

Briefing Document

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YPAR
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YPAR's Vision is

For the North East Inner City to be a place of Hope, where young people's dreams are realised

YPAR Mission is

To promote and develop a principled and integrated approach to working with young people that serves their needs and realises their dreams

Main Goals of YPAR are:

- 1) To establish an integrated, interagency structure focused on improved outcomes for children and youth at risk
- 2) To improve the quality and delivery of services for children and youth at risk
- 3) To ensure that the voices and views of young people at risk are heard
- 4) To establish appropriate mechanisms to co-ordinate and integrate services for children and youth at risk
- 5) To support young people at risk in accessing services, education, training and employment
- 6) To ensure anti-discriminatory and accessible policies and practices in services for young people at risk
- 7) To support children and youth at risk to develop the skills and capacities needed to become active members of the community
- 8) To evaluate the intervention from the very beginning, in order to monitor progress and to learn what works and what doesn't.

The Young People at Risk Initiative (YPAR) started working in Dublin North-East Inner City in January 2004. YPAR has been the result of local endeavours to integrate services for children and young people at risk and maximise the effectiveness of services. YPAR has defined a child at-risk as:

“Primarily a child/young person aged 0 to 18 years experiencing severe personal, family, educational or social problems (which could benefit from outside support).”

Risk factors include early school leaving, anti-social behaviour and crime, drug and alcohol abuse, marital violence, severe neglect and abuse . . .

Existing partners in the initiative are Inner City Organisations Network, Health Service Executive, Dept. of Education and Skills, City of Dublin Youth Service Board, National Education Welfare Board, An Garda Síochána, Dublin City Council and a number voluntary and community groups operating in the North-East Inner City of Dublin. YPAR also has full support and involvement of other Initiatives including the Local Drug Task Force, Childcare and Pre-School Providers, Community Policing Forum and Community Development Projects. At its onset YPAR has also met with and got support from the then National Children's Office.

YPAR operates on the basis of age related Working Groups which focused on the needs and gaps in services of that specific age group – 0 to 5 years / 5 to 12 years / 12-18 years. There is also a working group for Foreign National Young people at risk and recently has established a Youth Forum.

YPAR Achievements to date include:

- **YPAR has over 65** statutory voluntary and community organisations who work collaboratively to support enhanced services to young people at risk in the NEIC of Dublin. Key front line workers highly value the work of YPAR in facilitating their interagency work.
- **Steering Group** - Establishment and maintenance of a Steering Group of Community and Statutory Groups is in place to develop and manage the initiative.
- **YPAR Protocol** - YPAR developed and got the agreement and sign up of statutory agencies and community groups to the YPAR Protocol to support collaboration, cooperation and information sharing of interagency services for 0 to 18 year olds in the North Inner city.
 - Based on a child and family centred approach YPAR is now implementing the interagency protocol in which over 40 local organisation have worked together to support 55 families involving up to 80 children.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation** - Development of a learner centred Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism to measure the outcomes from the work of YPAR both as an effective model for service delivery and crucially its impact on the lives of the young people was established to help.
- **Youth Forum** - The creation of a Youth Forum to provide the opportunity for young people to express their views on decisions that affect their lives.
- **Working Groups** - Local service providers and their agencies are actively engaged in Working Groups in addition to their own other duties and workloads
- **Training and Information Workshops** - Total of 250 front-line workers participated in YPAR review, planning, training and information workshops, including Child Protection, the role of the Gardai (JLO, Community Gardai and Child Protection Gardai, working effectively with parents, and training in the use of the YPAR Protocol.
- **Strengthening Families Programme** - The delivery of the Strengthening Families Programme to 10 local families. This programme is designed to allow parents and their children develop new, healthy parent/child communication skills that build up positive relationships
- **Directory** - A Resource and Service Mapping Directory of Children and Young people services in the NEIC Report is complete.
- **Database** - Developing a database of front line workers in the area identifying their specific skills and areas of expertise. This will work as a resource to families, young people, local projects and other statutory agencies.
- **Mapping Report** - Through the Mapping Report an Audit has identified a number of facilities and resources and their use, with a view to maximising their use and avoiding duplication.
- **Consultation Exercises** - Local community and neighbourhood youth projects deliver regular residential consultation exercises with young persons which

- constantly inform services providers of the current and emerging needs of young people.
- **Youth Events** - A number of collaborative Youth focussed Events have been held which include Graffiti, DJ-ing and an Intercultural Football event
 - **YEPP** -Through involvement in the Youth Empowerment Partnership Programme a number of local Young people have attended a number of transnational events.
 - **Youth Bank** - Providing administration and technical back up to support the delivery of the Dublin North Inner City Youth Bank which provides small-scale funding to local youth-led community initiatives.
 - **Home School Community Liaison Clusters** have played an active part and essential role in YPAR ensuring the local schools have a formal mechanism to learn, share information and support early interventions for identified children at risk within the schools.

Specific YPAR Protocol Outcomes in 2010/11

- Effective and willing co-operation between services around individuals/families.
- More effective use of resources in supporting people through:
 - Sharing relevant information on needs and services
 - Reduced retelling of distressing life stories by young people and families.
 - Through the Protocol meeting, the relevant workers can discuss whatever issues are appropriate to the needs of the young person etc, in the company of the parent or guardian, other workers and the young person if age allows, and this reduces the need for unnecessary home visits, often fruitless, and the need to ring each worker individually. All in a non judgmental and non-disciplinary atmosphere
- Family Re-housed
- Family member offered supportive accommodation
- School attendance improved
- Parents and family being provided with on-going support
- Agencies agreed to become involved because of the Protocols criteria
- Support provided to families experiencing different types of loss
- Improved supervision by parents
- Co-operation between services around individuals and families
- Finance made available for home improvements
- Family availed of respite week
- Young person helped to postpone involvement in destructive behaviour
- Young person supported by school to continue in education
- Supportive information and resources shared between services and groups

Agencies and Groups involved in the YPAR Protocol to date.

Society of St Vincent De Paul Resource
Centre

Society of St Vincent De Paul
Community Policing Forum

Mater CAMHS
 Belvedere Youth Club
 Step-by-Step Child and Family Project
 Larkin College
 St Michael's House*
 O'Connell's Schools
 St Brigid's Crèche
 Social Work Service (HSE)
 Mental Health Services (HSE)
 Scoil Caomhain
 Dublin City Council
 Marlboro St NS
 Beaumont Hospital
 Hill St Family Resource Centre
 SWAN Youth Service
 Rutland St Pre School
 Barnardo's Family Centre
 North Strand Mental Health Services
 Probation and Welfare Service
 Family Support Service (HSE)

NYP 1
 NYP 2
 Public Health Nurses (HSE)
 Talbot Centre
 Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers
 CDVEC Foundations Project
 Home School Liaison Officers
 NICKOL
 School Completion Programme D1
 School Completion Programme D7
 National Education Welfare Board
 Lourdes Youth and Community
 Services Project
 Ballybough Youth Project
 Hill Street Family Resource Centre
 Adventure Sports Project
 Community After Schools Project
 (CASPr)
 Daughters of Charity Henrietta St
 Community Welfare Officers

Into the Future

The main goal of YPAR in 2011-13 will be to implement our new three year strategic. It will also focus on promoting and supporting the ongoing implementation of a principled and integrated approach to working with young people in the North East Inner City through the ongoing and extended use of the agreed protocols and codes of practice among services and agencies. Other key objectives linked into this goal will be:

- Assisting services in the ongoing development of a quality framework to ensure quality and excellence in the management and delivery of all services for children, young people and their families.
- Continuing to promote and advocate the YPAR aims and objectives with key Government Agencies and relevant Service Providers. This will be done most specifically through the Office of the Minister for Children who have to date given their support to the process
- Supporting agencies and projects on the ground in implementing the new approaches to service provision, through training, on-going monitoring and evaluation.
- Continue to promote and enable the interactive and informed involvement of children and young people in all the YPAR structures.

YPAR operates primarily on the voluntary involvement of the young people, their families, statutory front-line workers and workers from the local community and neighbourhood youth projects. At present YPAR has three Part-time staff, a Coordinator, Protocol Coordinator and an Administrator (Administrator is provided by TEN the local Jobs Initiative Programme).

For the past three years YPAR has received funding from the HSE, Dublin City Council, Probation Service, City of Dublin Youth Service Board and the Irish Youth Foundation to fund the Coordinator and programme costs. This funding ended on December 2010. In 2009, 12 month funding was secured from the Dormant Accounts to support the establishing of the YPAR Protocol and fund the Protocol Coordinator. YPAR has insufficient funds to maintain its current staff complement beyond June 2012.

Through its interagency collaboration and integration work YPAR provides a real social and economic added value in supporting services to young people at risk. YPAR will continue to focus on a positive and solution-based approach that keeps it moving forward to achieving its mission and ultimately creating the agreed vision for young people, not just in the North East Inner City but throughout the country.

We would hope the Department of Children will see the merits in the work of YPAR and use its office and influence to enable YPAR to secure the resources required to maintain its services and approach beyond June 2012.

YPAR (YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK) INITIATIVE

Protocol for Coordinating Inter-Agency Services

For 0-18 Year Olds in the North Inner City of Dublin

Introduction.

There is a wide range and variety of projects, agencies and services that work with young people at risk and their families in Dublin's North Inner City. This protocol provides an agreed structure for cooperation between these projects, agencies and services for the purpose of ensuring a coordinated service for young people at risk and their families.

The basic idea of the protocol is that any agency can seek the assistance of any other agency(ies) to address the needs of a young person and his/her family by calling a protocol meeting to which relevant agencies are invited. At the meeting, each agency identifies the particular role that it can play in responding to those needs and makes a commitment to actions that it can carry out. An agreed plan for the young person is then drawn up on the basis of these commitments and the implementation of the plan is monitored by the overall group at the follow-up protocol meetings. Consent to use the protocol is sought from the parent/guardian and the parent/guardian and the young person (depending on the age) can attend the protocol meeting.

The protocol is designed to support and strengthen the implementation of Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, whose procedures for child protection always apply. It is not intended that this protocol will replace existing informal or formal contacts between agencies.

The Protocol

1. The agency in initial contact with a young person or family will be called the Lead Agency. Where the needs of a young person or family cannot be met by the Lead Agency on its own, it will seek support from other services by:

- (i) Obtaining the consent of a parent / guardian and young person to make contact with other agencies
- (ii) Preparing a referral form and sending it to other relevant agencies who subscribe to the protocol
- (iii) Inviting other relevant agencies to a protocol meeting for the purpose of preparing an agreed plan to meet the needs of the young person and/or family
- (iv) Ensuring that the plan is implemented, and that participating agencies deliver on their commitments.

2. The Lead Agency will seek the consent of a parent / guardian to contact other services. In order to ensure informed consent, the Lead Agency will offer an explanation of the Consent Form prior to signing. The Consent Form is in Appendix One.

3. The procedures in Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, always apply. No part of this protocol can limit or interfere in any way with the statutory function of the Health Services Executive to protect children, or the statutory function of An Garda Síochána to investigate crime. All information shared under the auspices of this protocol is voluntary. The Health Services Executive and An Garda Síochána will indicate if, in any particular case, the voluntary sharing of information under the protocol conflicts with the exercise of their statutory functions.

4. All information about young people and families which is shared between agencies is designed to promote their welfare and protection. Sharing information in this context is not a breach of confidentiality because, according to Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children: “Giving information to others for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality” (page 41). Agencies which subscribe to this protocol recognise that information about young people is shared on a ‘need to know’ basis, and only where it is in the best interests of the young person or family. All agencies also undertake to ensure that information about young people and families is kept safe and secure. This applies to information which is held in hard copy as well as electronically. Keeping information safe and secure requires that it is not

physically accessible to anyone without a key, and not electronically accessible to anyone without a password. In addition, information about children and young people is accessible only to persons who have been authorised by their agency to receive it.

5. The Lead Agency will complete the Referral Form and circulate it to those services who are asked to the protocol meeting. The Lead Agency can be assisted by the YPAR Protocol Coordinator to identify all agencies that may or could be involved with the young person or family. The Referral Form is in Appendix Two. Given the risks associated with transferring confidential data over the internet, the Lead Agency will ensure that all referral forms are posted or delivered by hand.

6. Copies of the Referral Form will be sent to the YPAR Protocol Coordinator, who will maintain a Master List of the names and ID numbers of all young people who are referred in this way. These ID numbers will be used, instead of names, in all correspondence between services in relation to that young person or family.

7. The Lead Agency will invite relevant services to attend the protocol meeting to discuss the needs of the young person and/or family. Agencies will be specifically invited where they are already working with the young person or family, or could potentially provide a service to address some of the needs identified.

8. The Lead Agency may invite the parents and /or young person to attend the protocol meeting, but only where this has the consent of the agencies that have been invited to attend the meeting.

9. The Lead Agency will fix a date for the protocol meeting, preferably after consultation with the agencies who are invited to attend. The Lead Agency will arrange a venue for the protocol meeting, chair the meeting, ensure that minutes are taken of the meeting including details of the agreed plan and actions, and circulate minutes of the meeting to those who attended.

10. The agenda of each meeting will take the following format:

- (i) Introductions from staff in each agency to each other, including completion of attendance sheet with contact details. See Appendix Three for details of the attendance sheet.
- (ii) Discussion of the case

- (iii) Agreed plan comprising the actions decided, agencies responsible for each action, and the agreed timeframe
- (iv) Decide who is to be the Lead Agency for the purpose of overseeing the plan (Lead Agency may change by agreement during the course of the plan if considered appropriate)
- (v) Date of follow-up review meeting
- (vi) Any other business

11. The Chair will ensure that the meeting remains focused on the agenda and will follow the guidelines for chairing these meetings in Appendix Four.

12. The Chair will ensure that minutes of the meeting are prepared using the agreed format in Appendix Five. Minutes will be kept brief, factual, and non-judgemental, bearing in mind that they may be the subject of a disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. The minutes of the meeting will be circulated to all those who attended the meeting. The minutes of each meeting will be copied to the YPAR Coordinator.

13. The Lead Agency will discuss, as soon as practicable, the plan agreed at the protocol meeting with the young person and/or family.

14. Services who are party to the agreed plan will be accountable to other agencies for commitments made in that plan.

15. A follow-up meeting will be held, at a time specified in the plan, to assess if the plan is being implemented, to see if there are any changes in circumstances, and to review if the plan is making an impact. A final review meeting will be held to decide when the intervention is to end. The Lead Agency will be responsible for organising, chairing, and recording these review meetings which will take the same format as the protocol meeting. The minutes of each review meeting will be copied to the YPAR Coordinator.

16. The YPAR Protocol Coordinator will act as a resource to monitor and support the implementation of this protocol.

17. A Steering Group, drawn from those services who subscribe to this protocol, will oversee its implementation and subsequent development. Each member of the Steering Group will have written authorisation to represent their agency.