

ANNUAL REPORT

LIMERICK YOUTH SERVICE

20
23



CHAIRPERSON STATEMENT

In 2023, Limerick Youth Service achieved the remarkable milestone of celebrating our 50th Birthday. Throughout the year, a series of events celebrated this landmark occasion including a large-scale conference held in Thomond Park which focused on young people's well-being and their response, recovery and resilience post Covid. Limerick Youth Service also had significant participation in the Annual St Patricks Day parade representing the diverse young people of Limerick Youth Service and showcasing our service to the wider community. The contribution of young people for their leadership and volunteering activities to Limerick Youth Service through the Sr. Joan Bowles Youth Leadership Award was also recognized.

The role of volunteers in the delivery of support to young people across the city & county is a backbone of our service, in 2023 we intensified our efforts to re-establish youth clubs and were successful in initiating new club development in a number of areas and launching the Volunteer Youth Club APP to support clubs with administration . We committed additional resources to continue this work in 2024.

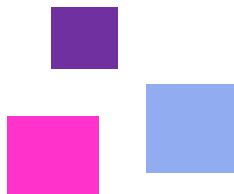
Particular focus of our work in 2024 will be to continue to work on the Erasmus + programme and the development of plans for international youth work.

Our concentrated efforts to engage young people who are out of school or at risk of early school leaving has resulted in the Community Training Centre returning to near full capacity. Collaborations with schools, other services, and outreach events bolstered our recruitment and presence. A concerning trend emerging in this area is the younger age range and the additional needs of young people who are presenting and are out of mainstream education.

The continued maintenance and development of Youth Facilities and spaces in the city and county is a priority identified in our strategic plan, particularly in light of the confirmed closure of the Factory Southside Youth Space in 2024 and challenges in relation to accessing suitable facilities in communities in the city & county.

We developed and adapted our services to meet the new and emerging needs of young people who have fled the war in Ukraine or who are coming to Ireland as International Protection Applicants delivering supports and outreaching to community settings, direct provision centres and schools. We have secured additional resources towards this work in 2024 and are all too aware of the importance of integration and inclusion to promote social cohesion and democratic values.

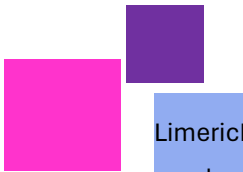
As we reflect on the achievements of 2023, we acknowledge that our work is ongoing. The year ahead holds more opportunities for growth, innovation, and positive impact but in these uncertain times, it is imperative that we foster a space where diverse perspectives are valued, where dialogue cultivates understanding, and where inclusivity thrives. By doing so, we equip young people with the tools to become agents of positive change in the future.



Audrey Fehily



Chairperson



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 and the Irish Association of Community Training Centres. 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.

Mission

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

Strategic Priority Areas

Youth Work	Education, Training & Employability	Volunteers
To empower and support young people across Limerick City & County to enhance their personal and social development through their voluntary involvement in high quality youth work services and supports	To support & facilitate young people to develop their skills, competencies and experience through the delivery of high quality, accessible and inclusive Education, Training, & Employability opportunities	To attract, support and sustain volunteers so that they may positively contribute to improving the lives of young people, and to strengthening communities and civil society.

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

SECTION 1

YOUTHWORK



In 2023, high quality youth work provision remained a strategic priority under which our aim was to foster meaningful outcomes for young people in the following areas:

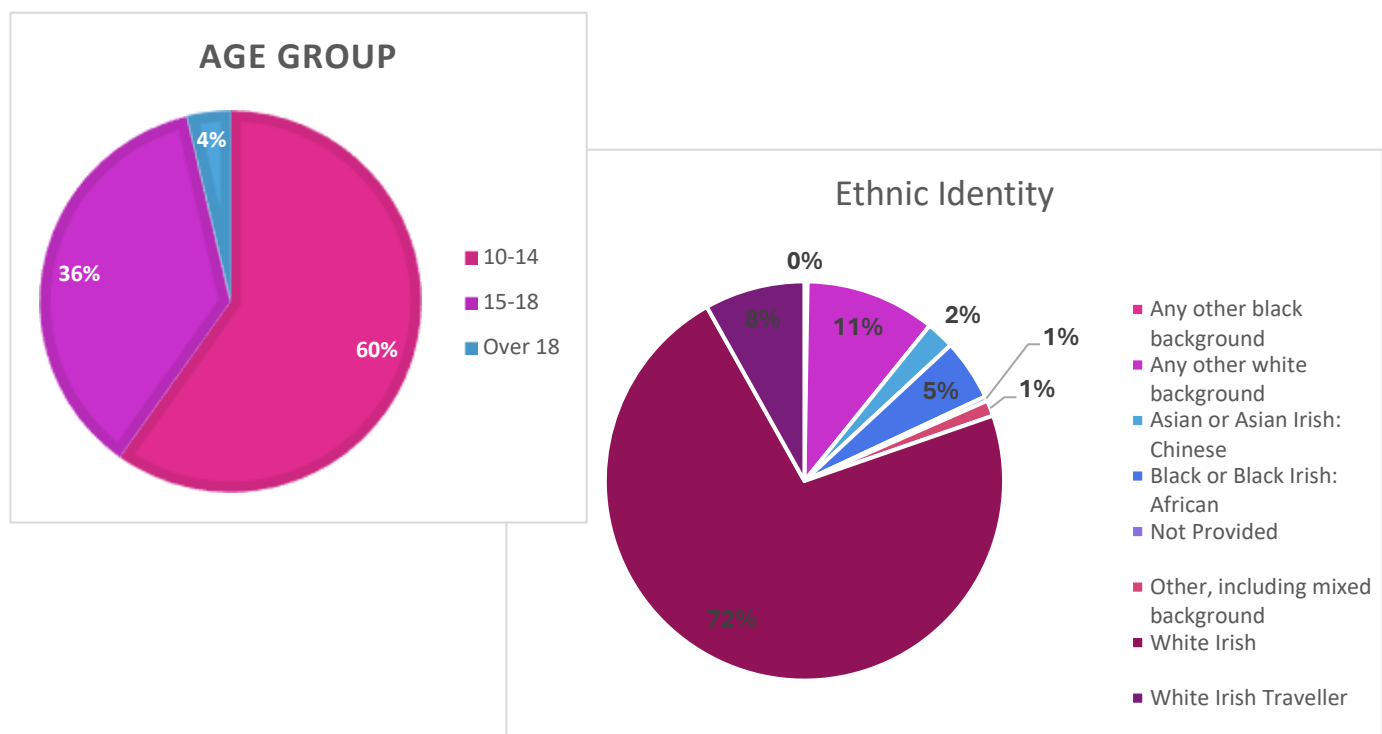
1. Physical and mental health & wellbeing
2. Learning and development
3. Safety and security
4. Active citizenship

In 2023, LYS facilitated the following youth work programmes and activities:

1.1 UBU - YOUR PLACE YOUR SPACE

LYS delivered six projects under the 'UBU – Your Place Your Space' scheme funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Integration, Disability and Youth (DCEIDY); working with **787** young people aged 10-25 years, in their local communities, to enable them to overcome adverse circumstances.

The following charts present the profile of young people engaged with UBU programmes in 2023:



YOUNG PEOPLE'S NATIONALITIES, OTHER THAN IRISH, WERE UKRAINIAN, AFRICAN, POLISH, ASIAN, LATVIAN, ITALIAN, MOLDOVAN, SLOVAKIAN, AFGHANI, BRAZILIAN, BRITISH, GEORGIAN, ICELANDIC, LITHUANIAN AND SAUDI ARABIAN.

EAST LIMERICK YOUTH PROJECT

The rural East Limerick UBU project delivered activities including after school homework clubs in Castleconnell; a weekly Youth Café engaging Ukrainian young people aged 11 – 13 years; outreach activities encouraging young people and their parents/guardians to engage with the positive outcomes of youth work; supporting young people aged 10-14 years in Cappamore to participate in tidy towns, join local nature walks and providing a safe social space in Caherconlish for older teenagers aged 14-18 where they can cook healthy meals, play pool and bingo and chill out in a safe and fun environment. In conjunction with Hospital FRC, the project delivered the Strengthening Families Programme.

LIMERICK CITY & SUBURBS YOUTH PROJECT

The City Suburbs UBU programme, primarily operating from the Northside Youth Space in Ballynanty, delivered regular and consistent weekly youth cafes for 12-14 and 14-16 year olds, along with a girls café for 18-21 year olds. Boys aged 10-14 years engaged in weekly sporting activities, young men aged 16-24 years participated in personal development programmes and young people from the travelling community, aged 12-16 years attended weekly group sessions focused on physical and mental health and wellbeing.



GARRYOWEN YOUTH TOGETHER YOUTH PROJECT

In 2023, the Garryowen UBU project facilitated regular group work sessions such as substance misuse awareness raising programme for girls aged 12-15 years; a drop-in space for boys aged 13-16 years; a Limerick Lynk podcasting group for young people aged 13-16 years, who went on to publish their podcast on Soundcloud and attend the Kinia Techfest!

An older girls group aged 15+ completed activities including mental health and wellbeing workshops, a beauty programme and a healthy eating cookery programme. Youth workers delivered detached youth work supports engaging with hard-to-reach young people in local Garryowen neighbourhoods.

KINGS ISLAND & SURROUNDS YOUTH PROJECT

In Kings Island, youth workers supported young people aged 10-12 years to take part in a drama called 'The Parish'. A young mother's group met regularly, supporting each other and engaging in fun and relaxing activities such as social and emotional wellbeing programmes, days out and baking. Detached youth work in Kings Island engaged young people in local places such as the handball alley, which led to their eventually running a successful handball tournament. In Summer 2023, Kings Island youth project held a family fun day celebrating LYS' 50th birthday and where handball tournament trophies were presented. Kings Island facilitated other youth groups including a young girls group, aged 12-13 years that meet in our Nicholas Street Youth Space every Wednesday and an Active Life outdoor group that for Under 14s and Under 18s.



LAVA JAVAS YOUTH PROJECT

In 2023, LYS' city centre based Lava Javas UBU project supported Ukrainian young people aged 11 – 17 years living in hotel accommodation and young people living in Direct Provision, facilitating activities such as a 6-week dance programme in preparation for Limerick City St. Patrick's Day Parade, a talent show where young people scripted and performed drama pieces, creative games/baking/art and fun activities such as Lava Javas Weekend Bingo event. LGBTQIA+ groups, both under and over 18s, were supported to meet weekly and engaged in activities such as 6 week life-skills programme, marching in the Dublin Pride parade in Dublin after attending pride breakfast at Youth Work Ireland HQ. Young people crafted a large banner for the event exploring through flags, colour and their own interests. Lava Java youth cafes held every Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, providing an alcohol and drug free safe and social city centre space, where young people have had fun joining in large-scale events such as the Decades Costume Ball, live music gigs, karaoke nights and the large-scale pride concert, Culture Night and open MIC nights

RATHKEALE & ASKEATON YOUTH PROJECT

Rathkeale-Askeaton UBU youth workers facilitated regular group sessions engaging both settled and traveller young people in activities such as a music programme, culminating in a talent show showcasing their Ukelele skills! Settled and Traveller girls came together in groups and developed positive friendships through activities such as dance, crafting and baking. Younger teens participated in a workshop exploring healthy relationships. Older teens trained for a number of weeks to climb the 12 O Clock hills in Clare; laying rocks with positive quotes along the way to encourage other hill walkers! Youth workers facilitated weekly group work sessions for young traveller boys on reduced timetables supporting them to complete gym and swimming sessions and the driver theory test. Youth workers prepared a group of Junior Leaders aged 14-16 years to participate in an Erasmus+ programme with partners from Belgium and Romania involving the completion of a documentary 'Youth Work & Us'.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

In 2023, Limerick Youth Service supported young people arriving in Ireland from Ukraine and young people coming to Ireland under the International Protection System. We worked across a variety of direct provision centres including Knocklisheen, Abbeygrove and Griffen House in addition to working with young people living in hotel and private accommodation in the city centre, suburbs and Limerick County. 150 Young people were supported across 20 groups each week.

Outcomes for young people participating across UBU programmes include the development of positive and supportive relationships, both with their peers and with youth workers. Young people feel safe to talk with youth workers they have built trusting relationships in relaxed, youth friendly environments, thereby strengthening their mental health and wellbeing. Participation in fitness, healthy eating, sexual health and substance misuse programmes has enhanced young people's physical health and increased knowledge and understanding of how to manage their physical health. Young people have been supported to stay in education and to access training and employment opportunities which improve their economic security. Marginalised young people including ethnic minorities, traveller youth, LGBTQ+ young people have been empowered to express their identity, make connections and participate in society.

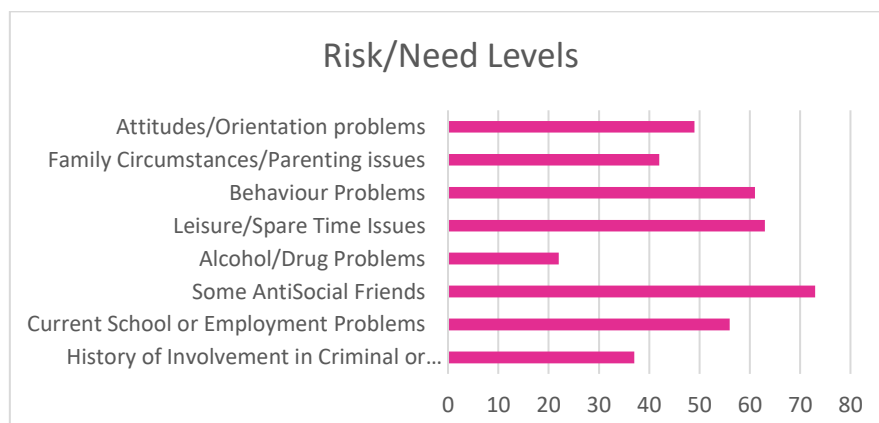
1.2 YOUTH DIVERSION PROGRAMME

“YDPs are community-based, youth crime prevention initiatives that primarily seek to divert young people involved or at risk of becoming involved in criminal/anti-social behaviour away from the criminal justice system by providing suitable activities to facilitate personal development, promote civic responsibility and improve long-term employability prospects.”



Education issues such as poor attendance, attainment, retention, reduced timetables and challenging relationships with peers and teachers were key needs for YDP young people in 2023

A high need for YDP young people in 2023 was Education/Employment relating to poor attainment, attendance, retention, problems with peers and teachers, and receiving reduced timetables. Key support activities included regular engagement with School Completion Projects, Home School Community Liaison Officers, Special Needs Assistants, Schools/ Education providers and Education Welfare Officers. The Youth Level of Service / Case Management Inventory – Screening Version (YLS/CMI SV) is the baseline assessment used for all young people referred to YDPs. In 2023, the YLS identified key needs and outcomes for young people as follows;

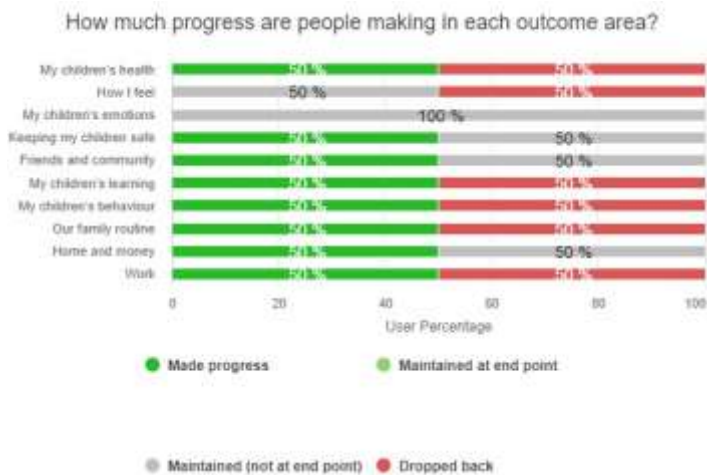


The types of interventions delivered by Youth Justice Workers included empowering young people to remain in post-primary education and progress to further education and training. Young people were supported to develop their employability skills such as CV and interview skills, and to progress to full and part time employment. In facilitating positive leisure & recreational opportunities, the YDP delivers Music programmes such as DJing/ rapping/ Guitar, Fitness & Nutrition, boxercise, pool competitions, Driver Theory, DIY, Horse Care, Career Development, Woodwork Skills, Outdoor Gardening and Construction, Film Projects and Photography Programmes and holiday provision in Ballyhass Aquapark.

Name of Programme	HORSE CARE & RIDING PROGRAMME
Number of Young People Involved	14 Young People
Duration:	4 consecutive Days
YLS 2.0 Needs Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Relations • Education & Employment • Personality & Behaviour • Attitudes & Orientation
Description of Programme:	This programme equipped young people with the knowledge and skills for employment opportunities in the horse care industry. This course provided students with knowledge and skills relating to riding, breaking, and training horses, preparation for sale, and encouraged students towards Horse Sport Ireland & further employment opportunities in horse care management.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horse Care Skills Development • Self- Management Skills • Experience of a Work Environment • Team Building • Confidence Building



A key issue for YDP families in 2023 were financial difficulties due to the cost of living crises. YDP family support workers implemented financial budgeting tools with families who are struggling, along with referring families to financial support organisations. Family Star Assessments taken at the beginning of parents/guardians engagement with the YDP shows where they were on their Journey of Change, with the majority feeling positive about their capacity to manage their children's learning and health, and feeling stuck in terms of work, and with respect to friends and community.





1.3 YOUTH & FAMILY SUPPORT

The aim of the Youth and Family Support (YFS) Project is to improve the life chances of young people, enhancing their personal and social skills in partnership with their family and community. In 2023, 62 children and young people received a YFS service delivered in the Factory Southside Youth Space, Northside Youth Space and City Centre locations.

Key need areas for YFS in 2023 included parental support, mental health, school refusal/educational supports, a lack of healthy peer relationships and the benefit of social, safe spaces in developing positive peer relationships. Issues around housing, homelessness or the threat of homelessness were increasingly apparent.

The YFS team primarily facilitated one to one mentoring supports focused on strengthening young people's physical and mental health and wellbeing. In addition to one to one supports, six young girls aged 16-17 years participated in the '*Guiding Lights Programme*', a programme focused on strengthening understanding, skills and behaviour with respect to healthy relationships addressing consent, red and green flags in relationships, sexist assumptions, existing laws and where to seek support.

The YFS team made a great effort to bring Christmas cheer to all families through organising a celebratory Christmas event in the Factory Southside Youth Space including a meeting with Santa Claus in his grotto, face painting, cookie decorating, festive games, delicious food and live music. Parents and guardians were offered hand massages and nail painting during the celebration in a designated parent corner.



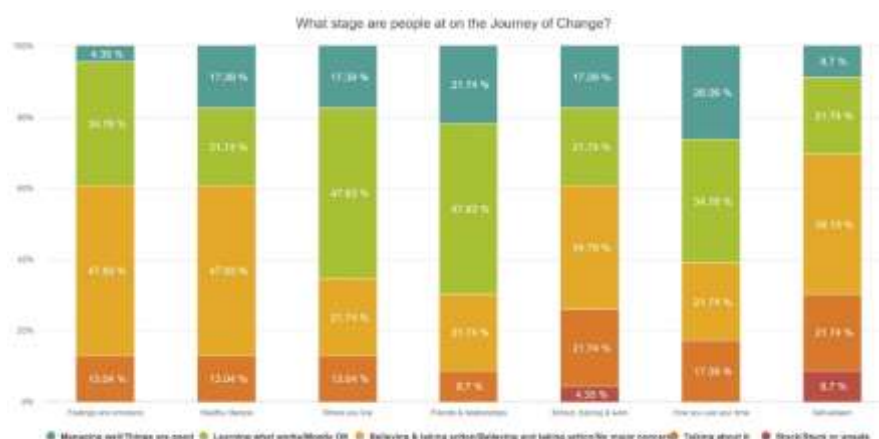
1.4 BE WELL YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

BE WELL - aims to strengthen youth mental health and wellbeing, enhance awareness of and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health, and support youth participation in mental health services. In 2023, 103 young people attended 1107 counselling sessions with an attendance rate of 89%. The top presenting issues for young people in 2023 were anxiety, family, self and identity, bereavement and loss, interpersonal relationships.

In 2023, BE WELL's rural and urban youth mental health workers:

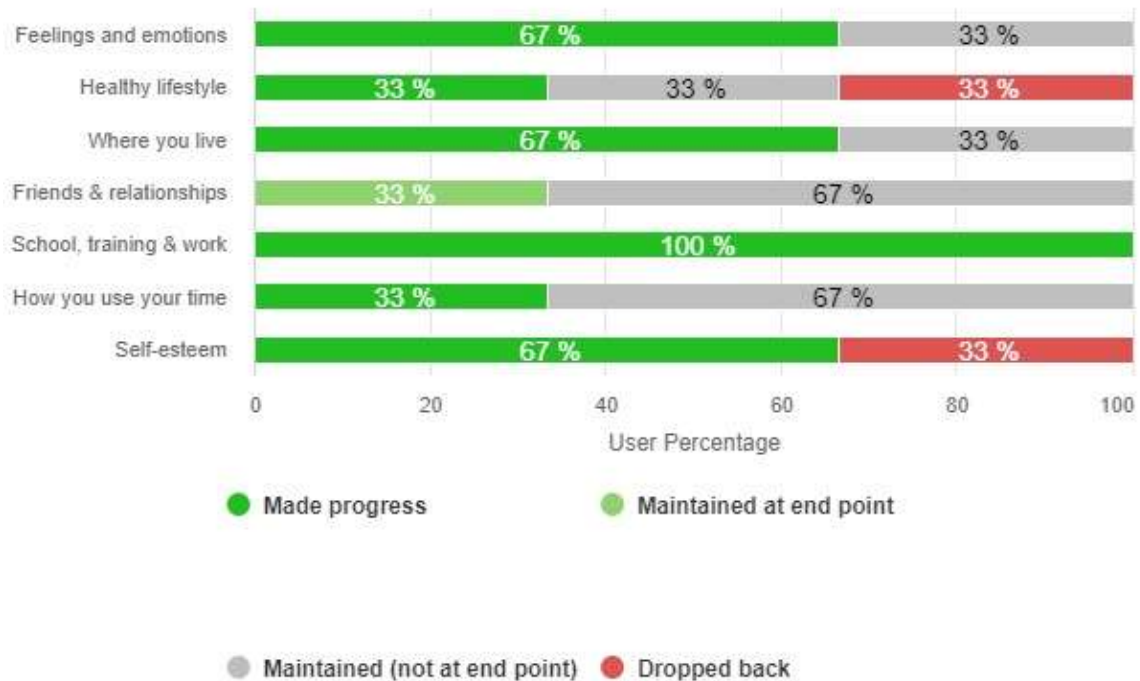
- Delivered the Be Well Anxiety Awareness Programme to 313 young people attending rural Limerick post-primary schools, to 19 young people attending a city centre school completion programme.
- Delivered a youth mental health information session to 38 young people in a city centre post-primary school.
- Delivered the Mind Out mental health programme to 11 X rural Leaving Cert Applied (LCA) students and to 5 young people attending a city centre youth cafe.
- Designed the youth mental health programme 'How to Navigate Life as a Young Person' in collaboration with the Community Substance Misuse Team (CSMT), which combined a focus on socio-emotional skills and substance misuse safety behaviors and delivered.
- Provided 21 young people aged 15-25 years with one-to-one mentoring sessions using on the 'My Mind Star' outcome tool.
- Facilitated regular group work sessions with 11 rural Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) members and 20 senior and junior urban YAP members focused on building communication, planning and problem solving, creativity, self-esteem, and resilience skills.
- Successfully delivered, and supported young people's participation in, the LYS/Be Well youth mental health conference in Thomond Park on March 29th where nearly 100 professionals from Limerick/mid-west region were in attendance.
- 8 YAP members involved in Hungary ERASMUS exchange

In 2023, youth mental health workers using the Outcome Star identified the following stages on the journey of change for young people, showing that 'Feeling Stuck' is most likely with respect to in terms of School, Training & Work, and Self-Esteem:



The chart below illustrates Distance Travelled for young people accessing youth mental health supports with the majority making progress and maintaining with respect to Feelings & Emotions and Where you Live.

How much progress are people making in each outcome area?



1.5 YOUTHWORK PROGRAMMES

Moving on Up Transition Programme

The 'Moving on Up' transition programme was delivered to **616** young people attending 3 post-primary and 14 Primary Schools between March and August 2023. This programme was supported by Basis Point Corporate Funding, and its aim is to support the positive transition of young people from primary to secondary school through activities focused on strengthening skills in communication, friendship, wellbeing & resilience and in managing bullying. The programme is delivered in the secondary school that young people will be attending, and those who participated on the day noted that they learned about:

'the importance of friendships, how bullying can affect others, how we can communicate in so many different ways'.

Feedback from school staff noted that the programme:

'Eases anxiety about moving to secondary school, promotes discussion about fears they have'.



1.5 YOUTH INFORMATION

The LYS Youth Information Centre provides a free specialist information and support to young people, parents/guardians and those who work with them. The information is delivered in a relevant and understandable format and is available for all.

From its base at the Community Training Centre, the Youth Information Centre utilises several platforms and mediums to provide its service. These include Outreach Programmes such as Community and Jobs Fairs, information points at LYS youth spaces and visits to schools and youth groups.

The Youth Information Centre is active in the virtual world as it promotes LYS and issues of relevance to young people through all relevant social media platforms and limerickyouthservice.com

One of the key features of the Youth Information Centre's online presence, is its involvement with the nationwide Youth Information Chat Service. Run in partnership with Youth Work Ireland, SpunOut, Crosscare and YMCA, this service can be accessed via various websites and social media sites. It has a live chat feature on weekdays evenings with an out of hours 'ticket/email' system. In 2024, this feature will be accessible via WhatsApp.

In 2023 the Youth Information Centre had enquiries on a diverse range of topics including access to education, employment, travel, volunteering, health, social media, accommodation, literacy support, access to youth clubs and many more.

1.6 INTERNATIONAL YOUTHWORK

In 2023, Limerick Youth Service continued to develop our international youthwork offering. 2 Erasmus+ Youth Mobility exchanges were conducted with Hungarian and Greek partners. The Hungarian exchange addressed themes relating to youth disability and employment and engaged 12 young Irish people and 13 young Hungarian people. The Greek exchange involved 12 Irish and 15 Greek young people, addressing themes such as community leadership, youth voice, empowerment and activism through creative mediums.





SECTION 2

VOLUNTEERS

2.1 YOUTH CLUBS

13

Youth Clubs supported
across Limerick City
And County

St. Senans Youth Club
Patrickswell Youth Club
Ballingarry Youth Club
Askeaton Ballysteen Youth Club
Abbeyfeale Youth Club
Foynes Youth Club
Ballybrown Club
Kildimo/Pallaskenry Club
Doon Youth Club
Kileedy Youth Club
Newcastle West Youth Club
The Domain Youth Club

Over 2023, volunteer clubs received support from LYS in terms of their: Governance; Finance; Grant Applications; Fundraising; Quality Compliance; Reporting and Administration. In addition we supported the Garda Vetting and Child Safeguarding support for Volunteer Led Youth Clubs. Volunteer Induction Training is also provided to Clubs on an on-going basis.

The roll -out of the online portal to support Volunteer Led Youth Clubs commenced in 2023. This allows clubs to complete their registrations and consents online and allows the Youth Service to push out notifications of upcoming events, training etc. to clubs.

707

Young people
involved in
Volunteer led
youthclub activities

245

Volunteers involved
in Volunteer Led
YouthWork



2.2 YOUTH LEADERSHIP

In 2023, **40** young people attending youth clubs took part in a Youth Leadership programme designed to help young people develop the skills needed to play an active part in their youth group, school, home and community. The programme includes a residential weekend where young people develop a personal plan of action with ideas on an activity/event they want to organise, which is then realised with the support of a youth worker.



The Sr. Joan Bowles Youth Awards awards were held in 2023, an event celebrating the outstanding contribution of **35** young people to their youth clubs/groups, community and Limerick Youth Service.

2.3 COMHAIRLE NA NÓG

In 2023, LYS supported **31** young people to engage with Comhairle na nOg, the youth council of Limerick City & County Council. Mental Health was the key theme identified by young people for 2023 and activities included research, workshops and documentary film. Young people received training in: Committee Skills; Communication/Presentation Skills; Facilitation Skills and Team Building.

In November, 2023, a full day Comhairle na NÓg Youth Conference was held in Limerick City and County Council discussing the important issues for young people in Limerick and attended by

111 young people. **31%** of the attendees were from non-white Irish backgrounds, and/or harder to reach communities and for the first time a full table was delivered in Ukrainian.



SECTION 3

EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYABILITY

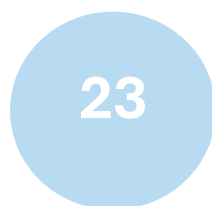


3.1 COMMUNITY TRAINING CENTRE

LYS CTC delivers a range of practical and academic programmes including catering, food safety, barista skills and professional bakery, pre-apprenticeship and construction skills, retail skills, Leaving Cert Applied and the ESOL programme. Additional supports are offered in literacy, numeracy and digital literacy, along with a key emphasis on the development of personal and social skills integrated throughout all programmes across the CTC. Referrals to the CTC come from schools, Education Welfare Officers, Tusla Aftercare, Focus Ireland, Probation, Self, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, Local Employment Service and Home School Community Liaison.



Average number of young people enrolled in the Community Training Centre



Young People progressed to Further Education and Employment



Work placements undertaken by Young People

In 2023, the average numbers of young people enrolled in the CTC on a monthly basis was **91** with a further **43** young people on tracking.

Community Training Centre Staff worked extremely hard to re-engage young people in education and training programmes within the Community Training Centre. 99 Young people were registered with the centre in December 2023 with a further 46 young people on tracking.

99 work placements were completed during 2023 with **21** young people taking up taster courses and **7** undertaking evening programmes. Results in the Leaving Cert Applied programme were excellent with one young person receiving the Fergal Quinn award and learners continued to progress and thrive within a supportive environment. **11** young people successfully achieved QQI level 4 Retail Skills Major Award. **38** QQI level 3 components were achieved and **90** QQI level 4 components were achieved. 10 young people progressed to employment and 13 young people to further education and training.

Attendance and retention levels on average increased throughout the year due to enhanced learner supports including advocacy, mentoring, literacy and numeracy supports, restorative practice methodologies, therapeutic counselling, outreach work and links with parents/guardians; all provided in a youth friendly environment with integrated access to LYS' youth work supports and programmes including youth spaces, youth groups, youth information and youth volunteering opportunities.



3.2 ABILITY+

In 2023 the Ability+ programme worked with **71** young people. **44** were Female and **24** Male, 1 stating Other Gender and with an average age of 21. Young people were supported to enhance employability & interview skills; complete Work Experience and Voluntary Placements; access Ability+ Assessment Tool Support & Mentoring, progress to accredited training, support in Employment and Family support. The following case study presents Sarah's experience of the Ability+ programme.

SAM'S ABILITY+ STORY

Sam came to the Ability+ programme after having dropped out of a college course. Sam had experienced domestic violence was homeless and preparing for the arrival of their first baby. Sam grew up in foster care separated from their siblings and was managing multiple diagnoses including ADHD and General Anxiety Disorder and Depression. Sam explained that when they: *'I was clueless, hopeless....my life was at a standstill....'*

Ability+ mentors first focused on strengthening Sam's stability; advocating on their behalf in securing housing; facilitating the assignment of an after-care support worker, and their registration with Adult Mental Health Services (AMHS). The early stages of the relationship between Sam and their Ability+ mentor also focused on building trust and understanding. Sam had engaged with numerous services and felt mistrustful of an 'expert' led approach, whereby Sam was often regarded as 'the problem':

'Other services where people sit behind a desk and take notes... I wasn't trusting of other services where you are the young person with all the problems....'

When Sam was in a more stable situation, living in secure accommodation and had built a trusting and empowering relationship their Ability+ mentor, they were then able to concentrate on education, training and employability goals. The importance of goal-oriented mentoring and identifying attainable actions in enabling progression was very important to Sam:

'What I found helpful was planning something to do in the first meeting, something that has to be done before you meet again....'

To begin with an achievable goal, and bearing in mind that Sam now had a new baby to care for, they first completed a 12 week online micro credential course with Limerick Clare Education & Training Board (LCETB). Ability+ facilitated an additional LCETB support tutor for Sam and provided the space every Friday afternoon in LYS, and the technological equipment that they needed to successfully complete the course. Sam had been fearful of returning to academia following their negative experience in dropping out of college. In successfully completing this course, Sam felt much more positive and confident about returning to education.

Sam built on this strong foundation and progressed to a 1-year full-time Level 6 course in Limerick College of Further Education (LCFE). A few months in, Sam realised that they couldn't manage a full-time course and parent their baby alone. The Ability+ mentor arranged with LCFE for Sam to complete the course part-time over 2 years; a first for LCFE who now offer the course in this format.

Sam has been awarded 3 distinctions in the 1st year, and so far, 1 distinction in the 2nd year. Sam has also completed the driver theory test and was financially supported by Ability+ to pay for driving lessons and a licence fee.

Throughout their course work, Sam has been supported by the Ability+ mentor with their mental health and well-being, managing relationships, confidence & motivation, financial stability and in developing a positive routine. Through engagement with the Ability+ programme, Sam has been able to access integrated services and supports including LYS youth mental health one to one therapeutic counselling. Their mentor has also supported Sam to access learner supports including support with study skills.

Sam would describe their relationship with their mentor as mutual, open, trusting, kind and relaxed. Sam is encouraged to stay focused and to achieve what they want to achieve in a way that respects their strengths, voice and autonomy:

[Mentor] asked me 'What do you want? What do you need? ... keeps me on top of what to do, if there is something I can't do then [Mentor] will sayjust to get something done for this week, maybe you can do this, if it suits you better?'

'...asked if that's how I wanted to be contacted, if I wanted to receive phone calls and texts, asked what works best in my life? how [Mentor] can fit in.... I am always asked what I want to do, if I want to do something, would I prefer to do something else.... My voice is heard'.

Sam emphasised the importance of positive adult encouragement and mentoring for young people who have been in foster care, and who may not have reliable adults in their lives to give this time and support.

The Ability+ programme empowered Sam to identify goals and create a path towards attaining them. Sam's aspiration and motivation in terms of wanting to progress, widening scope, raising ambition and feeling confident has been strengthened *'...helped me to see where I wanted to be, you can see yourself and where you want to be'.*

Sam eventually wants to return to college and complete a degree. Sam also wants for other young people to access Ability+ services and supports, particularly young people in after care who would benefit hugely from the type of mentoring and opportunities that Sam has accessed.



SECTION 4

ENABLING OUR

STRATEGY

4.1 BUILDINGS & FACILITIES

In 2023, LYS enabled the delivery of services and supports within dedicated, safe, accessible and youth friendly spaces across Limerick City & County.

- Limerick Youth Service Headquarters, Lwr Glentworth St. Limerick
- Community Training Centre, Lwr Glentworth St, Limerick.
- The Factory, Southside Youth Space, Galvone Business Park, Limerick.
- Northside Youth Space, Ballynanty Limerick
- Rathkeale Youth Space, Abbey Court, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick
- Nicholas St. Youth Space, Nicholas St, Limerick.
- East Limerick Youth Project, Castleconnell
- The Solar Youth Space in Askeaton, Co 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.



The Factory SYS

The Southside Youth space had one of its busiest years in 2023. Maintaining its reputation as an important site for indoor activity for young people and community groups in Limerick City, the Factory SYS operated

on average 6 days a week with footfall of **36,935** for the year and **42** separate groups utilising the premises. Highlights included hosting Limerick City Community games with over 300 young people attending from all over the city. Regular groups using the facilities included local dance classes for young people, fitness classes for young adults and mothers and adult disability services. Classrooms are utilised by Muslim community groupings for teaching at weekends as well as community meetings.

New users during the year include Limerick Cricket Club, who utilise the pitches as their main indoor training site for players from Limerick and beyond. Large scale community events hosted during 2023 included a Halloween Scare Youthfest event, funded through LCCC SIF funding and a Christmas family event in association with the Youth & Family support team. Both were very well received by those who attended and showcased the variety of work and events that can go on in the Factory SYS.

The Northside Youthspace

In 2023 the Northside Youth Space catered for 10458 people from 30 individual organisations providing support and activities for young people from the local area. The Northside Youth Space is home to the following projects:

- Ballynanty Hub Youth Diversion Project
- Ballynanty Youth Cafés
- Youth & Family Support Project
- Youth Mental Health Project

4.2 PERFORMANCE, PRACTICE & INNOVATION

2023 saw the launch of our Strategic Plan 2023-2027, which informed the development of programme area' annual plans. Learning and progress towards stated objectives was monitored using information management systems, regular reviews and funder reports.

A key objective for Limerick Youth Service is to ensure that young people benefit from responsive and needs based services and supports which meet the highest quality standards. In order to achieve this, LYS employ a monitoring and evaluation officer and our work in this area focused on improving the methods and procedures for the collection of data across Limerick Youth Service in order to improve delivery of our service. In addition the following areas of work were completed;

- Limerick Youth Service Transition Programme Evaluation
- Evaluation of the Rural Youth Mental Health Project & development of Video project
- Needs Analysis in the area of Neurodiversity
- Updating data collection and supporting all projects in registering young people and documenting activities
- Review and analysis of Community Training Centre Impact & Experience
- Supporting Information Management in LYS Community Training Centre
- International Youth Work review and evaluation of exchanges
- Qualitative case studies completed on young people in CTC and Ability Programme
- Funding applications and reports to funders
- Supporting on Outcome Star evaluation tool

4.3 COMPLIANCE

Limerick Youth Service is an integrated youth service, affiliated to Youth Work Ireland, and is fully compliant with its Membership Charter.

Underpinning all activities of Limerick Youth Service is compliance with relevant legislation and development of appropriate policies. Limerick Youth Service's policies are reviewed and developed as required by changes in legislation, best practice and requirements of funders.

Limerick Youth Service publishes our annual audited accounts which are prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).

In 2023 Limerick Youth Service stated our compliance with the Charity Governance Code and undertook a range of specific actions in relation to governance including reviewing policies on policies on complaints and comments, critical Incident, code of ethics, financial policies & procedures, student placement, disciplinary & grievance, sponsorship and fundraising and protected disclosures. New policies developed included a health & wellbeing strategy and policy, leave for medical care, sexual wellbeing practice & guidelines and a marketing & communications strategy

LYS strengthened compliance with our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) through the development of: LYS' GDPR Policy, Data Retention Schedule implemented throughout our GDPR week in November 2023, Data Security Guidance, Data Breach Guidelines and Data Access Request Procedures.

4.4 CHILD SAFEGUARDING

Limerick Youth Service is committed to safeguarding young people by ensuring that the entity is compliant with the Children First Act 2015 and Children First National Guidance 2017. All our staff and volunteers undertake an application process, including Garda vetting and cannot start employment/volunteering before their vetting is complete. All staff and volunteers participate in a 4 hour Child Safeguarding Awareness programme (NYCI). Staff also complete a Tusla E-Learning Certificate. On completion of this programme, each participant receives a certificate which is valid for 3 years.

In 2023, the Child Protection team delivered 11 sessions of Child Safeguarding Training. Participants included staff, students and youth club volunteers. 125 people were Garda vetted. One additional staff person was trained as a Child Safeguarding Trainer.

4.5 MANAGEMENT & STAFFING

MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Board delegates the day to day management of Limerick Youth Service to the CEO and Management Team who are as follows:-

CEO	Fiona O Grady
CTC General Manager	Kathryn Clancy
Youth Work Manager	Maurice Walsh
Finance and Administration Manager	Bernadette Behan

Human Resources Manager

Sinead Noonan

In 2023 Limerick Youth Service employed an average of 100 staff and worked with a large number of volunteers engaged in various aspects of its work with 10 – 25 year olds throughout Limerick City and County. 21 staff were employed under the Department of Social Protection community employment programme and 8 staff were employed under the Community Services Programme.

In 2023, LYS supported **17** 3rd level students in placements across youth work, employability, education and training, attending TUS, UL and a Belgian University.

4.6 PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

In 2023, LYS maintained its collaboration with corporate partners basis.point who funded our Moving on Up, Primary to Secondary Transition programme securing educational outcomes through enabling their successful transition from primary to secondary school, a key developmental stage in young people's lives. In addition we worked closely with SKY to initiate a project in relation to the development of a digital hub in the Northside Youth Space



4.7 GOVERNANCE

STRUCTURE

Limerick Youth Service was founded in 1973 and is registered as a Scheme of Incorporation by the Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests in Ireland, under Section 2 of the Charities Act 1973. The Scheme and Constitution were revised in 2011 and approved and sealed by the Commissioners for Charitable donations and Bequests for Ireland in December 2011.

Recruitment and Appointment of Board Members

Limerick Youth Service is governed by members of the Board who are appointed for a term of three years and may serve no more than two terms of three years. The Board members are volunteers and are its Trustees for the purposes of Charity Law.

Board Meetings

The Board meet a minimum of six times per year and met six times in 2023 in addition to the AGM. Conflict of Interest is an agenda item for all Board Meetings and Board Members are asked to absent themselves in any item where they have an interest or potential conflict.

Board Membership of Limerick Youth Service Board in 2023 was as follows:-

Audrey Healy
Karen Long Eacrett
Inspector Oliver Kennedy
Laura Scanlan
Aoife Walsh
Mairead Holland
Eileen Hoffler
Michael Howes
Fr. Tim Wrenn
Yvonne Delaney
Eoin Coughlan
Brian Ryan
Inspector Sandra Heelan
Joe O'Mara

Sub Committees

The Board has established a number of sub committees including Audit, Governance and Risk, Community Training Centre and Human Resources in addition to time bound specified purpose working groups which advise on specific projects.

Audit, Governance and Risk Sub Committee

The role of the Audit, Governance and Risk Sub Committee is to monitor and control the audit and risk management systems of Limerick Youth Service including planning the annual audit, reviewing the annual financial statements, reviewing the quarterly management accounts, reviewing the risk register and driving good governance practice and policy.

In 2023 the Audit, Governance and Risk Sub Committee continued to work on a number of areas including; compliance with the Charity Governance Code, updating the financial controls and risk policy, review of pension provision and tendering for new auditors in 2024. There were four Audit and Risk Committee meetings in 2023 in addition to a pre-audit meeting with the Auditors.

Fiona O'Grady
Michael Howes
Ber Behan
Paul Kelly
Yvonne Delaney
Seamas Enright

Community Training Centre Sub Committee

The Community Training Centre's Sub Committee's principal objective is to assist the Board of Limerick Youth Service in the provision of training, education and employment related services for young people in a friendly and informal manner. The committee met four times in 2023.

Fiona O'Grady
Kathryn Clancy
Maurice Walsh
Fr. Seamus Enright
Bernadette Daly
Inspector Ollie Kennedy
Eileen Hoffler
Tracy Lawlor

Human Resources Sub Committee

The Human Resources Sub Committee principal objective is to assist the Board and the CEO to fulfil their functions by providing timely advice and guidance on areas within its remit. There were four meetings of the HR subcommittee in 2023. The HR subcommittee focused on a range of activities including updating the performance guidance system with staff collaboration, employee wellbeing enhanced through the addition of DCM online training platform and the provision of staff counselling supports. A number of IR issues were addressed and concluded successfully.

Recruitment continued throughout the year and LYS successfully sourced youth work staff, sessional staff, CE and support staff to work with migrant young people. The organisation also tendered for a new pension provider in 2023 and exited our existing trust arrangements into a master trust scheme.



5.1 THE FUTURE

Limerick Youth Service plans to continue with our core activities of providing youth work supports, services and programmes, delivering education, training and employability initiatives and supporting volunteers.

Particular focus of our work in 2024 will include;

- Continue to develop the Erasmus + programme and international work for the remainder of the Leargas accreditation period.
- The difficulty in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff continues to be a challenge. We need to ensure that we continue to remain competitive and attractive to potential employees. We are working with the third level institutions and other partners to develop innovative ways of upskilling and supporting staff as well as reviewing remuneration.
- We will continue to expand links with private enterprise and build on the positive results we have achieved through our engagement with corporate entities in 2023 such as basis.point, Community Foundation of Ireland and Sky.
- The crises situation in Ukraine and the increase in the number of International Protection Applicants will affect service delivery in 2024 and 2025. We have secured additional resources for the delivery of support to Ukrainian young people and International Protection Applicants in both Limerick City & County . We are all too aware of the importance of integration and inclusion to promote social cohesion and democratic values.
- Redevelopment of Volunteer Youth Clubs and support for club reinvigoration and new club development will be prioritized. The continued difficulty in recruiting and retaining volunteers and the fact that many volunteers have moved on will challenge us in the delivery of volunteer led youth work.
- Ensuring that we continue to deliver the Community Training Centre provision in line with the FET Strategy and recommendations of the Youthreach/CTC Evaluation
- Ongoing review and compliance with the Charity Regulator Charity Governance Code.
- The continued maintenance and development of Youth Facilities and spaces in the city and county is a priority identified in our strategic plan particularly in light of the confirmed closure of the Factory Southside Youthspace in 2024 and the lack of youth facilities in many areas of the city.



FURTHER INFORMATION

LIMERICK YOUTH SERVICE

www.limerickyouthservice.com





An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta
agus Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Employment Affairs
and Social Protection



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



Bord Oideachais & Oiliúin
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁ
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



government supporting communities



city of dublin youth services board
CDYSB
comhairle na n-óige



Irish Youth Justice Service
Seirbhís na hIreannais na n-Óige agus na n-Óige



ciste na
gcuntas diomhaoin
the dormant
accounts fund



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills



Limerick
Comhairle na nÓg
Young Voices. Local Issues.



Ag treisiú do chumarscáil
and do chumarscáil
ag cur le do chumarscáil
ag cur le do chumarscáil
ag cur le do chumarscáil



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The European
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Europe investing in
rural areas



An tAidilbh Oideachais Luimnigh agus Scileanna
Further Education and Training Authority





CCTV
CAMERAS IN
OPERATION



limerick youth service
Supporting Young People for 50 Years