

'LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND'

For me and the community in which I serve/work in we can see that the impact the pandemic and previous years of neglect and lack of appropriate and adequate services to address the real need has lead us into a crisis in young people's mental health. This is highlighted for me when I look at the SDG's and think how attainable are they in a local sense. The world continues to move and grow and everyone is looking at climate action / climate change / climate justice and all I can see is young people who can't function on a daily basis in today's society and I think to myself are they going to get left behind who is going to look after their needs how can they make an impact locally so that they can change the future for them and their community.

If we look at the community of North Clondalkin where CAMHS is operating on a skeleton service waiting lists are 2 years long sometimes I ask myself is there even a waiting list or is it just lip service. Jigsaw left our community in 2019 and promised a satellite service to date this has still not materialised. The young people who we work with have no access to real time, easy accessible, fit for purpose youth mental health services.

Young people need quick solution focussed access to mental health services. There is no under 18's dual diagnosis if you are a young person presenting with dual diagnosis you will find it near impossible to be seen to by a professional.

Young people in lower socio-economic communities getting left behind because of a lack of services available to them and their families. What we have noticed in the youth service is that we can only hold these young people for a short time, they are becoming dependent on the staff and we do not have the training or experience to be dealing with clinical issues. We have nowhere to

sign post these young people and access to private counselling or therapy is not an option.

What frightens us working in the community is that in 2007/2008 we had a spate of copycat suicides among our young people. It is now 2023 while the community have engaged with the conversation around mental health and in general society is more aware and open to the topic our young people are still not receiving any additional services.

If we can't provide the generations of the future with basic coping skills and safe places to talk what hope have we of enabling them to make longer societal changes around climate action/justice when their basic needs are not being met, when there is no services for them to turn too who will look at the trauma they have encountered in their lives or who will be able to put building blocks in place so that in the future they are equipped with skills to deal with life.

THE YOUTH SECTOR

Take this opportunity to highlight a few issues or to remind you of some reports and resources previously published around youth work

A recent report on the economic value of the sector indicated that for **every €1 spent on youth services the state saves €2.2 euro in the long run**. The report, Assessment of the Economic Value of youth Work, was prepared by Indecon and published by the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI).

“We know that youth work makes a real difference in the lives of young people and the communities they live in, but this report now provides hard evidence that youth work is also value for money and makes economic sense,” said Senator Jillian van Turnhout, speaking in advance of the debate.

Link: <https://www.youth.ie/articles/indecon-report-e1-invested-in-youth-work-saves-e2-22-in-the-long-run/>

The NYCI pre- budget campaign for 2023 highlighted that an extra 12 million investment in Youth Work could provide so much but in return the sector got an increase of 2.4 million.

https://www.youth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/NYCI_Prebudget_Submission_2023_Accessible_Final.pdf

We are also asking for the professionalisation and recognition of youth work from the state and for funding and salaries to be brought in line with our counter parts in the public sector for example Tusla and the HSE