



The St John Bosco Youth Centre, known locally as “The bosco”, founded and built by the community in Drimnagh over 70 years ago has proudly provided services for generations of young people. We are located on Davitt Road opposite the Drimnagh LUAS stop and the Grand Canal on Davitt Road. Since being divested from the Catholic Church to community ownership in 1996 the centre has continually adapted and developed its services to young people and the broader community, supported by various government bodies and user group contributions.

Currently, our centre operates 7 days a week with a very diverse range of services and activities, including a Montessori, Merchants Quay Aftercare, English language classes, a full-time gym, Youth Justice Project, Narcotics and Cocaine Anonymous meeting and is also the location of the Irish Filipino Consulate. It also hosts numerous sports groups, dance and drama groups and various other activities for all ages. In excess of 500 people access the centre each day.

I could talk in detail about our history and current activities, but however, today I am here to talk about our youth work provision, of which I am the project leader.

Our youth work programme is a UBU-funded project and consists of a small team of two full-time youth workers and myself as project leader. Last year, we had a total of 202 young people access our service and with an ongoing increase in the local population, this figure is set to increase. Our service engages young people through a broad range of programmes and supports, including our Youth Café, Structured Programme Groups, and one-to-one supports. We have recently secured funding from the Dublin 12 Local Drugs and Alcohol Task Force to fund a centre-based Art Therapist.

While the practice of youth work has broadened and evolved, the root antagonists of young people’s development and effective participation in society remain the same. Familial addiction and mental health issues, cultural marginalisation, low education attainment and limited life opportunities have a pernicious impact on many young people long before their initial engagement with youth services.

With UBU-funded programmes limited to working with young people 10 and over, many young people have already been severely impacted by difficult life circumstances prior to navigating, what’s aptly described by G Stanley Hall as the “storm and stress of adolescence”.

Currently, one of the priority needs our programme encounters is a substantial rise in the number of young people encountering issues with their mental health. Navigating the world of social media is also presenting challenges for many of our young people, and no doubt contributes to decreases in mental well-being.



While the St John Bosco Youth Centre will continue to ensure our work is relevant and responsive to the needs of local young people, there do exist challenges that impinge on the quality and effectiveness of this work.

Despite significant investment, the St John Bosco Youth Centre building is no longer adequate for the needs of the community. Our local community network Dynamic Drimnagh is currently lobbying for a new purpose-built youth/community facility.

Our youth work programme is currently under-resourced and with just three staff members sustains constant pressure to meet the needs of young people.

Drimnagh is currently experiencing population growth, with a substantial increase expected over the coming years. It is vital that Drimnagh receive adequate resources to ensure the effective delivery of services to young people.

Due to changes in funding structures, the centre has, over the past ten years, lost two full-time youth education courses and a significant reduction in our primary school service.

And finally, the difficulty in recruitment of youth workers is an issue affecting the sector as a whole. It is currently near impossible to recruit staff which is having a country-wide impact on services to young people. Our service has operated without one of our three posts since October 2022 due to this issue.

I would like to thank you for the invitation to speak here today on behalf of the St John Bosco Youth Centre, Drimnagh.

