

limerick youth service



ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Youth Work Ireland

LAVA JAVAS YOUTH



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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

Over the past year, we have continued on our journey of connecting with young people and supporting them to realise their full potential. I am proud to report that, together, we have made significant progress in advancing our mission and strengthening our impact across Limerick.

Young people engaged in youth cafés, clubs and group programmes throughout Limerick City and County, benefiting from a wide range of cultural and recreational opportunities. Our music, art, and creative writing programmes provided spaces for expression, creativity and learning.

We expanded our international youth work programme, strengthening our offerings in Youth Mobility, Strategic Partnerships and Cooperation Projects.

Participation in Further Education & Training (FET) also remained strong, with young people completing Leaving Cert Applied, QQI Level 3–4 courses, and progressing successfully into employment and further education. The Workability Project continued to play a vital role in providing tailored mentoring to support these transitions.

This year also saw the growth of targeted supports for young migrants, neurodiverse young people and renewed efforts to engage Traveller youth in our programmes. Workshops on wellbeing, sexual health, digital safety and resilience addressed emerging needs and provided essential life skills. Young people contributed actively through youth committees, advisory groups and peer leadership roles, with youth-led events, campaigns and creative initiatives thriving across the organisation.

Our partnerships deepened further as we collaborated with statutory agencies, schools, universities and community organisations. Increased public visibility through events such as Africa Day, Youth Night, Pride and Comhairle na nÓg highlighted the vibrancy and commitment of the young people we serve.

Despite the progress achieved with our current resources, rising costs and increasing demand place pressure on our ability to deliver consistent, high-quality services. Securing long-term investment is essential to maintaining stable staffing, upgrading facilities and expanding programme offerings. In addition, the online environment presents complex risks including cyberbullying, misinformation, digital overload and exposure to radicalisation.

Reaching the most marginalised young people—those affected by geographic isolation, cultural barriers or challenging personal circumstances—continues to be a priority.

Despite these obstacles, what gives me confidence is the unwavering spirit of Limerick Youth Service—its people. Our staff, volunteers, board members, partners and, most importantly, the young people themselves bring purpose, resilience and energy to everything we do. To everyone who contributed to our work this year, I extend my sincere thanks. Your dedication ensures that young people in Limerick are supported, respected and provided with meaningful opportunities to thrive.

As we look ahead to 2026 and beyond, let us remain bold, collaborative and firmly youth-centred in all that we do. Together, we will continue to shape a brighter future for the young people of Limerick.

Audrey Fehily



Chairperson

1. ABOUT LIMERICK YOUTH SERVICE

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

In our Strategic Plan 2023-2027, there are three strategic priorities;

Youth Work

1. To empower and support young people across Limerick City & County to enhance their personal and social development through their voluntary involvement in high quality youthwork services and supports.

Education, Training & Employability

2. 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

Volunteers

3. 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.

Impacts and Outcomes



Targeted youth & family support delivered across Youth Diversion, Family Support and Integration programmes



852 young people supported through UBU Your Place, Your Space groupwork, mentoring, outreach and advocacy



1,350 one, to-one mental health sessions delivered, alongside group and school-based programmes



Youth voice strengthened through Comhairle na NOg, youth panels and youth-led campaigns



High-impact Youth Cafés & open access spaces delivering arts, culture and leadership programmes



146 learners supported through the Community Training Centre, with **82,5%** progressing to work or education



72 young people with disabilities supported via **WorkAbility**, achieving **50 jobs** and **30 accredited trainings**



International youth work expanded through Erasmus+ exchanges and EU digital projects



1,100+ young people engaged through youth information and communications services

48,126 visits to The Factory Southside Youth Space

A photograph of two young people, a man and a woman, both making peace signs with their hands. The man is on the left, wearing a black t-shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a grey hoodie over a white t-shirt that has the text 'SON OF ADAM' visible. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred crowd of people with colorful vertical light streaks in shades of pink, orange, and blue.

YOUTH WORK

**DELIVER HIGH QUALITY YOUTH WORK THAT
FOSTERS MEANINGFUL OUTCOMES FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE**

2. YOUTH WORK PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

LYS works with young people outside, yet alongside, the formal education sector. Section 3 of the Youth Work Act 2001 defines youth work as:

‘a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training; and provided primarily by voluntary youth work services’

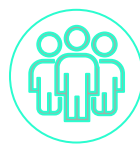
LYS Youth work provision across Limerick City and County incorporates:

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

Limerick Youth Service’s youth work programmes, services and activities are designed to improve confidence, communication, planning and problem-solving skills among young people.



2.2 UBU YOUTH PLACE YOUR SPACE



852 Young People

were registered with UBU projects in 2025. This funding scheme targets young people, across the city & county who experience social and economic isolation, are marginalised and vulnerable, engaging them in youth work activities including weekly structured groups, drop-in cafes, one to one mentoring, residentials, detached youth work, large-scale community events, outreach and advocacy. Outcomes for young people relate to emotional wellbeing, relationships, communication, resilience, confidence and decision making.



2.2.1 EAST LIMERICK UBU

East Limerick UBU registered

128 young people from



across Cappamore, Caherconlish and Castleconnell, and Murroe engaging them in activities such as a beauty programmes, cookery, swimming, biodiversity, Clean Up Limerick and Music Generation.

2.2.2 RATHKEALE-ASKEATON UBU

Rathkeale-Askeaton UBU registered



145 young people ages 10

to 18 years from both traveller and settled communities;

engaging them in activities such as

Eco UNESCO -Eco Leaders collaboration on environmental concerns, film making, sports & wellness, road safety, exam supports, day trips, seasonal activities, summer programmes, camping trips, residential, youth leadership programmes, youth cafe drop in and special interest groups. The Project also supports young people to explore further opportunities in education and training as well as local volunteers and youth club activities

2.2.3 CITY SUBURBS UBU

City Suburbs UBU registered **126**

young people from across

Ballynanty, Rhebogue, Thomondgate & Caherdavin and young people living in Direct Provision in Ballysimon and Mungret Gate,

engaging them in activities including podcasting, arts & crafts, sport, board games and a Halloween disco for traveller youth and their families.

2.2.4 KINGS ISLAND UBU

Kings Island UBU registered **87 young**

people from the Kings Island area,

engaging them in activities including a young men's mental health and well-being programme, employability, homework & exam supports, handball, great Limerick run, knitting, conflict resolution, detached youth work and a family fun day.



2.2.5 LAVA JAVAs UBU



This UBU registered **228 young people** from across Limerick City & County, engaging them in activities such as a youth exchange with Macedonian partners, a youth committee, a St. Patrick's Day Alternative Ceili, creative writing, a Rap Residency, Culture Night activities, Africa Day, jewellery making and workshops exploring gender and sexuality.

2.2.6 GARRYOWEN UBU



Garryowen UBU registered **91 young people** from across Garryowen including young people living in Direct Provision in River House activities including a youth exchange with French partners, boxercise, podcasting, detached youth work and community gardening.

2.2.7 Drug Education and Prevention Support (DEPS)

In June 2025, Drug Education and Prevention Support (DEPS) became part of Limerick Youth Service, continuing its role as a key provider of drug education and prevention supports across Limerick city and county. Since joining LYS, DEPS has strengthened its contribution to youth work provision, supporting young people to develop knowledge, resilience, and informed decision-making in relation to substance use.



During 2025, DEPS **registered 47 young people** and engaged them through a wide range of structured educational, creative, and recreational activities. These included



camp, book club, sports and fitness sessions, a Breaking Barriers soccer event, structured drug education programmes, and the development of a Kick the Vape awareness video. These initiatives provided young people with safe, supportive, and engaging opportunities to learn, develop skills, and build positive peer connections.

DEPS primarily works with young people aged 10–24 years, while maintaining a limited capacity to support adults where appropriate. The service delivers tailored drug education programmes to a broad range of youth groups, schools, and community settings throughout the city and county. Using factual, interactive, and age-appropriate approaches, DEPS aims to increase understanding of substance use and misuse, while empowering young people to make positive choices regarding their health, wellbeing, and future.

At the core of DEPS' work is a commitment to responsive, evidence-informed drug education that reflects the realities of local substance use. The service seeks to highlight not only the impact of substance use on



individuals, but also the wider effects on families, communities, and society.

A key event in 2025 was 'Breaking Barriers', a CROSS-COMMUNITY football event hosted in the Factory Southside Youth Space engaging young people from communities across Limerick city along with local Gardaí. The event aimed to break barriers through football.

2.3 YOUTH & FAMILY SUPPORT PROJECT

In 2025, the Youth and Family Support Project worked directly with over **100 young people aged 10-18**. The total number of young people in receipt of a service from our Ukrainian/IPAS family support worker in 2025 was 43 including one to one and groupwork.

The type of supports provided to young people included one to one mentoring in mental health and wellbeing, school retention, targeted group work e.g. understanding and preventing vaping, parenting and family work around financial management, living in temporary accommodation, crisis

intervention and holiday provision such as trips to doon social farm for neurodiverse young people.

Outcomes for young people related to improved social and emotional wellbeing, enhanced family, peer and community relationships and improved school engagement and retention.

Outcomes for families including those living in temporary accommodation included reduced isolation and increased access to a holistic range of supports.



CASE STUDY

Youth and Family Support involvement with Community Law & Mediation

Youth Advisory Group

Over a six-month period, young people involved in the LYS Youth & Family Support Project took part in a Youth Advisory Panel which included three visits to the Community Law & Mediation Centre (CLM), an independent, community- focused law centre providing free legal advice, mediation, and education to communities affected by social exclusion and inequality. CLM is working to establish a Children's Law Service and commissioned research into the legal supports available to children in Ireland and the barriers they face in accessing them. The young people contributed to this work as members of a Youth Advisory Group, helping to inform the research and its recommendations. A report was published in summer 2025, and the group continues to play a role as CLM works towards establishing a children's rights centre.



2.4 YOUTH DIVERSION PROGRAMME

Limerick Youth Service's Youth Diversion Project (YDP) works with young people who are involved in, or a risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour and crime.

The Project works in partnership with An Garda Síochána and is part supported by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund. LYS Youth Diversion Project is in Ballynanty, Irishtown and the King's Island areas of Limerick City, with an outreach team engaging with young people in the Limerick City Centre (Henry St) & East Limerick Garda Districts.



3 young people aged 8-11 years;
90 young people aged 12-17
years; 5 young people aged over
18 years and 22 families, engaged

with the project.

Activity highlights throughout 2025 include: a menstrual health education programme, engaging young Traveller girls; substance abuse education, youth leadership programme; Photography exhibition in the hunt museum, driver theory test support, a colour & connect programme; creative art tapestry. Family support programmes included coffee mornings; Self Care programme, Walking programme & Menopause workshop for parents

Outcomes for young people included engaging in more positive leisure and recreational opportunities; positive peer relationships; education & employability opportunities; family relationships and personality/behaviour; need areas which were identified using the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI). The YDP project has supported young people to complete the Iscoil programme, Junior Certificate, a Gym Instructor and Fitness Instructor Course and supporting engagement in the Community Training Centre and supporting education retention.

Outcomes for families, as measured by Family Star Plus include supporting parents to keep young people healthy, safe, strengthening young people's learning and enhancing parents'/guardians community relationships and friendships.



Marks Story

Return to Play Programme

Mark is a 14-year-old young person who had been passionate about soccer from a young age, playing consistently with local teams. When his local club could no longer provide an age-appropriate team, he lost access to organised sport. This sudden loss of routine, structure, and belonging had a significant impact on his wellbeing.

At the same time, he was struggling in mainstream education. As a young person with learning difficulties, school had become a source of ongoing frustration, leading to frequent conflict with teachers and challenges with emotional regulation. These difficulties often escalated into verbal and physical aggression at school and at home. Although he later transitioned to a special education school that offered greater support, his confidence had been badly affected. Despite strong soccer ability, he no longer believed he was “good enough” to join the school team.

To address these challenges, YDP staff developed the Return to Play Programme, a five-week targeted intervention combining strength and conditioning, technical soccer training, and sports psychology. From the outset, the young person engaged fully. Physical sessions focused on endurance, strength, agility, and mobility, while the psychology element supported confidence building, emotional regulation, and mindset development. Over time, he showed clear improvements in skill, stamina, confidence, and willingness to challenge himself.

By the end of the programme, he regained belief in his abilities and joined his school soccer team. He was subsequently selected to represent his school at the Football for All Tournament at the AVIVA Stadium, where his team reached the final and he won Player of the Tournament. He later competed in the All-Ireland Schools Tournament and the Breaking Barriers Tournament.

Off the pitch, his behaviour, mood, and school engagement improved significantly, and he demonstrated growing social awareness and leadership. In 2025, he received a Group Garda Youth Award, marking a powerful transformation in confidence, resilience, and identity.



2.5 BE WELL YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

In 2025, the Be Well Youth Mental Health Service continued to provide essential, accessible mental health supports to young people across Limerick. The service delivered a comprehensive blend of therapeutic interventions, skills-based programmes, group work and youth participation initiatives, responding to identified need across both urban and rural communities.

Therapeutic Supports and Outcomes



Clinical data gathered through the CORE-OM psychological assessment tool indicates that 1,350 one-hour therapeutic sessions were delivered during the year, supporting 135 young people, with a strong attendance rate of 85%.

The most common presenting issues identified were:

- Anxiety
- Family and interpersonal relationship difficulties
- Trauma and loss
- Self-identity
- School-related challenges

In addition to individual therapy, 30 young people participated in therapist-led group work, providing opportunities for shared learning, peer connection and emotional support.

At a programme level, two Be Well Programmes were delivered in rural secondary schools, engaging 217 young people aged 13–19. These programmes focused on emotional wellbeing, resilience and mental health awareness, supporting early intervention and prevention.

Organisational capacity was strengthened through the delivery of a Be Well Train-the-Trainer Programme to five LYS Youth Workers, enhancing the organisation's ability to respond effectively to young people's mental health needs.

Skills-Based Mental Health Supports

Skills development remained a core focus throughout 2025.

30 young people participated in therapist-led group work, providing opportunities for shared learning, peer connection and emotional support

2 Be Well Programmes were delivered in rural secondary schools, engaging 217 young people aged 13–19.

Be Well Train-the-Trainer Programme delivered to 5 LYS Youth Workers, enhancing the organisation's ability to respond effectively to young people's mental health needs.

9 Decider Skills Programmes were delivered, reaching 250 young people across three rural youth groups and three post-primary schools.

A focused programme with Moyross Youth Academy delivered the Decider Skills programme to 15 young people

These sessions supported young people to build practical tools for emotional regulation, problem solving, stress management and resilience.

One-to-One Support, Group Work and Awareness

One-to-one mentoring and support sessions were delivered using the My Mind Outcome Star, ensuring structured goal-focused engagement.

In addition:

- Four structured group work programmes focusing on mental health and wellbeing engaged 22

young people across three rural youth groups.

- A targeted mental health talk on anxiety, procrastination and accessing supports was delivered to 40 young people through the Limerick & Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB).

Conference and participated in workshops addressing youth identity, disordered eating and substance misuse. Regular social gaming meet-ups further supported connection, inclusion and belonging.

Youth Participation and Voice

Youth participation remained central to the Be Well service. In 2025:

- A Rural Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) was established, comprising nine young members.
- The rural panel worked alongside the city-based YAP, which maintained 12 active senior and junior members.

Members of both panels contributed to planning the 2026 Youth Mental Health



Case Study

Building Resilience and Confidence Among Rural Young People

Limerick Youth Service delivered targeted mental health and wellbeing supports to rural young people aged 14–18 through the *Be Well Anxiety Awareness* and *Decider Skills* programmes. One secondary school group of 13-14 year-olds participated in interactive workshops focused on understanding anxiety, managing emotions, and developing practical coping skills. This programme included 5 sessions: recognising & Regulating Emotions; Empathy & Relaxation Techniques; Managing Thoughts & Feelings; Being Resilient & Support Networks and Communication & Conflict Management. Young people completed pre and post assessments which identified increased confidence in recognising bodily signs of worry and happiness, improved awareness of available supports and increased confidence in their ability to support friends and family.

Before taking part, many students reported feeling unsure about how to manage stress and where to access mental health supports. Following the programme, the majority of participants reported increased knowledge about mental health, improved skills in managing their wellbeing, and greater awareness of available supports. Breathing and mindfulness exercises were frequently identified as the most useful take-away skills, with students describing them as practical and easy to use in everyday situations.

Teachers and school staff also observed positive outcomes, noting that the workshops encouraged reflection, normalised conversations about mental health, and helped students feel more confident discussing their emotions. By combining evidence-based tools with a youth-friendly delivery style, the programme reduced stigma and strengthened resilience among young people, creating lasting benefits for both students and their wider school communities.



2.6 YOUTH WORK PROGRAMMES

In 2025, the **Moving on Up** primary-to-secondary transition programme was delivered across two rural secondary schools and four primary schools, reaching a total of 460 young people. The aim of this programme is to support students as they move from primary to secondary school by strengthening key personal and social skills, including communication, managing bullying, and overall wellbeing. One Junior Leadership residential programme was delivered to six young people. The objective of this programme is to build participants' confidence and leadership capacity so they can take on active roles within their youth clubs and communities. Core topics covered included teamwork, communication skills, body language, and event organisation.

2.7 INTERNATIONAL YOUTHWORK

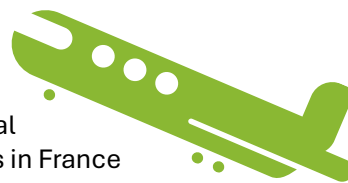
In 2025, Limerick Youth Service significantly expanded its international youth work through two Erasmus+ youth exchanges involving partners in France and North Macedonia, with **24 young people** participating in the Macedonia–Limerick exchange and **23 involved in the Limerick–France exchange**.

A preparatory visit to North Macedonia ensured high-quality partnership development and programme planning.

LYS also continued to play an active role in wider European youth work initiatives, including acting as an associate partner in a large-scale KA1 Immersive Technologies project, leading a KA2 Small Scale Partnership on Virtual Reality in Youth Work with Hungarian partners, and preparing for the delivery of a Youth Worker Mobility training focused on digital youth work.

Further involvement included a Youth Participation project on youth-led mental health initiatives, an ESC application, and participation in the University of Limerick–led EMERGE alliance. Collectively, these initiatives strengthened LYS's leadership in international collaboration, digital innovation, and youth-led practice.

The Mayor of Limerick, John Moran was among the guests at the International Youth Work Celebratory evening at the Northside Youth Space. As part of the celebration, young people who participated in youth exchanges shared their experiences and were presented with their EU Youthpass and Recognition certificates by Mayor Moran.



Case Study: Africa Day Youth Culture Festival 2025

In May 2025, Limerick Youth Service celebrated Africa Day with a vibrant, two-day Youth Culture Festival that brought together young people, families, and communities from across Limerick. Held on 23 and 24 May, the event highlighted African culture through fashion, music, dance, food, and participatory workshops, creating a welcoming and inclusive space for learning and celebration.

The festival opened with a youth led African fashion show, featuring young models from IPAS centres and local youth programmes, showcasing traditional African fabrics reimaged in contemporary styles. This was followed by a diverse programme of family friendly activities, including live drumming workshops, African dance sessions, face painting, magic shows, and performances by Afrobeats DJs and live musicians.

Across the two days, over 250 people attended the festival. The interactive nature of the activities encouraged meaningful engagement between young people from different backgrounds, supporting integration, cultural understanding, and community connection. Partnerships with African led businesses and artists further strengthened the authenticity and impact of the event.

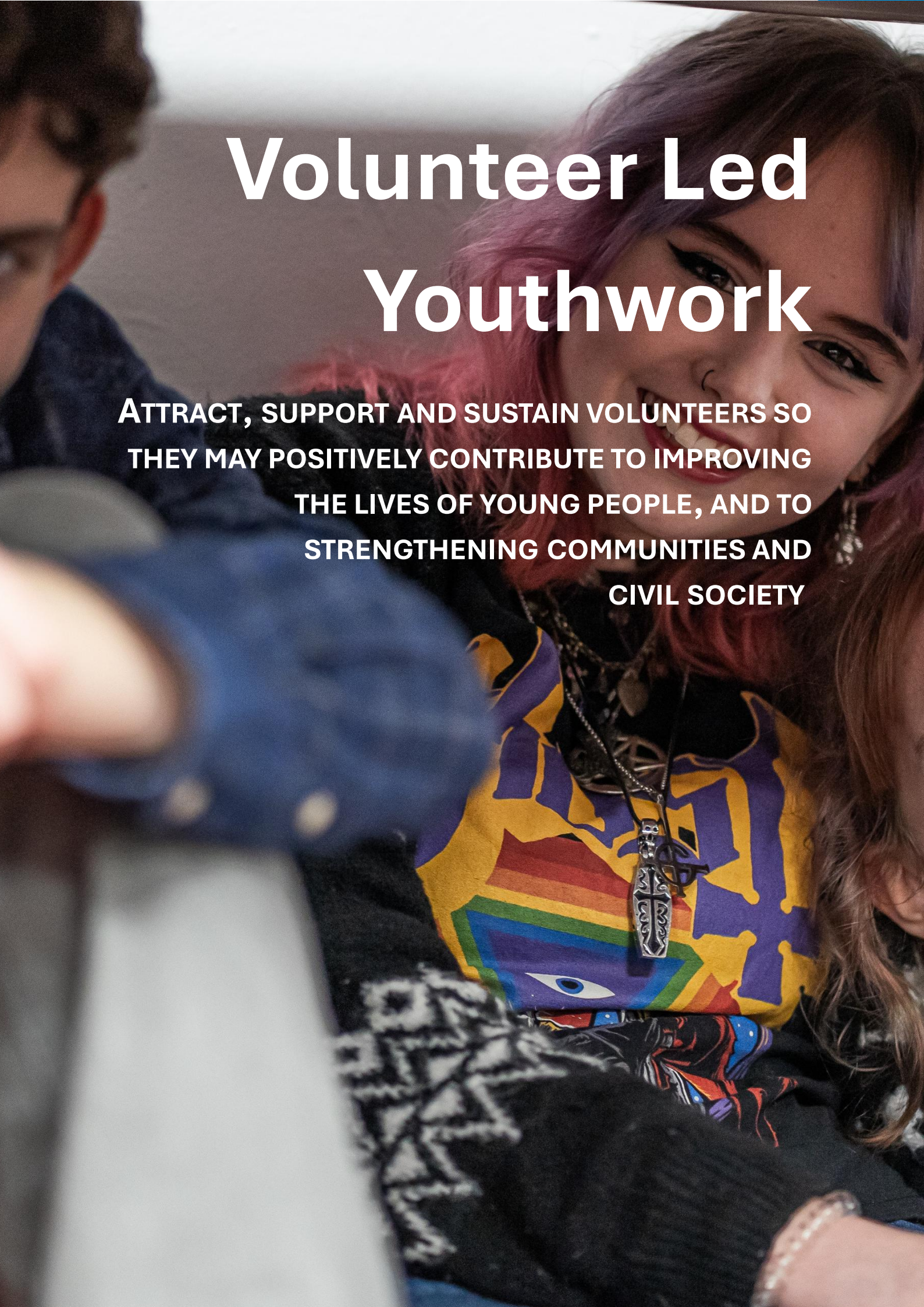
Africa Day 2025 was widely promoted and received local media coverage, reinforcing its reach and visibility. Overall, the festival was a strong example of Limerick Youth Service's commitment to inclusion, youth voice, and intercultural youth work, while providing a joyful and empowering experience for young people and families across the city.





2.7 INTEGRATION YOUTHWORK

In 2025, under the IPAS programme, LYS was providing youth work supports to 60 young people with families based in Abbeygrove, Mungret, those in Griffin House continue to access our services and new young people joining from Ballysimon and River House accommodation Hubs. Summer and Halloween camp activities were provided to 25 Ukrainian and local young people with Ukrainian young people based in Tara House, and to 12 young people based in accommodation in Bruff and the Pery Hotel, City Centre. 35 Ukrainian young people and 15 migrant youth accessed supports in the city centre through our Lava Javas UBU project, Queen of Peace Volunteer-Led Youth Club.



Volunteer Led Youthwork

**ATTRACT, SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN VOLUNTEERS SO
THEY MAY POSITIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVING
THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE, AND TO
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES AND
CIVIL SOCIETY**

3. VOLUNTEER LED YOUTHWORK



3.1 VOLUNTEER LED YOUTHWORK

In 2025, Limerick Youth Service (LYS) made significant progress in sustaining, supporting and revitalising its network of volunteer led youth clubs across Limerick city and county. A key focus of the year was the stabilisation and re-engagement of several clubs that required support, including Askeaton, St. Senan's (Foynes), Newcastle West and Killeedy. Through ongoing engagement, structured support, and targeted staff interventions, these clubs were successfully maintained and reactivated, safeguarding vital community based youth provision.

A gradual increase in young people returning to youth clubs was evident throughout the year, reflecting a growing appetite for safe, social, youthfriendly spaces following the post Covid shift in young people's needs and routines.

A major highlight of the year was the Volunteer Recognition Event held in the Woodlands, Adare, celebrating the contribution of over 40 volunteers and reaffirming LYS's commitment to supporting and valuing its volunteer base.

LYS continued to face challenges in volunteer recruitment and in ensuring consistent staff

resources to support clubs. Additional pressures emerged from changes in young people's expectations post Covid, with many seeking more informal drop-in style spaces. Shifts in parental availability and changes in local age profiles also influenced club dynamics. Despite these challenges, progress across the year demonstrates strong resilience within the volunteer-led model and ongoing community commitment to youth work.

3.2 COMHAIRLE NA NÓG

In 2025, Limerick Youth Service's Comhairle na nÓg continued to empower young people to have a real say in issues that matter to them locally and nationally. Throughout the year, members took part in regular meetings, consultations, and youth-led projects focused on wellbeing, inclusion, and community engagement. They represented the voices of Limerick's young people at regional and national events, contributed to policy discussions, and collaborated with partners across the youth sector. Their work in 2025

reflects a strong commitment to ensuring that young people are heard, valued, and actively involved in shaping the future of their communities.



3.3 YOUTH INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

In 2025, the Youth Information Centre (YIC) continued to play a central role within Limerick Youth Service (LYS) by ensuring young people had access to clear, impartial and accessible information. While primarily youth-focused, the YIC also supported parents, families, and professionals working with young people. Through partnerships with Youth Work Ireland, Eurodesk, ERYICA and SpunOut, the YIC remained at the forefront of developing innovative and youth-centred communication approaches. Young people accessed the service through the YIC hub, across LYS locations, and via email, social media, drop-in supports and the national live chat service.

In 2025, the centre engaged with approximately **1,100 young people** on topics including education, training, careers, health, wellbeing, travel and

volunteering. The live chat service recorded 1,600 contacts nationally, with YIC responding to 80 of these.

The YIC coordinated the LYS Outreach Programme, attending careers fairs, delivering

workshops and supporting community and professional organisations. The YIC also coordinated major awareness events such as the Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival, Africa Day, Youth Work Ireland Week and Óiche na hÓige, and supported young people involved in international programmes, including Eurodesk's "30 Faces for 30 Years".

Volunteer recruitment and support remained a key focus. In 2025 the YIC delivered 5 Discover Europe sessions to 30 participants and attended 8 volunteer fairs.

promoted voter registration for the Presidential Election.

Through its Communications & Marketing Strategy, the YIC

promoted the positive contribution of young people and the work of LYS across media platforms. Highlights included:

- Features on Live 95FM
- Over 45 articles across the Limerick Leader, Limerick Post, Vale Star and Weekly Observer
- Strong digital engagement:
 - 45,000 website visits
 - 450,000+ Instagram views
 - 304,000+ Facebook views
 - TikTok: 11,000 views, YouTube: 4,300 views
 - Additional engagement through LinkedIn, Snapchat and X



EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYABILITY

PROVIDE FURTHER EDUCATION, TRAINING
& EMPLOYABILITY OPPORTUNITIES THAT
EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE TO FULLY
INTEGRATE AND PARTICIPATE IN SOCIETY

4. EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYABILITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Limerick Youth Service provides education, training and employability programmes and courses to young people not in employment, education or training (NEETS) through our Community Training Centre (CTC), Workability Programme employability initiatives, work experience opportunities and student placements. In addition, Limerick Youth Service delivered a range of informal education and training opportunities such as health and beauty, fitness, art, woodwork, personal development, cookery and film making.

42 COMMUNITY TRAINING CENTRE

In 2025, the Limerick Youth Service Community Training Centre (CTC) continued to deliver high quality education, training and progression supports to early school leavers aged 16–19.

cert standard qualifications.

At the end of 2025, the centre had 83 learners attending in centre and 63 learners being tracked after leaving the programme with a total throughput of **146** learners during the



year.

Occupancy levels remained consistently high and aligned with national Community Training Centre productivity

guidelines, which consider 90% utilisation as full capacity.

The centre continued to work with young people presenting increasingly complex needs. Of the 83 learners in centre at the end of 2025

39 were engaged at the Targeted Input level

22 had an ASD diagnosis

4 were from the Traveller community

5 had been expelled from school before Junior Cert

6 were linked with LYS Youth Diversion Programme teams

17 were or had been attending CAMHS

Progression outcomes in 2025 were the strongest in three years. A total of 52 young people **82.54%** of those completing—progressed to employment or further education and training (FET). Of these, 37 (58.73%) progressed to FET at the same or a higher level, and 15 (23.81%) progressed into employment.

Progression pathways in 2025 included transfers to Youthreach LCA, hairdressing traineeships, mechanic traineeships, youthwork traineeships, and Level 5 courses across LCETB campuses (KRC and LCFE), with 32 young people progressing to Level 5 programmes.

4.3 WORKABILITY

In 2025, Limerick Youth Service (LYS) continued to deliver the *WorkAbility: Inclusive Pathways to Employment* programme, supporting young people aged 16–25 with disabilities to progress towards meaningful education, training, and employment opportunities. Through a person-centred, youth-work-led approach, the programme delivered strong outcomes despite increasing complexity in participant needs, particularly in relation to mental health, housing, and socio-economic disadvantage.

Across the year, the programme supported 72 young people, engaged 42 stakeholders and 38 employers, and exceeded targets across a broad range of employment, education, and skills development measures.

LYS delivered substantial progress in improving employment prospects for young people with disabilities:

22 young people secured full-time positions,

28 secured part-time positions and 30

completed NFQ accredited training courses.

Personal progression plans, specifically the Work Star supported and evidenced change with respect to job skills and experience, aspiration and motivation, Job-search skills,

Stability, Workplace and social skills and health & wellbeing.

4.4 YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY KINGS ISLAND

In 2025, Limerick Youth Service facilitated a four-month programme from August to December. Six participants—four female and two male—between the ages of 16 and 17 engaged in structured employability development. The programme supported young people who had disengaged from education, experienced unstable living circumstances, or possessed limited work experience. All six participants engaged in structured work experience lasting between six and eight weeks. Placements were arranged with local employers in retail, hospitality, childcare, and community services. One participant completed their placement internally with LYS. Two participants were offered part-time opportunities following their placements, and one expressed interest in pursuing a QQI Level 4 course in 2026





Enabling our Strategy

**TO BUILD A STRONG ORGANISATION THAT
IS OPEN TO LEARNING, RESPONSIVE TO
CHANGE AND COMMITTED TO ITS
ONGOING DEVELOPMENT**

5. GOVERNANCE, COMPLIANCE & STRUCTURES

5.1 BUILDINGS & FACILITIES

In 2025 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.

5.1.1 THE FACTORY SYS

In 2025, the Factory Southside Youth Space welcomed **48,126 users**, averaging over 4,000 visitors per month and representing an increase of almost 12,000 from the previous year.



A total of **57 community and youth groups**

accessed the facility, which continues to serve as a vital resource for individuals, community organisations, and sporting groups across the Southside. Supported by the POBAL Community Services Programme, which funds five fulltime staff and one manager, the Factory SYS provides a base for numerous local sporting and community groups, including a dance group engaging 35 young people weekly, daily fitness programmes for young mothers and teenagers, Limerick Cricket Club serving 35 young people from local schools and migrant communities, the Southill Men's Shed, and Limerick City Community Games, which hosted 950 young people across

five weekends. Partnerships with Limerick Sports Partnership and the FAI development officers further extend social inclusion opportunities, while local national schools and clubs regularly use the space for indoor winter training and targeted events such as the Breaking Barriers tournament for countywide Youth Diversion participants. The SYS also supported six young people—three second level students and three participants in training schemes or third level placements—through work experience aimed at developing skills and employability.

The facility provides a safe, accessible, youth friendly environment that promotes social connection, wellbeing, participation in healthy activities, and personal development. The SYS prioritises marginalised and vulnerable young people, supports positive lifestyle choices, builds interpersonal and citizenship skills, enhances employability through dedicated programmes, and contributes to reduced risk-taking behaviours.

5.1.2 NORTHSIDE YOUTHSERVICE

The Northside Youth Space is a dedicated youth facility that supports the social, educational and creative development of young people, offering a wide range of activities and programmes designed to meet the needs of youth across the community. It is home to several key projects including: Youth Mental Health, Youth Diversion, Youth Café, Youth & Family Support, Drugs Education and Prevention and Sky Up Digital Hub. Thanks to its layout and versatile design, it also serves as a community hub accommodating staff, stakeholders and local groups to host exchanges, training sessions, meetings, clinics and art & wellness classes on a regular basis. They include but are not limited to Tusla, HSE, Barnardos, Iscoil, Sports Partnership, & Limerick City Partnership. In 2025, the footfall amounted to approximately 10500.



5.2 LIMERICK YOUTH SERVICE STRUCTURES

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.

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. A particular body/agency may be invited to nominate a Board member and that member must not act as a representative of that group in acting as a Board member. A Board pack is updated annually and circulated to all Board members. All Board members participate in induction.

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.

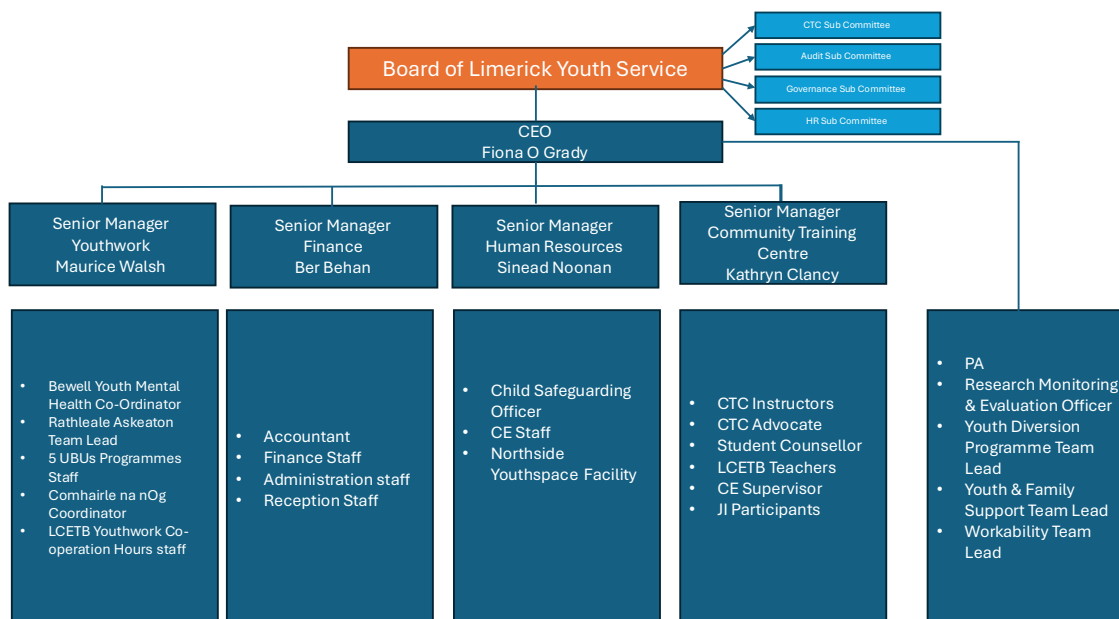
Board Meetings

The Board meet a minimum of six times per year and met six times in 2025 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 and attendance of Limerick Youth Service Board in 2025 was as follows:-

Name	February 13th	April 24 th	June 26 th	September 4 th	October 16 th	December 4 th
Audrey Fehily	Yes	Yes	Yes	X	Yes	Yes
Mairead Holland	X	Yes	Yes	X	Yes	
Yvonne Delaney	Yes	X	Yes	X	X	X
Fr Tim Wrenn	X	Yes	Yes	Yes	X	Yes
Eoin Coughlan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Brian Ryan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Inspector Sandra Heelan	Yes (Online)	X	Yes	Yes (Online)	X	X
Joe O'Meara	X	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Justin O'Connor	Yes	Yes	X	X	Yes	X
Sean O'Gorman	Yes	Yes	Yes (Online)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mel Butler	Yes	Yes	Yes	X	Yes	X
Alan Holmes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The organisational structure of the Board of Limerick Youth Service is set out as follows:-



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 2025 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 & Attendance 2025

Name	March 6 th	May 20 th	October 6 th	November 17 th
Fiona O'Grady	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Paul Kelly	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bernadette Behan	Yes	X	Yes	Yes
Yvonne Delaney	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Brian Ryan	Yes	Yes	X	Yes
Justin O'Connor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Community Training Centre Sub Committee 2025

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 CTC Committee oversaw a wide range of operational, learner-focused, and strategic matters throughout the period, monitoring

enrolment levels, waiting lists, learner tracking, progression outcomes, and certification achievements while supporting the CTC Manager in maintaining a person-centred, holistic model of youth development.

At a governance and strategic level, the Committee monitored impacts of reduced counselling hours, the submission and approval status of Business Plans for 2025 and 2026, and funding constraints arising from LCETB's proposal to reduce centre places from 100 to 80. Members raised concerns about the implications for vulnerable learners, infrastructure, staffing, and programme flexibility, and supported continued advocacy with LCETB.

Name	Marc h 6 th	Ma y 22 nd	Septembe r 18 th	Decembe r 1 st
Fiona O'Grady	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kathryn Clancy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maurice Walsh	Yes	X	X	Yes
Zoe Gogarty	Yes	X	Yes	Yes
Tracy Lawlor	X	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bernadette Daly	Yes	Yes	Yes	X
Caroline Curley	Yes	x	Yes	X
Sgt. Aoife Bannon	X	X	Yes	Yes
Eoin Coughlan			Yes	Yes

Human Resources Sub Committee

In 2025, the Limerick Youth Service HR Committee focused on a wide-ranging programme of work including salary scale reviews and the impact of WRC agreements, extensive recruitment activity across multiple programmes, ongoing employee relations actions, continued rollout of mandatory and specialist staff training, retirement

considerations, the development and approval of several new organisational policies, management of auto-enrolment and pension options, while also monitoring developments related to The Factory SYS and its funding position.

Membership & Attendance 2025

Name	January 27 th	April 15 th	June 3 rd	August 29 th	October 13 th	November 27 th
Aoife Walsh	X	X	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sean O'Gorman	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mairead Holland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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

Clancy

Youth Work Manager

Walsh

Kathryn

Maurice

Finance and Administration Manager

Bernadette Behan

Human Resources Manager

Sinead Noonan

In 2025 Limerick Youth Service employed an average of 108 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. The CE Programme continues to serve as a key support mechanism for Limerick Youth Service's operational capacity. An average of 23 staff were employed under the Department

of Social Protection Community Employment and Jobs Initiative.

5.3 GOVERNANCE

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.

CRA GOVERNANCE CODE

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

In 2025, Limerick Youth Service strengthened its organisational governance, compliance systems, and operational oversight through a wide range of reviews, audits, and regulatory processes. Key activities included updates to the Governance Code, completion of the Board Skills Audit, and ongoing refinement of the organisational Risk Register and policy registers.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Limerick Youth Service maintains strong financial governance through a comprehensive set of structures designed to ensure accountability, transparency, and accuracy in all financial matters. Key mechanisms include a dedicated Finance Manager and Internal Accountant, the oversight of an Audit Sub-Committee, and review by an External Auditor. The organisation operates under robust Financial Policy & Controls Procedures, supported by a Fundraising & Sponsorship Policy, an Apportionment Policy, and adherence to SORP auditing standards. These systems ensure that LYS meets the highest levels of financial

stewardship expected of a registered charity and publicly funded organisation.

The organisation's Financial Policy & Procedures Manual is reviewed and approved by the Board on a regular basis and this was again completed in 2025. This manual provides clear guidance on the treatment of funding, purchasing, payroll, banking, and accounting, while establishing a strong system of internal financial control. It supports staff in managing day-to-day financial transactions and ensures sound governance practices that protect the organisation and its stakeholders. Complementary policies, including the apportionment and fundraising policies, outline LYS's approach to allocating management support costs and the consistent application of direct and indirect expenditure across all programmes.

As part of its commitment to transparency and compliance, Limerick Youth Service submits its full annual accounts to the Charity Regulatory Authority and publishes SORP-formatted accounts and its Annual Report on the LYS website.

In 2025, LYS successfully managed a broad range of external audits and compliance checks, including, School Meals Inspection, the Rathkeale UBU Audit, and the Erasmus+ Review, alongside routine oversight visits from CCAP, UBU, Tusla, and the Department of Education.

COMPLIANCE

Limerick Youth Service is fully compliant with the Youth Work Ireland Membership Charter and places strong emphasis on meeting all legislative, regulatory, and funder requirements. The organisation maintains a comprehensive suite of governance and operational policies which are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in legislation, best practice, and regulatory standards and publishes audited annual

accounts in SORP format to ensure transparency.

LYS submits detailed annual work plans, progress reports, and final reports to funders in line with DPER requirements and undergoes routine on-site audits and monitoring visits from statutory bodies, all of which help verify adherence to procedures and strengthen organisational systems. In 2025, additional compliance work included a Building Reinstatement Cost Assessment, and implementing updated national regulations such as revised vetting procedures, auto-enrolment, and changes to IT licensing for the charity sector. Several policies were also reviewed and approved, including those on apportionment, adverse weather, remuneration, no smoking, mobile phone use, environmental sustainability, employee representation on external committees, and conflict of interest reinforcing LYS's commitment to strong governance, accountability, and regulatory integrity.

Risk

Limerick Youth Service holds risk management as a core tenet in its Strategic outlook and central to effective Governance. Risk is an everyday part of the organisations activities and managing it effectively is essential to provide an effective service and safeguard funds and assets. Risks can affect staff, volunteers, service users, liability to others, property etc. In 2025 the Board initiated a review of the risk register which will be completed in 2026. In addition a separate Risk & Governance committee was established to focus on risk going forward.

Elements of a Limerick Youth Service risk management framework include the following:

- Risk Register
- Risk Management Policy
- Risk Assessment Guidelines for Staff
- Risk Mitigation Continuous Improvement
- Training and Awareness for staff and building a risk-aware culture



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. In 2025, LYS continued to prioritise the safety and protection of young people through the delivery of a comprehensive Child Safeguarding Training programme. Across the year, seven training sessions were delivered ensuring that staff, students, and volunteers were equipped with the knowledge and skills required to uphold best practice in safeguarding. A total of 76 individuals completed Child Safeguarding Training in 2025. This included 24 staff, 26 students, and 26 volunteers representing a wide range of LYS programmes and community partners. Participants included youth workers, sessional staff, international students, new volunteers, and staff from partner organisations. Training delivery was supported by multiple trainers throughout the year, ensuring broad coverage and high-quality facilitation.

Throughout 2025, the Safeguarding Committee worked to maintain and further strengthen organisational safeguarding systems and supports. Key areas of work included:

- Delivering safeguarding training and updating training materials as required.
- Participating in refresher and national training events hosted by Youth Work Ireland and NYCI.
- Supporting continued organisational compliance in areas such as vetting and safeguarding requirements for staff, students, and volunteers.
- Progressing the ongoing review and update of the Safeguarding Statement, Policies and Procedures.
- Holding four committee meetings across the year to track progress and emerging issues.

- Monitoring safeguarding trends and identifying areas for improvement within services.

This work ensured that LYS maintained strong governance, visibility, and accountability in safeguarding practice, in line with national policy requirements and internal organisational standards.

5.4 RESEARCH MONITORING & EVALUATION

A key objective for Limerick Youth Service (LYS) is to ensure that young people benefit from responsive, needs-based services and supports that meet the highest standards of quality. In 2025, Research, Monitoring & Evaluation (RME) continued to play a central role in achieving this goal, with significant progress across multiple organisational initiatives, and quality improvement processes.

Throughout 2025, the RME function provided ongoing support to programme teams, driving improvements in data quality, evaluation processes, and evidence-informed practice. Key achievements & areas of work included :

- Evidence-based programme planning in line with the logic model approach.
- Monitoring the numbers and profile of young people registering with the service.
- Monitoring and evaluating the quality of services and supports.
- Evaluating outcomes for young people using quantitative measurement tools, in addition to qualitative methods such as case studies.
- Compiling focused in addition to funder reports.

Supporting the use of Information Management Systems including CORE OM, Salesforce, CRM and Outcome Sta. These activities ensured consistent measurement of outcomes, increased accountability, and

enhanced the organisation's ability to understand and respond to young people's needs. Collaboration with academic and sector partners remained a strong focus in 2025, positioning LYS as an active contributor to youth research and evidence-based practice. Notable projects included:

- Participation in ***Responding to Youth Social Withdrawal*** study in partnership with LCETB and the University of Galway.
- Contribution to the national study ***Meeting the Legal Needs of Children and Young People in Ireland***, led by the Community Law and Mediation Service.
- Engagement in ***Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life: Lived Experiences of Children and Young Adults in Limerick City's Equity Initiative***, a qualitative research project exploring the experiences of children and young adults in local communities.

- Leading a major outcomes measurement project on evaluating the impact of Youthwork on Young Peoples Well-being.

4.5 EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS & CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT

In 2025, Limerick Youth Service (LYS) strengthened its network of external partners, deepening relationships that contributed significantly to staff development, programme enhancement, and organisational growth. These partnerships played a vital role in ensuring that LYS continues to provide high-quality, responsive services to young people across Limerick.

Collaborations with key corporate partners including Sky, Roches Feed, Linesight, Stryker and Munster Rugby.



THE FUTURE

Looking forward to 2026, there are some areas of concern for our organisation, the rising cost of living and housing affordability have added additional layers of stress for many of the young people and families with whom we work. Young people are presenting to our services with more complex needs in the areas of social anxiety, mental health conditions and neurodiversity, Budgetary challenges arising from LCETB funding of the Community Training Centre is promoting some uncertainty for 2026. We are also concerned with the numbers of young people who are out of school across our programmes and activities and the impact this will have on young people going forward.

Despite these challenges, we acknowledge that the year ahead holds more opportunities for growth, innovation, and positive impact and our work will focus on the following areas;

- In 2026 we will be to continue work on our Erasmus + programme and the delivery of a small scale partnership programme focused on online safety and a youth participation project focused on health & well-being for young people.
- We look forward to engaging with the new Youth & Community Work degree due to commence in TUS Mid West in 2026 and to working with the third level institutions and other partners to develop innovative ways of upskilling and supporting staff.
- 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 2025 such as Community Foundation of Ireland, Sky and Stryker.
- 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 insecurity regarding tenure in the Factory Southside Youthspace and challenges with regard to premises in Garryowen.
- Our Governance & Risk committee are in the process of reviewing LYS legal Structures to future proof our structures.
- We will continue our efforts in the areas of targeted youthwork which focuses our efforts on those who are most vulnerable through the provision of a range of supports out of school, evening and weekends.





An Roinn Coimíre Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection



An Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais
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 díomhaoín
the dormant
accounts fund



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



hi
Healthy
Ireland



**An Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais,
Taighde, Nuálaíocht agus Eolaíocht**
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+



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



**The Community
Foundation for Ireland**



FURTHER INFORMATION

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