

Cloyne Diocesan Youth Services CLG

Annual Report 2025



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Cindy O'Shea, Chairperson



It is a pleasure to introduce the 2025 Annual Report and to reflect on another year of meaningful progress, resilience, and impact across CDYS and the communities we serve. As we continue to navigate an evolving socio-economic landscape, the importance of youth work has never been more evident. Ongoing pressures, including the rising cost of living, housing insecurity, educational inequality, the emergence of a vocal far right lobby and growing mental health needs, alongside an increasingly unstable global picture, are all shaping the realities of young people in profound ways. In this context, our mission remains both vital and urgent.

At the heart of our organisation are our youth workers, whose exceptional commitment and passion continue to inspire and sustain all that we do. Day in and day out, they provide not only programmes and activities, but also stability, encouragement, and trusted relationships for young people. Their ability to respond with empathy, professionalism, and creativity, often in challenging and resource-constrained environments, is a testament to their dedication and belief in the potential of every young person.

Over the past year, our team has once again demonstrated remarkable adaptability. Whether through outreach initiatives, targeted supports, or innovative programme delivery, they have met young people where they are - both physically and emotionally. They have created inclusive spaces where young people can connect, express themselves, and develop the skills and confidence needed to navigate an increasingly complex world. The positive outcomes highlighted in this report are a direct reflection of their tireless efforts.

We are also deeply aware that this work does not happen in isolation. We extend our sincere gratitude to our funders and supporters, whose continued investment enables us to deliver and grow our services. Your commitment to young people and to community development has made a real and lasting difference. In a time of competing demands and financial uncertainty, your support is both valued and impactful.

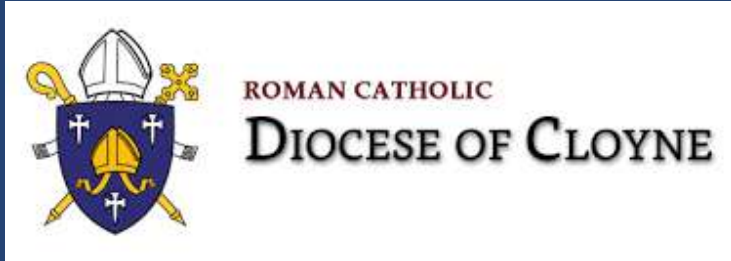
Our thanks also go to the many partners who collaborate with us: schools, community organisations, families, and volunteers - each playing a crucial role in strengthening the network of support around young people. These partnerships enhance our reach and deepen our impact, ensuring that we can respond more effectively to emerging needs.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on building on this year's achievements while continuing to respond proactively to the challenges facing young people. We are committed to listening, learning, and evolving, ensuring that our work remains relevant, inclusive, and empowering. Most importantly, we remain steadfast in our belief that young people are not only the future, but active contributors to our communities today.

As you read this report, we hope you will see the difference that dedicated youth work can make and the collective effort that underpins it. Thank you for your continued support and for being part of this shared journey.

Cindy O'Shea
Chairperson of the Board of CDYS

Message from Bishop Crean Bishop of the Diocese of Cloyne



A Cháirde,

We are now well aware of the power and threat of A.I. – Artificial Intelligence. We know too that it is having an ever-greater influence on so many areas of our lives, both for good and bad. It is posing a major question for society. Will we control A.I. or will we allow it to control us?

Much of the power to control the negative influence of this technology is in the hands of the Regulators. The remaining power belongs to us, the users of these media platforms. It is shocking on one level but also not surprising on another, to witness the use of technology to humiliate and shame people through the manipulation of their body images. We know the tragic consequences of this invasion of privacy and personal integrity can have.

This is just one of the most recent challenges that young users of social media have to deal with. Even many adults find it difficult to cope with this reality. These recent developments remind us of the essential and vital nature of our accompaniment of young people on this journey. Many are vulnerable, for all kinds of reasons. They especially need to know, of our love, care and concern for them and their families.

The other side of our journey with young people is the fun, joy and energy they bring to our lives. Thankfully, so many are focussed and resilient and serve as great friends and support to one another.

I, and the people of the Diocese of Cloyne, are deeply indebted to the CDYS leadership team and all you do for the young people in your care. The Good Shephard is always the inspiration of our desire to care, the compassion and outreach of Jesus' service to the sick, the outcast and the sinner, remains our model of care. I commend your ministry in our name and pray the Lord's blessing on all you serve.

With best wishes,

Bishop William Crean
Bishop of Cloyne.

About CDYS CLG

Mission

CDYS supports young people in achieving their full potential in a safe and supportive community.

The core values of CDYS are:

- Meeting young people 'where they are at' with human relationships at the core of our work.
- Respecting and valuing all young people regardless of social, economic or religious background, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or ability.
- Inclusion of all young people while respecting differences and individuality is central to our work.
- Valuing partnership and collaboration with stakeholders and the community is vital in ensuring the best outcomes for young people.
- Supporting our qualified and committed staff and volunteers in their vital work with young people.

CDYS collaborates with statutory, community, and local bodies, leveraging funding to provide services to young people, families, and communities. CDYS is confident that its work is instrumental in achieving positive outcomes for young people and families. CDYS is committed to delivering services that reflect Best Practice models and approaches and contribute to the development of national policy and practice.



Youth Diversion Projects



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt,
Gnóthaí Baile agus Imirce
Department of Justice,
Home Affairs and Migration



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach
Co-Funded by the
European Union



Youth Diversion Programmes (YDPs) are community-based multi-agency crime prevention initiatives that seek to divert young people involved in crime or antisocial behaviour and support wider preventative work within the community and with at-risk families. These projects facilitate personal development and promote civic responsibility. They are funded by Irish Government and the European Social Fund (ESF) as part of the ESF+ Programme 2021-2027 and strongly supported locally by An Garda Síochána. CDYS has three YDPs; Feabhas (Cobh), Mallow and CDYS Mobile covering all North and East Cork.

Each young person involved in a Youth Diversion Project goes through an assessment process to identify their individual needs and strengths. This allows the project to tailor a programme of activities specifically to meet the needs of the young person. This assessment focuses on several areas in their lives e.g. education/employment, recreation, drug use etc. We aim to highlight young people's strengths and to support their educational achievements or focus on their employability prospects, while on the other hand, through specific programmes respectfully challenging their negative belief system.

Mobile Youth Diversion Project, North Cork

The North Cork Mobile Youth Diversion Project works on a needs-led, child-centred approach, prioritising intervention work that diverts young people from the criminal justice system while promoting social, emotional and personal development. The project also provides family support, ensuring a holistic and wrap-around approach to supporting the family unit.

The North Cork Mobile Youth Diversion Projects activities are adapted to suit each young person's needs and interests. In 2025, we supported young people to prepare for and pass their Driver Theory Test, which boosts their chances of employment or education while also building independence. In 2025, we also supported young people to complete their Manual Handling and Safe Pass courses. This not only boosts their confidence and sense of achievement but also opens doors to employment opportunities, apprenticeships, and further training, helping them take practical steps toward independence and a positive future. In 2025, we introduced our Traveller young people to the new Traveller Apprenticeship Incentivisation Programme, providing them with direct access to apprenticeship training and career pathways. This helps break down barriers to employment, builds practical skills, increases confidence and ambition, and creates opportunities for long-term independence and professional development within their communities.

We also completed equine therapy with two young people, a trauma-informed intervention that supports emotional regulation, confidence, and trust-building. Weekly sauna and cold-water dips at Ballyhass Lakes gave young people a positive routine, space to talk, builds emotional regulation, decreases impulsivity and a relaxed setting for strengthening relationships. Alongside this, we took part in outdoor activities like Zipit forest zip-lining, water activities in Ballyhass, pitch and putt, hikes, and go-karting—offering pro-social engagement, teamwork, confidence-building, and healthy risk-taking.

Mobile Youth Diversion Project, North Cork Cont.

Our Halloween trip to the Scare Factory in Limerick offered fun and a chance to reward and recognise consistent school attendance, good behaviour and positive engagement with the YDP staff throughout the autumn months. After that, we ran a series of Christmas and winter social trips, including ice skating at the Marina Market and bowling and pool at Planet Entertainment. We also took a trip to Cork City to ring the Shandon Bells and visit the oldest sweet factory, giving young people exposure to different parts of their County and City.

In 2025, the North Cork Mobile Youth Diversion Project supported two young people who achieved major educational milestones, one excelling in their Junior Certificate and another returning to school after refusal, boosting engagement and personal development. Two young people completed their Safe Pass and Manual Handling courses and subsequently secured employment. Through the Traveller Apprenticeship Programme (TAIP), we are supporting another young person to stay in school, building skills and pathways to work. These achievements show real progress in education, training, employment, and what can be achieved from youth diversion

In 2025, the North Cork Mobile Youth Diversion Project supported 23 young people. The project staff extends its sincere appreciation to the Department of Justice and the European Union for their ongoing support, which made a meaningful difference to young people and families throughout 2025. We are also grateful to our Juvenile Liaison Officers, John Hurley and Paul Murphy, for their continued commitment.

We would like to especially thank Project Committee Chair Inspector Miriam McGuire, who retired this year. We are deeply thankful for her dedication and unwavering support over the past five years.

Our thanks also extend to the members of An Garda Síochána, all contributors to the Referral Committee, the CDYS Board and management, our CDYS colleagues, and our many community partners, including local schools, Tusla, and the CETB for their invaluable support. Finally, we would like to thank all the participants of the YDP throughout 2025. .



Mobile Youth Diversion Project, Midleton / Fermoy

We are committed to using a person-centred and non-judgemental approach with our young people and always try to meet them at their pace. Our focus is building a relationship with the young people and taking time to get to know them as a person through time and developing trust with each individual young person. Over time and as the relationship develops, we get to know the young person's strengths and encourage them to identify their interests. Young people get involved in activities which are of interest to them, and activities they might never have thought of trying and end up enjoying it.

We work with every aspect of a young person's life, such as with their family and sometimes their school. This allows us to get a picture of what life is like for this young person and how to foster change in their lives.

In the last year, we have covered a multitude of activities with our young people. Among these activities were regular attendance at Thai boxing in East Cork Combat, Little Island, Mixed Martial Artis in SBG Cork City as well as regular attendance at gyms in Midleton, Fermoy and Carrigtwohill. During midterms and our summer programme we took part in trips to Ballyhass lakes in Mallow, Go Karting in Cork City, Bowling, a trip to Emerald Park, aswell as hill walks and hikes, including the Old Head of Kinsale and Torc Mountain in Killarney.

In the past year we also introduced short term groups that included a book club, and a photography club in conjunction with Fermoy UBU.

These activities are on top of the regular contributions we make to assisting young people with practical resources they can use in their lives like driver theory tests, CV and interview preperation, job applications, Safe Pass course, first aid and manual handling.

We also continue to support young people in their journey through education and training. In 2025, we also provided family support via our family support worker to six families in Midleton and Fermoy.

We have worked closely with the UBU projects in Midleton and Fermoy who support young people engaged within our project. We are continually supported by our JLO's Pat Hegarty and Paul Murphy and hope to build a relationship with the wider Garda community in the future through activities and workshops.

The project staff would like to thank the Department of Justice and the European Union for their continued support, which helped many young people and families in 2025. The staff also wish to thank our Juvenile Liaison Officers John Hurley, Pat Hegarty and Paul Murphy, Project Committee, Chief Inspector Stephen Murphy, An Garda Síochána members, Referral Committee contributors, the CDYS board and management, CDYS colleagues, and community stakeholders, including schools, Tusla, and the CETB, for all the support during 2025.



Feabhas Youth Diversion Project, Cobh

Our Aims

We take a non-judgemental, person-centred approach when working with young people, helping them make safer and more positive choices in relation to crime and antisocial behaviour, while also encouraging their social and personal development. We understand that each young person has unique needs, so our support is individually tailored. We promote engagement in positive leisure activities such as sports, art, and music, and hold meaningful discussions about career interests, supporting young people to explore the different pathways available to reach their goals.

Activities

Over the past year, we have provided a wide range of activities, including music lessons, go-karting, bowling, mosaic workshops, hillwalking, driver theory preparation, DJ workshops, and art classes. With the involvement of the young people attending the project, we also built a new decking area at the rear of the centre, giving them valuable hands-on experience in carpentry and construction.

Attendees

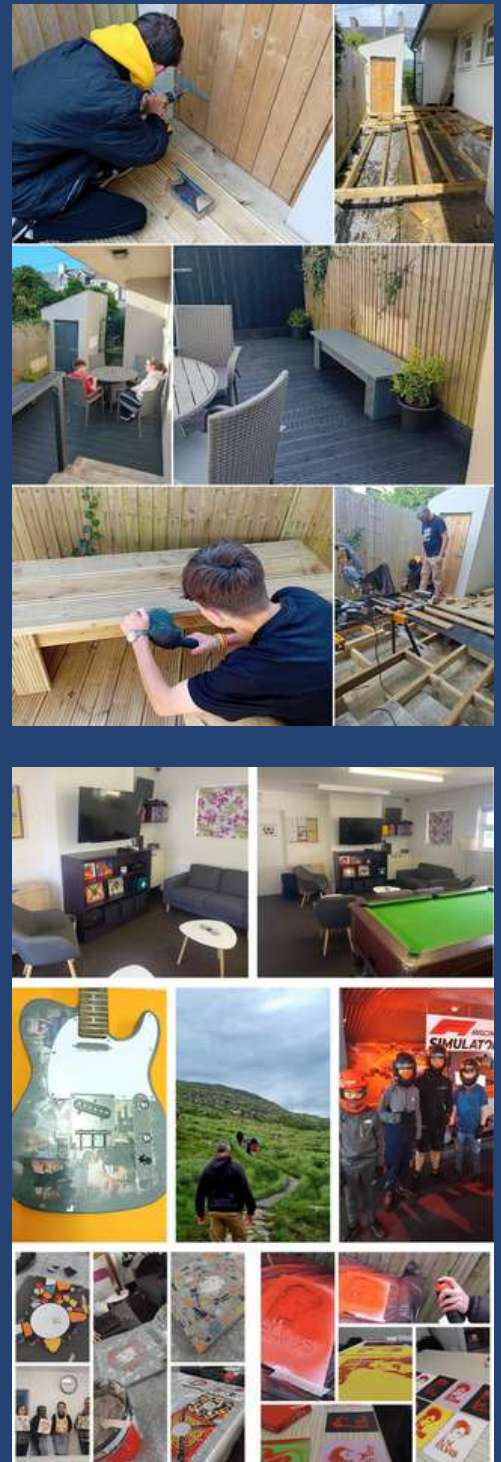
In 2025, 21 young people and 4 families engaged with the project.

Recognition of Support

We would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for the support we have received from An Garda Síochána, Carrigtwohill Family Resource Centre, Tusla, Cobh YMCA, Cobh Family Resource Centre, Barnardos Ireland, Cobh Youth Services, and the Home School Community Liaison at Carrignafoy Community School.

Highlights

Key achievements this year include supporting two early school leavers to return to education, facilitating bereavement counselling for one young person and therapeutic support for a young person affected by significant childhood trauma. We assisted another young person in progressing to Cork College of FET. We brought groups of young people on outings to Torc Mountain (Kerry), The Scare Factory (Limerick), Emerald Park (Meath), The Marina Market (Cork) and Go-Karting (Cork).



Mallow Youth Diversion Project

Each young person involved in a Youth Diversion Project goes through an assessment process to identify their individual needs and strengths. This allows the project to tailor a programme of activities specifically to meet the needs of the young person. This assessment focuses on several areas in their lives e.g. education/ employment, recreation, drug use etc.

We aim to highlight young people's strengths and to support their educational achievements or focus on their employability prospects, while on the other hand, through specific programmes respectfully challenging their negative belief system.

Throughout 2025, we worked with 22 referrals, (18 males and 4 females). We also supported past referrals and friends of referrals or young people known to the project. We engage with young people to help them with personal development. We support young people to achieve things like their driver theory test, preparing CV's, seeking out work experience, help with schoolwork, day trips, Gaisce, social farming, pool tournaments and provide opportunities to get involved in whatever takes their interest e.g. art, cooking, baking, and any relevant interests that arise.

We took part in the Social Farming project for the summer of 2025. Avondhu Blackwater funded the initiative which was another great success this year. Two young people participated in the social farming project where they got to be part of a close community with a structured routine and continuous support by the fantastic host families. Social Farming allowed the young people to see different types of lifestyles and work ethics. It inspired the Young People to see what sparks their interests in a non-clinical setting. One young male and one young female attended local farms one day a week for twelve weeks, where they spent time participating in daily tasks and chores. This consisted of animal care, crop maintenance, cleaning sheds & stables, baking and cooking. The young people thoroughly enjoyed this experience, becoming more familiar with cows, horses, sheep, rabbits, chicken and dogs. Keeping with the social farming theme, the project organised a day trip to the National Ploughing Championships in Co. Laois. The project took 5 young people. The day was a success and enjoyed by all who attended. They learned about animals, farming, machinery and the importance of farming in society. This trip tied into the social farming project from earlier in the year.

We took a group of 6 young people to Collins Barracks for an open day. Here the young people got to see the Infantry (ground combat), Armor (tanks), Field/Air Defense Artillery, Aviation, Engineering, Signal (communications) and Military Police. The group learned about the different ranks amongst the army. A very pertinent piece that raised much discussion within our group on the trip was the nature of authority.

In December 2025, we took 6 Young People to the Garda Training College in Templemore. We would like to thank Garda Martin Foley for inviting us on this trip. The young people thoroughly enjoyed the trip, asking Garda Martin questions relating to the career and different laws. The young people got to observe a self-defence class and got to do some practice for the physical test for An Garda Síochana.

Throughout the year we supported two young people to gain their driver's license. This was part of the driver theory programme within the Mallow Youth Diversion project. Project staff provide learning materials and support to the young person. The young person in return does not come to Garda attention, attends school regularly and has good behaviour at home. As long as these conditions are met, the project supports the young person to achieve the driving license. Many jobs require or strongly prefer a driver's license which has enabled these two young people to gain employment. Learning to drive teaches responsibility, decision-making, and time management. It also enables the young people to follow traffic laws and maintaining a vehicle builds accountability. A driver's license helps a young person gain independence, responsibility, and access to more opportunities as they transition into adulthood.

Mallow Youth Diversion Project Cont.

In November of 2025, the Department of Justice held the Annual Youth Diversion Project Conference in Croke Park, Dublin. We attended with 4 young people who were previous participants in the social farming project. Four young people sat on stage with one engaging in an interview about her experience doing social farming. The project staff are very proud of the young people for being able to get up on stage in front of around 500 people including members of the Department of Justice, An Garda Síochana and different youth diversion projects. We are grateful for the wonderful support we receive from our project committees. A special mention to Garda Inspector Miriam McGuire, who retired from An Garda Síochana this year and as Chairperson of the committee was extremely dedicated to the young people of Mallow. Garda Inspector Paul Aherne was welcomed onto the committee as the new Chairperson. Our Juvenile Liaison Officer Garda John Hurley, and Garda John Fitzgerald (Community Garda) deserve distinct thanks as they have been stalwarts in their support of the Mallow Project and its staff.





Across the Erasmus+ accredited programme, CDYS aimed to support the personal, social, and civic development of young people and youth workers through inclusive, high-quality international mobility. Projects including Pride Across Borders, Mind Your Head, Positive Choices, and Youth Worker Mobility (Walk the Talk – Portugal) created safe, supportive environments where young people could grow, connect, and learn through shared international experiences. The programme placed a strong emphasis on inclusion, actively engaging young people at risk of early school leaving, those from Traveller and migrant backgrounds, LGBTQ+ young people, and young people experiencing mental health challenges, trauma, or social isolation. Creative and non-formal approaches – such as storytelling, podcasting, activism, physical activity, illustration, and youth-led workshops – were used to support learning, self-expression, and positive decision-making. The Impact of our International work also links with UBU outcomes.

Communication Skills

Young people developed stronger communication skills through group work, workshops, creative activities, and intercultural exchanges. Participants reported increased confidence in expressing their views, sharing personal experiences, and communicating with peers from different backgrounds and cultures.

Confidence and Agency

Participation in international mobility significantly increased young people's confidence and sense of agency. Many young people travelled abroad for the first time and successfully navigated unfamiliar environments. These experiences helped them step outside their comfort zones, take responsibility for themselves, and recognise their own capabilities.

Planning and Problem Solving

Young people were actively involved in planning activities, managing travel routines, and responding to challenges such as language barriers, anxiety, and unfamiliar settings. These experiences strengthened their ability to think ahead, adapt, and solve problems independently and as part of a group.

Relationships

The programme supported the development of positive relationships between peers and with youth workers. Young people built trust, empathy, and mutual respect, often forming new friendships and feeling a stronger sense of belonging. Participants reported feeling less isolated and more confident in forming and maintaining relationships.

Creativity and Imagination

Creative methods such as storytelling, podcasting, illustration, and activism enabled young people to explore identity, culture, and social issues in meaningful ways. These approaches encouraged imagination, personal expression, and engagement, particularly for young people who may not thrive in traditional learning environments.

Resilience and Determination

Young people demonstrated resilience by overcoming personal fears and challenges, including anxiety around flying, social interaction, and unfamiliar foods or environments. Many participants described the experience as challenging but empowering, highlighting increased determination and perseverance.

Erasmus + International Work cont.

Emotional Intelligence

Through reflective activities and trauma-informed support, young people developed greater self-awareness, emotional regulation, and empathy for others. Programmes such as Mind Your Head supported improved mental health awareness, reduced stigma, and increased confidence in recognising emotions and seeking support when needed.

Outcomes for Youth Workers and CDYS

Youth workers participating in the Portugal mobility strengthened their professional practice through the exchange of inclusive, rights-based, and trauma-informed approaches. They developed new tools, shared learning with European partners, and enhanced their capacity to support diverse groups of young people.

At organisational level, CDYS strengthened European partnerships, improved evaluation and reflection processes, and increased its capacity to design and deliver inclusive, high-quality international mobility projects with lasting impact at local and national level.



Erasmus + International Work cont.



Youth Work

UBU

UBU Your Place Your Space provides out-of-school support to young people aged between 10 to 24 years. These supports offer a wide range of quality, community-based activities. Providing place and space aims to enable all young people to realise their maximum potential. CDYS has five UBU Projects in Gurannabraher, Fermoy, Mallow, Midleton and Mitchelstown.

These projects were funded by Department of Education and Youth (DoEY) through the Cork ETB.



An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige
Department of Education and Youth



UBU Mallow

Mallow UBU works with young people aged 10–24 to support their personal and social development. Based at Mallow Youth Centre in Mallow town centre and The Blue Cube in Gouldshill, the project creates a variety of opportunities for young people to engage in their local community and develop valuable skills. Much of the work at The Blue Cube is guided by the principles of Global Youth Work, the IDEA Code, and youth empowerment.

Each week, the Mallow UBU Project offers a wide range of groups, including One-to-One Sessions, Homework Club, Junior Girls, Junior Boys, CDYS Boys, Youth Council, Teen Travellers, 1st Year Group, 2nd–3rd Year Group, and Drop-In sessions. To promote development, creativity, and inclusivity, the project introduced several exciting initiatives, excursions, and events throughout 2025, as well as welcoming new groups to the centre.

In 2025, 177 young people engaged with the UBU service in Mallow, demonstrating the strong demand for and trust in the programme within the local community. Participation took many forms, including group work, workshops, trips, and drop-in sessions, reflecting the wide reach and impact of the service.

The high level of engagement also highlights the positive relationships built between the UBU service, young people, and their families. Many families continue to show confidence in the support provided, returning regularly and encouraging ongoing participation. This strong connection underpins the role of the Mallow UBU service as a vital community resource, supporting young people's wellbeing, personal development, and sense of belonging.

We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to Finbarr, CDYS Outreach Counsellor, for facilitating an anxiety workshop for young people. Finbarr delivered the session in a calm, supportive, and engaging manner, creating a safe space where participants felt comfortable to listen, learn, and take part. The workshop provided young people with a greater understanding of anxiety, along with practical coping strategies they can apply in their everyday lives. Finbarr's approachable style and professional expertise had a very positive impact, and the session was extremely beneficial in supporting the young people's emotional wellbeing and confidence.

UBU Mallow Cont.

We would also like to extend our thanks to Tiger Training Academy who delivered a two-day eyebrow workshop. The workshop was very well received and offered young people the opportunity to learn new, practical skills in a supportive and encouraging environment. Their knowledge, patience, and engaging approach helped build confidence and interest among participants, while also introducing potential pathways in beauty and training. The experience was both enjoyable and empowering, and we are very grateful to them for their time, effort, and commitment to supporting young people through this valuable programme.

Finally, we extend our thanks to our funders, whose support makes it possible for us to deliver our programmes and provide exciting trips and opportunities for young people.

Junior Groups in the Blue Cube and Mallow Youth centre.

Throughout the year, CDYS UBU Mallow continued to provide a safe, inclusive, and engaging space for young people aged 7–12 through our Junior Groups programme. These groups support both boys and girls and focus on fun, creativity, friendship-building, and positive youth development.

Our junior members attend two groups per week, offering them regular opportunities to connect with peers and youth workers. The groups are designed to be welcoming and age-appropriate, ensuring all young people feel included, valued, and supported.

Junior Girls

The junior girls' group is a bright, creative, and enthusiastic group who really enjoy spending time together in a relaxed and supportive environment. They particularly love activities that allow them to express themselves, with art and baking being firm favourites. Whether they are drawing, painting, or getting hands-on in the kitchen, these activities encourage creativity, teamwork, and plenty of conversation. The girls enjoy chatting while they work, sharing ideas, laughing together, and building friendships in a space where they feel comfortable and included. These sessions help boost confidence and give the girls a chance to explore their interests while having fun.

The group has also enjoyed some lovely trips throughout the year which gave them memorable shared experiences. A highlight was a visit to the Cork Opera House to see Aladdin, which was an exciting and special outing for the girls. The trip sparked lots of discussion about the characters, music, and favourite scenes, and it was a great opportunity for them to experience live theatre together. Another enjoyable outing was a trip to Little Rascals play zone, where the girls had plenty of fun being active and playful, some of the junior boys also attended. These trips, combined with their regular creative activities, have helped strengthen friendships and create a strong sense of belonging within the group, making the junior girls programme a positive and enjoyable space for everyone involved.

Junior Boys

The junior boy's group is an energetic and sociable group who enjoy having an active space where they can have fun and spend time with their friends. Playing pool is a firm favourite and often the main focus of the sessions, providing a relaxed way for the boys to engage with one another through friendly competition. Alongside pool, they also enjoy taking part in other sports and physical activities, which help them burn off energy while learning teamwork, turn-taking, and fair play. These activities naturally encourage chatting and laughter, helping the boys build confidence and strong friendships in a positive group setting.

UBU Mallow Cont.

They attended a performance of Aladdin in Cork, which was an exciting experience for them. The outing gave them a chance to enjoy live theatre together and talk about their favourite moments. A trip to Little Rascals was another big success, giving the boys plenty of opportunity to be active and play freely. Overall, the junior boys group benefits from a good balance of structured activities and free play, creating a welcoming and enjoyable space where the boys can socialise, stay active, and feel part of a group.

Teen Traveller Girls

The Teen Traveller girls' group is confident, social, and close-knit, enjoying time together in a relaxed and supportive environment. They particularly value chatting, catching up, and sharing stories, which helps strengthen friendships and build trust. Baking is a favourite activity, providing a calm and enjoyable space where the girls can work together, develop new skills, and share lots of laughs. These sessions encourage teamwork, patience, creativity, and give the girls a sense of achievement while feeling comfortable and included.

The group has also enjoyed a range of exciting trips and experiences throughout the year. A visit to Emerald Park was a major highlight, offering a fun-filled day of rides, excitement, and shared memories. Ice skating provided the chance to try something new and support one another outside their comfort zones. The girls also took part in a two-day eyebrow course with Sinéad from Tiger Training Academy, which helped build confidence, self-care skills, and personal expression. Over the summer, they volunteered with the Blue Cube Summer Camp, showing responsibility, leadership, and a willingness to give back to the community.

Overall, the Teen Traveller girls' group combines fun, learning, and personal development, creating a positive and supportive space where the girls feel valued, included, and heard.

CDYS Boys Group (Ages 13–16)

The CDYS Boys Group is a lively and social space where young people aged 13–17 can relax, have fun, and connect with one another. Meeting once a week, the boys enjoy hanging out, playing pool, and socialising in a supportive environment that encourages friendship, trust, and confidence. The pool table has become a favourite activity, sparking laughter, conversation, and friendly competition while giving the boys a chance to unwind and be themselves.

Throughout the year, the group also enjoyed exciting outings and activities:

Ice skating in Cork during Christmas – a highlight that allowed them to try something new and strengthen friendships. They also mixed with other groups within CDYS which was a good experience to see other young people.

Emerald Park summer trip, organised with UBU Fermoy, gave the boys the chance to mix with peers from other centres, building shared memories and social skills.

Driver theory test preparation for older members, supporting independence and future goals.

Overall, the CDYS Boys Group provides a safe, welcoming, and fun space where young people can enjoy themselves, develop friendships, and gain life skills, balancing socialising with personal growth as they navigate their teenage years.



UBU Mallow Cont.

CANDID Group & Youth Council

The CANDID Group and Youth Council provide a supportive space where young people can have their voices heard, share ideas, and help make positive changes in their community. These groups encourage young people to take an active role, build confidence, and support one another through friendship and teamwork.

Throughout the year, young people played a key role in community events, including Halloween and Christmas celebrations at the Castle, in collaboration with Cork County Council. At the Halloween event, over 9,500 people walked through the castle gates, with the young people dressing up in costume and helping to create a welcoming, fun atmosphere. The feedback from the community was extremely positive, highlighting the impact the young people had on the event.

The group also participated in turning the Christmas lights on in Mallow and are currently working towards their Bronze and Silver Gaisce Awards. Overall, the CANDID Group and Youth Council help young people build friendships, feel supported, and develop a strong sense of pride in themselves and their community.

One-to-One Support

This year, CDYS UBU Mallow provided individual support sessions to young people, focusing on their emotional well-being, personal goals, and practical skills.

Support provided included:

Emotional support: Helping young people navigate challenges, build confidence, and manage difficult situations.

Theory test practice: One young person successfully passed her driving theory test after previous attempts, showing how consistent support can lead to real achievements.

Career and goal guidance: Supporting a young person in preparing an application to join An Garda Síochána, offering guidance and encouragement every step of the way.

Summer Camp 2025

This year, CDYS UBU Mallow ran a highly successful 4-day Summer Camp, achieving the highest attendance to date. The camp offered a mix of activities designed to be fun, inclusive, and engaging for all participants.

Highlights included:

Inclusion art project: A local artist led a creative session focused on teamwork and self-expression.

Physical activities: Bouncy castle, sports, and Zumba sessions kept everyone active and energized.

Outings & treats: Trip to Little Rascals Play Zone and visits from an ice cream van.

Creative fun: Arts and crafts activities, games, and free play opportunities.

The camp not only gave children a space to have fun and build friendships but also fostered creativity, teamwork, and confidence. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with parents already asking to register their children for next year's camp.

UBU Mallow Cont.

Santa's Grotto 2025

The Santa Grotto was another huge success this year, running over two days and welcoming numerous families to enjoy festive fun and meet the Big Man himself.

Highlights included:

Festive treats: Hot chocolate and cookies for all attendees.

Special visits: Santa brought by the Gardaí and a visit from Mrs Claus delighted children.

Youth involvement: Young people played a key role in helping run the event, dressing in costumes and assisting with activities.

Staff support: CDYS staff from across all programmes worked together in the lead-up and during the event to ensure the event ran smoothly and successfully.

The event was a wonderful example of community collaboration and youth participation, creating lasting memories for children and families while giving young people the chance to take responsibility and contribute meaningfully.

1st Year Group

The 1st Year group was established in September following a one-week transition programme, aimed at supporting young people as they moved into secondary school and youth services.

During the initial months, the focus was on building positive, trusting relationships with youth workers and helping young people feel welcomed, safe, and supported.

The group engaged in a variety of activities, including baking, arts and crafts, and sports, which encouraged participation, teamwork, and confidence building. These activities also provided opportunities to develop new skills and foster a sense of achievement. A key highlight was attending their first CDYS trip together, which included an ice-skating session and socialising with other groups. This memorable experience helped strengthen friendships, build confidence, and deepen their connection to the youth service.

2nd Year Group

The second-year group continued to grow each week, welcoming new members and building a close-knit environment.

The young people enjoyed a variety of activities, including debating, baking, and arts and crafts, and each session offered something unique. The group is enthusiastic about events and regularly helps out at local activities such as Christmas at the Castle, Halloween at the Castle, and the Christmas lights.

The group also took part in wider CDYS opportunities, attending One World Week celebrations in Cork and enjoying an ice-skating trip, which provided fun and memorable experiences. Six members participated in an anxiety workshop led by CDYS Outreach Counsellor Finbarr, which they found very beneficial. Young people reported enjoying meeting peers from other groups and expressed excitement for future excursions and shared activities.

These experiences support key youth work goals, including building confidence, encouraging teamwork, civic engagement, and leadership development, while strengthening young people's connections to their community.



UBU Mallow Cont.

Drop-In (13+)

The 13+ Drop-In group continued to provide a welcoming, relaxed, and informal space where young people could unwind, socialise, and spend time with youth workers without pressure to participate in structured activities. Traditionally, the group preferred to chat and connect with staff, using the space as a safe environment to relax.

During this period, a positive shift was observed, with more young people engaging in activities together. Baking became especially popular, encouraging teamwork, cooperation, and shared enjoyment while providing opportunities for conversation and relationship building. The group also attended an ice-skating trip, which offered a fun, social, and memorable experience. Many members expressed enthusiasm for future trips and shared activities. Several also showed an interest in volunteering at CDYS events, including Santa's Grotto at the Big Blue Cube and community initiatives such as Christmas at the Castle. These opportunities helped young people develop new skills, build confidence, and feel a strong sense of pride and belonging within the youth service and wider community.

Erasmus Trip to Spain

Fifteen young people from Mallow UBU took part in an Erasmus trip to Spain, focused on the theme "Mind Your Head", exploring mental health and wellbeing. During the trip, participants attended workshops on mental health, learning about the importance of recognising emotions, talking about feelings, and asking for help when needed.

The young people had the opportunity to meet and build relationships with Spanish peers and group leaders, developing friendships and intercultural understanding. The experience encouraged confidence, teamwork, and social skills, as well as a deeper awareness of mental health and self-care. Following the trip, young people reported feeling more comfortable discussing their emotions and supporting one another, demonstrating the positive impact of international youth engagement on personal growth and wellbeing.



UBU Mitchelstown

CDYS Mitchelstown continued to provide high-quality, youth-centred services throughout 2025, supporting young people aged 10 to 24 and their families across the local community. The project remained focused on creating a safe, inclusive and welcoming space where young people feel valued, supported and empowered to reach their potential.

Throughout the year, engagement continued to grow, with 152 individual young people engaging with the service since the start of the year. On an ongoing basis, the project supported 112 regular members alongside over 100 occasional participants, reflecting the strong reach and accessibility of the service. Our work placed a strong emphasis on wellbeing, inclusion, leadership development and positive social connection. We supported young people from a wide variety of backgrounds, including those experiencing social or economic disadvantage, young people from migrant and international protection backgrounds, and those who benefit from additional emotional or educational supports.

CDYS Mitchelstown remains a trusted space within the community, with strong relationships built with families, schools, partner organisations and local services. These partnerships allow us to respond flexibly to emerging needs and ensure young people receive the right support at the right time.

The project is delivered by a dedicated team including a full-time Project Coordinator (Christy O'Neill), part-time Youth Worker (Rachel Hurley Roche), CE Scheme staff member (Anna Datsenko) and student placements, whose commitment and professionalism underpin the quality of Services delivered throughout the year.

Project Aim and Purpose

The aim of CDYS Mitchelstown is to support young people aged 10 to 24 to develop confidence, resilience and positive life skills through meaningful youth work engagement. The project seeks to reduce isolation, promote inclusion and provide accessible opportunities for personal, social and educational development.

A key priority is supporting young people who may be disengaged from education, training or community life, helping them to reconnect with positive pathways and build strong relationships with peers and trusted adults.

Our Approach and Methodology

Our work is grounded in a holistic and needs-led youth work approach, placing young people at the centre of all programme planning and delivery. We combine structured group work, creative programmes, leadership opportunities and one-to-one support to meet the diverse needs of young people accessing the service.

Relationship-based youth work remains central to our model. By building trust, consistency and emotional safety, staff are able to support young people through challenges, celebrate achievements and encourage positive personal growth.

We also place strong emphasis on inclusion and participation. Young people are actively encouraged to shape activities, contribute ideas and take on leadership roles within the project. This approach not only strengthens engagement but helps young people develop responsibility, confidence and a sense of belonging within their community.



UBU Mitchelstown Cont.

Programmes and Activities Delivered in 2025

Throughout 2025, CDYS Mitchelstown delivered a diverse and responsive programme of youth work activities designed to support wellbeing, inclusion, learning and positive social development. Engagement remained strong across all age groups, with young people participating regularly in structured programmes, creative workshops, leadership initiatives and recreational activities.

On a typical day, CDYS Mitchelstown supports between 22 and 35 young people, across structured group programmes, drop-in sessions, one-to-one youth work and mentoring supports. This level of daily engagement highlights the importance of the youth centre as a consistent and trusted space for young people within the community.

Youth Leadership and Participation

The voice of young adults and leadership continued to be a central focus of the project. The Youth Council, Youth Forum and Junior Leaders Programme provided meaningful opportunities for young people to develop leadership skills, take responsibility and actively shape the direction of the service.

Junior Leaders supported younger members during weekly sessions, assisted with trips and events, and acted as positive role models within the centre. The Youth Forum supported younger members to develop confidence and communication skills, while the Youth Council played an active role in planning activities, representing the project at events and contributing to decision-making processes.

These leadership pathways helped young people build confidence, teamwork skills and a strong sense of ownership within the Youth Service.

Integration and Inclusion Programmes

CDYS Mitchelstown continued to provide targeted integration supports through both Junior and Senior Integration Groups. These groups brought together young people from a wide range of backgrounds, including Irish participants, young people from Ukrainian families and those living in International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS).

Creative activities, group projects, cooking sessions, games and collaborative planning supported positive peer relationships and helped young people build friendships across cultures. These programmes promoted inclusion, reduced social isolation and strengthened community connection among participants.

The International Women's Hub also continued to provide an important space for social connection and creative engagement within the wider community. The group brought together women of different ages and cultural backgrounds to participate in arts and crafts, cultural exchange and social activities, helping to reduce isolation and strengthen local integration.



UBU Mitchelstown Cont.

Wellbeing and Personal Development

Supporting young people's emotional wellbeing remained a key priority throughout the year. The Drama Therapy programme provided a safe and supportive environment where young people could explore emotions, develop self-confidence and build coping skills through creative expression.

In addition to group programmes, one-to-one youth work continued to form a core part of service delivery. Staff worked closely with young people and families to provide personalised support, guidance and practical assistance when needed. Strong relationships with parents and schools helped ensure young people received consistent and coordinated support.

Education, Skills and Employability

CDYS Mitchelstown supported young people to develop practical skills and gain real-world experience through a range of learning and employability-focused initiatives.

Work experience placements provided students with insight into youth work practice, programme delivery and community engagement. The Mini Company initiative supported young people to develop entrepreneurial skills, including stock management, budgeting, customer service and teamwork. Beauty and creative skills programmes also offered young people opportunities to explore potential career interests while building confidence and independence. These initiatives supported young people to develop transferable life skills that will benefit them in education, training and future employment.

Trips, Recreation and Cultural Engagement

Trips and recreational activities continued to play an important role in promoting wellbeing, social connection and positive use of free time. Throughout the year, young people participated in a wide range of outings including visits to Emerald Park, a summer trip to Castlegregory, a multi-activity day in Youghal including bowling, laser tag and cinema, and a cultural visit to the Everyman Theatre.

Seasonal activities such as Christmas trips, ice skating and group outings provided positive shared experiences, strengthened friendships and supported young people who may face barriers to accessing recreational opportunities outside the youth service.

These experiences offered young people the chance to relax, build memories, develop independence and engage with new environments in a safe and supported way.



UBU Mitchelstown Cont.

Highlights of 2025

Screamland: Youth-Led Community Event and Flagship Achievement

One of the most significant highlights of 2025 for CDYS Mitchelstown was the involvement of young people in the delivery of the Screamland Halloween community event in Cashel, delivered in partnership with Le Chéile Cashel. This large-scale public event welcomed over 1,500 members of the community and provided a safe, creative and family-friendly alternative to antisocial behaviour traditionally associated with Halloween night.

A group of over 20 young people from CDYS Mitchelstown volunteered across several days to support the planning, preparation and delivery of the event. Their roles included set design, prop creation, costume preparation, performance roles, crowd engagement and event operations. Participants represented a wide range of backgrounds, including Irish young people, young people from Ukrainian families and those living in International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS), highlighting the strong integration and inclusion outcomes achieved through the project.

For many participants, Screamland provided an opportunity to step outside their comfort zones, take on new responsibilities and develop confidence in a public setting. Young people who would typically describe themselves as shy or reserved took on highly visible performance and leadership roles, demonstrating personal growth, creativity and resilience. The experience supported the development of teamwork, communication skills and a strong sense of pride in contributing to a major community event.

The partnership with Le Chéile Cashel was a key factor in the success of the event. Their logistical support, volunteer coordination and care for the wellbeing of participating young people ensured a positive and supportive experience throughout the project. The collaboration also strengthened links between youth services across the region and created new opportunities for future joint initiatives.

Screamland received widespread positive feedback from families, community members and local media. The event showcased the positive contribution young people can make when provided with meaningful opportunities, while also raising the profile of CDYS Mitchelstown's youth work programmes within the wider community.

Overall, Screamland stands out as a powerful example of youth-led volunteering, community engagement and partnership working. It reflects the core values of CDYS Mitchelstown by placing young people at the centre of meaningful community activity, promoting inclusion and celebrating the talents and potential of the young people we support.

Small Wins and Everyday Successes

Alongside large-scale projects, many smaller achievements made a significant difference to young people throughout 2025. Young people developed increased confidence through leadership roles, drama therapy participation and creative programmes. Several participants progressed from being quiet or withdrawn members to actively contributing ideas, supporting peers and taking on visible responsibilities within the centre. These everyday successes reflect the long-term impact of consistent relationship-based youth work.



UBU Mitchelstown Cont.

Supporting Families and Strengthening Community Care

Alongside programme delivery and youth engagement, CDYS Mitchelstown placed strong emphasis on supporting families and responding to practical needs within the community throughout 2025. Many families continue to experience financial pressure due to rising living costs, and the project remained committed to ensuring that young people and families could access support in a respectful and dignified way.

Throughout the year, the team supported families through the distribution of food parcels, essential household items and shopping vouchers. These supports were provided discreetly, ensuring families could access help without stigma while maintaining privacy and dignity. This approach strengthened trust between families and the youth service and reinforced CDYS Mitchelstown's role as a safe and reliable source of community support.

The annual Food Appeal, delivered in partnership with local businesses and community volunteers, played a significant role in meeting immediate needs. Young people actively participated in collecting and organising donations, helping to build awareness around social responsibility and community solidarity. The items collected supported both families connected with the project and wider local households experiencing hardship.

Seasonal supports during the Christmas period were particularly impactful. The project was able to assist families at a time when financial pressures can be heightened, helping to reduce stress and ensure young people could continue to participate fully in activities and celebrations alongside their peers.

This work reflects the holistic nature of CDYS Mitchelstown's approach. By addressing both emotional wellbeing and practical needs, the project supports stronger family stability, improves young people's ability to engage in education and youth programmes, and contributes positively to overall community wellbeing.

Impact Snapshot: Engagement and Outcomes in 2025

Throughout 2025, CDYS Mitchelstown supported 152 individual young people and engaged with dozens of families through direct youth work programmes, family support initiatives and community outreach. In the final quarter alone, 112 young people were attending regularly, with a further 100 occasional participants, demonstrating strong retention and ongoing demand for services.

Daily attendance averaged between 22 and 35 young people, reflecting the high level of consistent engagement across the project. Young people accessed the service through a variety of entry points, including open youth club sessions, targeted integration programmes, leadership initiatives, wellbeing supports and creative activities. Many participants attended multiple times each week, demonstrating sustained engagement and the importance of the youth centre as a safe and supportive space.



UBU Mitchelstown Cont.

The project supported young people from a wide range of backgrounds, including those experiencing social or economic disadvantage, young people from migrant communities and those from refugee or international protection backgrounds, as well as those requiring additional emotional or educational support. This diversity reflects CDYS Mitchelstown's strong commitment to inclusion and equal access to opportunity.

Key outcomes observed throughout the year included:

- Increased confidence and self-esteem among young people participating in leadership, creative and performance-based programmes
- Improved social skills and peer relationships through group activities and integration supports
- Strong progression pathways from participation into leadership roles through the Youth Council, Youth Forum and Junior Leaders Programme
- Greater engagement with education, training and employment pathways through work experience placements and skills-based initiatives
- Strengthened relationships between young people, families and community services

The consistent level of engagement and positive outcomes achieved throughout 2025 highlight the importance of accessible, relationship-based youth work within the local community. CDYS Mitchelstown continues to provide a vital space where young people feel supported, valued and empowered to grow.

Regional Reach and Catchment Area

CDYS Mitchelstown provides youth services to a wide catchment area extending beyond the town itself. In 2025, young people accessed the service from 13 towns and villages across Cork, Limerick and Tipperary.

The catchment area includes:

Cork: Mitchelstown, Glanworth, Kilworth, Ballindangan, Kildorrery

Limerick: Anglesboro, Kilfinane, Ballylanders, Knocklong

Tipperary: Ardfinnan, Ballyporeen, Burncourt, Kilbeheny

This regional reach reflects the important role CDYS Mitchelstown plays in supporting rural young people who may otherwise face barriers to accessing youth services.

Recognition of Project Supporters

CDYS Mitchelstown would like to acknowledge the continued support of partner organisations, community groups and individuals who contributed to the success of the project throughout 2025. We extend particular thanks to Le Chéile Cashel for their partnership and collaboration on the Screamland community event, Creative Minds Crafts tutors for their ongoing work with younger members, Maeve Lewis, our Drama Therapist, and Ger Brennan for his ongoing community support and parish engagement.

We would also like to thank local schools for their continued cooperation and referrals, along with the community volunteers and businesses who supported food appeals and fundraising initiatives. Their contribution plays a vital role in strengthening youth services and positive community impact.

Project Location and Facility Developments

Throughout 2025, a number of practical improvements were completed to enhance the safety, accessibility and overall environment of the youth centre. New external pathways were installed around the building, improving access and movement around the site for young people, families and visitors.

UBU Mitchelstown Cont.

The main hall roof was re-tiled, helping to protect the building infrastructure and ensure the continued safe use of the space for large group activities and events. In addition, the main entrance hall and project room were repainted, creating a brighter, more welcoming environment for young people and supporting a positive first impression for new members and families accessing the service. These improvements contributed to maintaining a safe, inclusive and high-quality space that supports the delivery of youth programmes and encourages regular engagement.

Looking Ahead and Acknowledgements

As we reflect on 2025, CDYS Mitchelstown is proud of the positive impact achieved across youth engagement, community participation and family support. The year demonstrated the strength of relationship-based youth work and the value of providing safe, inclusive and responsive services for young people and families.

Looking ahead, the project remains committed to continuing high-quality programme delivery, strengthening leadership pathways for young people, expanding inclusive and integration-focused initiatives, and responding to emerging needs within the community. CDYS Mitchelstown will continue to place young people at the centre of decision-making, ensuring their voices, ideas and experiences shape the future direction of the service.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the success of the project throughout the year. This includes the young people who engage with the service and bring energy, creativity and commitment to every programme, the families who place their trust in our work, and the staff and volunteers whose dedication and professionalism make this work possible.

We are also grateful to our partner organisations, schools, community groups and funders whose ongoing support enables CDYS Mitchelstown to continue delivering meaningful youth work and positive opportunities for young people across the region.

Together, we look forward to building on the achievements of 2025 and continuing to support young people to thrive, grow and reach their full potential.



UBU Midleton / Carrigtwohill / Cloyne / East Cork

CDYS Midleton strives to facilitate the personal & social development of participants aged 10-24 years in order to realise their potential and present opportunities for young people to participate positively in their local communities. To promote the ideals of global youth work and create inclusive spaces for all young people.

UBU Midleton operates as a Hub and Spoke model offering access to the Midleton youth centre as the Hub with activities provided in outreach centres in Carrigtwohill, and Cloyne. We operate an open door policy in the youth centre in that all young people are welcome and we work with them to accommodate their needs/wants. We run a needs led service responding to requests for programmes from Parents and/or young people or identified by staff as needs arising in the community. We use a strengths based approach in our work with young people believing that all young people, given the correct supports can be instrumental in their own personal development.

We work with other community based projects to best support the Young People and their families of East Cork, such as SECAD, The Gardaí, CDYS East Cork Music Project and the Youth Diversion Project. We have engaged in projects with the Local Family Resource Centre and Cork County Council. We have regular interactions with local schools, Cork ETB, Educational Welfare Officers and TUSLA. We have been networking with Youth Work Ireland, The National Youth Council of Ireland and Leargas on various projects throughout the year. In 2024 we supported approximately 190 individual young people in various activities and projects.

We run Junior groups in Carrigtwohill, Cloyne and Midleton for 5th and 6th class pupils using art/crafts, board games and food prep to encourage young people to interact, learn new skills, grow in confidence and engage socially with their peers. We do a lot of Sustainable Development awareness work with these groups and they often join in local and national participation events such as One World Week, Youth Voices etc. They have learned to use their voice and join in conversations with older age groups and adults and understand that they are heard. In Summer 2025 we ran a weekly transition project for young people moving from 6th class to 1st year. Additionally, we ran a week long camp of games and sports to encourage these young people on getting to know their peers who they will be attending secondary school with. Many of these young people attend small rural primary schools and will need to adjust to much larger secondary schools. Along side this we also run a weekly 1st - 3rd year drop in social group to continue to support those who need it.



UBU Midleton / Carrigwohill / Cloyne / East Cork Cont.

Some of our other projects include a LGBTQI weekly meeting attended by young people aged 14-18 years from across East Cork. This group gives some isolated young people a social outlet to mix with their peers in a safe space where they can be themselves. Members from this group and from Carrigwohill went on to volunteer for the Youth Council. This group serve as a link between staff and young people in the wider community, highlighting key issues and fostering opportunities for active participation. Again, a focus on global youth work and the goals of equality and equity for all are the basis for a lot of work done in this group.

Given the ethos of the Youth Council and the capabilities of the group to work together this group were an obvious choice for an Erasmus+ youth exchange to Finland. We left on April 1st 2025 and spent a full week in Maartinen. The theme of the weeks workshops were equity and values and how we could change society if applied to all policies. It was a wonderful week and the young people learned so much about Finnish life from their Finnish counterparts and about themselves.

In their own words they had this to say

“Its been one of the greatest weeks of my life. I got to experience and meet so many new people and places I never would’ve been able to experience without an Erasmus trip”

“This youth exchange opened my eyes to a future with travelling and helped me make friends anywhere I go”

This group also attended the National Youth Council of Ireland Youth Voices in Cork City. This was attended by young people from CDYS projects and other organisations where they explored issues surrounding Sustainable Development Goals. A small group attended a weekend overnight trip to Leap Co. Cork in preparation for upcoming workshops. Throughout the year we travelled to Cork City to attend a celebration of youth and partied at Pride Cork where the young people engaged with others from outside of their own communities. In November the Youth Council took part in an event in Cork City for One World Week. This event was attended by young people from across the county and they looked at how to be agents of change in the world.



UBU Midleton / Carrigtwohill / Cloyne / East Cork Cont.

Our weekly drop in groups are very popular with young people. Activities include playing pool, board games, music and food preparation. Wednesday's, our local secondary schools finish earlier. This gives our young people time to participate in the groups on offer and give them the chance to meet other young people and build relationships with their peers. Everyone is encouraged to take responsibility for the space and to be aware of others who use the youth café. Through discussion and by example young people learn about the Sustainable Development Goals informally and are encouraged to adopt the practices of environmental protection in their everyday lives.

We worked with a large number of young people from Ukraine who are living in Trabolgon. We bring young people into the centre for drop ins to promote integration with local young people. These young people really enjoy the opportunity to have a space for themselves and to meet with other young people within the community. We encourage the use of the English language as much as possible within this group setting. We supported a young Ukrainian person in accessing a local football team where he is now a valued player.

Throughout the Summer some of the young people took part in a rowing course on the River Lee with Cork Sports Partnership and Bádoreacht Corcaí. We had trips to Fota Wildlife Park, The Escape Rooms in Cork City, Day trips to Ballyhass Coachford and Mallow and Zipit Farren woods. At the end of the year we took a large group Ice skating to Alpine Skate Trail, and another group to Wonderlights at Fota. It was a busy but fun year.

Many of our older young people are interested in youth work as a future career and we are proud to support them in this. We were able to support two of them through the WPEP scheme and then through sessional worker funding. It is one of our great pleasures that they have both been attending UCC Diploma in Youth and community work. Through further assistance with funding we put another 2 young adults through an SNA course from which they have both been able to secure work in this field. It is one of the most satisfying aspects of our work to continue supporting those young people we first met as primary school pupils. It is a testament to the importance of good relationship building and being a constant in the lives of young people when they most need it .

Our low cost Play Therapy for children has continued to be very busy with our Therapist holding clinics on Mondays and Tuesdays. Children as young as 4 years old have accessed this service. Art Therapy for 12 - 18 year olds is funded by TUSLA and sessions are held on Wednesday afternoons, young people from all over East Cork access these services.

We have two youth clubs now using the Youth Café weekly. The FrienDS Midleton club is a club set up by parents of young people with Downs Syndrome, it is very popular with its young members and gives them an evening social outlet to meet with their peers and engage in activities. The newest club is the East Cork Comic Con club. This club was again set up by parents for their teens who are interested in Role Playing games, preparing for, and attending Comic Cons nationally.

It was decided at the beginning of 2024 to change location for our junior group in Cloyne. We had been meeting in the parish hall but felt that we were not reaching those who we most needed to. Upon speaking with the principal of the local national school we were offered use of the school library after school hours. This enabled us to be more targeted in working with young people that truly need the focussed aspect of smaller groups. This has been working out extremely well and is definitely the way forward for this group.

UBU Midleton / Carrigtwohill / Cloyne / East Cork Cont.

At the end of 2024 a decision was made to move location in Carrigtwohill as the space that was being used was quite small and restrictive. Carrigtwohill Community Centre had built on some new rooms and a room was chosen that would meet our needs and the young peoples needs. The groups will transition over in the new year and the groups will be advertised to the local schools to increase numbers. While the small space had served us well and many of the young people lamented its closing, the new bright space and the opportunities it represents are a welcome change for a new future.

As we face into 2026 we plan to continue offering the above services to the young people of East Cork. We hope to see our outreach grow and develop with more supports available through an increase in staff numbers and improved capacity.



UBU Fermoy

We operate an open-door policy for the young people of Fermoy and its surrounding areas aged 10-24 years. The aim and purpose of the project is to ensure that every young person has a safe space where they can be themselves. Our project ensures that young people can build on their own personal and social skills through the services we offer them. The programmes which we offer are educational, but with a non-formal approach. We assist young people with finding something that they enjoy doing and guide them towards mastering those skills. We also help our young people when it comes to education, employment, health and wellbeing. The project offers services on a group basis as well as one to one basis.

Many young people engaged with our UBU project this year. We have concentrated on personal and social skills which will strengthen their communication, teamwork, leadership, empathy, relationships and resilience skills. We have a diverse community within our groups and using the Global Youth Work approach has benefited the young people. We have supported young people not only through group activities but also on an individual basis throughout the year.

Activities used in the Project:

- Music – Guitar, Ukelele, Piano, Drums, Singing
- Music Production with our Tutor Alex – Rap, Songwriting, Sound Production, DJ Skills
- Soccer with our Junior and Senior Groups
- Pool and Ping-Pong
- Volleyball
- Playstation 4 - recently upgraded to Playstation 5
- Culinary in our Kitchen
- Dungeons & Dragons Group
- Homework Club
- Ceol agus Craic Group
- Arts & Crafts
- Swimming in Fermoy Leisure Centre
- Crochet
- Photography
- Jewellery Making
- Rings Competitions



Recognition of Supporters of the Project:

Alex Brady is our Music Production Tutor and has been an excellent addition since coming onboard with us in the latter part of 2025. The young people have great admiration for the work he does with them. Alex built a solid relationship with our young people from the start, and he is back with us in 2026.

The Youth Affairs unit paid us a visit in March of last year and listened to some of the voices of our young people. It was nice to see them at ground level, seeing the incredible youth work that goes on.

We would like to thank Fiona Quinn of Cork ETB for inviting us to the Voices of Harmony Concert in Cork City Hall in November. One of our young people – A.J. got to perform two rap songs to a very large audience. It was an amazing spectacle!

UBU Fermoy Cont.

Highlights of 2025:

In 2024 the young people attending the groups were predominantly from two direct provision centres in the town. We attended schools in Fermoy, attended community network meetings and liaised with school and home liaison officers to highlight the work that we do with young people. This in turn has increased the number of young people attending our groups and we now have a more diverse group from all backgrounds and communities. This has been a positive outcome for UBU Fermoy and has helped promote integration and inclusion in the local community.

Another aspect of the work which we are very proud of is the reinstatement of Traveller Groups in Fermoy. By building a relationship with the parents initially, we managed to entice some young Travellers back into the project. At first, numbers were low and there was reluctance to trust us, but now we have an average of 9 boys and 7 girls availing of our service on a weekly basis. The relationship and trust is definitely there now, with conversations about personal life at the forefront.

The introduction of a music group has been a huge success. Over the course of the year several young people have learned how to play the guitar and ukelele. From not knowing how to hold a guitar, to performing live at One World Week in November as a music group, it was very special. We also managed to incorporate folk music on the guitar with rap music and this was also performed at the event.

Some of our young people still speak about the trips which we went on throughout the year. The standout one for us was the Ireland vs Armenia match in Aviva Stadium. We took four young people from direct provision to Dublin for the day before going to watch the match. Those young people had not been outside of Cork, and it was a major experience for them.

The relationship built with other CDYS projects throughout 2025 was amazing. We participated in many cross-project trips and initiatives. From hiking to day trips.

Lastly, the biggest achievement of 2025 was the relationship we built with every young person in the project. Each one of them has their own background story and path in life and we admire every one of their stories. From just being there for the ones who needed an open and honest chat about their personal life, to offering young people a space for when they were removed from school, to guiding them towards education, employment and health services, we are proud of what we could offer everybody throughout the year.



UBU The Hut, Gurranabraher

The groups and services which we provide at The Hut are based on an area needs assessment conducted by the CETB. This needs assessment was influenced by local stakeholders such as local schools, community development projects and other services. The needs were also influenced by the young people themselves. We work from a personal development, person centred & global youth work approach. Youth participation in decision making is a key factor that influences what services we provide.

Throughout the week at The Hut UBU project, we have a range of groups such as a Homework Support Group, Music Group, Rap - Song Writing & Beats Group, Teen Gym, Art, Traveller Boys Group, Soccer Group and various other youth cafes and groups. Among all these, we have one to one opportunities. Young people can attend The Hut to speak with our youth workers around any personal issues including sexual health, mental health & addiction. The youth workers will listen, refer and sign post the young person to other specialist agencies for further help. We also work with young people around employment, education & training. Young people get the opportunity to do their Driver Theory Test, get help with CV's, apply for jobs and more. We also link young people into trainings locally including Safe Pass, Manual Handling etc. As well as all the above, we run various events and trips throughout the year including International projects, Gurranabraher Summer Scheme, Fishing Trips, Global Youth Work Projects, and attend various events. We are founding members of the Northside Youth Forum that aims to give young people a chance to influence decision making in their local area. We also have our very own Mental Health & Wellbeing programme called 'Mind Your Head'. As well as that, we run a specific Arts project called 'Cork Creates'. Its aims to provide opportunities for young people and remove barriers to engage with the arts.

We work with approx. 80 to 100 young people per month, not including young people who get the opportunity to participate in our Mind Your Head programme and our Cork Creates Outreach Arts Projects.

Our work locally in Gurranabraher & Churchfield is supported by the Cork Kerry Community Work Department Health Action Zone, Cork City Partnership, Cork City Council, Cork Sports Partnership, Cork ETB, Music Generation Cork City, Leargas, Erasmus+, Local schools and Sexual Health Centre.

A Year of Connection, Creativity, and Courage: The Hut in 2025

In 2025, The Hut UBU Youth Project continued to be far more than a building or a timetable. It was a place of belonging, creativity, challenge, laughter, leadership, and growth – a space where young people felt safe to show up as themselves and to imagine what might be possible next.

Guided by a Global Youth Work lens, all activity throughout the year encouraged young people to see their lives in a wider context – linking local experiences to global issues such as equality, human rights, mental health, identity, peace, and social justice. Whether through creative projects, international travel, sport, or everyday conversations, young people were supported to reflect critically on the world around them and their role within it. Across the year, hundreds of young people from Gurranabraher and Churchfield engaged with The Hut through drop-ins, group work, creative programmes, sports, international mobility, Mind Your Head, and one-to-one supports. Some came daily, some returned after time away, and others walked through the door for the first time – all finding a space that met them where they were at.



UBU The Hut, Gurranabraher Cont.

A Space Young People Choose

One of the clearest indicators of The Hut's impact in 2025 was the continued rise in informal engagement. Drop-in attendance increased steadily across the year, particularly during Q2 and the summer months. Young people used the space to socialise, relax, access digital facilities, and talk with trusted adults.

These informal moments often became the starting point for deeper engagement — linking young people into groups, supports, leadership roles, and opportunities they may never have accessed otherwise. For many, The Hut acted as a protective and stabilising presence in their lives.

Mental Health, Wellbeing, and Preventative Support

Mental health and wellbeing were embedded across almost every aspect of The Hut's work in 2025. Young people engaged through gym and sports programmes, creative expression, sexual health supports, and targeted one-to-one interventions.

A major milestone this year was the continued expansion of Mind Your Head, The Hut's mental health and wellbeing programme. Delivered directly to young people in schools and youth settings, the programme also evolved into a training model for professionals, with youth workers from across CDYS trained to deliver it themselves. This ensured the learning and impact extended far beyond one project or location.

Alongside this, young people were supported to access counselling, gym memberships, MMA training, and other wellbeing supports — addressing mental health through practical, interest-led and non-stigmatising approaches.

Learning Without Borders: Interrailing and Youth Exchange Experiences

International mobility was a powerful learning tool in 2025. In January, young people took part in CDYS's first ever DiscoverEU Interrailing Project, travelling by train across Europe through cities including Amsterdam, Berlin, Lindau, Innsbruck, and Venice. For many participants, this was their first time travelling abroad and their first experience navigating international transport systems independently.

Young people were actively involved in route planning, budgeting, accommodation decisions, time management, and group problem-solving. Music was used as a thematic thread throughout the journey, with visits to music museums, cultural spaces, and live performances embedded into the programme.

Later in the year, The Hut organised a Erasmus+ Youth Exchange in Greece, focused on positive life choices, identity, and personal development. A particularly significant moment within this process was the inclusion of a young person on the advance planning visit. Their involvement ensured that activities, accommodation, and programme design reflected young people's needs and interests from the outset — reinforcing a genuinely youth-led approach rather than adult-led decision-making.

Across both projects, young people developed confidence, independence, communication skills, and resilience. They learned to adapt to unexpected challenges, support one another, and reflect critically on their experiences — core principles of Global Youth Work in action. The success of these projects has led to plans to continue international opportunities in the coming years.

UBU The Hut, Gurranabraher Cont.

Creativity, Inclusion, and the Doras ‘Portal’ Project

In partnership with Cork Creates, one of the most powerful creative initiatives of the year was The Portal, delivered with students from Doras Training Centre – a service supporting young people with intellectual disabilities and autism.

This was a fully inclusive, youth-led creative residency, running over several months and culminating in a graduation performance. Participants shaped every stage of the project – from initial ideas and visual concepts to sound, movement, and final presentation.

Delivered within the Doras setting, the project removed barriers relating to cost, transport, and anxiety, ensuring accessibility for all participants. Participation grew steadily as young people gained confidence and ownership. The final installation – The Portal – symbolised transition, growth, and the journey into adulthood.

Beyond the artistic output, the project supported communication, collaboration, confidence, and self-expression, standing as a strong example of inclusive youth arts practice grounded in dignity and respect.

Working in Partnership with Young Travellers and TVG

A core strand of work throughout 2025 involved deepened partnership with the Traveller Visibility Group (TVG) and sustained engagement with young Travellers. Dedicated Traveller-specific spaces, alongside creative and leadership projects, supported identity, pride, and participation while responding to the realities of exclusion and discrimination experienced by young Traveller communities.

This work was recognised externally as strong practice, with elements viewed as a model for other services. A trauma-aware, culturally responsive approach ensured young people felt safe to express themselves, build confidence, and engage meaningfully with youth work on their own terms.

Summer Scheme: Belonging, Fun, and Continuity

The Summer Scheme remained a cornerstone of The Hut’s annual programme. Delivered across two weeks for different age groups, it brought together dozens of young people each day for trips, activities, and shared experiences.

Activities ranged from sports days and outdoor adventures to options days where young people chose their own activities in smaller groups. Despite funding pressures, the scheme was delivered successfully through strong planning, partnership, and financial stewardship.

For many young people, the Summer Scheme provided structure, safety, and connection during a time when supports can be limited. It also introduced new young people to The Hut, many of whom continued engaging with weekly services afterward.

Youth Voice, Leadership, and Pride

Throughout 2025, young people from The Hut played active roles in the Northside Youth Forum, Youth Councils, consultations, and national events such as NYCI Youth Voices. A particularly proud milestone was a long-term participant being selected to sit on a Local Community Safety Partnership, embedding youth voice directly into local decision-making.

Another defining moment came with the delivery of the first-ever youth-specific Pride mental health event in Cork. Entirely youth-led, alcohol-free, and grounded in wellbeing, the event combined live music, creative spaces, information stands, and celebration – affirming LGBTQ+ young people’s right to safe, visible spaces in the city.

UBU The Hut, Gurranabraher Cont.

Lord Mayor's Award

In 2025, young people connected to The Hut were recognised through the Lord Mayor's Award, celebrating their commitment, leadership, and positive contribution to their community. This recognition highlighted the impact of sustained youth work relationships and the importance of creating opportunities where young people's efforts, growth, and civic engagement are publicly acknowledged and valued.

Partnership with Solas Youth Project

Our ongoing partnership with Solas Youth Project continued to strengthen in 2025, providing valuable opportunities for shared learning, connection, and youth exchange. Through reciprocal visits and joint activities, young people built relationships with peers from a different community, challenged assumptions, and developed confidence through collaboration. This partnership reinforced the value of inter-project cooperation and demonstrated how shared youth work values can create meaningful experiences beyond local boundaries.

Looking Ahead

As 2025 came to a close, The Hut stood as a space shaped by trust, creativity, inclusion, and a strong Global Youth Work ethos. From local community rooms to European cities, from quiet one-to-one conversations to packed dancefloors, young people were supported to grow, lead, and belong. 2026 promises to be another bumper year.



Up Cork

UP Cork provides safe, inclusive, and affirming spaces for LGBTQ+ young people aged 15 to 22. The project supports personal development, mental health, social connection, and empowerment, enabling participants to explore their identities, build confidence, and engage positively with local and European communities. UP Cork is primarily funded through the LGBTQ+ Grant, the project's core and most consistent source of income, with additional support from project-based funding, partnerships linked to creative programmes, Global Youth Work initiatives, and Erasmus+ activities.



The project employs a holistic, needs-led approach grounded in non-formal education and Global Youth Work principles. Programmes are youth-led and responsive, combining group work, one-to-one support, creative expression, reflection, and peer support to meet young people where they are. Activities foster inclusion, emotional well-being, resilience, and intercultural understanding, with a strong emphasis on supporting trans and gender-diverse participants.

Throughout 2025, UP Cork delivered a wide range of activities designed to support identity exploration, personal development, and social connection. Weekly LGBTQ+ youth group sessions provided a consistent, safe environment for young people to engage with peers, discuss challenges, and build confidence. Creative workshops in podcasting, MCing, spoken word, music, visual arts, and storytelling offered opportunities for self-expression and reflection, while one-to-one support sessions addressed mental health, safeguarding, personal guidance, and family support.

In addition to local programmes, UP Cork participated in national and international initiatives. Preparations for and participation in the Erasmus+ Youth Exchange “Pride Across Borders” enabled Irish young people to connect with peers in Greece, exploring new cultures, languages, and customs. These exchanges promoted mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue, and a stronger European identity, while encouraging participants to consider youth advocacy, social change, and leadership opportunities.

Pride-related events, including the Pride Pony Club Teen Disco, provided safe public spaces for celebration and self-expression, many for the first time. Staff training throughout the year enhanced service delivery, covering LGBTQ+ inclusion, gender identity, cultural competence, mental health, resilience, safeguarding, risk assessment, non-formal education, and Erasmus+ project management.

In 2025, UP Cork's LGBTQ+ Youth Project continued to provide safe, inclusive, and affirming spaces for young people, supporting personal development, mental health, and social connection. The year began with the initiation of weekly youth groups, focusing on building social connections, promoting emotional well-being, and encouraging self-expression. Early training for staff in inclusion, safeguarding, and non-formal education enhanced the quality of support, and participants quickly reported feeling safer and more confident in exploring and expressing their identities.

Up Cork Cont.

As the year progressed, creative workshops and peer support sessions became central to the project, providing opportunities for participants to explore their identities, emotions, and resilience. These sessions fostered trust and a sense of belonging within the groups, while conversations around school and family challenges informed tailored support strategies. The third quarter concentrated on preparations for the Erasmus+ Youth Exchange, with a strong focus on intercultural learning, risk assessments, and careful accommodation planning to ensure trans and gender-diverse participants were fully supported. Youth workers developed key skills in facilitating inclusive and intercultural group experiences, ensuring that all participants could engage safely and confidently. The year culminated in the Erasmus+ exchange to Greece, which had a transformative impact on all involved. Participants navigated new cities, engaged with local culture, and practiced language skills, while cultural evenings, discussions on LGBTQ+ rights, and identity-focused activities deepened empathy and understanding. For many, this was their first experience abroad, opening new perspectives on cultural diversity and European citizenship. The project's commitment to inclusion was further recognised through an award for excellence in LGBTI+ youth inclusion from BelongTo, highlighting UP Cork's dedication to creating empowering spaces.

Across 2025, these activities collectively fostered confidence, resilience, social connection, and personal growth. Creative workshops, peer support, and one-to-one sessions provided safe spaces for young people to express themselves, while participation in international exchanges and leadership opportunities broadened horizons, strengthened European identity, and inspired some participants toward advocacy and social change. UP Cork's holistic, needs-led approach ensured that every young person experienced meaningful engagement, belonging, and empowerment throughout the year.

Over the year, more than 30 young people engaged locally through youth groups, one-to-one support, and creative programmes, with 11 participants attending the Erasmus+ exchange. Each quarter, 23 to 26 LGBTQ+ young people aged 15 to 23 took part in programmes, representing male, female, and non-binary identities. Across the year, over 770 youth contacts were recorded, with 45 group sessions delivered, alongside ongoing one-to-one and family support. For many participants, UP Cork remained the only environment where they felt fully safe, accepted, and able to express themselves authentically.

Throughout 2025, young people experienced increased confidence, resilience, and self-expression. Creative workshops, consistent group engagement, and peer support enabled participants to move from isolation and anxiety toward greater self-belief, stronger peer connections, and emerging leadership within the group. One-to-one sessions provided confidential spaces to discuss emotional challenges, reinforcing self-worth and protective factors.

The Erasmus+ Youth Exchange "Pride Across Borders" had a transformative effect on all involved. For many Irish participants, it was their first experience abroad, offering opportunities to navigate new cities, discover different cultures, and practice language skills. Cultural exchange nights facilitated mutual respect and understanding through food, music, and storytelling. Discussions on LGBTQ+ rights and identity fostered empathy and encouraged participants to consider future roles in youth advocacy. Participation in creative programmes, leadership development, and international exchanges increased confidence, reduced isolation, and broadened horizons for young people. Pride events, including the youth-led Teen Disco, offered safe, affirming public spaces that enhanced community visibility and belonging.

Up Cork Cont.

Recognition of UP Cork's work through the BelongTo award for excellence in LGBTQ+ youth inclusion validated the organisation's dedication to creating safe, supportive, and empowering environments. Policies and facilities were improved to better support trans and gender-diverse participants, addressing accommodation and safeguarding challenges in local and international settings. Every achievement, whether a personal breakthrough in a workshop or a milestone in an international exchange, contributed to the collective growth and empowerment of young people. UP Cork would like to acknowledge the invaluable support of BeLong To, NYCI, Trócaire, Cork Pride, the GayProject, Coolmine Addiction Services, SolarWind, creative facilitators such as Alex Brady, and the many European partners, artists, youth workers, and organisations who contributed their expertise, time, and support throughout 2025.

UP Cork embeds Global Youth Work principles across all programmes, fostering connections to Sustainable Development Goals, including Good Health and Well-Being (SDG 3), Quality Education (SDG 4), Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10), and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).



Global Youth Work

The Global Youth Work Programme in 2025 was funded by the Irish Aid but also supported through a combination of funding streams including Erasmus+ and UBU support through the LCYP. Additional support was provided through inter-agency collaboration with organisations such as Cork ETB, NYCI, Scala Youth Ministry, and the Department of Education and Youth. The Global Youth Work Programme aims to empower young people to become informed, confident, and active global citizens. Through creative, educational, and participatory approaches, the project supports young people to engage with social justice, equality, sustainability, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while strengthening their leadership, voice, and sense of agency.

The programme is grounded in a holistic, needs-led, and youth-centred approach, using non-formal education and creative methodologies to make global issues relevant and accessible. Learning is experiential and participatory, encouraging reflection, dialogue, collaboration, and critical thinking, while creating inclusive and supportive spaces where young people can safely explore identity, power, and responsibility.

A key strand of work in 2025 was The CDYS MCing School: Breaking the Silence. Running from June to November, this programme brought together young people aged 15–17 from all CDYS branches. Through a combination of online and in-person workshops, participants developed skills in public speaking, voice control, storytelling, and creative expression. Group rehearsals and collaborative work fostered teamwork, resilience, and creativity, while regular reflection and feedback sessions supported confidence building and self-awareness. The programme culminated in a final performance, where participants confidently showcased their work, demonstrating significant growth in self-esteem, communication skills, and leadership.

The Scala Leadership Programme, delivered in collaboration with Scala Youth Ministry, further supported young people to develop friendship, listening skills, teamwork, confidence, and an understanding of the SDGs. This initiative strengthened interpersonal skills while encouraging young people to reflect on their role within their communities and the wider world. One World Week 2025, themed “Change is a Journey,” served as a central moment of celebration and learning. The programme included a county-wide soccer tournament on Friday 21st November, hosted by CDYS The Hut UBU Youth Project, followed by the One World Week Project Showcase on Saturday 22nd November at South Parish Community Centre. The tournament promoted diversity, inclusion, and teamwork through sport, with young people travelling from across the county, including Kerry, to participate.

The Project Showcase brought together 83 young people and youth workers from Mallow, Cork City, Mitchelstown, Fermoy, and Midleton. Each branch presented youth-led projects linked to sustainability, social justice, diversity, and global citizenship. The day featured music, art, storytelling, Erasmus+ reflections, and creative workshops, including a collective art piece facilitated by artist Cristina Espada. Participants from the MCing School took on the role of hosts and MCs for the entire event, applying their newly developed skills in a real and meaningful context.

The CDYS MCing School: Breaking the Silence, together with NYCI training for youth workers, supported CDYS’s ongoing work toward developing Youth Councils in each branch. These initiatives focused on building the skills, confidence, and organisational structures required for meaningful youth participation and shared decision-making.

Global Youth Work Cont.

The NYCI training introduced the Three Strands of the Youth Panel Programme, which now inform the emerging Youth Council model across CDYS. Strand One focuses on a year-long, youth-led project aligned with CDYS priorities and grounded in critical social education, giving young people practical experience of planning, collaboration, and leadership. Strand Two centres on organisational input, creating structured opportunities for Youth Councils to share views on programmes and operational matters, and to engage directly with managers and staff at both local and regional levels. Strand Three supports representation and progression, enabling young people to take part in external forums, consultations, and public events, based on their individual strengths and interests.

The MCing School complemented this framework by developing communication, facilitation, and public-speaking skills, helping prepare young people to confidently contribute within Youth Councils, represent their peers, and engage in leadership and advocacy roles across CDYS branches.

An additional strand of work was the Erasmus+ Youth Worker Mobility project “Walk the Talk”, hosted in Portugal at the Impact Beach House. This initiative brought youth workers together from across Europe to explore human rights, environmental justice, mental health, climate action, activism, decolonisation of practice, and global youth work. Through participatory workshops, field visits, and cultural immersion, youth workers strengthened their capacity to integrate the SDGs into practice and foster globally aware, inclusive youth work.

Across 2025, the Global Youth Work Programme engaged young people from all five CDYS branches, with 83 young people and youth workers participating in the One World Week Showcase alone. Additional engagement occurred through the MCing School, leadership programmes, sports events, and Erasmus+ initiatives, ensuring broad and meaningful participation throughout the year.

CDYS acknowledges the contribution of artists Alex Brady and Cristina Espada, Scala Youth Ministry, Cork ETB, NYCI, LCYP, Irish Aid, Erasmus+, Cork City Council, the Department of Education and Youth, and UCC placement students. Their support and collaboration were integral to the success of the programme.

Throughout the year, young people demonstrated remarkable growth in confidence, creativity, and leadership. From finding their voice through MCing, to presenting projects linked to global justice, to engaging in intercultural learning and sport, each experience reinforced that meaningful participation builds resilience and agency.

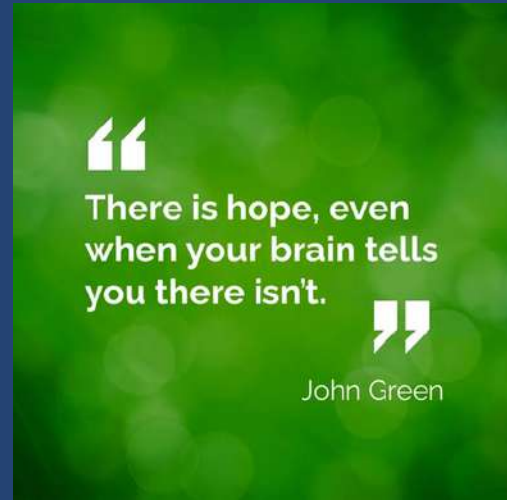
One World Week stood out as a powerful moment where young people saw their local actions reflected within a global context, strengthening their sense of belonging and responsibility.

The successful delivery of international youth worker mobility further strengthened CDYS’s capacity to embed global youth work principles across all services.

CDYS is a member of the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA), the national network for Development Education in Ireland. In 2025, CDYS was recognised for good practice under the IDEA Code, specifically Code 4 (encouraging critical thinking), Code 7 (building knowledge, skills, and attitudes), and Code 9 (active reflection and learning). This work was shared as an example of good practice within the IDEA Code community.



CDYS Outreach Counselling Service



CDYS Outreach Counselling is a low-cost service based in Mallow/ Mitchelstown/ Fermoy. There is no cut-off at age 18. It has a sliding scale regarding fees. Counselling is offered to young people, 12 and up, and a broad range of issues are supported. Most commonly, young people avail of treatment for issues of anxiety, depression, relationship issues, self-esteem, grief and loss, school related issues and Trauma.

A space is offered to young people to attend to matters that might otherwise not be attended to. In doing this, the young person is empowered believe in themselves and have an experience to find their voice again. A time to feel that they are not as powerless to change things as they may think. Space is offered to parents to deepen their connection with their adolescent and work together to find solutions.

The service has been running for the last 9 years with Finbarr O' Donovan M.I.A.C.P. who is an accredited Counsellor and Psychotherapist with a B.A. (Hons) in Counselling and Psychotherapy from MTU and has a background in Social Care.

Theories applied include adolescent development models, Polyvagal Theory, EMDR, Family Systems Theory, Gestalt, CBT, IFS, Mindfulness based stress reduction integrating resilience and coping skills.

Finbarr had an opportunity to do some group work this year with a wonderful CDYS group which was fun and an opportunity to witness the fantastic relationship between youth workers and young people.

- In 2025, 311 hours of counselling were offered with 237 hours attended.
- 95 of these hours included parent support work.
- 43 clients received counselling
- 28 clients were under 18 and 15 clients were over 18.
- 22 clients were in Mallow
- 21 clients were in Fermoy/ Mitchelstown

The service looks forward to another year of infusing young people with hope, possibility and their own capacity for healing and the healing that comes with the reenergised support of loved ones. Themes in the work this past year included digestive issues and the preservation of life.

Creative Community Alternatives (CCA) is an initiative funded by Tusla, whose support is instrumental in enabling us to deliver positive outcomes for children, young people, and families across our community.

The goal of the CCA project is to provide alternative, community-based interventions for children and young people who are at risk of entering care or who are currently in care. Many of these young people experience complex and interrelated challenges, including abuse, neglect, family separation, substance misuse, mental health difficulties, and socio-economic disadvantage. Through the delivery of strength-based, trauma-informed, and wraparound supports, the project seeks to empower children, young people, and their families to build resilience and to thrive within their own communities.

Our approach is holistic and tailored to the individual needs of each young person and their family. CCA is delivered on a one-to-one basis, which has proven highly effective in fostering strong, trusting relationships between young people and staff. This relational approach helps to break down barriers, supports meaningful engagement, and facilitates positive relationship-building. Through collaborative planning and personalised support, we assist young people in developing problem-solving skills, coping strategies, and self-confidence. In addition, we prioritise strengthening family support networks and building connections within the wider community to promote sustainable, long-term outcomes.

We adopt a relational approach in our work, delivering activities which promote healthy and active lifestyles. This includes organised outings to local amenities such as the Mallow Riverwalk, Ballyhass Adventure Centre, Doneraile Park, and the Donkey Sanctuary in Lisscarrol. In addition, we provide home visits and make use of dedicated CDYS facilities, including the Blue Cube in Mallow, The Hut in Gurrannbraher, the facilities in both Fermoy and Mitchelstown to ensure that young people feel supported within safe, inclusive, and welcoming environments.

In 2025, CCA supported 47 young people, enabling them to remain connected to their communities and family support networks. This outcome reflects the strong engagement of participants and the effectiveness of the program in fostering confidence and resilience. The organisation is pleased with the progress achieved and the positive impact delivered for each young person involved.

This work would not be possible without the support of our valued community partners. In particular, we acknowledge the contribution of the Activate Club, which has provided young people with meaningful opportunities to connect with their peers and develop positive, supportive relationships.

A notable achievement in 2025 was the support provided to a young person requiring five days of weekly intervention following a Section 12 order. Our staff facilitated open and effective communication with both the young person and their parent, clearly explaining health considerations. As a result, the family relationship has significantly improved, the young person is now independently managing their health, and ongoing support is no longer required. Importantly, the risk of a placement breakdown has been mitigated.

This is just one example of the numerous successes achieved throughout the year, all made possible by the creativity, dedication, and perseverance of the staff team.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to continually improving our services. Staff are encouraged to identify areas for professional growth and participate in targeted training to develop their skills further. A culture of continuous learning is embedded within the team, supported by regular reflective debriefs that explore what went well, what could be improved, and how practice can evolve to achieve the best outcomes for young people.

Creative Community Alternatives (CCA) Cont.



Maintaining our core community spaces, including the Blue Cube, Stag Park, and Fermoy, is essential to ensuring we have the resources to meet the needs of our young people. These spaces provide safe, accessible environments where young people can engage, connect, and access the support they need.

Prevention Partnership & Family Support (PPFS) & Meitheal Project

Tusla funds the Prevention, Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) and Meitheal Programme, which delivers early-intervention, family-centred supports for children, young people and their families. Through structured collaboration with parents, children and local community organisations, the programme promotes family empowerment, well-being and skills development, with a focus on identifying and addressing needs at an early stage to prevent escalation of risk.

The project applies a needs-based, collaborative approach to ensure the timely delivery of high-quality, targeted supports. The Meitheal case coordination model promotes effective communication and joint working by bringing together professionals from relevant services to respond to each family's identified needs. The overarching aim is to empower families to address challenges while safeguarding the health, rights and overall well-being of children and young people.

A range of activities is provided to promote connection and personal development. Family events and workshops foster a sense of belonging, while one-to-one support and home visits offer tailored care. Skills-building sessions and multi-agency collaboration ensure families are equipped with practical tools and resources. In 2025, the PPFS team also carried out significant advocacy work, supporting families to access essential services and achieving meaningful, transformative outcomes.

Over the past year, the project supported 117 families, support was tailored to meet families' specific needs. This individualised approach helps families build resilience, navigate challenges, increase confidence, and work towards greater independence, with the ultimate goal of requiring minimal ongoing support.

We extend our sincere thanks to Tusla for their continued funding and support. We also acknowledge the invaluable contributions of local services and practitioners who collaborate with us to ensure the success of the project. Their commitment has been essential in delivering effective and meaningful support.

Over the past year, the Family support staff have achieved several significant outcomes. One of the major successes has been supporting numerous families involved with Child Protection to a point where they now require little to no ongoing support. This has been achieved through the consistency demonstrated by staff, the implementation of well-structured plans for the family, and a strong focus on relationship building with families.

Another key achievement has been the continued work addressing school refusal. Staff collaborated closely with schools and families to develop and implement individualised reintegration plans. While many of these plans initially commenced with reduced school attendance, they have since progressed, with several children now attending full school days. This reflects the effectiveness of collaborative planning and sustained support across the year.

IPS (International Protection Service) Family Support Project



The IPS Family Support Project aims to support young people and families as they navigate the challenges of settling into a new community and culture. Through early intervention, tailored support, and an emphasis on empowerment, the project helps families to access essential resources, develop key skills, and build the confidence needed to thrive in Ireland.

To address the specific challenges faced by families and young people, the project adopts a comprehensive, needs-led approach that combines both individual and group-based interventions. Group work promotes social connection, cultural integration, and a sense of belonging, while one-to-one support ensures that families receive tailored and responsive assistance. All activities are delivered within a trauma-informed, strengths-based framework to ensure meaningful and effective support.

The project also utilises the Meitheal Family Support Process to enable coordinated, early intervention for children and young people. This collaborative, strengths-based approach brings together families and relevant professionals to ensure timely, holistic, and well-aligned support. The IPS Family Support Project delivers a combination of individual and group-based activities. Individual support involves one-to-one work with families to help them navigate systems, access services, and overcome barriers to integration. Group-based work is primarily focused on young people and offers structured programmes designed to build relationships, strengthen social skills, and support cultural adjustment. Peer-led initiatives, social activities, and workshops provide safe and supportive environments for learning and personal development, while fostering a strong sense of belonging and community.

For example, the project actively engages young people in baking and cooking activities, using these sessions to encourage social interaction, develop practical life skills, and build self-confidence. These hands-on activities create a relaxed and enjoyable setting in which young people can express creativity, learn new skills, and experience a sense of achievement.

In 2025, The IPS worked with 22 families directly, helping them address challenges, built support networks and get access to resources in the community. The group work carried out in Mallow and Fermoy proved very beneficial for families. It helped foster connections among young people and gave them the opportunity to build friendships in a relaxed and informal setting.

We would like to recognise the commitment of local organisations, schools, and community services that work alongside us to support families and young people. Their ongoing collaboration plays an important role in helping families move towards more positive and hopeful futures.



Support for Young People and Families

Youth Ministry

A unique project within CDYS is youth ministry, which focuses on fostering the spiritual growth and development of young people. This initiative aims to create supportive environments where youth can explore their faith, build meaningful relationships, and engage with their community. By providing opportunities for mentorship, education, and service, the youth ministry seeks to empower young individuals to navigate the complexities of modern life while grounding them in the core values of the Gospel. Through various programs and activities, this project addresses the diverse needs of youth, helping them to thrive both spiritually and socially.

Pope John Paul II emphasized the significance of youth and the ministry dedicated to them. Just as Jesus accompanied the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the Church is called to be a "traveling companion" for young people (Pope John Paul II, WYD 1995).

This role has evolved significantly over time. Today's youth are influenced by numerous social and cultural factors that often diverge from the spiritual and moral values central to the Gospel. Consequently, it is essential to view youth ministry as a holistic endeavor that encompasses activities within families, schools, and the broader community.

This project, funded by the Parish of Mallow, supported over 666 young people and 132 families in the Mallow area throughout 2025.

The CDYS Youth Ministry role is wide ranging and adapts to support the emerging spiritual, Parish, pastoral and community needs. During 2025, the activities included;

Pastoral Support for Families: Providing guidance and assistance to families within the community.

One-on-One Support for Young People: Offering individualized support tailored to the needs of young individuals.

Confirmation Retreats Across the Diocese: Organizing retreats designed to prepare young people for the sacrament of Confirmation.

Assistance with Confirmation Preparation and Ceremony: Supporting the logistical and spiritual aspects of the Confirmation process.

Pope John Paul II Award: Serving as the coordinator for this award within the Diocese, recognizing youth involvement in community service and faith development.

St. Aloysius Faith Camp: Facilitating a faith-based camp in Mallow to foster spiritual growth among youth.



Youth Ministry cont.

Support and Guidance for Other Faith Camps and Summer Camps: Providing assistance and oversight for additional camps as needed.

Engagement in Liturgical Events: Involving young people in activities such as the November Remembrance Masses and the Mass for World Day of the Sick.

Nativity Play Participation: Encouraging youth involvement in the annual Nativity Play to celebrate the Christmas season.

ACTivate Club: Running a weekly club specifically for young people with Autism, promoting social interaction and inclusion.

Lourdes Interviews: Conducting interviews for young people interested in volunteering for the Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes.

Christmas Food Appeal: Organizing a food drive and distributing hampers to those in need during the Christmas season.

Easter Food Appeal: Facilitating a similar initiative during the Easter period to support families in the community.

Mallow Parish Pastoral Council: Collaborating with the council to address pastoral needs and enhance community engagement.

Retreats

Confirmation preparation retreats are important for young people because they give them time and space to reflect on their faith in a meaningful and engaging way. Away from the normal routine of school and daily life, retreats encourage young people to explore the meaning of Confirmation, build friendships with their peers, and feel part of their faith community. Through activities, discussion, and prayer, they can better understand the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how these can guide them in their lives. Overall, retreats help make the sacrament of Confirmation a more personal, memorable, and spiritually enriching experience. During 2025, retreats were delivered across the Diocese to:

- Scartleigh National School., Whitegate NS & Scoil Iosagain Atha Fhada
- Ballyclough National School and Kilbrin National School
- Scoil Mhuire Naofa, Scoil Chlochair Mhuire & Carrigtwohill Community National School



Youth Ministry cont.

ACTivate Club

The CDYS Ministry project supports ACTivate which is designed specifically for young people with autism or other neurodivergent needs, where they can socialise, take part in activities, and build confidence, independence and friendships in a supportive and understanding environment. The activities are often structured but flexible and may include things like games, art, sports, technology activities, or trips. The environment is adapted to suit sensory needs, smaller group sizes, and spaces where young people can take a break if they feel overwhelmed.

Many evenings during 2025, the young people in the club enjoyed creative arts and craft sessions. The young people also developed their baking and cooking skills especially enjoyed tasting the treats. Sports activities were undertaken during club nights, and when a break was needed, the young people took time to relax in the sensory zone. An anxiety and stress workshop was delivered by Colm Mallon which was informative and supportive to the young people and their parents. The ACTivate club also enjoyed a trip to the Aquadome in Tralee and went bowling during the year.



Food Appeal

The food appeal is an important way for communities to support individuals and families who may be struggling to afford basic groceries. With the rising cost of living, many people rely on community supports to help meet their daily needs. In collaboration with various CDYS projects, we successfully assisted 90 families through the distribution of food hampers for the Christmas Food Appeal. These hampers were made possible by the generous contributions from Tesco Food Appeal Mallow, Sheehans Butchers, Brown & Brown Insurance Mallow, Maghnala, EPS Mallow, Mallow Women's Shed Group, local schools, parents, and volunteers.

Youth Ministry cont.

John Paul II Awards

The Pope John Paul II Award is a faith-based award for young people, that encourages them to take an active role in their parish, school, and wider community. Inspired by the life and teachings of Pope John Paul II, the award recognises the time and commitment students give to activities such as volunteering, parish involvement, and developing their faith. Through participation, young people grow in leadership, service, and responsibility while making a positive contribution to the Church and society. The programme also helps students reflect on their personal faith journey and the values of compassion, respect, and community. The 12th Pope John Paul II Award Ceremony was held in Mallow Community Youth Centre on 16th October 2025. 59 young people from across the Diocese received the award. It was a great achievement for the young people, their families, their schools and local parishes and the support was shown with a massive crowd on the night. Schools who were represented on the night, were St Mary's Secondary School Mallow, The Patrician Academy Mallow, St Mary's Secondary School Charleville, C.B.S Charleville, Presentation Secondary School Mitchelstown, St Mary's Secondary School Macroom and Colaiste Mhuire Buttevant & St Mary's High School Midleton and Colaiste Muire Cobh. Guest speaker, the 2025 Cork Rose Nancy Lehane delivered the key note address which emphasised the importance of giving back to the community.



Youth Ministry cont.

St Aloysius Faith Camp

St Aloysius Faith Camp was held in July 2025 with 65 young people participated in the camp, and we were delighted to have over 30 leaders and junior leaders from Mallow Parish Youth Ministry-CDYS, the Pope John Paul II Award & the Mallow CDYS Youth Council participants help over the week.

The Faith Camp allows young people to come together to learn more about their faith while taking part in fun and engaging activities. It usually includes a mix of prayer, discussions, workshops, music, and reflections alongside typical camp activities such as games, team challenges, and outdoor adventures. It aims to help young people deepen their understanding of their beliefs, build friendships, and feel part of a supportive faith community.

The St Aloysius Faith Camp is grateful for the support from Sr Maria Thuan and Sr Anne Therese from the Dominican Sisters of St Cecilia (Ireland) who came daily to deliver Catechesis to the older group of young people and Sr Frances and Sr Mary Stella from the Missionaries of Charity (Blarney) who delivered the Good Shephard Catechesis to our junior group of young people. We appreciate Sr Ita who gave freely of her time to ensure that the young people had the opportunity to have Adoration every day where they had quiet time to sit and talk to Jesus. Every day finished with the celebration of Mass, to which we are very thankful to Fr Greene, Fr Carvill, Fr Lynch & Fr Sheehan.



Appreciation

Youth Ministry depends greatly on the dedication and generosity of its volunteers who help to organise and run a variety of programmes and activities. The volunteers of the ACTivate Club, the Pope John Paul II Award Committee, and the St Aloysius Faith Camp—including both volunteers, students and junior leaders—give generously of their time each week, as well as during the week-long camp in July, to ensure these initiatives are successful. The retreat team also work tirelessly in preparing and delivering the retreat programmes throughout the year.

Special appreciation is extended to Bishop Crean for his continued encouragement and support of Youth Ministry. CDYS would also like to sincerely thank the priests of Mallow Parish for their ongoing commitment to and support of the youth project. Finally, a special word of thanks is due to Sr. Ita for her steadfast support of the St Aloysius Faith Camp.

Education & Training

East Cork Music Project (ECMP) LTI

The CDYS East Cork Music Project has been a cornerstone of creative education in the region since 2011. What began as a response to a clear need for alternative learning pathways has grown into a vibrant hub where young people aged 16–24 can explore music, the arts, and their own potential. Driven by a committed team passionate about youth development, the project continues to thrive and evolve.

ECMP offers a space where learners from diverse backgrounds can engage in education outside the traditional school system. Many of those who join us do so because their individuality wasn't fully understood or supported in mainstream settings. Here, we celebrate those differences. We work with each learner to help them recognise their strengths, build confidence, and develop the life skills and qualifications needed to progress into further education or employment.

Our approach is grounded in a critical social education model, enriched by principles of community education. This framework has helped ECMP earn a strong reputation among local youth as a welcoming, inclusive, and creative environment. It is a place where learners feel safe to express themselves openly and authentically, without fear of judgement.

The staff team plays a central role in fostering this atmosphere. Their empathy, care, and commitment ensure that learners always have someone to turn to, whether they need support, guidance, or simply a listening ear. Together, we continue to build a community where young people can learn, grow, and belong.

There are currently 22 learners on the project. 9 learners are taking our QQI Level 3 General Learning course and 13 learners are taking our QQI Level 4 Employability Skills course. Our QQI Level 3 General Learning course is basically a flexible, beginner-friendly programme that helps learners build confidence and essential skills before moving on to higher-level courses or work. Our QQI Level 4 General Learning course is the next step up from Level 3 and helps learners build stronger academic, practical, and workplace skills. It's a great option for young people who want to push themselves a bit further, get more confident with assignments, and prepare for higher-level courses or employment. Level 4 gives learners a solid foundation, recognised qualifications, and a real sense of achievement. It's ideal for anyone who wants to keep progressing at a steady, manageable pace. On a brief but important note, 7 out of 9 of our learners who completed the Level 4 in August have progressed to various further education courses in Cork City and the other 2 have gone on to employment.

Modules on the QQI Level 3 General Learning course include:

- Communications
- Personal Effectiveness
- Career Preparation
- Art and Design
- Drawing
- Music Appreciation
- Word Processing
- Work Experience
- Mathematics



East Cork Music Project (ECMP) LTI Cont.

Modules on the QQI Level 4 Employability Skills course include:

- Communications
- Personal Effectiveness
- Career Planning
- Drawing
- Music Performance
- Mathematics
- Workplace Safety
- Customer Service
- Word Processing



Each learner is also able to avail of one-to-one counselling from ECMPs amazing counsellor. Our counselling service has become one of the most important supports we offer at ECMP. Many of our learners arrive carrying personal challenges, past school experiences, or day-to-day stresses that can make it hard to focus on their education. Having a qualified counsellor available gives them a safe, confidential space to talk things through, build coping strategies, and feel genuinely heard.

The impact has been huge. Learners who engage with counselling often show increased confidence, better attendance, and a stronger sense of stability. It helps them manage their wellbeing so they can fully participate in the programme and get the most out of their time with us. For many, it's the first time they've had access to this kind of support, and it makes a real difference in their ability to learn, grow, and move forward.

Some highlights of 2025

March 20th ECMP Open Day

We held our open day for incoming learners for the 2025/2026 programme on the 20th of March 2025. Our current learners put together a fantastic performance for visitors and took the lead in showing people around ECMP. They shared their own experiences, talked about what the project means to them, and helped give a real sense of why ECMP is such a supportive and inspiring place to be.

May 12th Jesters Gig

On the 12th of May 2025, ECMP had the honour of closing the Midleton Arts Festival with a performance in Jesters, a small local pub with a big atmosphere. Opportunities like this are incredibly important for our learners. Taking part in public performances helps build confidence, strengthens social skills, and encourages teamwork and responsibility. Learners experience what it means to prepare, rehearse, and deliver something as a group, all while having fun and feeling proud of what they've achieved. Events like these remind our young people that their creativity has a place in the community and that their hard work genuinely pays off.

July 13th Trip to the Hollies Eco Centre in West Cork

The Hollies is an ecological centre in West Cork that focuses on sustainable living, traditional building skills, and community education. It's known for offering hands-on courses in things like natural building, permaculture, woodland management, and eco-friendly living. The space itself is a working example of low-impact living, with natural homes, gardens, and woodlands that people can learn from.

During our visit we got our hands dirty building Cob pizza ovens, the learners were quite hesitant at first but then really got "mucked in" (pun intended).

East Cork Music Project (ECMP) LTI Cont.

July 25th Trip to Spike Island

We brought learners to Spike Island because it offers a powerful, hands-on way to explore Irish history while also supporting personal development. The island's past as a monastery, fortress, and prison opens up meaningful conversations about society, justice, and resilience topics that connect strongly with our social education approach. The trip also gave learners the chance to experience something new, work together, and build confidence in an unfamiliar environment. Between the boat journey, the guided tour, and the shared adventure, the visit helped strengthen group bonds, encourage curiosity, and create a memorable learning experience outside the classroom.

June to November

During this time, we took part in a range of artist events and creative workshops, including a visit to the Gormley's Art exhibition at the Castlemartyr Resort Hotel, a clay tile-making workshop with Nicola Geary, and participation in the Cork Zine Festival. Experiences like these are incredibly valuable for our learners. Engaging with art gives young people a platform to express themselves, explore their identity, and build confidence in their own ideas. Creative activities also support emotional development, problem-solving, and communication skills, while offering a positive outlet for self-expression. These workshops not only introduce learners to new artistic techniques but also show them that their voices and perspectives matter and that creativity can be a powerful tool for personal growth.



Good Lives Project, Macroom LTI

The “Good Lives Project” is a Local Training Initiative based in at CDYS, Macroom. Local Training Initiative programmes (LTIs) are community-based training courses primarily for unemployed individuals aged between 18 and 35. Run in conjunction with Cork ETB the Good Lives project provides opportunities for learners outside of mainstream education (who may be unable to participate in other training for personal, social, or geographic reasons) to engage in a range of learning activities with a view to opening pathways to further training and education options as well as employment opportunities.

A particular focus of the Good Lives project is providing learners with a clear and practicable progression path beyond the programme. With this end in mind modules such as Communications, Functional Maths, Computer Skills and Teamwork Skills are designed and delivered to give each participant a confident grounding and practical competence in these areas as well as the skills and tools to cope with group dynamics in workplace scenarios. The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) module focuses on English language development for students who do not have literacy difficulties in their native language but require assistance developing their written and spoken English. ESOL classes are of enormous benefit to non-national participants in the programme facilitating both their further integration into their local communities as well as advancing their employment prospects.

Also incorporated into the project are the Safe Pass Course, Basic First Aid, Manual Handling, and Child Protection Training as well as personal development, art, horticulture, cooking and sports and creation modules. All of these modules award a recognised QQI Level 3 or Level 4 qualification upon completion. The Work Experience module exemplifies the practical emphasis of the programme, providing participants with the opportunity to engage with local business for a short work placement period. Such placements provide experience in real-world workplace scenarios in which learners can put the more theoretical aspects of the modules into practice as well as giving them the invaluable opportunity to update CVs, practice interview skills and develop confidence in their own ability to gain employment.

Particular highlights of our 2025 academic year included our Art Exhibition in February during which learners’ art works were displayed in the Kool Café in Macroom. Run in partnership with the Macroom School of Art, the exhibition also included a short film created by our students on the theme of “One Community” which was viewed in excess of 5,000 times on various social media platforms. Also in February, as part of our sports and recreation module we organised a trip to the Cork City LeisurePlex for a day’s bowling.

During the summer, as part of our horticulture module our students spent time with a local ecologist planting native trees in the Macroom Castle Demesne. As part of the same module a local herbalist gave three workshops on foraging and incorporating everyday plants into our diets as well as using them to make medicinal salves, ointments, and traditional remedies. June saw the project host our first Annual Sports and Events Day. This included darts, frisbee, a basketball tournament, connect 4 as well as a general knowledge quiz of events from throughout the year. The event was very well attended and was a great success. Of the nine learners who started the programme at the beginning of the academic year six completed the programme with full major awards.



Youth Clubs

CDYS had eight youth clubs affiliated with the organisation during 2025. CDYS provides support around affiliation, insurance, garda vetting and safeguarding as well as club activities and support around grant applications.



- CDYS - Play as you Please
- CDYS - FriendS Youth Club Midleton
- CDYS - FriendS Youth Club Mallow
- CDYS - Lismire Youth Club
- CDYS - ACTivate Youth Club
- CDYS - Kinsale Youth Community Cafe
- CDYS - ACTivate Club Mallow
- CDYS - East Cork Comic Con & Youth Group



Safeguarding & Vetting for the Diocese of Cloyne 2025

Overview

The Diocese of Cloyne funds Cloyne Diocesan Youth Service to provide Safeguarding and Vetting Coordinator Services to the Diocese of Cloyne. The Safeguarding and Vetting Coordinator is an employee of CDYS.

The Safeguarding & Vetting Co-ordinator for CDSC manages the CDYS Office. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator for CDSC in the Diocese of Cloyne provides specific administrative as well as organisational support to the chair of the CDSC in the execution of their functions and maintains all records, files and data bases pertaining to Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Services, including training, preparation of school/ parish and external audits, enquiries or other relevant information that normally resides within the CDS office. It also maintains personnel files on all trained and vetted representatives in the Diocese.

The Safeguarding and Vetting Coordinator role also acts as the Diocesan signatory pertaining to all vetting and reference checks in the Diocese and maintains and updates a database and record of all vetting applications and correspondence. This function is carried out in line with clear guidelines and procedures on Garda vetting within the Diocese of Cloyne.

Overview of Activities

Strategic Planning and Policy Development

In January 2025, work commenced on the Child Safeguarding Strategic Three-Year Plan for the Diocese of Cloyne, in accordance with the National Board's new safeguarding policy, *A Safe and Welcoming Church*, launched in June 2024. This work was undertaken under the direction of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee.

During February 2025, delegated work from the Safeguarding Committee included the finalisation of the Strategic Three-Year Plan and the procurement of updated child-friendly safeguarding posters, as requested by parishes. Work was also undertaken on the development of the Cloyne Diocesan Social Media Policy, informed by safeguarding and data protection considerations.

Parish Safeguarding Audits and Support

At the beginning of January 2025, the Chairperson of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee and the Child Safeguarding Training Co-ordinator began analysing the 46 Annual Parish Safeguarding Self-Audits submitted by parishes.

Arising from this analysis, the Annual Communication Plan and Annual Training Plan for 2025 were developed. These plans guided the work of the Safeguarding Committee throughout the year.

Throughout 2025, ongoing support was provided to parishes that requested assistance. In certain cases, the Safeguarding Training Co-ordinator visited parishes to provide guidance on safeguarding procedures, audit completion, forms, and training requirements.

Safeguarding & Vetting for the Diocese of Cloyne 2025

Training and Capacity Building

Child Safeguarding Training Returns were submitted to the National Board by the end of March 2025, in line with national requirements.

Adults at Risk of Abuse Training, was delivered on 14th May 2025 at the Vienna Woods Hotel in the evening, to accommodate deacons who were unavailable during daytime hours.

Additional training activities during 2025 included:

- Attendance at National Board training on Resilience and Supervision in Maynooth on 12th February 2025
- Attendance at Data Protection Training provided by the National Board on 15th May 2025 in Maynooth
- Delivery of Refresher Child Safeguarding Training for diocesan priests on 19th May 2025, focusing on the 2024 safeguarding policy updates and the migration to a three-year vetting cycle
- Delivery of a Child Safeguarding Session in Youghal Parish on 23rd May 2025, at parish request.
- In November 2025, in collaboration with Fr. Jim Moore and Michael Walsh (Education Officer), five in-person Garda Vetting Validator/Affiliate Training sessions were delivered across the five deaneries.

Vetting, Compliance, and Oversight

From January to May 2025, continuous liaison took place with the President of the Cloyne Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage regarding vetting requirements, documentation, and compliance. A significant volume of re-vetting of volunteers was required in 2025.

Mandatory briefings on new vetting forms and procedures were attended in Thurles on 11th June 2025. Vetting documentation was subsequently audited by the Vetting Bureau Compliance Unit on 25th June 2025, with all documentation found to be in order and the audit deemed successful.

Faith Camps and Pilgrimages

Preparatory work for the Annual Lourdes Pilgrimage began in January 2025 and included risk assessments, vetting and re-vetting of volunteers, and safeguarding arrangements for the youth contingent.

From April to May 2025, preparations commenced for the 2025 Faith Camps, including vetting, safeguarding training, and risk assessments. Faith Camps were held in Mallow, Mitchelstown, Fermoy, and Knockadoon.

A Vulnerable Persons Training pre-meeting for designated personnel was held on 13 May 2025, followed by the delivery of Vulnerable Persons Training to clergy and deacons on 14 May 2025 at the Vienna Woods Hotel.

In June 2025, preparations began with Fr. Roman Biletskyy in relation to running a Faith Camp in Knockadoon, including guidance on vetting requirements and safeguarding procedures.

Additional safeguarding preparation took place in August 2025 for a Ukrainian Faith Camp in Knockadoon, with on-site Child Safeguarding Training delivered on 24 August 2025.

Munster Safeguarding Group

The Munster Safeguarding Group met on several occasions during 2025 to progress shared safeguarding and vetting initiatives. Key areas of work included standardising vetting guidance across Munster, addressing new vetting changes, updating vetting forms, revising the Annual Parish Audit in line with new policy requirements, and preparing materials for parishes and schools.

Special recognition of the Lord Mayor's Award

In 2025, young people connected to The Hut were recognised through the Lord Mayor's Award, celebrating their commitment, leadership, and positive contribution to their community. This recognition highlighted the impact of sustained youth work relationships and the importance of creating opportunities where young people's efforts, growth, and civic engagement are publicly acknowledged and valued.



Community Service Programme Mallow Youth Centre & The Big Blue Cube, Gouldshill

Funded through Pobal the Community Service Programme together with CDYS CLG supports five full-time employees across management, administration, and maintenance at Mallow Youth Centre and the Big Blue Cube, Gouldshill.

The CSP aims to support community-based organisations such as CDYS CLG to provide local social services through a social enterprise model. In particular, the CSP aims to tackle disadvantage by providing a co-funding contribution towards the direct salary costs of a number of full-time positions for individuals who have been unemployed for a minimum of six months; in the case of CDYS CLG a manager, two administrators and two care-taking staff (two staff members are non-nationals and another is a member of the Traveling Community). In addition to providing employment, the programme also provides the opportunity for supported staff members to avail of various employability-enhancing training initiatives. Over the last number of years two former staff members supported by the programme have progressed to careers in the civil service.

Our Funders

Sincere thanks to our funders for your ongoing support to CDYS.



cetb

Bord Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Chorcaí
Cork Education and
Training Board



elcyp

Comhpháirtíocht Áitiúil
Óige Ildánach Chorcaí
Cork Local Creative
Youth Partnership



Irish Aid

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí
Cork City Council



Cork
County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF CLOYNE



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

 **léargas**



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth



Erasmus+

**Mallow Parish
Diocese of Cloyne**



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt,
Gnóthaí Baile agus Imirce
Department of Justice,
Home Affairs and Migration



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach
Co-Funded by the
European Union


ciste na
gcuntas díomhaoin
the dormant
accounts fund

Enabling Our Work



CDYS Structure

Cloyne Diocesan Youth Service was initially established in the 1960s when it became a collaboration of youth clubs across the Diocese of Cloyne. Since then, CDYS has worked to respond to the evolving needs of young people in the communities across the diocese, regardless of social, economic, and religious backgrounds.

CDYS Charity Objective: To provide community-based youth services, with an emphasis on the disadvantaged, and to assist their spiritual, emotional and social growth and development.

CDYS: Goals:

- To develop and promote integrated and inclusive youth services
- To ensure that young people are encouraged to participate and become actively involved in decisions that impact their lives, their community and wider society.
- To empower and support young people to develop personally and socially to meet their needs and to foster dependence and decision making capacity.
- To attract, support and maintain staff and volunteers so they can positively support young people to improve their lives.
- To implement best practice in relation to leadership, management and governance.

Organisation Type: A company limited by guarantee.

Company Registration Number: 397125

Charitable Tax Exemption Number: 16840

Charity Registration Number: 20061555

Registered Address: Mallow Community Youth Centre, New Road, Mallow, Co. Cork P51XEX9

CDYS Board

CDYS is governed by a voluntary Board with a maximum of ten members. Our current Board members have skills in the areas of Accountancy, Audit & Risk, Youth Work, IT, Community Development, Education, Youth Justice, and Facilities Management. All Board members work voluntarily and do not receive any remuneration as required by the Charities Act. They are entitled to reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses in the discharge of their functions as Trustees. The CEO of CDYS reports to the Board and is not a member.

CDYS held eight Board meetings during 2025 in addition to the Annual General Meeting.

Enabling Our Work

CDYS Auditors for 2025: Carmody Kelly & Associates, Auditors & Accountants, Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co Clare

CDYS Bank: Bank of Ireland, Bank Place, Mallow, Co. Cork

Our People

CEO: Dr Lorraine O' Donovan

CDYS employed, on average, 54 employees during 2025 and was supported by many volunteers throughout the year in our work with young people and their families. We are delighted to see that our volunteer numbers have continued to rise during this past year.

CDYS supports TÚS, Community Employment and J1 Schemes, with participants getting the opportunity to engage in further education and training. Scheme participants support the work of CDYS in various areas, including youth work, administration, caretaking and maintenance.

We were delighted to support the training of students as part of work placement modules from MTU, UCC and Cork College of FET.

The Community Services Programme, based in Mallow, provides much-needed community support through the team at Mallow Youth Centre and the Big Blue Cube.

Some CDYS staff members moved on from their positions in 2025 and while we were disappointed that they have left the organisation, we sincerely thank them for their work with CDYS and we wish them the very best of luck in their new positions.

Training

CDYS seeks to foster an environment that encourages and supports self-directed learning and development. CDYS values ongoing training for our staff, scheme workers and volunteers to ensure they are fully equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to provide our young people and families with quality services.

Throughout 2025, CDYS participated in online and in person training, provided by our funders and arranged by CDYS on topics that emerged in the course of our work. These included; neurodiversity, Traveller Apprenticeship Programme, Motivational Interviewing, Rainbows, Non Violent Resistance Training and Child Participation Training.



Enabling Our Work

Employee Self Care

CDYS strongly believes that a positive workplace and culture are extremely important to positive mental health among its staff team. External supervision is available to the staff team to support them in their roles, where needed. Two self care events were held during 2025, both events offered different activities and approaches in the management of self care. In particular we honed our problem solving and team work skills with exercise as we embarked on a scavenger hunt about of historical and cultural elements of Cork.



Self-care
IS EMPOWERMENT

I matter



Enabling Our Work

Compliance

CDYS stated its compliance with the Governance Code for 2025. During the year, several specific actions were undertaken in relation to governance, including a review of safeguarding policies and GDPR compliance with various policies.

CDYS is an integrated youth service affiliated with Youth Work Ireland. CDYS is committed to and works to ensure that it is compliant with all relevant legislation. CDYS is compliant with the requirements of each funder, service level agreements, DEPR and value-for-money ethos. CDYS regularly receives compliance visits and audit requests from our funders, which we welcome as they provide an opportunity to strengthen our practice and process.

Risk

To ensure the safe and effective delivery of our services, CDYS reviews risks on an ongoing basis. Risk is a standing item at every CDYS Board meeting. CDYS monitors and manages identified risks through its Risk Management Policy, Risk Appetite, Risk Register, and Risk Guidelines for staff. These were reviewed and updated during 2025.

Safeguarding

CDYS has an obligation to ensure compliance with legislation regarding safeguarding. CDYS is committed to effective and safe practices across all elements of the organisation, e.g. recruitment, supervision, trips, transport, etc. During 2025, Child Safeguarding Awareness and risk assessment trainings were rolled out across the organisation to staff, volunteers, scheme workers, students and youth clubs.

Promotion of CDYS

This year, we made significant progress in strengthening our social media presence and expanding our digital reach. Through a more consistent content strategy, targeted campaigns, and increased audience engagement, we grew our follower base across key platforms and improved overall engagement rates. By sharing timely updates, impact stories, and behind-the-scenes insights, we enhanced brand visibility and built stronger connections with our community. Social media has become an increasingly valuable channel for raising awareness, driving traffic to our website, and supporting our broader organisational objectives.

CDYS Strategic Plan 2024-2028	STRATEGIC GOAL	STRATEGIC ACTIONS	KPIs
<p>Our Aim: Our aim is to assist young people in developing the skills needed to address their distinct life challenges and to foster independence and decision-making capacity within a safe and supportive environment dedicated to employment and self-employment.</p> <p>Our Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop and promote integrated and inclusive youth services. To ensure that young people are encouraged to participate and become actively involved in decisions that impact their lives, their community and wider society. To empower and support young people to develop personally and socially to meet their needs and to foster independence and decision-making capacity. To attract, support and maintain staff and volunteers so they can positively support young people to improve their lives. To implement best practice in relation to leadership, management and governance. <p>Our Values:</p> <p>The core values of CDYS are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting young people where they are at with human relationships at the core of our work. Respecting and valuing all young people regardless of social, economic or religious background, ability, gender, sexuality or identity. Inclusion of all young people, while respecting differences and individuality, is central to our work. Valuing partnership and collaboration with stakeholders and the community is vital in ensuring best outcomes for young people. Supporting our qualified and committed staff and volunteers in their vital work with young people. <p>CLOYNE DIOCESAN YOUTH SERVICES CLG. YOUTH WORK IRELAND</p>	<p>1. INCLUSIVITY To develop and promote integrated and inclusive youth services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any young person who wishes to attend CDYS has access to activities. Young people have access to safe and supportive youth and community facilities that meet their needs. Identify individual needs and develop services for young people with diverse or additional needs. To provide vocational access and appropriate services for young people from minority groups. Continue to develop and promote programmes and services that help young people develop, contribute, build on relationships, spiritual and mental wellbeing and personal development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of young people attending CDYS services. Number of young people from minority groups attending services. Number of young people attending CDYS youth and community facilities. Stability of staff and volunteers. Stability of income generated through CDYS services.
	<p>2. PARTICIPATION To ensure that young people are encouraged to participate and become actively involved in decisions that impact their lives, their community and wider society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to promote the ethos of Social Youth Work. Engage and encourage participation of young people in Youth Councils. Consult with young people on the development, planning and evaluation of projects and services. Encourage young people to be active members of their community and to engage in social, civic and leisure activities. To involve young people with European opportunities to enhance their understanding of Social Citizenship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement of young people in decision-making processes for young people. Number of young people participating in youth councils. Number of young people and their involvement in our youth councils. Number of young people who are active members of their community and who engage in social, civic and leisure activities. Number of young people who are involved in European opportunities to enhance their understanding of Social Citizenship.
	<p>3. SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE To empower and support young people to develop personally and socially to meet their needs and to foster independence and decision-making capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to develop opportunities for young people to develop social and life skills. Promote participation of young people in creating new educational and development opportunities. Encourage young people to engage in formal, informal and on-line learning. Ensure that young people have access to relevant knowledge and information in order to make informed decisions. Continue to monitor the changing needs of young people and continuously develop services that meet their needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of young people who are active members of their community and who engage in social, civic and leisure activities. Number of young people who are involved in European opportunities to enhance their understanding of Social Citizenship. Number of young people who are active members of their community and who engage in social, civic and leisure activities. Number of young people who are involved in European opportunities to enhance their understanding of Social Citizenship.

Financial Information

Cloyne Diocesan Youth Services CLG
Profit and loss account
Financial year ended 31 December 2025

	Note	2025 €	2024 €
Income	4	3,569,578	3,001,652
Administrative expenses		(3,546,269)	(3,214,071)
Other operating income		8,824	8,824
(Deficit)/Surplus for the financial year		<u>32,133</u>	<u>(203,595)</u>

The company has no other recognised items of income and expenses other than the results for the financial year as set out above.

Balance sheet
As at 31 December 2025

	Note	2025 €	€	2024 €	€
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	10	166,032		137,427	
			166,032		137,427
Current assets					
Debtors	12	88,371		17,768	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,003,040		1,282,975	
		1,091,411		1,300,743	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(560,244)		(764,280)	
Net current assets			531,167		536,463
Total assets less current liabilities			697,199		673,890
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	14		(23,816)		(32,640)
Net assets			<u>673,383</u>		<u>641,250</u>
Reserves					
Other reserves	19		31,778		31,778
Surplus and deficit account	19		641,605		609,472
Total funds			<u>673,383</u>		<u>641,250</u>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and in accordance with Section 1A of FRS 102 Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Honouring the Legacy of Sharon Doody



On 3 July, CDYS came together to honour the life and legacy of Sharon Doody, a valued staff member and volunteer who dedicated more than 20 years of service to the organisation. Sharon's contribution to youth work and to the wider CDYS community has left a profound and lasting impact.

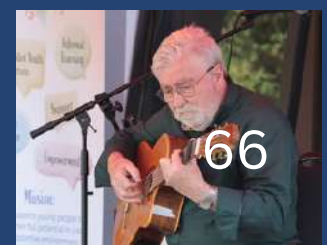
Staff, young people, volunteers, board members, and community representatives gathered outside the Big Blue Cube for a special commemorative event celebrating Sharon's life and service. A memorial bench was unveiled in her honour, providing a permanent space for reflection and connection within the grounds of CDYS. The bench stands as a tribute to Sharon's generosity, kindness, and unwavering commitment to supporting young people.

As part of the evening, Sharon's family were presented with a commemorative book compiled following her passing. The book contains personal reflections, messages, and artwork from young people, colleagues, and community members. It is a powerful testament to the meaningful relationships Sharon built over two decades and to the positive influence she had on so many lives.

Throughout the event, speakers shared stories that reflected Sharon's warmth, humour, and tireless dedication. Performances by young people, including members of The Friends Club, highlighted the vibrancy and sense of belonging that Sharon fostered through her work. The gathering concluded with a collective rendition of "You'll Never Walk Alone," symbolising the enduring community spirit she helped nurture.

Sharon's legacy is evident not only in the memories shared but in the continued strength and compassion of the CDYS community. Her work empowered generations of young people, strengthened families, and helped build inclusive, supportive spaces where young people could thrive.

CDYS remains deeply grateful for Sharon's exceptional service and lasting contribution. Her values continue to inspire our work and our commitment to young people.



Closing Comment for CDYS Annual Report 2025

As we conclude our 2025 Annual Report, I want to acknowledge the remarkable resilience, compassion and commitment that have defined this year for our organisation and the young people we serve. In a time of continued social, economic and emotional pressures, our work has never been more necessary. Throughout 2025, we had the privilege of supporting over 3529 young people and 358 families across our programmes and services. Every interaction, every safe space created, and every young voice supported is a testament to our shared belief that young people matter and that their potential deserves to be nurtured and protected.



I extend my sincere thanks to our dedicated staff, volunteers and youth leaders, who bring our mission to life each day with professionalism, generosity and care. Our volunteers play a vital role in supporting young people and families at local level, generously giving their time, skills and energy to ensure that our services remain accessible, responsive and rooted in the communities we serve. I am deeply grateful to our Board of Trustees for their guidance and stewardship, and to our funders, partners and supporters whose trust enables us to respond meaningfully to the needs of those we support. Most importantly, I thank the young people and families themselves, whose trust, honesty and resilience continually inspire and challenge us to do better.

Looking ahead to 2026, we remain committed to strengthening our impact, listening closely to young people, and advocating for a society where every young person feels valued, supported and hopeful about their future. With the continued support of our staff, volunteers, partners and wider community, we will build on the progress of this year and move forward with confidence, purpose and care.

Dr. Lorraine O' Donovan



Retirement of Tim O'Callaghan and Richard Dempsey from the CDYS Board



Dr. Lorraine O' Donovan & Danielle Gayson, President of YWI

