experiential learning in 'real world' settings for example in our operational restaurant and bakery
- We facilitate a diverse range of integrated supports which address the needs of the 'whole' young person. These include therapeutic counselling, family supports, teaching & learning supports, career guidance, advocacy, and access to youth work interventions
- We enable learning and progression as part of a community and prioritise collaborative relationships with families, communities, schools and community organisations
- In addition to critical skills development, LYS prioritises the development of employability and life-skills including communication, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, confidence, and self-belief



3. VOLUNTEERS

LYS recognises the value and contribution of volunteers to our organisation and to strengthening communities and civil society. In line with the National Volunteering Strategy 2021-2025 (Department of Rural and Community Development), LYS acknowledges the contribution of volunteers to 'developing communities as vibrant, inclusive and sustainable places'. Volunteers are a necessity in the community & voluntary sector and LYS appreciates and celebrates their contribution.

For almost 50 years, volunteers have played an essential role in enabling LYS to improve the lives of young people in the following ways:

- Through LYS' affiliated volunteer-led youth clubs across the city and rural county Limerick including the delivery of youth-focused events such as youth discos, talent shows and large-scale community events
- Supporting young people to complete our 'Youth Leadership Programme' focused on

civic engagement and the development community youth leadership skills including teamwork, communication, planning and problem skills

- Empowering young people completing LYS education and employability programmes
- Volunteering with our youth cafes and youth work projects including youth mental health and youth and family support initiatives across the city and county
- The contribution of second and third level students on formal placements across our services and supports who in turn develop skills and their CVs.

We are committed to providing comprehensive volunteer structures and supports such as child safeguarding training, youth club governance and management supports, recognition and award events and recruitment events. We particularly prioritise meaningful volunteer opportunities for young people.



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS 2018-2021¹

Over the course of our Strategic Plan 2018-2021 2,000 young people have accessed the following supports on an annual basis: therapeutic counselling, one to one mentoring & coaching, youth diversion programmes, detached youth work, family supports, youth mental health workshops, advocacy & outreach, employability supports, evidence-based programmes such as Junior Leader Training and Moving on Up- Primary to Secondary Transition Programme and youth cafes.

Annually, an average of 1,200 young people spent their free time in one of 20 youth clubs each week with an average of 1700 young people attending youth club discos and participating in largescale events including the LYS End of Year Games and the Youth Factor. Approximately 2,500 young people and 660 parents/guardians have accessed LYS' Youth Information service annually: strengthening their awareness of issues such as Sexual Health & Well Being, Web Safety & social media, Legal and Justice Issues, and Accommodation and Homelessness.

The positive impact that LYS has had on the lives of the young people that we work with is reflected in the following quotes:

"Being supportive about everything and you can talk about things freely, without judgement.....Good place for people to go and to just talk and feel safe.....LYS helps people feel more safe and lets them know that they are not alone"

"[I] could volunteer with Lava Javas, participate in foreign exchange, be on Lava Javas youth committee and now counselling when struggling with mental health condition. LYS like a one stop shop!!"

"All five of my kids have been involved with the youth centre and it's been fantastic for them and for myself"

Feedback from our stakeholders include:

'The empathy for young people - in particular disadvantaged young people - is huge and shows with young people continuing to engage with the service. Facilities are excellent, in areas where they are established and they are appreciated. Trust [from] both children and young people but also [from] their parents is a very important feature'

'The ethos of the Organisation can be seen in service delivery, The voice of the young person is paramount, Quality Services provided by professional staff, Value for money services'

'Its integration within community, its connection with various support agencies'

¹ All our achievements can be viewed in our annual reports at <https://limerickyouthservice.com/resources-publications/#lys-annual-reports>

OUR ENVIRONMENT

This plan has been prepared in accordance with the following key policy documents:

Policy	Summary
<p>Better Outcomes Brighter Futures The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020</p> <p>Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies 5 National Outcomes concerning Health, Learning & Development, Safety & Security, Economic Opportunity, and Civic Engagement Emphasises the importance of early intervention, ensuring quality services, interagency collaboration, effective transitions, supporting parents and giving voice to children and young people
National Youth Strategy (DCEDIY)	Its aim is to enable all young people realise their maximum potential, by respecting their rights and hearing their voices, while protecting and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood
National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making 2015-2020 (DCEDIY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out to ensure that children and young people will have a voice in their individual and collective everyday lives across the 5 national outcome areas of Better Outcomes Brighter Futures
<p>Future FET: Transforming Learning The National Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy (2020-2024) Department of Further & Higher Education and Research, Innovation & Science (DFHERIS)</p>	<p>Outlines the following strategic priorities and related goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion (Embed Inclusive Practice; Prioritise Target Cohorts; Consistent Learner Support & Literacy and Numeracy) Skills (New Vocational Proposition; Up-skilling the Workforce; Delivering on Apprenticeship; Meeting Critical Skills Needs) Pathways (Pathways from School to FET; Pathways within FET; Pathways between FET to HE; Facilitating Lifelong Pathways)
EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 & European Youth Goals 2019-2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Strategy fosters youth participation in democratic life, supports social and civic engagement and aims to ensure that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in society European Youth Goals include Quality Learning, Inclusive Societies, Mental Health & Wellbeing and Quality Employment
<p>National Volunteering Strategy 2021 - 2025 m</p> <p>Department of Rural and Community Development</p>	<p>Its objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase participation and diversity in volunteering Facilitate, develop and support the Volunteering Environment Recognise, celebrate and communicate the value and impact of volunteers and volunteering in all its forms Promote ethical and skills-based international volunteering

DEMOGRAPHIC & SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

- The population of Limerick City and County is 205,444, a rise of 5.4% from 2016 (CSO, 2022)²
- In 2020, the population aged 10-14 years was 13,905, aged 15 - 19 years was 12,612 and aged 20 - 24 years was 14,265 (CSO, 2022).³
- The under 15 population across Limerick City and County has increased by an average of 1.45% - higher than the state average, with the 15-24 age group population falling by 8% in the city and 2.7% in the county, again, more than state averages.⁴
- The number of those resident in the city and county who were born outside of the State has more than trebled in size between 1996 to 2016 and as a proportion of the population increased from 5.46% in 1996 to 14.09% in 2016.⁵
- Rathkeale (Rathkeale Urban ED) has an exceptionally high percentage of Traveller population, where 326 individuals or 24% of the population identify as White Irish Traveller, followed by Askeaton East, Abbeyfeale, Kilmallock and Newcastle Urban (CSO, 2016).
- Trutz Haase Deprivation Index, 2017 identifies extremely and very disadvantaged areas in Limerick City including John's A, Galvone B, Ballynanty, Abbey C and Prospect B - mirroring unemployment blackspots. In rural County Limerick, 'marginally below average' EDs include Rathkeale Rural, Croom, Patrickswell and Fedamore.⁶



2 CSO, 2022. <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpr/censusofpopulation2022-preliminaryresults/componentsofpopulationchange/>

3 CSO, 2020. <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/fp/fp-ipeads/irishpopulationestimatesfromadministrativedatasources2020/populationestimates/>

4 2021, Indecon. The Future Development of Limerick City. https://limerickchamber.ie/cms_files/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/The-Future-Development-of-Limerick-City-Indecon-International-Research-Economists-Final-Report.pdf

5 Ibid

6 2016, Pobal HP Deprivation Index. <https://data.gov.ie/dataset/hp-deprivation-index-scores-2016/resource/6480bb69-023c-47f2-813f-8689bacafa54>

KEY TRENDS

Key issues and trends for young people which emerged in the consultation process include:

Outcome Area: Physical & Mental Health

Young People's Strengths	Young People's Needs
<p>Young people feel they are healthy, fit and enjoy getting involved in sporting activities. Increased awareness of the importance of physical health</p> <p>Young people enjoy being free to have fun, to laugh and play/hang out with friends. Older young people are looking forward to the future, to opportunities and their independence</p> <p>Increased awareness and understanding of positive mental health and wellbeing. Better variety of supports and services available in this area</p> <p>Young people demonstrated strength and resilience throughout the COVID pandemic</p> <p>Young people are enjoying play, recreation and sporting opportunities and access to youth clubs/groups</p>	<p>Substance abuse issues including problem drinking, smoking, and vaping</p> <p>Social media perpetuates a perfect body image. "Body dysmorphia" and "fat shaming" highlighted as a challenge.</p> <p>Negative impact of COVID on young people's mental health and wellbeing</p> <p>Stigma, fear, and a lack of understanding surrounding mental health. Lack of youth mental health information, support, and services with high waiting lists</p> <p>Social media promotes false images of perfect lives and in turn, feelings of inadequacy. A pressure on young people to fit in</p> <p>Difficulties around managing emotions including anger and fear</p> <p>Enhanced sexual health education with an emphasis on consent</p> <p>More diverse recreational opportunities. Emphasis on competitive sport – to be the best. Spaces for older young people to hang out, which aren't 'youth clubs'</p>



Outcome Area: Education & Learning

Young People's Strengths	Young People's Needs
<p>Young people are open to learning, to new experiences and think creatively</p> <p>Improved educational access and equity for e.g., reduced rates of early school leaving</p> <p>More diverse educational choice and opportunities</p>	<p>Overemphasis on academic achievement</p> <p>Unequal engagement and achievement of Traveller community in formal education. Socio-economic disadvantage and its implications for poor educational attainment</p> <p>Teacher capacity to empower disadvantaged, marginalised, and vulnerable young people to attain in education needs to be strengthened</p> <p>Negative consequences of the COVID pandemic on educational retention and outcomes</p> <p>Learner supports including financial, literacy and academic supports are essential</p> <p>The digital divide made obvious due to COVID 19</p> <p>Peer pressure to 'not do well' in school</p> <p>Support for 'Alternative' educational provision; a middle ground between mainstream and provision specific to learning difficulties</p>

Outcome Area: Safe & Secure

Young People's Strengths	Young People's Needs
<p>Most young people live in stable and secure environments and have people who care for them</p>	<p>Dysfunctional family environments and poor parenting. Family conflict & poor parental mental health</p> <p>Unsafe community environments enabling access to drink and drugs</p> <p>Bullying in school environments and bullying and conflict within larger peer groups. Online bullying, relentless judgement, and criticism</p> <p>Young people feel that they can be treated negatively by school staff</p> <p>Destructive peer relationships can result in young people becoming involved in anti-social behaviour</p>

Outcome Area: Economic Opportunity

Young People's Strengths	Young People's Needs
<p>Young people enjoy their freedom from financial and job-related responsibilities</p> <p>Young people have strong technological skills, which expand employment opportunities</p> <p>Increased and varied employment opportunities</p>	<p>The rising cost of living and inflation will further deepen socio-economic disadvantage</p> <p>Insecure housing, homelessness, and the housing crises</p> <p>Participation in the workforce remains difficult for some young people including securing work experience</p>

Outcome Area: Connected & Respected

Young People's Strengths	Young People's Needs
<p>Young people feel supported by their family and friends</p> <p>Young people are good at communicating and making friends. Social media enables young people to communicate with others and develop networks of friends</p> <p>Services and supports are focusing more on marginalised young people and targeted interventions</p> <p>Young people feel that they are tolerant, accepting and committed to challenging inequality, injustice and exclusion through active citizenship and engagement in political, social and cultural life</p> <p>Perspective that society is becoming more inclusive in terms of disability.</p> <p>Availability of more youth focused services supports and spaces.</p>	<p>Young people can feel pressure to be who the adults in their lives expect them to be, negatively affecting self-expression</p> <p>Racism, integration and the marginalisation of specific groups including traveller youth, LGBTQ+ young people and migrant communities.</p> <p>Gender inequality persists</p> <p>Some young people do not feel that they have a supportive family</p> <p>Importance of critical analysis with respect to social media and online information</p> <p>Young people can struggle with developing more 'real' and 'in-person' supportive friendships with their peers and within the community. Online relationships can be seen as 'fake'</p> <p>Young people can feel little control over their own lives or that their voice is listened to by the adults in their lives</p> <p>Young people in rural areas experience isolation from friendships, services and supports</p> <p>COVID restrictions minimised opportunities for connection and social activities, resulting in feelings of loneliness and increased isolation</p> <p>Young people feel that climate change and the environment are key issues affecting them today</p> <p>Young people value international experiences</p> <p>Strengthened youth participation and voice in local and national structures and forums</p>

Findings from the consultations are supported by our literature review:

- The COVID-19 crisis had negative effects on young people's health and wellbeing, especially amongst some marginalised groups. The most common negative effects relate to mental health, including overthinking, concern, worry, anxiety, depression and a sense of hopelessness⁷
- More than 1,600 children are growing up in the direct provision system with limited access to play or recreation⁸
- School closures and learning losses due to the COVID 19 pandemic have had a particularly negative impact on students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and students with special educational needs. Disengagement from education throughout the pandemic was a significant challenge, particularly for already marginalised young people with limited support at home⁹
- COVID-19 has revealed a digital divide specifically access to devices and broadband and digital skills¹⁰
- Lockdown measures throughout COVID greatly increased the risk that children living in unsafe home environments be exposed to direct harm (through neglect or physical or sexual abuse) or indirect harm (e.g. through witnessing domestic abuse).¹¹
- There had been a 20% increase in cyberbullying in Ireland during lockdown, and Ireland had one of the highest incidences of cyberbullying in Europe¹²
- The Mid-West region has the highest proportion of homelessness outside Dublin with 102 children recorded as homeless in March 2022¹³
- Many LGBTQ+ young people are at risk of leaving school early due to identity-based bullying and harassment¹⁴
- Insufficient consideration is given to facilities for young people in rural communities including more tailored amenities for different age groups and there exists a gap in the diversity of activities available in rural areas for young people, outside of sports¹⁵

7 Department of Children & Youth Affairs, 2020. 'HOW'S YOUR HEAD? Report of a national consultation with young people on mental health and wellbeing' https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/33132/1/Hows_your_head.pdf

8 Special Rapporteur on Child Protection 14th Report, 2021. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2d30f-annual-report-of-the-special-rapporteur-on-child-protection-2021/>

9 ERSI, 2020. 'Learning for all? Second-level education in Ireland during covid-19'. <https://www.esri.ie/pubs/SUSTAT92.pdf>

10 ERSI, 2020. 'The implications of the covid-19 pandemic for policy in relation to children and young people, a research review'. https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/SUSTAT94_3.pdf

11 The Special Rapporteur on Child Protection 14th Report, 2022 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2d30f-annual-report-of-the-special-rapporteur-on-child-protection-2021/>

12 Dublin City University, 2021. 'KiDiCoTi: Kids' Digital Lives in Covid-19 Times: A Study on Digital Practices, Safety and Wellbeing Key findings from Ireland' https://antibullyingcentre.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Short-report_Covid_for-media_TM_with-Author-names-1-2.pdf

13 Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Monthly Homelessness Report March 2022

14 Gay and Lesbian Equality Network 2016. 'Being LGBT in School: A Resource for Post-Primary Schools to Prevent Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying, and Support LGBT Students' <https://assets.gov.ie/24762/729f5d8906184a6a8c4be0c5e2a349dd.pdf> file:///C:/Users/fiona.baily/Downloads/222484_1159ba1c-66ad-4b32-9dbb-49f473486c52%20(1).pdf

15 OUR RURAL FUTURE' - RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2021-2025 <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/132413/433aebac-f12a-4640-8cac-9faf52e5ea1f.pdf#page=27>



OUR JOURNEY TO A NEW PLAN

Extensive consultations were undertaken by LYS with young people, volunteers, staff, board members, parents, funders, partners and collaborators between January and June 2022 as follows:

- Focus Groups were completed with over 111 young people across Limerick City & County
- Social Media survey with young people
- One to one interviews with individual young people
- Survey undertaken with LYS volunteers
- Board & staff survey and planning workshops
- Stakeholder survey

Please see Consultation Report 2022
[Linked here](#)

Secondary data was reviewed and analysed including:

- Profile & Demographic Review
- Policy Review
- Literature Review
- Internal document Review

Please see Data Review 2022
[Linked here](#)

The findings from the consultations and reviews provide the evidence from which our strategic themes, aims and objectives have emerged.



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. YOUTH WORK

Aim: Deliver high quality youth work that fosters meaningful outcomes for young people

Outcomes	Objectives
1.1 Young people are physically healthy and enjoy positive mental health & wellbeing	1.1.1 Support young people's physical health with a focus on reducing substance misuse, healthy eating, and physical activity
	1.1.2 Strengthen young people's mental health and social and emotional wellbeing in light of COVID's damaging impacts
	1.1.3 Promote positive sexual health and wellbeing
	1.1.4 Facilitate more diverse recreational opportunities in the arts, culture, the outdoors/nature, and play
1.2 Young people are learning and developing	1.2.1 Provide informal and community-based learning and development opportunities including homework supports and educational transition programmes
	1.2.2 Support the retention & achievement of young people in formal education
1.3 Young People are safe and secure	1.3.1 Empower parents & guardians to provide safe, secure, stable, and caring home environments
	1.3.2 Increase access to community-based safe, friendly, recreational youth spaces particularly within communities experiencing high levels of deprivation
	1.3.3 Improve awareness, understanding, skills and behaviour with respect to bullying

Outcomes	Objectives
1.4 Young People are active citizens and engage in political, social, and civic life	1.4.1 Empower young people's independence, autonomy, and self-expression
	1.4.2 Enable young people to develop positive peer relationships, friendships, connections, and networks
	1.4.3 Engage young people experiencing rural isolation and other marginalised young people including LGBTQ+, Traveller, and economically disadvantaged young people
	1.4.4 Strengthen young people's civic engagement with a focus on the environment and international opportunities
	1.4.5 Enhance youth participation and voice in local and national structures and forums
1.5 Young People have access to the information and knowledge they need to make informed choices about their lives	1.5.1 Ensure youth information provision with a focus on themes including employment, education, and training; social and cultural opportunities including volunteering, sexual health and web safety and social media
	1.5.2 Strengthen young people's critical/media literacy and promote online safety
	1.5.3 Develop innovative approaches to information provision



2. EDUCATION, TRAINING, & EMPLOYABILITY

Aim: Provide Further Education, Training & Employability opportunities that empower young people to fully integrate and participate in society

Outcomes	Objectives
2.1 Young people are gaining critical skills	2.1.1 Develop & deliver programmes linked to local, regional, and national skills needs and with clear employment and/or progression opportunities
	2.1.2 Provide consistent and structured work placements and internships, and facilitate Erasmus+ opportunities
	2.1.3 Develop and deliver pre-apprenticeship initiatives
2.2 Young People are developing employability and key life skills	2.2.1 Strengthen young people's confidence, self-esteem, communication, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, resilience, and relationship skills
2.3 Young people are progressing to further education, training and employment opportunities	2.3.1 Support engagement with post-primary schools and early school leavers in increasing access to LYS education, training & employability initiatives
	2.3.2 Facilitate education & training pathways within LYS and to other Further & Higher Education Institutions
	2.3.3 Support young people in securing sustainable employment opportunities
2.4 Marginalised young people are engaged in education, training & employment	2.4.1 Enhance the inclusion of more marginalised groups including Traveller young people, young people with a disability, young people with mental health support needs, ethnic minorities and young people experiencing social exclusion
2.5 Young people are provided with integrated supports tailored to their needs	2.5.1 Embed wraparound supports underpinned by need's assessments, learning and progression plans, one to one key working, mentoring & coaching, group work, family supports, advocacy, social supports and therapeutic counselling
	2.5.2 Facilitate classroom teaching & learning supports including small group and one to one supported learning settings, literacy & numeracy, English language and ICT supports

3. VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & SUPPORT

Aim: Attract, support and sustain volunteers so they may positively contribute to improving the lives of young people, and to strengthening communities and civil society

Area of Work	Objectives
3.1 A greater number of parents and volunteers are supported and sustained to work with young people in their local communities	3.1.1 Develop and implement an organisation wide Volunteer Recruitment & Retention Strategy
	3.1.2 Promote and develop international opportunities for young people and volunteers through Erasmus+ programmes
	3.1.3 Increase the number of volunteers working with young people in their local communities
	3.1.3 Ensure young people themselves have meaningful opportunities for volunteering through the development of Youth Leadership programmes
3.2 Volunteers are supported, recognised and facilitated to provide a high-quality safe experience to young people..	3.2.1 Facilitate volunteer recognition events and networking opportunities which celebrate volunteers and the difference they make
	3.2.2 Provide Information and support in relation to the setup, development, management, and administration of volunteer youth clubs & groups
	3.2.3 Deliver formal and informal training opportunities for all volunteers
3.3 Greater numbers of young people can access Volunteer led youth provision in Limerick City & County	3.3.1 Strengthen the provision of volunteer led youth clubs including specific targets for club retention and new club development
	3.3.2 Build and enhance an annual programme of volunteer club activity
	3.3.3 Develop models and means of communication with volunteers, clubs, and parents and guardians

4. ENABLING OUR STRATEGY

Aim: To build a strong organisation that is open to learning, responsive to change and committed to its ongoing development

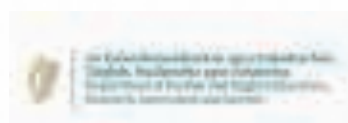
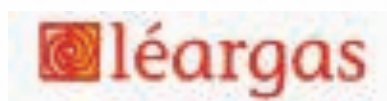
Outcomes	Objectives
4.1 Governance and Organisational Management is strengthened and improved	4.1.1 Continue to update, and modernise Governance, Financial, IT and Administration systems
	4.1.2 Ensure compliance with charity, youth, and education sector standards
	4.1.3 Further develop appropriate Board, sub-committee, working groups and staff structures to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of this plan
4.2 Young people are accessing safe, accessible, youth friendly spaces and facilities.	4.2.1 Enhance our infrastructure to broaden service provision and meet emerging needs of young people
	4.2.2 Secure, enhance and expand IT infrastructure and digital capability
	4.2.3 Ensure Child Safeguarding policies and procedures meet the required standards and conduct regular review of all processes in this area
	4.2.4 Ensure efficient and effective health and safety and building management systems
	4.2.5 Monitor and improve LYS sustainability and carbon footprint
	4.2.6 Facilitate maximum use of facilities by young people at times which suit them and increased use of facilities by the local community
4.3 LYS is valuing and communicating our work and advocating on behalf of young people	4.3.1 Design and deliver a communications and marketing strategy for LYS which promotes the visibility and understanding of our organisation and the work we do
	4.3.2 Strengthen our digital communications capacity & offering
	4.3.3 Celebrate and share the work of LYS and the power of youth work and inclusive education provision in young people's lives
	4.3.4 Safeguard and enhance our reputation through striving for excellence in all that we do
	4.3.5 Pro-actively advocate with and on behalf of young people affecting change for young people in the area's health & wellbeing, employment, civic engagement, education & learning

Outcomes	Objectives
4.4 Organisation skills, capacity, knowledge and resources are developed and maximized to meet the needs of young people	4.4.1 Develop employee skills and knowledge through informal & formal processes for continuous learning and development
	4.4.2 Co-produce and implement an organisational Health and Wellbeing Strategy with all employees
	4.4.3 Ensure as an organisation that we reflect the diversity of the community
	4.4.4 Maximise current revenue streams and identify new opportunities to generate revenue in the areas of corporate partnerships, fundraising and social enterprise
4.5 Young people benefit from responsive and needs based services and supports which meet highest quality standards	4.5.1 Develop detailed needs and outcomes based Annual Programmes and Plans in all areas of our work which set out how each area is contributing to the delivery of key areas of the Strategic Plan
	4.5.2 Research and identify the key issues affecting young people and their communities and adopt a leadership role in influencing policy and strategy
	4.5.3 Increase involvement and participation of young people in the design, delivery, and evaluation of services
	4.5.4 Further develop innovative and effective youth work and education & training methodologies underpinned by best practice
4.6 Strategic partnerships and collaboration are enhanced and expanded	4.6.1 Strengthen and develop collaboration, networking, referrals, and signposting opportunities with external agencies
	4.6.2 Reinforce internal collaboration across LYS services and programmes and seek out new strategic partnerships which support delivery of this plan



OUR PARTNERS

LYS collaborates and partners with a wide variety of local, regional, and national organisations in order to deliver appropriate services and supports and maximise outcomes for young people. These include our funders, community and voluntary organisations, schools and corporate partners.

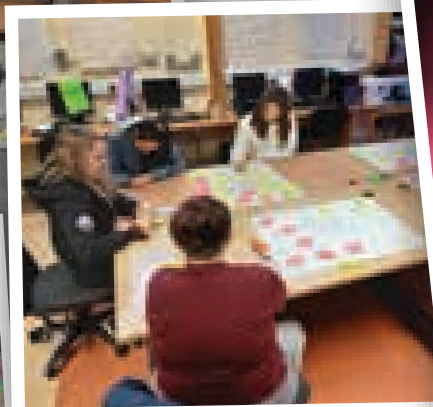


A WORD OF THANKS

We thank everyone who contributed to the development of this strategic plan.

We listened to your views and, as far as possible, included them in the plan.







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