

limerick youth service



# LIMERICK YOUTH SERVICE

## ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Youth Work Ireland

# CHAIRPERSON STATEMENT

In the past year, Limerick Youth Service has continued on our journey of connecting with young people and supporting them to reach their full potential, and I am proud to say that, together, we have made significant strides in achieving our mission.

Some of the highlights of the year include expanding opportunities for youth engagement through programmes such as Workability, International Youthwork activities, Community based youthwork and the Community Training Centre where we have provided young people with more opportunities than ever before to develop their skills, explore their potential, and become active members of their communities.

We have strengthened our partnerships through our collaborations with businesses, local organisations, and other stakeholders such as schools which has allowed us to deepen our impact and reach more young people in need.

Our commitment to youth voice remains at the core of what we do. This year, we saw an enhancement of youth participation and voice through our own Board Membership, youth committees and advisory groups, participation in the YWI political briefing and pre-election breakfast briefing, and in a range of other local and national structures and forums.

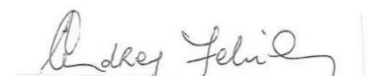
Of course, the year was not without its challenges, the war in Ukraine and the increase in International Protection applicants as well as the significant needs emerging among neurodiverse young people has placed additional pressure on resources. Housing insecurity and homelessness, cost of living increases and increasing levels of school avoidance is having a significant impact on the lives of young people.

Despite these barriers and obstacles, I am proud of how the LYS community has come together showing resilience, adaptability, and teamwork to overcome these hurdles and ensure that no young person was left behind. We have managed our resources responsibly, allowing us to deliver high-quality services while planning for future growth.

In the area of Governance we continue to meet our obligations as a Charity through compliance with the Charity Governance Code. Our commitment to quality is visible through our successful achievement of the ERYICA quality youth information label and NYCI Health Quality Mark.

Looking ahead, our focus for the coming year includes an emphasis on ensuring that young people are accessing safe, accessible, youth friendly spaces and facilities. We aim to ensure that both our volunteer and staff led programmes and activities reach even more young people across Limerick, especially those in underserved communities. We are committed to exploring new and creative ways to engage with young people, leveraging technology in areas such as the virtual youth space and enhancing our mental health and wellbeing supports. We will strengthen our commitment to involving young people in decision-making and leadership roles within the organisation and building on youth leadership initiatives already in place.

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

The mission of Limerick Youth Service is ‘Connecting with young people and supporting them to reach their full potential’.

The core principles guiding the work of Limerick Youth Service are:-

- Young People at the Centre of all that we do
- Community based, integrated and collaborative.
- Learning, Creativity & Innovation
- Equality Inclusion & Diversity

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 & Committees

## EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYABILITY

LYS’ Education Training & Employability initiatives provide young people between the ages of 15 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).

## **VOLUNTEERING**

LYS recognises the value and contribution of volunteers to our organisation and to strengthening communities and civil society. In line with the Volunteer Strategy 2021-2025, 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.





# SECTION 1

## YOUTHWORK



# 1.1 YOUTH DIVERSION PROJECT

The Garda Youth Diversion Programme (YDP) is a community-based, multi-agency initiative that aims to divert young people (aged 12-17) at risk of or involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour from the criminal justice system, offering alternative supports and activities to promote positive development. In 2024, LYS YDP worked with 77 young people aged 12 – 17, 3 young people over 18 and implemented early interventions with 5, young people aged 10 to 12. 23 families across the service area were provided with a Family Support Service. The YDP uses case management software to identify and understand areas of risk/need for young people. In 2024, a strong risk/need areas for young people was in relation to anti-social peer groups, followed by leisure/spare time issues and behaviour problems.

The types of interventions delivered throughout 2024 included: Positive Pathways Programme for six weeks developing CVs, cover letters, career goals, and employability skills; traveller youth completed a six-week Sexual Health Programme, breaking down the barriers they face in accessing health information; Sports, Health and fitness through for example nutrition, boxercise, and pool competitions; creative arts activities such as music, arts, film projects, and photography; educational retention supports such as advocacy and homework clubs.

Six young people from the Irishtown, HSO, and Ballynanty hubs participated in the Fáilte Ulkona Youth Exchange between Limerick Youth Service and a Finnish Youth Service. As part of the programme, participants engaged in creative workshops, cultural activities, and outdoor education, with three young people successfully completing the hosting element and travelling to Finland in October 2024. This experience enhanced their time management, cultural awareness, communication skills, and confidence in forming new friendships.

Early intervention supports adopted the Outcome Star tool 'My Star' as a means of supporting and measuring change and included a Dads and Lads programme, managing anger workshops and a focus on building confidence and self-esteem.

Family supports are informed by the Family Star tool, which prioritises areas including health and relationships. Interventions throughout 2024 focused on healthy lifestyles, managing emotions, self-care and building positive and supportive relationships.

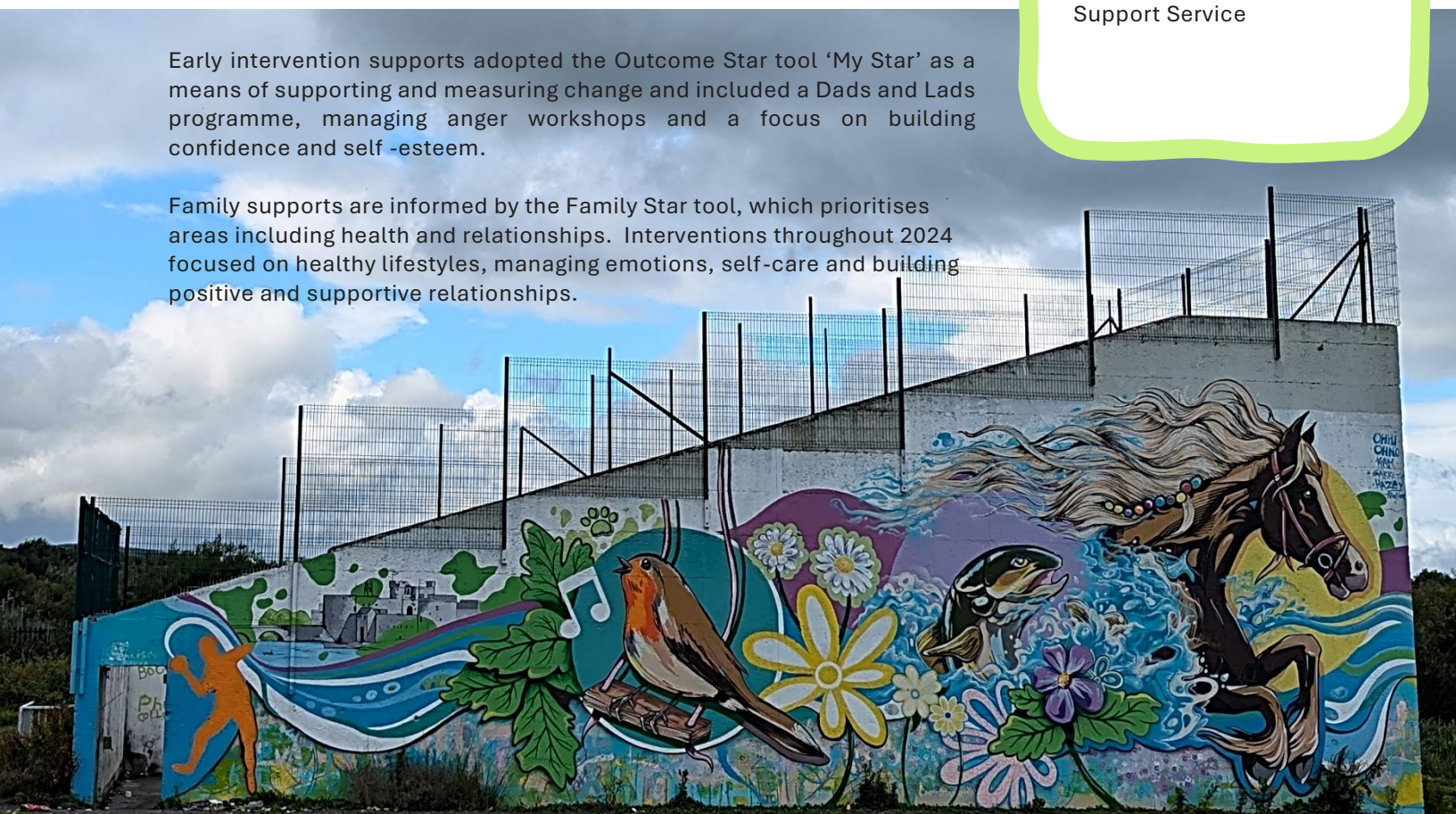
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**23 families** across the service area were provided with a Family Support Service





## 1.2 YOUTH AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROJECT

In 2024, the Youth & Family Support Project (YFS) supported 72 young people aged 12 -16 years. The average threshold of need was high with key areas of need including; parental support, mental health, school refusal educational supports, pro social supports and safe space to develop healthy peer relationships. YFS operates from the Factory Southside Youth Space, Northside Youth Space and Glentworth Street, City Centre. YFS facilitate group interventions including healthy relationship workshops; employability mentoring; education and training supports; parental and family support addressing issues such as addiction and family crises. Mid-term and Summer holiday provision is aimed at fostering positive peer engagement in safe social spaces, creating positive memories, exposure to alternative hobbies and interests and to having fun.

**72 young  
people  
supported  
through  
the Tusla  
funded  
Youth &  
Family  
Support  
Service**





# 1.3 YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT

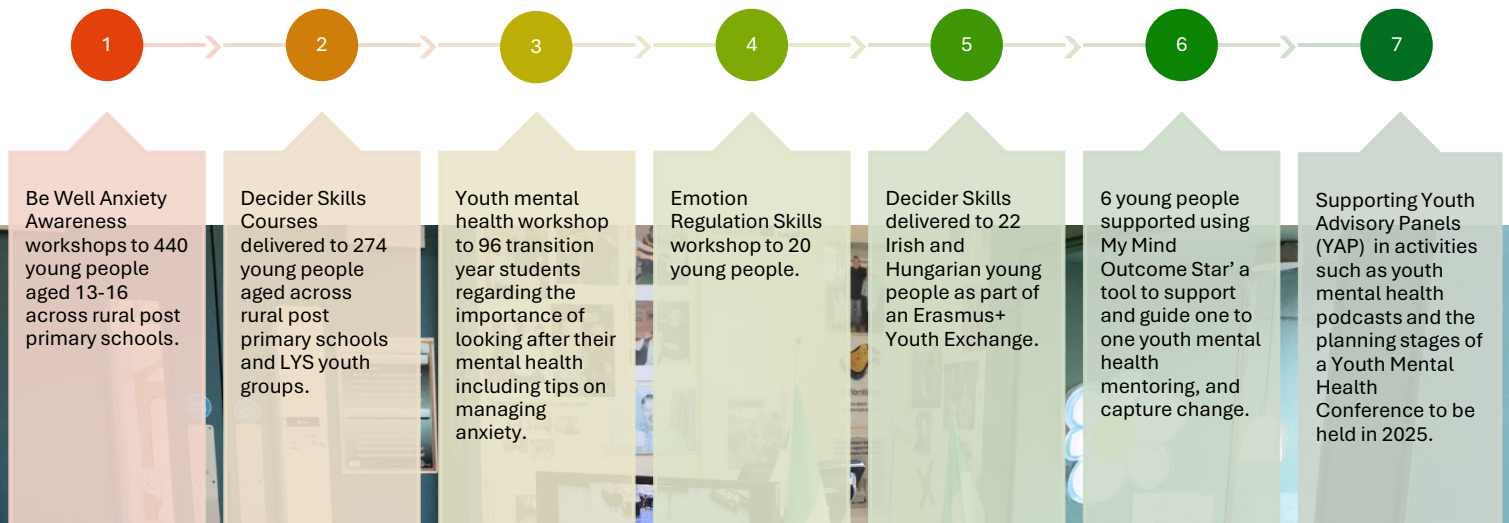


In 2024, 106 young people were referred to the Be Well Youth Mental Health Counselling Service. 30% of referrals were from Parent/Guardian, 25% internally, from across LYS projects, 10% self-referrals, 10% from CAMHS -10%, 10% from TUSLA and 15% Other. The majority, at 75% were Under 18. Top presenting issues were as follows:

- Anxiety
- Low mood
- Family/relationships
- Trauma/abuse
- Behavioural issues/school
- Neurodiverse related issues

Key patterns in 2024 show that 25 % of new referrals have an ASD diagnosis; an increase in male attendance; lack of coping skills continues to be an area of concern amongst young people and the accommodation crisis and its impact on young people.

In addition to the Counselling Service the Youth Mental Health Workers delivered:

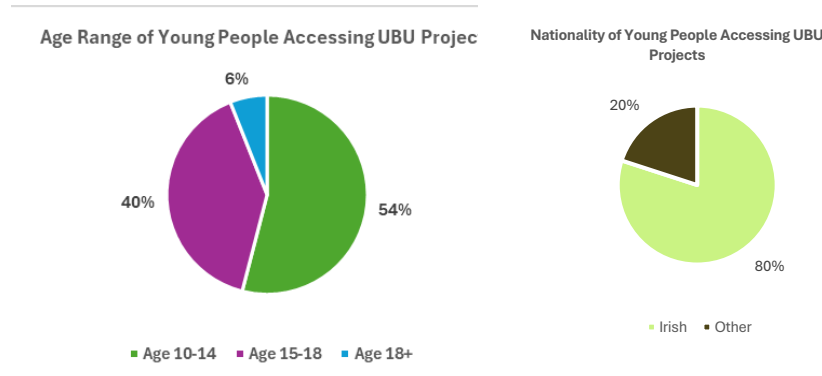


## 1.4 UBU YOUR PLACE YOUR SPACE

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 731 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 2024 as gathered in our registration forms:

In Other Nationality, out of 20% (144): 25% are Ukrainian; 12% are



Sudanese; 9% are Pakistani; 8% are Polish; 5% are Latvian 4% are Afghani, with the remainder, at between 0% and 4% being Zimbabwean; African; Asian background; Bangladeshi; Brazilian; British; Congolese; Croatian; Gambian; Georgian; Indian; Italian; Lithuanian; Moldova; Portuguese; Rwanda; Saudi Arabian; Spanish; South African; Slovakian; Sudanese.

In terms of Ethnicity, 69% are White Irish; 10% are Any Other White Background; 9% are Black or Black Irish and 7% are White Irish Traveler 7%.

### 1.4.1 EAST LIMERICK UBU

East Limerick supported 120 young people aged 10-25 years in 2024. The majority were aged 10-14 and 20% were of Other Nationality, primarily Ukrainian with an increasing engagement from Traveller youth. East Limerick provision included the delivery of youth social spaces in Castleconnell engaging Ukrainian young people based in local IPAS accommodation, advocacy and support visits with Ukrainian families, music generation programme and swimming lessons. Provision in Cappamore & Caherconlish included horticultural programmes, strengthening families workshops, biodiversity, fishing, nature walks, cooking and healthy eating. Young people from across East Limerick accessed Summer provision and one to one social supports.

### 1.4.2 RATHKEALE ASKEATON UBU

Rathkeale-Askeaton UBU worked with 117 young people in 2024, with 40% aged 15-18 years, 55% aged 10-14 and 6% aged over 18 years. Almost 30% of young people are from the traveller community in Rathkeale & Askeaton. Provision includes weekly informal group activities such as baking, sport, art & crafts, music and a youth cafe. Regular group work also focuses on building relationships between settled and traveller youth. In addition, an environmental project was developed in collaboration with ECO UNESCO and a key activity for 2024 was participation in a youth exchange with Romania in August as well as hosting group from Romania in October. In addition staff from the project attended a partners meeting in Romania in 2024.

### 1.4.3 CITY SUBURBS UBU

151 young people registered with the City Suburbs youth project in 2024, the majority of whom are 10-14 years old. 3% of young people were from the Traveller community and 21% are of other Nationality for e.g. Congolese, Nigerian and Afghani. Areas of focus includes emotional regulation, anger management and positive behaviour with young boys. Regular youth cafes in Northside Youth Space engage young girls aged 15-18 years in positive physical and mental



health activities, education and employability opportunities and encourage civic engagement.

A key activity in 2024 was the youth cafes participation in a youth exchange with partners in Finland. The project also supports young traveller and settled males in weekly youth work activities focused on physical and mental health and wellbeing.

### 1.4.4 KINGS ISLAND & SURROUNDS UBU

75 young people registered with Kings Island UBU in 2024 predominantly from the St. Mary's Park area, with 64% aged 10-14, 32% aged 15-18 and 4% over 18 years old. Throughout 2024, Kings Island UBU has delivered small and large group work supports including the Active Life Outdoor Group, Boxercise Boys and Girls Groups, a Gaming Group, a Young Mother's Group, Young Girls, A Creative Arts Group, and Friday and Saturday Hang Out groups. These groups meet regularly, generally once or twice weekly for 2 to 3 hours in Kings Island youth space. Young people have participated in a photography project, a mindfulness and wellbeing programme, a young residents programme, a film project, health and beauty programme, drama workshops, a collaborative allotments programme with Paul Partnership and in a Junior Leader Training residential programme in the Burren. Regular activities also include handball in the local handball court and detached youth work, whereby youth workers deliver services and supports where young people 'are at' geographically, i.e. outdoors in the local community. Regular social and learning activities within the space include the use of the gym, homework supports, healthy cooking, baking, board games, pool, art, drawing and listening to music with peers and youth workers.



### 1.4.5 LAVA JAVAS UBU



187 young people engaged with Lava Javas UBU in 2024. The majority, at 65% are aged 15-18 with 9% over 18. 42% are of a Nationality other than Irish including Ukrainian, Sudanese, Pakistani, Polish, Latvian and Afghani.

Lava Javas UBU works with young people living in Direct Provision (DP) and International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS). Traveller youth, at 4%, also access this service for e.g. boxing, health and fitness sessions. Youth work with migrant youth included regular weekly group sessions in our city centre youth space facilitating a dance programme, preparations for and participation in the St. Patrick's Day parade, a beauty therapy programme, outreach to and support for families in DP and IPAS, one to one social and emotional, educational and employability supports, and participation in fun days out and residential; a break from the small spaces of hotel rooms. Lava Javas works with LGBTQ youth and in 2024, supported participation in Pride events, collaboration with the Ombudsman for Children's Rights. Lava Javas youth cafes are safe, social, alcohol and drug free spaces held Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings and in addition to hanging out, playing board games, movie nights and listening to music, young people participated in youth music award activities, creative youth partnership and film making workshops.





## 1.4.6 GARRYOWEN UBU

In 2024, **81** young people were part of Garryowen UBU with 52% aged 10-14

years and 42% aged 15-18 years. 14 out of 19 Small Areas in Garryowen are categorised as Disadvantaged by HP Pobal Index. A key initiative in 2024 was the Erasmus+ youth exchange with Greek partners, which was life changing for all the young people who participated. In 2024, young people took part in regular group activities such as dance workshops for girls, podcasting discussing issues relating to religion, LGBTQI+ with a focus on tolerance and transforming hate, gaming groups, boxercise, gym sessions and health and fitness.



## 1.5 YOUTHWORK PROGRAMMES

In 2024, the primary to secondary transition programme 'Moving on Up' was delivered in 3 rural secondary schools to 327 young people, and in 14 primary schools to 221 young people. The aim of this programme is to support the successful transition of young people from primary to secondary school by focusing on personal and social skills such as communication, managing bullying and wellbeing. 258 young people completed an evaluation, which showed that young people learned primarily about bullying/peer pressure in terms of what it means and where to seek support, followed by learning about school procedures, subjects, schedules and making friends.

2 Junior Leadership residential programmes were delivered to 17 young people in the Burren. The aim of the Leadership programme is to equip young people with the skills and confidence to assume leadership roles in their youth clubs and community. It covers a variety of topics such as teamwork, communication skills, body language and organising events.

A youth mental health and wellbeing programme, supported by West Limerick Mental Health Association was delivered to 14 young people attending Scoil Mhuire agus Ide in Newcastle West. The aim of this programme was to strengthen awareness, knowledge and skills relating to practical tools and techniques to manage stress and anxiety.

## 1.6 YOUTH PARTICIPATION

At Limerick Youth Service, we believe that young people are the driving force for positive change in our communities. We have worked to engage young people in decision-making processes through mediums such as Comhairle na nOg and Youth Advisory Panels/Committees which offer a platform for young people to voice their concerns and ideas. Young people have participated in events as the NYCI policy event, LYS pre-election breakfast briefing and the political briefing held in Dublin earlier in the year.



**LIMERICK COMHAIRLE NA NÓG** is a child and youth council which enables young people aged 12-17 to exercise their rights in influencing decision-makers on the topics most important to them. Limerick Comhairle na nÓg is managed under Limerick Youth Service youthwork programmes. 97 young people attended the Annual Comhairle Conference which took place in November 2024. There were 20 secondary schools in attendance at the event in addition to young people from LYS Community Training Centre. There were 11 meetings during the year excluding the AGM. Comhairle reps participated in 5 Regional and National Events throughout the year. Transport and access to transport was voted as theme for the 2024/2025 year.



## 1.6 INTERNATIONAL YOUTHWORK

International Youthwork expanded significantly in 2024 with 3 exchanges taking place during the year. In March 2024, LYS facilitated the return leg of the VACAY Youth Exchange - engaged 12 young people accessing the Garryowen UBU programme and 15 young from Florina, Greece through partner youth organisation 'Active Youths of Florina'. 'Connecting Abilities' youth exchange engaged 13 Hungarian young people and 12 young people accessing the Ability programme and the CTC. Failte Ulkona youth exchange engaged 13 Finnish young people and 13 Irish young people accessing the City Suburbs and YDP programmes. In 2024, LYS was successful in its application for small scale partnership funding and is currently partnering with a Hungarian organisation in the area of virtual youth work. LYS also applied for and received funding to develop a Youth Participation project in the area of youth mental health.





A photograph of a residential street with a child riding a purple bicycle on the sidewalk in the foreground. The street is lined with houses and parked cars, with hills visible in the background under an overcast sky. The text 'SECTION 2' and 'VOLUNTEERS' is overlaid in large white letters on the right side of the image.

# SECTION 2

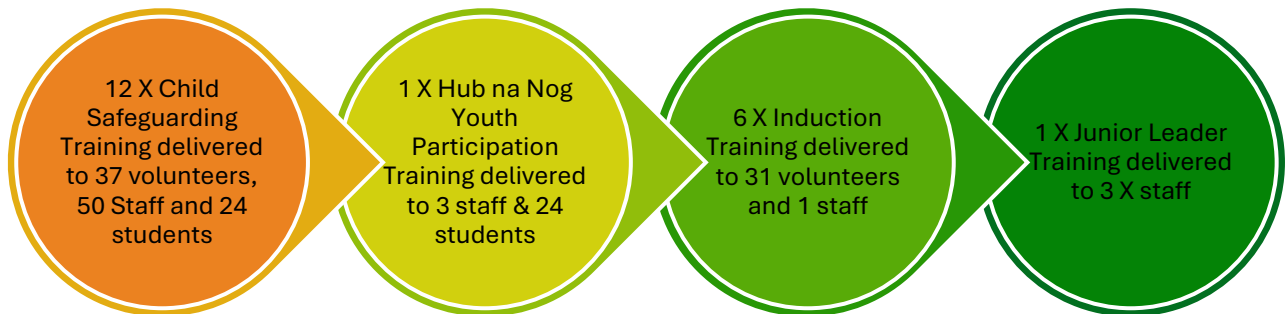
# VOLUNTEERS

## 2.1 VOLUNTEER LED YOUTH WORK

### Volunteer Led Youth Clubs

In 2024, LYS supported 17 Volunteer led clubs and 111 volunteers. Support was offered in relation to Governance; Finance; Grant Applications; Fundraising; NQSF Compliance; Reporting; and Administration.

The following Training & Capacity building measures were delivered;



### 2.1.1 VOLUNTEER YOUTH AWARDS 2024

Named in honour of the founder of Limerick Youth Service, the Sr. Joan Youth Leadership awards celebrate the outstanding contribution of young people to their communities.

The young people are current or past members of LYS youth clubs, groups & boards.





## 2.1.2 YOUTH CAFES

The main objective of Youth Cafes is to provide safe, supported, and open access Youth Spaces for young people aged 14-19 yrs. In 2024, 90 young people accessed the Northside Youth space, Ballynanty, and Lava Javas Youth Café on a weekly basis. Additional numbers engaged throughout the year in a variety of projects offering outlets for creativity and engagement in non-formal education programmes for Young People.

There are 6 regular Youth Café sessions weekly which operate during youth friendly hours / out of school hours. They support a diverse group of Young People from across the City steered by active Youth Committees.

Activities include arts and crafts, leadership activities, summer trips, gigs, games, pool tournaments, soccer tournaments along with collaboration with other projects such as Youth Diversion Projects. The Cafes also provided a wide range of cultural, social, and informal educational events throughout 2024 including Pride events, Pride breakfast and March, Musical Programmes, Creative



programmes for film, St Patricks day events, Culture Night, Young Artist in Residence Programme in collaboration Hunt Museum, Social Boardgame group, Halloween Event Christmas Celebrations and Summer Activities.

In County Limerick, two Youth cafes in Rathkeale and Askeaton are operating with the support of five volunteers through the Rathkeale and Askeaton UBU . This is a hugely valuable service for young people living in rural areas.



### 2.1.3 YOUTH INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

In 2024, LYS' Youth Information Service was awarded the European Youth Information Quality label, certifying that information provided is verified and reliable. Youth information is primarily provided to young people, but is also available to external institutions such as Higher Education providers, community and statutory bodies concerning opportunities and challenges relating to young people, and to parents/guardians. Information is mainly provided face to face at 40%, via email/website/chat service at 25% and 16% over the telephone. The top 3 areas of information provision are Education & Training at 23%; Social & Cultural Opportunities including volunteering 19%, employment and career 13% and physical and mental health and wellbeing 10%. LYS Youth Information Service also facilitates information provision via Large Scale Events, which in 2024 included a Community Expo; Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival; Community Mornings; Career & Volunteer Fair, a Political Breakfast Briefing highlighting key issues for young people in advance of local elections and wellbeing fairs.







# SUPPORTING INTEGRATION

In 2024, LYS supported migrant young people across Limerick City & County including Ukrainian Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and those living in the direct provision system under the International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS). This support was delivered through existing and new LYS programmes, and in collaboration with organisations including Paul Partnership & Barnardos.

LYS UBU projects supported up to 24 young people aged 10-16 years in IPAS accommodation in Mungret Gate. Activities included sport, arts and crafts, baking, a bullying workshop delivered in collaboration with Barnardos, preparing for and marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade, Summer provision at Castleconnell Scout Centre and additional one to one support and mentoring when needed.

8 Ukrainian young people based in the Riverbrook Hub, Castleconnell participated in a youth group with local young people where they took part in activities such as swimming, fitness, fun and social activities in a youth friendly space where they could meet and make friends with Irish young people. Summer provision included water activities on the lake, BBQs, day trips and youth workers also engaged with Ukrainian families in supporting young people. A Saturday club in the Factory SYS engaged 10 young people aged 10-16 who were based in the Maldron Hotel. This group also joined in with all other LYS youth groups in accessing Summer provision where they got the chance to experience the outdoors. LYS supported 41 Ukrainian young people based in rural facilities in Clarina and Bruff through weekly youth groups and their participation in Summer provision, as well as preparation for and participation in LYS' Halloween Fest!.

LYS worked with up to 55 young people in the city centre aged 10-16 from across migrant communities including those in IPAS, Ukrainian young people and those living in high density population areas such as the Dock Road. Ukrainian youth workers delivered English classes, all young people took part in Summer provision and days trips including a residential in Killary, Co. Mayo. Preparations for and participation in St. Patrick's Day parade was a very impactful event. Other activities included a beauty programme, a cookery programme in collaboration with Paul Partnership, drama and dance.

LYS Youth & Family Support Project employed a migrant family support worker, who has supported the delivery of the above provision, in addition to the delivery of regular youth groups supporting 11 Ukrainian young people based in the Pery Hotel, focused one to one supports for both young people and family members, advocacy supports relating to immigration status and facilitating events such as parent coffee mornings.



# **SECTION 3**

## **EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYABILITY**



## 3.1 COMMUNITY TRAINING CENTRE

In 2024, 97 young people were registered with the CTC with 5 young people on a waiting list. Over 70% are aged between 15 and 17 years. 56% registered with a Junior Certificate Qualification, and 35% registered with No Qualification. In 2024, 3 young people attained QQI Level 4 Major Awards; 104 attained QQI Level 3 Minor Awards; 72 attained Level 3 Minor Awards; 6 attained their Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), and other awards included Barista, Food Safety and Safe Pass. 12 young people also completed evening

*'After not finishing secondary school and having quite a bad experience with education, the centre gave me the confidence to pursue an education that I thought I was not capable of or just was not for me.'*

*'They gave me hope for my future and I know that they will help others like me again'*

*'I liked everything about the course. My classmates were sound, the curriculum was good, and the teachers were very supportive.....if I struggled with anything, they would help me through it in a constructive manner.'*

*'It is partly due to the flexibility and patience of my teachers, that I completed the LCA when my son was just four months old.'*

*'I have Limerick Youth Service to thank for introducing me to teaching...and giving me the opportunity that shaped my career'*

Out of 91 young people recently registered with the Limerick Youth Service' Community Training Centre:

**78%** were aged between 15 and 16 years old

**24%** were of a Nationality Other than Irish

**25%** had attained Primary Education Only

**43%** were from catchment areas identified as 'unemployment blackspots' and rated as Extremely /Very Disadvantaged on Pobal HP Deprivation Indices

**9%** were living in hotel accommodation due to homelessness and/or in Direct Provision

**33%** of non-Irish nationality were residing in the 6th most densely populated Electoral District (ED) in the country, Dock A in Limerick City

**24%** were referred by Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Educational Welfare Officer, Doras, Tusla and Extern

courses with Limerick Clare Education & Training Board (LCETB). In 2024, 66% of young people progressed to employment or Further Education & Training (FET); 39% progressed to FET at the same or higher level and 27% progressed to employment. Positives for 2024 included high

attendance rates at 81% and strong retention, challenges include meeting the complex needs of increasing numbers of young people aged 15-17 years old. 97 young people were registered with the CTC with 5 young people on a waiting list. Over 70% are aged between 15 and 17 years. 56% registered with a Junior Certificate Qualification, and 35% registered with No Qualification. In 2024, 3 young people attained QQI Level 4 Major Awards; 104 attained QQI Level 3 Minor Awards; 72 attained Level 3 Minor Awards; 6 attained their



Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), and other awards included Barista, Food Safety and Safe Pass. 12 young people also completed evening courses with Limerick Clare Education & Training Board (LCETB). In 2024, 66% of young people progressed to employment or Further Education & Training (FET); 39% progressed to FET at the same or higher level and 27% progressed to employment. Positives for 2024 included high attendance rates at 81% and strong retention, challenges include meeting the complex needs of increasing numbers of young people aged 15-17 years old.

## 3.2 WORKABILITY

In 2024, the Pobal-funded Ability+ programme was relaunched as the WorkAbility programme, focusing on supporting young people with disabilities aged 1–25 to access education, training, and employment opportunities. Over the year, WorkAbility engaged 34 young participants, providing tailored support to help them progress toward their goals. The table below outlines ‘Emotional wellbeing’ and ‘Stability at home’ as key need areas, under the Pathway Star, for 27 young people on first engaging with the WorkAbility programme in 2024:



Referral pathways were established with a range of partner organisations, including Employability Limerick, Paul Partnership, LCETB, TUSLA, CAMHS, AMHS, Limerick Homeless Action Team, NOVAS, DEASP, TUSLA Aftercare, Jigsaw, and Education Welfare Officers. Key outcomes achieved through the programme include:



12 young people securing full or part-time employment



11 actively engaged in job search activities



11 placed in community-based volunteer roles



8 completing NFQ-accredited training courses



32 completing non-accredited training courses

Participants benefited from one-to-one mentoring with WorkAbility mentors, who helped identify individual strengths and needs and develop personalised progression plans for education, training, and employment.

A bespoke, non-accredited six-week employability programme was delivered to all 34 participants. This covered essential topics such as health and safety, basic IT skills, personal hygiene, communication and interview skills, mock interviews, job search techniques, engaging with recruiters, using job boards, and managing anxiety and stress. The programme also emphasised soft skills development, confidence building, and fostering independence, including voluntary engagement in the community.

### 3.3 YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY KINGS ISLAND

The Youth Employability Initiative (YEI) 2024 was delivered by Limerick Youth Service through Social Intervention Funding (SIF) from Limerick City and County Council in the St Marys Park Community. The overall aim of the YEI was to support young people between 16 and 24 years of age, who are not currently in employment, education, or training (NEETs), in developing their personal and social competencies and ultimately preparing them for onward progression in their employment lives. Limerick Youth Service (LYS) facilitated this programme over a period of 4 months between September 2024 and December 2024 and engaged 8 young people aged 16 & 17 from the St. Mary's Park area. The aim of the programme was to develop the knowledge and skills of participants with respect to career development and employability in areas that included job skills and experience, aspiration and motivation, job search skills, workplace and social skills, health, and well-being. The programme Objectives were realised through the delivery of the following:



Delivery of the evidence-based programme Work to Learn, using youth work methods



Weekly one to one and small group sessions, CV building and Advocacy



8 week work experience for a period for 8 young people



Outreach Visits to SOLAS and Limerick Youth Service and other sites was a new aspect of the programme. Visiting workplaces such as the Opera Centre on Patrick St, Limerick were eye-openers for the young people.

### 3.4 WORK EXPERIENCE

Limerick Youth Service through the Student placement committee supported 13 3<sup>rd</sup> Level students on placement in 2024.

The majority of students, 7, were from TUS Social Care degree course, with others coming from ATU Social Care, TUS Community addiction, TUS Business & Sports, Mary Immaculate BA degree. Two international students from Karl de Groot University, Belgium, Social Work degree, and IES Rabalta, Valencia, Spain, Social Care also came on Erasmus sponsored placements.

All Students were interviewed and placed and supported in our youth work programmes in the city and county giving them valuable workplace experience as well as helping LYS to provide much needed services in the community.

In addition to student placement, Limerick Youth Service also support Community Employment and TUS participants to access valuable work experience, training and support in the area of youthwork. Many participants were supported into paid employment roles in this area within Limerick Youth Service.





# 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
- Garryowen Youth Together Project, John Street., Limerick.
- 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.

### 4.1.1 LOWER GLENTWORTH ST.

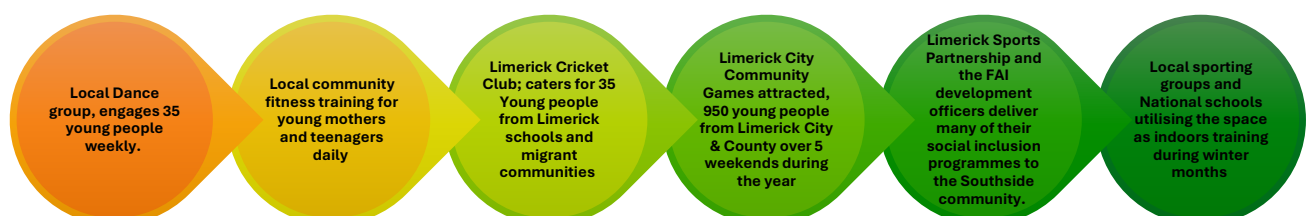
The lower Glentworth st offices of Limerick Youth Service are the base for the LYS Community Training Centre as well as the Administrative base for the organisation. In 2024 LYS successfully applied for funding to Limerick City & County Council under the Community Climate Action Fund to install solar panels into this building and also the Northside Youthspace.

### 4.1.2 THE FACTORY SYS

In 2024, 36,737 people utilised the Youth Space, averaging a footfall of just over 3,000 per month. 53 unique community, youth groups and organisations were supported in their usage of the Youth Space.

The SYS acts as a key resource and facilitates members individuals, community and sporting groups to utilise the facilities on a regular basis.

The Factory SYS is supported by POBAL Community Service Programme under which 5 staff and 1 manager are employed. The Facility is also supported by Limerick City & County Council through the Economic & Social Integration Fund. Some of the groups using the facility in 2024 include;



2 local 2<sup>nd</sup> level students and 3 young people on training schemes or 3<sup>rd</sup> level placements were also supported with work placements within the facility with the aim of increasing their skills and future employability.

### 4.1.3 NORTHSIDE YOUTHSPEACE

The Northside Youth Space promotes & facilitates the social, educational and creative development of young people & provides a wide range of activities and programmes that meet the needs of young people across the community. In 2024, 35 individual groups utilised the space with an annual Footfall of 15,266.

The Northside YS is utilised by a variety of groups and organisations providing support and activities for young people and is home to a Youth Mental Health project, Youth Diversion Programme and UBU Your Place, Your Space youth project.

## 4.2 RESEARCH, MONITORING & EVALUATION

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. Our work in 2024 included updating data collection and supporting all projects in registering young people and documenting activities to include

- Supporting Information Management in LYS Community Training Centre
- Qualitative case studies completed on young people in CTC and Ability Programme
- Funding applications and reports to funders
- Supporting on Outcome Star evaluation tool
- Collaborated with Salesforce in designing an Information Management System for the Community Training Centre, which will achieve efficiencies in data management as well as map progress for young people and document achievements.
- Finalised Limerick Youth Service' Community Training Centre Policy & Practice Review, 2024.

In addition the following areas of work were completed;



PRIMARY TO  
SECONDARY  
TRANSITION  
PROGRAMME  
EVALUATION



EVALUATION OF THE  
RURAL YOUTH  
MENTAL HEALTH  
PROJECT &  
DEVELOPMENT OF  
VIDEO PROJECT



NEURODIVERSITY  
NEEDS ANALYSIS



COMMUNITY  
TRAINING CENTRE  
IMPACT &  
EXPERIENCE  
REVIEW AND  
ANALYSIS



INTERNATIONAL  
YOUTH WORK  
REVIEW AND  
EVALUATION OF  
EXCHANGES

We continued to document and monitor all of our activities with young people using registration forms, sign in sheets and activity recording forms, and to evaluate the quality of our work and outcomes for young people using pre and post surveys, questionnaires, focus group discussions and interviews.

## 4.3 GOVERNANCE

### 4.3.1 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.

### 4.3.2 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.

The Catholic and Church of Ireland Bishops (Patrons) each nominate two representatives to the Board of Limerick Youth Service. Other Board members are identified based on skills analysis as per annual Board skills audit document. Current Board membership include skills in the area of Accountancy, Audit & Risk, HR, Legal, Youth Work, IT, Community Development, Human Rights, Education, Youth Justice, Health & Safety and Facilities Management. At least four members of the Board shall be actively engaged in organisations relevant to the workings of Limerick Youth Service.

The Board of Limerick Youth Service are not remunerated for their services to the organisation, however, in some instances nominal travel costs are paid. The CEO is not a member of the Board.

### 4.3.3 BOARD MEETINGS

The Board meet a minimum of six times per year and met six times in 2024 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 2024 was as follows:-

Audrey Fehily  
Mairead Holland  
Yvonne Delaney  
Fr Tim Wrenn  
Eoin Coughlan  
Brian Ryan  
Inspector Sandra Heelan  
Joe O'Meara  
Justin O'Connor  
Sean O'Gorman  
Mel Butler  
Alan Holmes  
Eileen Hoffler  
Karen Long Eacrett  
Aoife Walsh  
Laura Scanlan

### 4.3.4 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 and supporting good governance practice and policy.

In 2024 the Audit, Governance and Risk Sub Committee continued to work on a number of areas including reviewing the sub committee terms of reference and developing the reserves policy.

#### **Membership 2024**

Fiona O'Grady  
Paul Kelly  
Bernadette Behan  
Yvonne Delaney  
Brian Ryan  
Justin O'Connor  
Audrey Fehily

#### **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 2024.

#### **Membership 2024**

Fiona O'Grady  
Kathryn Clancy  
Maurice Walsh  
Zoe Gogarty  
Tracy Lawlor  
Bernadette Daly  
Caroline Curley  
Aoife Bannon  
Eileen Hoffler

#### **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 six meetings of the HR subcommittee in 2024. Of consideration a number of IR issues were addressed and concluded successfully.

A key issue which emerged in 2024 was the implications of the HSE/Tusla funding to Section 39 organisations following the WRC Pay Agreement. This agreement had significant implications for all LYS Youthwork staff not just those funded through Section 69. As a result of this agreement, LYS conducted a review of Youthwork Salaries and benchmarked against equivalent salaries in the sector. This exercise was concluded in early 2025.

A comprehensive staff training and needs analysis was also completed in 2024 and in response to this work, a number of training initiatives were rolled out to staff in the areas of First Aid, Child Safeguarding, Working with Neurodiverse young People etc.

#### **Membership 2024**

Aoife Walsh  
Sean O'Gorman  
Mairead Holland

### **4.3.5 MANAGEMENT TEAM & STAFF**

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 2024 Limerick Youth Service employed an average of 107 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. An average of 20 staff were employed under the Department of Social Protection labour

activation programmes and 8 staff employed under the Community Services Programme.

In 2024 Limerick Youth Service achieved the Silver Award for the NYCI Health Quality Mark.

## 4.4 COMPLIANCE

Accountability and transparency are essential to the work of Limerick Youth Service. Limerick Youth Service is registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority and completes all reporting as required and is compliant with the Charities Governance Code in Ireland. Limerick Youth Service is registered with the Lobbying register in Ireland and completes all returns as per requirements.

We continued to embed General Data Protection Legislation (GDPR) across LYS personal data processing and delivered staff information sessions in this area.

We also met our obligations under Lobbying legislation in Ireland.



### 4.4.1 CRA Governance Code

This Charities Governance Code sets out the minimum standards a charity should meet to effectively manage and control their charity. 2021

was the first year that charities were expected to comply with the Code. In order to achieve this, we have systematically worked through the principles of the code recording the actions that we have taken to meet each standard of the Code; and referencing the evidence that backs this up. This is an ongoing continuous improvement process.

In 2024 Limerick Youth Service stated our compliance with the Code and undertook a range of specific actions in relation to governance including reviewing policies on policies on Induction, Volunteers, Travel & Subsistence, Time off in Lieu and Garda Vetting. New policies developed included a podcasting, remote working and flexible working arrangements.

### 4.4.2 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Limerick Youth Service has the following structures and mechanisms in place to ensure financial accountability, transparency and accuracy;

- Finance Manager and Internal Accountant Position
- Audit Sub Committee
- External Auditor
- Financial Policy & Controls Procedures
- Fundraising & Sponsorship Policy
- Apportionment Policy
- Limerick Youth Service publishes our annual audited accounts which are prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)

### 4.4.3 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 2024, the Child Protection team delivered 11 sessions of Child Safeguarding Training, 7 of these were delivered as in-person training and 4 were delivered online. In total 106 people participated in Child Safeguarding Training in 2024

## 4.5 PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

Limerick Youth Service works with a wide range of Community, Private and Statutory partners on a local regional and national level.

This includes collaboration with the 20 member youth services around Ireland who are part of the Youth Work Ireland Federation.

LYS and our staff are part of a broad range of steering committees, networks and fora including Childrens Grief Centre, City Wide Youth Forum, Connecting for Life, Eurodesk Ireland, IPAS interagency group, LCETB Youth Work Committee, Limerick Children & Young Peoples Services Committee, Limerick Integration Group, Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival, Limerick Sports Partnership and West Limerick Resources



In 2024, LYS continued to develop our collaboration with corporate partners. We worked with the Sky Up team to develop our space in the Northside of the city as the second sky up hub in Ireland. We are also very grateful for the continued support of a wide range of parishes across Limerick County who support us through financial contributions. In addition, we have a number of partner organisations such as Roches Feeds, Sysco Foods and MS donations who provide us with support in the areas of finances, goods & services.

## 4.6 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

In 2024, through the establishment of an Environmental Sustainability Committee, LYS developed an Environmental Sustainability Policy, and action plan demonstrating our commitment to considering the impacts of our actions and how they affect the environment. As part of this committee we are working on reducing waste across our buildings, reducing energy consumption and engaging in climate actions initiatives with staff and young people.





## 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 2025 will include;

- Ensuring a renewed focus on evening and weekend youthwork provision across the city & county.
- Enhancing existing and advocating for additional youth facilities in the city & county.
- Intensive development of the volunteer led youthwork strand of our work.
- Advocating for increased funding for the youthwork sector to pre-financial crash level in real terms.
- Expanding the Erasmus + programme and embracing international youthwork as a means of achieving our objectives.
- Developing innovative and creative programmes in the area of digital inclusion and the arts.







An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí  
Department of Social Protection



An Roinn Leanaí, Michumais  
agus Comhionannais  
Department of Children,  
Disability and Equality



Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna  
**LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR**  
**LIMERICK & CLARE**  
Education & Training Board



**Limerick**  
CITY & COUNTY  
COUNCIL



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland



**TUSLA**  
An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency



**HSE**  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive



**pobal**  
government supporting communities



**An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt**  
Department of Justice



**An Roinn Tithíochta,**  
**Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht**  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage



ciste na  
gcuntas díomhaoin  
**the dormant  
accounts fund**



**An Roinn Oideachais**  
**agus Óige**  
Department of Education  
and Youth



**hi**  
Healthy  
Ireland



**An Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais,**  
**Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta**  
Department of Further and Higher Education,  
Research, Innovation and Science



**Limerick**  
**Comhairle na nÓg**  
Young Voices. Local Issues.



Arna chomhchistiú ag  
an Aontas Eorpach  
Co-funded by the  
European Union



Ag tacú le daoine óga  
atá faoi mhíchumas barr  
a gcumais a bhaint amach  
Supporting young people  
with disabilities  
reach their potential



**Erasmus+**



**léargas**



**SOLAS**  
An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna  
Further Education and Training Authority



**RTÉ**  
**Toy Show**  
**Appeal**



**The Community**  
**Foundation for Ireland**





## FURTHER INFORMATION

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