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# Foreword

2015 was another great year for Parents Plus. After our landmark year of 2014, when we moved into our new premises on St Vincent Street and gained core funding from An Pobal and the 3Ts Charity, we have capitalised on this with increased services to the organisations we support.

2015 has been our busiest year yet, with the provision of 750 training and supervision places to professionals throughout Ireland and the UK – an increase of 10% on 2014. Parents Plus also have continued to support major roll outs of parenting and mental health programmes in Ballyfermot, Donegal, Cork, Clare and Monaghan as well as continuing the national roll out of the 3TS project in both Adult and Adolescent mental health services and schools throughout Ireland. We are also continuing working with the Irish Prison Service and the Community Development Initiative to developing parenting supports to families affected by imprisonment.

The highlight of the year was our Innovations in Working with Families Conference in Croke Park which 450 people signed up for from both our existing facilitator base as well as new professionals interested in finding out about Parents Plus. At the conference, Prof Alan Carr from UCD presented a meta study of 17 of the 19 Parents Plus studies that have been completed. They present an impressive body of evidence for the Parents Plus and Working Things Out Programme that compares favourably with international studies.

In 2015, we have been also working on improving our communication and services to trained Parents Plus Facilitators and this has been spearheaded by the recruitment Ciara

Murphy as our part-time communication officer. Ciara has greatly improved our newsletters and information to facilitators adding practice tips and training resources. We hope to continue these improvements in 2016.

In 2015 we also welcomed our new board members, Catherine McIntyre (an accredited Parents Plus Facilitator), Phil Garland (a former senior manager in Tusla) and Eoin McGlinchey (a solicitor). We are delighted to have this new expertise on the Parents Plus Board.

Parents Plus has also benefited from a great staff team who keep the show on the road on a daily basis as well as a great wider group of trainers and supervisors – I would like to thank everyone for their hard work in 2015 and look forward to 2016.

2015 is also the final year for Carol Fitzpatrick and Jean Forbes in Parents Plus, both of whom will be stepping down from the board at the AGM in 2016. Their contribution to Parents Plus has been immense. Carol and I first embarked on developing Parents Plus in 1995 when some of the parents on courses innocently said– ‘can’t we make an Irish programme’. Naively we took up the challenge and started an incredible journey together for which I am truly grateful. Her wisdom and support in the creation of Parents Plus has been immeasurable.

With Jean, I first co-ran the early versions of the new Parents Plus Programmes and her skill and practice shaped the programmes as they developed – I could always trust her opinion. I am so grateful to both Carol and Jean and wish them all the best as they chart a new course. They will always be remembered warmly in Parents Plus.

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**Dr John Sharry**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Chairperson Message

2015 has been another wonderful year for Parents Plus, which has expanded its service provision to professionals throughout Ireland and the UK, with major roll outs of parenting and mental health programmes to communities, child and adolescent mental health services and schools throughout the country.

Our second flagship conference in Croke Park 'Innovations in Working with Families' held in December 2015 was a huge success, and showed the dedication of professionals to find new ways of helping families and young people to work together to improve relationships and deal with the difficulties of family life.

This is my final year with Parents Plus, and at the next AGM I will be stepping down from the Board which has been part of my life for over 20 years. I have seen Parents Plus grow from one course in one agency to become what it is today, a highly respected national and international service provider working through a huge network of professionals. So many people and agencies have contributed to the development of Parents Plus that it would be impossible to thank them all, but special

thanks must go to the parents we have worked with over the years, whose courage, tenacity and determination to do the best they can for their children has inspired us. Special thanks also must go to Sr. Margherita Rock and the Mater Hospital whose support for Parents Plus gave us the confidence to 'go it alone' in 2014, and become a thriving, independent body – maybe reflecting what most families wish for their young people!

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of so many people connected with Parents Plus, the staff, the trainers, the programme facilitators, and the researchers. Thank you to Breda Flood whose financial good sense has kept our feet on the ground. I don't have adequate words to describe my appreciation of all John Sharry has done for Parents Plus. His work ethic, his vision, his intelligence, his empathy and his sense of humour make him an exceptional colleague, and I will greatly miss working with him.

I wish Parents Plus a very successful and productive future, and am confident it will continue to grow and thrive in the years ahead.

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**Prof Carol Fitzpatrick**  
Chairperson

# About

Parents Plus is an Irish charity that develops practical, evidence-based parenting and mental health programmes. We train professionals working with children and families to deliver the programmes in communities and clinical settings. Our programmes support families to communicate effectively, build satisfying relationships and overcome emotional and behavioural problems.

Parents Plus have developed five flagship programmes in partnership with parents and children living in Ireland and includes their specific experiences. Our programmes encourage parents and children to take charge and make positive changes in their lives. Our programmes comprise of:

- The Early Years Programme for parents of children aged 1 to 6.
- The Children's Programme for parents of children aged 6 to 11.
- The Adolescent's Programme for parents of adolescents aged 11 to 16.
- The Working Things Out Programme targeted at adolescents aged 11-16.
- Parenting when Separated Programme targeted at parents who are preparing for, going through or have gone through a separation and divorce.

Parents Plus was founded by former Principal Social Worker at the Mater Hospital Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, and adjunct senior lecturer at the School of Psychology in University College Dublin, Dr. John Sharry and Prof. Carol Fitzpatrick in 1998 and established as a registered charity under the auspices of the Mater Hospital, Dublin in 2001.

## Mission & Values

Parents Plus mission is to empower professionals to deliver evidence-based mental health and parenting programmes to families.

Parents Plus provide an **evidence-based service**. We are committed to researching outcomes and developing effective programmes as well as encouraging facilitators to continually evaluate their practice to ensure their groups meet their families' needs.

Parents Plus encourage **collaborative practice**. We are working closely with families to ensure the programmes meet their goals and to ensure their experience and knowledge is central to the content of the materials.

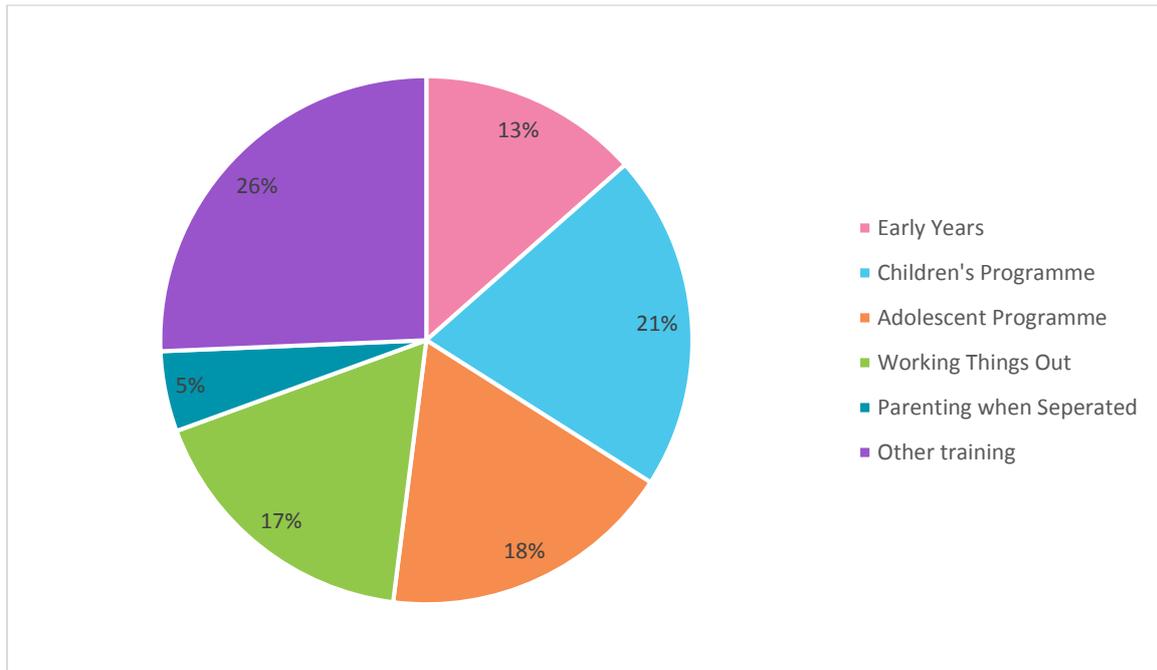
Parents Plus believe in **empowering** the professionals and families we work with. Our programmes are focused on encouraging children and parents to achieve their potential and our professional training is focused on encouraging professionals to achieve the highest standards of excellence.

# Activities & Projects

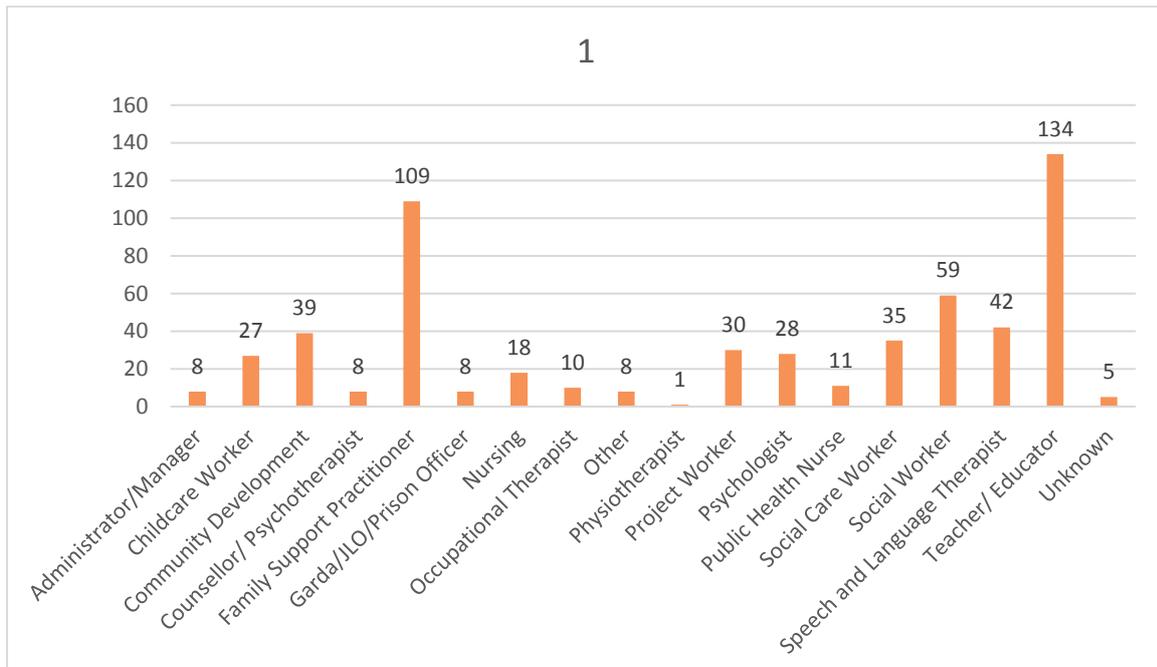
*“One of the key things that the Parents Plus course has given me is a sense of hope and a sense of understanding that there are other people in similar situations.”* **Parent**

2015 was the busiest year for Parents Plus to date in terms of training and supervision with **605** professionals trained to deliver at least one of our five parenting programmes. **147** professionals attended more training in more than one more programme. Most professions were represented (Figure 2) across the educational, health and community sectors (Figure 3). The agencies served were from throughout Ireland (23 out of 26 counties) and 66 professionals were from the United Kingdom (Figure 4).

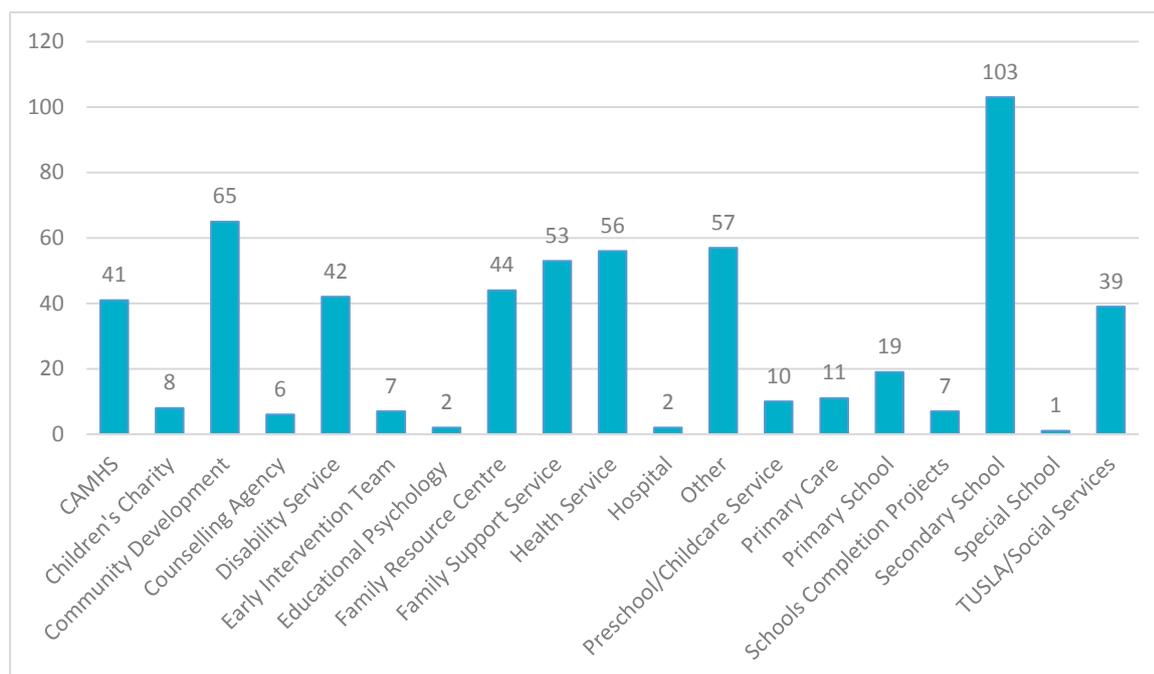
**Figure 1 Facilitator Training by Programme**



**Figure 2 Facilitator Training by Profession**



**Figure 3 Facilitator Training by Organisation Type**



## Projects & Activities

**3Ts Mental Health Project:** The 3Ts Mental Health Project is a national project to deliver family based mental health services using the Adolescent and Working Things Out programmes in schools and mental health services. The project is funded by 3Ts (Turn the Tide of Suicide). During 2015, a study of 93 families completing the programme in adolescent mental health services, showed positive outcomes for parents and children and was published in the Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health ([Wynne, Doyle, Kenny, Brosnan & Sharry, 2016](#)).

**Ballyfermot and Donegal Project:** As part of a national project to increase the access to parenting supports in communities, Parents Plus sponsored the training of community professionals in Donegal and Ballyfermot. The roll out of the Children's programme continued in both regions in 2015 with 87 parents completing the groups in Ballyfermot and 153 parents in Donegal. In 2015 Parents Plus published two reports on outcomes showing improvements in children's behaviour, greater levels of parental satisfaction and reduced levels of stress for families completing the groups.

**SPECS Project Bray:** A three year roll out of the Parents Plus Early Years Programme was started in Bray as part of one of the nine national ABC programmes. A multi-agency population centered approach will be adopted providing preventative courses to families as well as targeted interventions. The project will continue in 2016.

**Clare Working Things Out Project:** A multiagency delivery of the Working Things Out programme started in Clare in 2015, in partnership with Clarecare; Clare School Completion Programme; Clare Youth Service; Tusla. Clare Youthreach and North West Clare FRC. The delivery involved both workshop and eight week course formats.

**Monaghan Partnership:** With the support of the Katherine Howard Foundation, we delivered the second phase of the county wide roll out of the Early Years programme in 10 Monaghan childcare services in partnership with Monaghan Development and Child Care Committee.

**Prisons Project:** In partnership with the Childhood Development Initiative (CDI), the Irish Prison Service, and Bedford Row family project the adapted delivery of the Children's Programme was completed to two cohorts of families in 2015 in Limerick prison. The programme is to further adapted and rolled out nationally in 2016.

**Innovations in Working with Families Conference:** The Parents Plus Innovations in Working with Families Conference took place on Thursday, 3rd December 2015 in Croke Park, Dublin. Over 400 participants enjoyed presentations on up-to-date service innovations and research on the Parents Plus and Working Things Out Programmes, extensive networking opportunities, an exhibition and workshops on a broad range of topics including engaging hard to reach parents and adapting the programmes for parents of children with disabilities.

**Scholarship Programme:** To mark the 15th Anniversary of the organisation, Parents Plus invited scholarships in November 2015 from professionals who wished to train and become accredited in one the Parents Plus or Working Things Out Programmes. The scholarship included facilitator training on the programme of your choice; materials and parent booklets; and a full post-training supervision package over 18 months aiming towards the successful applicant gaining Parents Plus Accreditation.

We received a remarkable 56 applications and awarded seven scholarships across four organisations. The Parents Plus 2015 scholarship recipients were:

- Caroline Jordan and Rachel Fitzmaurice from Springboard Family Support Project, Loughlinstown
- Margaret Igoe, Kathleen O'Hara & Yvonne Kerr from Mayo Early Intervention Service, Western Care Association
- Nuala Kennedy from Tusla Child and Family Agency, North Cork
- Suzanne Lindsay from Foroige, Tallaght
- To support the continued work of the Fingal Parenting Initiative Andrea Kinahan Early Year Educator was also awarded a Parents Plus Scholarship.

**Post Training Support:** The [facilitators / members area](#) of the website was developed to include **resources** to help facilitators to promote their groups such as posters and fliers as well as certificates and handouts for the parents in the group; **best practice information** from the Parents Plus trainers as well as presentations and tips from Parents Plus facilitators; an archive the **monthly facilitator newsletter** which is emailed to all trained facilitators on the second Wednesday of each month and information on the **accreditation process** and quality assurance protocol.

## Research

There is now a substantial body of evidence demonstrating the high impact of the Parents Plus Programmes in terms reducing emotional/behaviour problems for children, alleviating parental stress as well as improving children's learning within the home. Positive outcomes have consistently been demonstrated in a variety of contexts.

In December 2015 Prof. Alan Carr, University College Dublin, presented a meta-analysis of the Parents Plus evidence base. This analysis highlighted the significant benefits for families who attend Parents Plus courses both post treatment and importantly, at follow up.

## Organisational Development

Key milestones in 2015 included:

- **May 2015:** Recruitment of new board members.
- **June 2015:** Recruit Communications Officer
- **July 2015:** Recruit new Assistant Psychologist
- **August 2015:** Launch of new Parents Plus website
- **December 2015:** Innovations in Working with Families Conference

# Governance & Organisation

*“The Parents Plus facilitator training was invaluable and a very positive experience. Staff felt a huge benefit from the training particularly on how to facilitate groups. As a result of training, I have observed changes in staff practices – they are more solution focused in their approach and more skilled at actually facilitating and able to get parents to help themselves more effectively.”* **Manager**

Parents Plus Ltd is a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital, registered in Dublin, Ireland with registered company number 530105. Parents Plus Ltd is registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority with registered charity number 20043124. Parents Plus Ltd has been granted charitable tax exemption by the Office of the Revenue Commissioners with the CHY reference number 13664.

## Governance Code

Parents Plus complies with the Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations. Parents Plus are a 'type b' organisation for the purpose of the Governance Code. You can read the Parents Plus Governance statement, adopted by our Board on September 2014 <http://www.parentsplus.ie/about/governance/>. Parents Plus have also started work on updating all our policies.

## Board

The Board of Directors – who meet six times annually – have responsibility for the strategic direction of Parents Plus in liaison with the Chief Executive Officer and senior staff members. The Board of Parents Plus comprises of nine members (31<sup>st</sup> December 2015):

- Michael Drumm (Director)
- Carol Fitzpatrick (Chair and Co-founder)
- Mary Fanning (Director)
- Breda Flood (Director)
- John Sharry (Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder)
- Jean Forbes (Accredited Parents Plus Facilitator)
- Catherine McIntyre (Accredited Parents Plus Facilitator)
- Phil Garland (former HSE Manager)
- Eoin McGlinchey (Solicitor)

## Training Sub-committee

The Parents Plus training sub-committee meets to provide a forum for all the Parents Plus accredited trainers (10 in total) to meet to review standards and to make representations to the Parents Plus Board as appropriate.

## Staff

Parents Plus has eight part-time staff members with a total WTE of 4 days

- Dr. John Sharry, Chief Executive Officer
- Breda Flood, Financial Controller
- Eileen Brosnan, Senior Trainer
- Grainne Hampson, Senior Trainer
- Una O'Maonaigh, Administrator
- Caoimhe Doyle, Assistant Psychologist
- Ciara Murphy, Communications Officer
- Aisling McGrath, Assistant Psychologist

## Funding

- The development of programmes and delivery of training is funded primarily through the sale of training and training products.
- Parents Plus received National Organisations Funding from An Pobal for the first time in 2014.
- Parents Plus Board Members and the Chairperson of the Board are volunteers and donate freely of their time, skills and expertise.
- With the support of the Mater Hospital and Sr Margherita Rock in particular, Parents Plus move to new home near at 15 St Vincent Street North, Dublin 7 in August 2014
- Parents Plus secure a major 3 year grant from the 3Ts Charity to start a national family based mental health project.

## Finance

Parents Plus adopts strict financial control systems to ensure good financial management including:

- Accounts are audited annually by the auditor for the Mater Hospital.
- The contracted administrator is an experienced book keeper and account manager and acts as financial manager for Parents Plus
- A budget is prepared annually for approval by the Board which sets out proposed costs and revenues, broken down by area of expenditure and by financial period.
- Up-to-date account information with costs and revenues is presented at each board meeting.
- All financial payments are reviewed by the administrator and the services coordinator and require two check signatories from four identified signatories on the Parents Plus Board.

# Financial Statements

*“The Parents Plus Children’s Programme theoretical framework is strong, has support for being effective with this population and is directly linked to the content and expected outcomes. The targeted outcomes are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. Reduced parental stress, child behaviour problems, and children’s hyperactivity have been shown through randomised control trials conducted by the developer.”* **National Parenting Academy, UK.**

Parents Plus Limited – Financial Information for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup>  
December 2015  
Summarised Financial Information

Income & Expenditure Account Extract	12 months ended 31/12/2015	
	€	€
<b>Incoming Resources</b>		
Programme & Training		234,462
Grants received		157,940
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>		392,402
<b>Resources Expended - Ongoing Expenditure</b>		
- Training & Other Costs		243,534
<b>Administration Costs</b>		
- Administration Costs	37,768	111,100
<b>Sub-Total Resources Expended - Ongoing Expenditure</b>		
- Depreciation		1,712
<b>Net Incoming Resources for the Period</b>		109,388
<b>Balance Sheet Extract</b>		
		€
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Leasehold Improvements & Office Equipment		9,294
<b>Current assets</b>		
Accounts Receivable		36,609
Cash at bank		217,686
Stock		12,467
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>		
Operating Creditors		(19,399)
<b>Accumulated Net Funds (2014-2015)</b>		256,657

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