**YPAR 14s – 24s Hard to Reach Youth Working Group Zoom Meeting Minutes**

**15th September 2020**

**In attendance:** Sarah Kelleher (LYCS), John Farrelly (CDETB), Eibhlin Harrington (SWAN), Jenny Courtney (Belvedere Youth Club), Ellie Sozzi (Tusla), Brigetta E Burke (Probation), Sarah-Jane McCreery (ALDP), Stephanie Cleary (HAY), Brid McMahan (HSCL Rosmini), Greg McGovern (JLO), Maggie Lalor (HAY), Martin Byrne (Ballybough Youth Service), Aislinn Delaney (SWAN), Daniel Rawat (MOST), Pat Gates, Frank Mulville & Mary Meehan (YPAR)

Apologises: Anto Corcoran (NYP2), James Callaghan (ASP),

**Introductions**

* Frank Mulville (YPAR Meitheal & Practice Coordinator) Chaired the meeting.
* Participants where welcomed and asked to introduce themselves.

YPAR Coordinator reminded participants of the definition on the “Hard to Reach” used by the Working Group. *‘Young people who are having difficulties with relationships, education/training, employment, health and who are caught up in damaging criminal, antisocial and or at risk & harmful activities and are not engaging on a consistent and voluntary basis in local social supports and services’.*

**Check-in and Emerging issues for Young people and Families**

Participants representing the various projects and agencies where asked to up-date the meeting on how there services was coping with the current situation (Covid etc) and where possible to identify any difficulty or emerging issue for their services, Young People and Families. The following issues were highlighted.

* There has been an increase in mental health issues presenting with both young people and parents
* Self-Harm and Suicide-ideation have been identified as a growing problem and a major worry for parents and workers.
* Increase in higher level drug use among young people is of particular concern. People off their heads on the streets and in homes. Higher amount of violence in the home –and children are witnessing it all.
* Increase in sale and supply of drugs happening all over the NEIC and outside of services.
* There has been an increase of violence linked to drugs. One participant described a incident in which a knife was used just outside one of the youth project just before she attended the meeting and was quite shaken by the incident.
* More young people getting involved in drugs and therefore drug debt. These drug debts getting higher – level of threats being made are increasing and people are getting desperate.
* Need to get families to report to Garda but this is proving difficult due to the nature of the intimidation and fear of reprisals if they go to the police.
* Young people not seeing any way out in the current circumstances. They are frustrated with the Covid restrictions and some are rebelling against it.
* Some people are benefitting from the drug dealing and are actively involved as an easy route to a decent income for their family.
* Young women coupling with drug dealers and criminal leaders for the lifestyle that can be presented and offers them the best of clothes, make-up and other material benefits. The consequences of this will have long-term social and psychological impact on them, their families, and the wider community.
* Hot spots increasing all over the NEIC and it has gotten worst since the outbreak of Covid and the community having to lockdown. Residents have said during lockdown the most visible people on the streets were the dealers. They are open dealing and it is creating a feeling of intimidation as there is violent behaviours associated with drugs.
* This is all very distressing for workers who have worked tirelessly to engage with young people and families to provide social outlets and alternative pathways for young people. However, it is very difficult in the current situation and many workers are feeling the stress and anxieties of the young people. This can lead to vicarious trauma for the frontline workers.
* This is a serious problem at present, and we are looking at possibly a whole new generation lost if this is to continue. All the progress that we have made with the support of the NEIC could be undone by the current activities and behaviours compounded by the impact of Covid.

**Possible Responses by Services**

The participants discussed how they could as a collective respond to the issues that are emerging in the community.

**Action**: - it was agreed that the Hard to Reach Working Group would hold a separate one item agenda meeting to look at solutions on suggestions on how to deal with this issue and to look at potential actions such as the role of the Gardai, how collectively services can collaborate to reach out to young people and their families, how to develop alternative pathways and cultural diversions and activities to the current harmful behaviours. SWAN street workers have linked in some hard to reach young people into youth employment (Career Leap) and have been developing strong interagency working practices. We need to look at how we can build on this work.

YPAR will also highlight this issue in all the local fora, including the YPAR Steering Committee and the NEIC PIB and Sub-groups. Staff were asked to stay safe, self-care to look after each other in these challenging times.

**CAN Young Leadership for Active Citizen Programme**

* The programme emerged from the YPAR Hard to Reach WG and is meant to develop new community leadership in conjunction with the local youth projects who are being asked to identify and support young people from their services who are potential future community leaders.
* The programme was devised by the Youth Services facilitated by CAN (Community Action Network) and funded by the NEIC.
* The next phase of the programme is to deliver the programme and identify young participants in partnership with the youth services
* The sub-group who developed the programme will meet to see how best to deliver the programme considering the restrictions under Covid-19.

**NEIC – Youth Services/Projects Alignment – (Area Plan)**

* As part of the (NEIC Sub-group 6’s) Integrated Service Delivery Framework Youth services are being asked to look at how they could enhance and improve integration, alignment and collaboration in their sector in the NEIC and how they could align their services with other services in the area.
* A process of consultation and dialogue has begone in relation to this with local youth services and representatives from Sub-group 6 and an agreed pathway to support improved integration and alignment of youth services is beginning to emerge.
* The objective is to ensure that there is a seamless pathway between local services that will ensure young people and families have access to as wide a range of appropriate and timely supports when and where necessary.
* Further information on this process will follow soon.

**City Connects**

* City Connects is another programme being delivered by the NEIC through the Department of Education and the Department of Children. The initiative is targeted at the 10 primary schools in the NEIC to ensure that all children have access to the appropriate services and supports. It is important that youth services are aware and familiar with the programme as the Youth Services are a possible referral pathway for identified support for young people from the initiative.

**Meitheal**

* Meitheal is the multiagency practice model available to support young people and families experiencing particularly difficulties. The Meitheal will bring a number of relevant agencies together to support the families overcome or work through particular difficulties that are threatening their welfare.
* Eleonora gave update on the current numbers of Meitheal operating in the NEIC and to encourage local services workers to contact her or FM from YPAR if they want further information or would like to convene a Meitheal. There are currently 34 active Meitheal cases in the NEIC

**Chairperson for the YPAR Hard to Reach Working Group.**

* At present the Hard to Reach Working Group does not have a Chairperson. Anyone who would be willing to volunteer to Chair the Working Group should make contact with the YPAR office.

**YPAR Local Practitioners Mindfulness Zoom**

* As part of the service workers self-care and welfare YPAR holds a Local Practitioners Mindfulness Zoom Every Wednesday @ 9.30. Below is the link to joint this meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87322534892?pwd=dWY5MkJsbTFiSllvS1dNQ3VHYW1Odz09>

Meeting ID: 873 2253 4892
Passcode: 339955

**Next YPAR Hard to Reach Youth Meeting will take place through Zoom on Tuesday 20th October @ 12 – Link to follow.**

**One item agenda** *“How can we respond collectively to the emerging issues for hard to reach young people and their families”.*