



**Annual  
Report  
2021**

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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 2021.

### **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.

# Testimonials

*The main gain for me is confidence. When I started, I didn't have a job. And when I got a job, I was stressed by it. They helped me cope. No 4 is a nice place to chill. Very friendly. No one judges. There isn't really anything like it for my age group in the city. (Male, early twenties)*

*It has some unique features, especially being able to show up whenever you need. For people like me who don't have much stability in our lives that is a real gift. For me it is a really important, safe, reliable space. I had a friend who was attending. She thought it would help me. I don't think I'm overstating this - No 4 saved my life. (Female, early twenties.)*

*I love being able to go in for a chat. It is a great haven - so many practical supports. I wish I knew it was there before. I accessed counselling in college, and they put me in touch. I discovered that No 4 is much more than a counselling service. (Female student.)*

*I found the last few years very stressful. The Covid made it worse. I was afraid to go out. I found the people at No 4 so good to talk to - it was a great relief. And great crack as well! (Female, late teens.)*

*I was bullied at school and couldn't stay there. I was receiving help from a mental health service who put me in touch with No 4. They gave me very practical help. I was able to do my mocks there. That made a huge difference as that year the Leaving was marked with predictive grades. I also got careers advice which helped me get to college. I'm in my second year now, doing really well. I'm so grateful to No 4. Apart from the practical help they gave me the confidence to face back out into the world. (Female student, early 20s).*

## Response to COVID 19

### Impact on young people

Covid-19 continued to present challenges for **No 4 Youth Service** and the young people we serve throughout 2021. In times of uncertainty, where face-to-face service provision was initially against Government guidelines it was a constant challenge to engage and support young people with their needs.

No. 4 Youth Service adapted with the times and worked towards providing a full face-to-face service once public health guidelines allowed. A blended approach to service provision for some young people has been necessary to best meet their needs and young people continued to be engaged by phone, what's app, email and online platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft teams when necessary.

Maintaining adequate staffing levels was a challenge during the year, especially in light of young people presenting with and reporting more complex needs as a result of the pandemic. In 2021 No. 4 Youth Service stayed true to its ethos of seeking to work with the whole person, without reducing the person to any of his or her issues. We recognised the inter-connectedness of the issues impacting on marginalised young people and sought to provide a service that is holistic. This approach was in keeping with best practice in a 'trauma informed' approach to care.

# 2021

**No. 4 had over 4,000 contacts with 319 Young People**

**16 young people attended tuition**

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

**236 F.E.A.D home deliveries**

**80 young people attended counselling**

## Organisational Structure

**No 4 Youth Service** – Seirbhísi na nOg CLG is managed by a voluntary Board of Directors, with operational responsibility delegated to the Manager, Natalie Coen.

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

### Employees

1 Manager  
3 Youth Workers  
1 Part-time Careers Guidance Counsellor  
1 Part-time Teacher  
1 Part-time Administrator  
1 Part-time Community Employment Scheme participant (Youth Work)  
5 Counsellors were available to work for 24 contracted hours per week

### Volunteers

2 Volunteer Tutors generously gave of their time to provide formal tuition in maths and science subjects.

### 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 2021 staff members continued their professional development by completing courses such as 'Trauma Informed Care', 'Understanding Self Harm' and 'Supporting Young Peoples Mental Health During COVID19'.

## **Dara (name changed to protect identity)**

### **Background**

Dara heard about the supports available at No.4 Youth Service from a family member. He had not availed of other support services in the past. At that time, he was not in education or employment and reported poor mental health and recreational drug use.

Dara initially worked 1:1 with the Careers Guidance Counsellor. He found this approach best as he expressed a lack of confidence prohibiting him from mixing with others.

Through the guidance process, Dara began to recognise his career ideas were based on his current confidence levels and fear and not on his true self, personality, aptitudes, interest and motivations.

Dara agreed to shift his focus from career planning for the time being and start to work on improving his confidence, mental health and family relationships. Dara agreed to attend No.4 on a weekly basis, meeting with staff and other young people in an informal supportive space, this way he could integrate without pressure. Dara also enrolled on a part time, short course to add structure to his week and explore his interests in a non-pressured environment.

Over time, Dara faced challenges, including exclusion from the family home, loneliness and isolation and having to consider the impact his drug use was having on his life. Dara says he learned a lot from meeting with peers and talking informally in No.4. He learned a lot about taking responsibility for himself and that the challenges of 'Adulthood' are felt by most young people. He felt supported and encouraged within the space and was less critical of his own abilities as he no longer felt unique or alone in his challenges.

Dara became a regular baker at No 4 and later instigated the activity each week. Dara believes the creativity of baking and the positive feedback from peers and staff was very fulfilling and supported his return to good mental health immeasurably. Dara spoke to staff about his drug use and over time, his attitude shifted from being casual about drugs to being more aware of the negative aspects of drug use.

As his confidence began to return and his mental health improved. Dara reengaged with the career's guidance counsellor. He was enthusiastic to have a new beginning and revisited a long-held dream to attend college. Careers and courses matching his genuine interests and aptitudes were identified. Applications were made through the CAO and directly to Further Education Colleges. Dara pursued his course goals, with minimal intervention; meeting all the deadlines and submitting all required materials, with the encouragement of staff.

### **Outcomes**

- Communication skills

Dara recognises the positive changes he made began when he recognised and communicated his needs to staff. He learned to articulate his needs on a personal level.

- Confidence

Dara states his confidence greatly improved over his time with No. 4. He was able to see that many of his challenges were 'normal' for young people transitioning to adulthood.

- Planning and problem solving

Dara states he learned a lot from being in No 4 and was guided with information and practical support from staff.

- Relationships

Dara developed friendships with people in No. 4 who he would not have met previously. His relationship with his family is much improved.

- Resilience and determination

Dara knows how debilitating it can be when his mental health is suffering and continues to make healthier choices. Dara believes he recognises when his mental health is being negatively impacted and he can make the necessary adjustments. He learned a lot from the mindfulness and meditation classes he attended in No 4 and continues to use many of the tools learned.