



**Annual
Report
2020**

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Introduction

No 4 Youth Service was founded in the early 1980's in response to the needs of young people at that time. While the organisation has adapted to the needs of the community in the intervening years, it continues to remain true to its mission of: -

'Assisting Young People at Challenging Times'.

No 4 Youth Service aims to enhance the quality of young people's lives by providing an effective and holistic response to a wide variety of issues pertaining to young people aged 13 - 25 years.

Our Work

No 4 Youth Service provides a wide range of supports for young people, all of which are based on a youth work approach, ensuring that young people aid their own personal development. The aim of **No 4 Youth Service** is to ensure that all of our programmes result in 'Better Outcomes' for young people in line with Ireland's National Policy for Children and Young People. It is important that young people can access support to help them to address the various issues they may be faced with, and critically it is essential that young people are supported to develop their own resilience to ensure that they can make positive choices for themselves as they go through life. The focus of the organisation is to improve the health and well-being of young people through implementing programmes and activities that have an emphasis on intervention and prevention in a range of areas including, homelessness, education, physical and mental health and employability.

Support available

Counselling

By engaging in the counselling process young people have the opportunity to gain self-respect, esteem, optimism and resilience. They have the potential to become full and healthy members of their community through better relationships with family, friends and colleagues. **No. 4 Youth Service** counsellors work within the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy Code of Ethics.

Personal and Social Development

Using informal individual and group work, one to one support and youth focused activities, young people are given the opportunity to find a sense of their own self-worth, to become more self-confident and more self-reliant, and to overcome difficulties that they may encounter.

Information

Information and assistance to access information on a wide range of issues is provided to young people.

Employability Skills and Careers guidance

Careers guidance is offered, providing the opportunity for young people to explore and clarify their options, needs and interests. Young people are assisted to build their communication and presentation skills. Practical support with CV writing, interview skills and job/course applications was also available to young people throughout 2020.

Homelessness Prevention

Young people (aged 18-25) are offered support, guidance and advocacy in relation to their housing needs. They are assisted to:

- Clarify their housing options
- Develop their personal and communication skills
- Source and view potential accommodation
- Apply for housing assistance payments as required
- Relocate and link up with supports in the local community
- Get acquainted with good home management practices

F.E.A.D

F.E.A.D is a National Food Programme targeting those on the margins of society who are in need of essential food support. Monthly food deliveries of non-perishable goods are available to young people who find it difficult to manage living independently on a restricted budget.

Formal Tuition

Support for young people who are excluded from mainstream school or require additional assistance to remain in school is available in the form of individual or small group classes with subjects including English, History, SPHE, Personal and Social Development and Maths. Support is also available for those in need of assistance with numeracy and literacy skills and cannot access more mainstream services.

Health

A range of practical supports are provided to ensure young people can attend to their basic health and hygiene needs to include shower and laundry facilities, access to toiletries and clean clothing and a daily nutritious meal.

“The people working there are very friendly”

“Attending the no.4 classes really helped me to form some sort of a routine”

“I find No. 4 not just useful, but a great place because they support and help me grow, they offered me a lot of information...always happy to help, very friendly people to be around”

“I have started to believe in myself, that I can do this”

“Before I would freak out if things went wrong, now I take a step back. Also when I have negative thoughts I learn to manage them better”

“When I was stuck I got help with applying for social welfare”

“It’s an amazing sense of support. I can’t even describe how much I appreciate all you do”

Response to COVID 19

Impact on young people

“The youth work sector plays a vital role in supporting young people nationwide – particularly young people who are ‘at risk’ and marginalised. The support provided by youth services becomes even more important during times of crisis, such as those we’ve experienced over the past six months.”

Roderic O’Gorman TD, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

According to a research report, ‘A Review of the Youth Work Sector Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic’, published by the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI). Young people who were already deemed ‘most at risk’ became the most disconnected from youth services and supports due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Covid-19 brought with it unprecedented challenges for **No 4 Youth Service** and the young people we serve. In times of uncertainty, where face to face service provision was initially against Government guidelines and later only permitted in emergency situations the service had to adapt and evolve to continue to reach, engage and support young people.

2020 has seen **No 4 Youth Service** adopt a blended approach to service provision. Young people were engaged by phone, whats app, email and online platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft teams as well as in person when appropriate and within the Public Health Guidelines of the time. Live tuition classes, counselling and careers guidance ensured that young people could continue to have access to structured one to one support.

Remote programmes focusing on creating ‘connection’ were developed and implemented as well as an in-person walking group promoting physical and mental health which was popular when restrictions allowed. A weekly newsletter with up to date health information, opportunities and activities was distributed to complement the connections between staff members and young people.

F.E.A.D deliveries continued and were in increased demand with young people spending more and more time confined to their accommodations. A range of ‘packs’ such as children’s activity and sleep hygiene packs were developed and distributed to meet the needs of young people in their homes.

Despite efforts to keep young people engaged throughout the year we did see a 30% drop in engagement leading to fears for the wellbeing of young people who disengaged from the service.

2020

'Adapting to the times'



2020

**No. 4 had almost 4,000 contacts with 296
Young People**

29 young people attended tuition

**65 young people engaged with careers
guidance and support with employability
skills**

**319 F.E.A.D/Hygiene/Activity packages were
delivered to young people**

75 young people attended counselling

507 meals were provided

Organisational Structure

No 4 Youth Service – Seirbhíse na nOg CLG is managed by a voluntary Board of Directors, with operational responsibility delegated to the Manager, Mary MacLynn and on her retirement in September 2020 to Natalie Coen.

- Marian Colohan (Chair)
- Carmel Brennan (Vice Chair)
- Pat Connolly (Secretary)
- Sheila Connell (Treasurer)
- Maureen Fleming
- Michael McCann
- Fr Des Foley
- Rebecca Jackson

Employees

1 Part-time Manager

1 Part-time Deputy Manager/Youth Worker

2 full-time Youth Workers

1 part-time Youth Worker

1 part-time Careers Guidance Counsellor

1 Part-time Teacher

1 part-time Community Employment Scheme participant (Youth Work)

4 counsellors were available to work for 18-21 contracted hours per week, one third of which were provided in a voluntary capacity.

Volunteers

2 volunteer tutors generously gave of their time to provide formal tuition in maths.

Training

The professional development of staff members always been a priority for **No 4 Youth Service**. Staff members have always taken part in training that enables them to develop their skills and work with young people to the highest standards. During 2020 staff members continued their professional development by completing courses such as 'Trauma Informed Care', 'Occupational First Aid' and 'Essentials for Supporting Young People Online'.

Young People

(Names have been changed)

Peter

Peter is 17 years old and is hoping to sit his Leaving Cert examination in June 2021. Before being referred to **No 4 Youth Service** he was registered in Secondary School but was not engaging due to emotional and mental health difficulties, instead Peter opted to work on his own at home. His school was very supportive in terms of encouraging Peter to return to mainstream education and facilitated a reduced timetable as well as encouraging Peter to attend for additional educational supports at **No 4 Youth Service**. Although Peter initially agreed with this plan, it did not succeed as his emotional and mental health prevented him from attending mainstream school -

"I would not sleep the night before and would wake up feeling nauseous, I couldn't face it. Then I would have an argument with my mother and it just caused stress at home".

When lockdown occurred and education went online for both No 4 Youth Service and mainstream schools, Peter found that he engaged better with school classes.

"The stability and consistency of the No 4 Youth Service classes really helped me with routine".

Peter elaborated on this by explaining how No 4 Youth Service delivers classes that suit his style, he has the freedom to stop the teacher to ask for clarification. The one to one classes in both English and Maths have allowed him to become more engaged -

"I'm not just sitting and listening, I am challenged to participate and to be involved and I like that, I don't feel invisible or lost".

Peter reflected on things that have changed for him in the last year -

"I know this sounds really stupid but before attending No 4 Youth Service I never sent an email in my life, that's really weird now but I'm finding that it is really useful and will be when I go to college".

Peter feels his communication skills have improved, he feels that he is very open and comfortable with No 4 Youth Service staff. Because he has been working on developing his opinion in regards to literature and relying less on notes, this has helped him communicate his opinion with greater confidence.

Thinking about and responding to a plan has helped Peter develop his organisational skills. This has reduced stress in Peter's life in terms of giving his day structure and order.

"When I have classes with No 4 Youth Service I know that I have to get up early, I know the teacher will be waiting for me and I know that I have to contribute to class".

Peter's relationship with his mother has improved since he engaged with classes at No 4 Youth Service -

"She felt that I wasn't doing any work and because I wasn't going to school and we would argue but now she sees me engaging with No 4 Youth Service. She sees the feedback I am getting from assignments and that has certainly helped reduce the stress. At least she knows that I am engaging so it is good for both of us".

Peter recognises that he needs to work on other issues that may cause him problems and is happy to avail of additional supports to help him. He continues with the goal of completing Leaving Cert in June 2021 and to keep his routine of getting up early -

"I can eat breakfast, plan my day and not be rushing towards things like I used to be doing".

Peter was asked to describe his experience of No 4 Youth Service in one word.

I want to say 'great' but that would be too simple, maybe I could say 'helpful' I think that would be better!

Vanessa

Background

Vanessa was born in Romania and grew up in an orphanage. During this time Vanessa endured physical, emotional and sexual abuse on a regular basis. She was introduced to non-recreational drugs at the age of 12/13 years. She came to Ireland aged 19 years in the hope of seeking out a better future for herself.

Involvement

Vanessa came to **No 4 Youth Service** seeking information on education. She engaged with the Careers Guidance Counsellor and explains that she had never experienced this form of support before stating - *"In the beginning I was terrified, I didn't want to make mistakes, it felt very stressful, it's very different in Romania, nobody wants to help, you have to do it all yourself"*.

Regular career guidance meetings allowed Vanessa to form a better understanding of the education system in Ireland and she was guided towards the appropriate courses she could undertake. She was supported to access a social welfare payment and, in time, part time work. Vanessa opened up about her traumatic past. She was supported to meet with a GP for her mental and physical health needs and she was accompanied to some of these appointments. Pivotal to her progression has been the management of her mental health. She attributes the trust built with staff members as critical in this regard. In addition, she attended counselling with **No 4 Youth Service**.

"I know if it gets too much I can come and talk and you will always listen and understand".

Outcomes

Although Vanessa still struggles with self-esteem and confidence at times, she attributes a great improvement in this area to the support received from the service. She recalls -

"I was so scared at the start, I would hardly look at you and you were always smiling and then I smiled and we would laugh."

She also states she feels more comfortable and confident asking for help and accessing other services - *"because you kept telling me what I'm entitled to so I don't feel bad anymore about it"*.

Planning & Problem Solving

Vanessa speaks of taking time to realise her goals and her progress in this area by saying that –

"Before I would freak out if things went wrong, now I take a step back. Also when I have a bad thought I learn to manage them better".

Creativity & Imagination

Vanessa got involved in various activities –

"I tried out sand work, painting, yoga, poetry, it was fun and helped me get calmer and took my mind from the things going on in my life, and I didn't have time for negative thoughts"

Relationships

Vanessa speaks of feeling better emotionally and more confident in her life relationships. -

"I am more confident meeting people in other areas of life, I feel better at interacting with people".

The Future

When discussing the future Vanessa speaks of feeling *"excited not sad"* and has a positive outlook. She is very resilient and this has helped her on her journey. She says the following of the service –

"I feel peaceful at No4, at ease, no judgement and we learn from each other".