



# ParentsPlus

Empowering Professionals to Support Families



**Annual Report**  
**2016**

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# Foreword

2016 was another busy year for Parents Plus with 616 professionals attending our facilitator training and supervision workshops.

Our collaboration with the [3Ts \(Turn the Tide of Suicide\) charity](#) completed its second year in 2016. This has allowed Parents Plus to support the roll out of the programmes in 17 secondary schools and nine mental health services throughout Ireland with great results. Two studies have shown the effectiveness of the project in reducing emotional and behavioural problems in adolescents, as well as parent stress in both schools and mental health services. In addition, for many services the delivery of the Parents Plus programmes has now become embedded meaning ongoing access to the families in these regions. We are grateful to the 3Ts charity for their support in this important work

One of the biggest achievements for Parents Plus was the redevelopment of our Facilitator Manuals and Parent Materials for all five [Parents Plus Programmes](#). Thanks to all the hard work of the Parents Plus Team, this was achieved in the incredibly tight timetable of seven months from start to finish and meant that the new materials were available for our November trainings. The new materials include, new topical material (such as, dealing with social media and technology) for facilitators, which is laid out in a more engaging fashion. The redevelopment means that Parents Plus now has consistent layouts

and branding for all five programmes. The new materials will be formally launched in 2017.

There have been many other highlights in our expansion of services in 2016. To support professional practice post training, we ran 38 individual and group advanced practice [supervision trainings](#) in different regions across the country, including, Cork, Dublin, Kilkenny, Waterford, Clare, Kerry Monaghan, Limerick and Donegal, as well as in Gloucester and Rochdale in the UK.

**“2016 was another busy year for Parents Plus with 616 professionals attending our facilitator training and supervision workshops.”**

An important [strategy](#) for Parents Plus has been increasing our level of support to facilitators who are currently delivering programmes, so as to help them maintain outcomes for the families they work with. Implementation support, supervision and supporting facilitators through the [accreditation process](#) are all key aspects of this.

In 2016, we welcomed two new members of staff with Siobhán Dolphin starting as our Operations and Communications Manager and Alex McDonald starting as our new Assistant Psychologist. Phil Garland retired from the Board on health grounds in 2016 – we wish him well and thank him for his contribution. We also successfully recruited three new Board members who will start in January 2017 notably Jane Morgan bringing expertise in marketing, Dr Charlotte Wilson from the School of Psychology in Trinity College Dublin and Philip Mudge, who has extensive experience in organisation development. Parents Plus are looking forward to the benefit of these fresh perspectives and new energy in 2017.

**John Sharry**  
**CEO, Parents Plus**

# Chairperson Message

I took up the position of Chair of the Board of Directors of Parents Plus this year and I am honoured to be associated with Parents Plus and to support an Irish charity that is dedicated to developing practical, evidence-based parenting and mental health programmes. The Board has the responsibility for the strategic direction of Parents Plus in liaison with the Chief Executive Officer and senior staff members and is a challenging, rewarding and engaging organisation. It has been a very busy year for Parents Plus and reading the Annual Report will give an indication of the impressive work and enormous activity undertaken during 2016.

In 2016, Parents Plus focused on the redevelopment of the Facilitator Manuals and Parent Materials for all five Parents Plus Programmes. The new programmes were available for the November trainings in 2016 and will be formally launched in March 2017. The website was also redesigned as part of the redevelopment process to clearly highlight what Parents Plus does, as well as a Members Area for trained facilitators, a fully integrated database and section on the staff and governance.

In 2016, Parents Plus was busy providing significant training across all of the programmes. There were 616 professionals trained in Parents Plus programmes over the course of the year and were represented across educational, health services and community agencies. A key part of the Parents Plus mission is to support agencies to deliver parenting programmes even if they do not have the financial resources to

pay for the training. With the help of the 3Ts (Turn the Tide of Suicide) charity, Parents Plus were able to sponsor the training of 111 professionals in 2016.

There were many major projects and activities that took place throughout 2016. The 3Ts (Turn the Tide of Suicide) charity supported our national Mental Health Project to deliver family based mental health services using the Adolescents and Working Things Out programmes. Evaluation of the effectiveness of this project evidenced significant benefits for participants as demonstrated by two published studies.

**“In 2016, Parents Plus focused on the redevelopment of the Facilitator Manuals and Parent Materials for all five Parents Plus Programmes.”**

Parents Plus also worked closely with the SPECS project in Bray (one of the nine national ABC programmes) to support the delivery of the Parents Plus Early Years Programme providing preventative courses to families. In partnership with the Childhood Development Initiative (CDI), and the Irish Prison Service, Parents Plus continued to support the delivery of an adapted version of the Children's Programme to families with a father in prison. In addition Parents Plus established

a network group to support the delivery of the Parents Plus programmes in disability settings. Also in 2016 with the support of the HSE, Parents Plus provided special training to both Adult and Child and Adolescents services with a focus on supporting the delivery of parenting groups in these specialist services.

Parents Plus offered a number of advanced practice workshops and supervisions to facilitators in 2016 throughout Ireland to increase the engagement of facilitators in supervision post training and to increase effective outcomes for families attending Parents Plus courses.

With regard to research there is now a substantial body of evidence demonstrating the high impact of the Parents Plus Programmes in terms of 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. All of the research details are available on the Parents Plus website.

Parents Plus is well supported by dedicated and committed staff and this ensures that we are in a position to continue to grow and develop, while providing quality evidence-based parenting programmes.

We are delighted to report that Parents Plus complies with the Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations, a significant achievement and essential to ensure public confidence in our organisation.

It is the ambition of Parents Plus to continue to support professionals to deliver evidence-based mental health and parenting programmes to families in a collaborative way that is empowering for both professionals and families alike. I look forward to supporting Parents Plus continued progress in all the new and various endeavours in 2017 and beyond.

**Michael Drumm**  
**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 was [founded in 1998](#) by Dr. John Sharry, former Principal Social Worker, and Prof Carol Fitzpatrick, former Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, when they worked together at the Mater Hospital Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in Dublin. Parents Plus was established as a registered charity under the auspices of the Mater Hospital, Dublin in 2001.

Now, Parents Plus trains circa 400 professionals as [facilitators](#) each year throughout Ireland, the UK and internationally to deliver our programmes in their own local areas and agencies. Our 'train the trainer' model ensures a long-term, sustainable benefit for facilitators' communities and organisations. Facilitators include teachers, social workers, speech and language therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, childcare workers, mental health workers and community workers.

Programmes are delivered to parents in a variety of settings including, family resource centres, childcare centres and preschools, primary and secondary schools, child protection agencies, child and adolescent mental health clinics, colleges and training centres as well as to parents of children with special needs.



Parents Plus has developed [five flagship programmes](#) in partnership with parents and children living in Ireland and includes their specific experiences. Our programmes combine a social learning model with a solution-focused preventative framework that encourages and empowers 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 [Adolescents Programme](#) for parents of adolescents aged 11 to 16.
- The [Working Things Out Programme](#) targeted at adolescents aged 11-16.
- The [Parenting when Separated Programme](#) targeted at parents who are preparing for, going through or have gone through a separation or divorce.



# Mission and Values

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

Parents Plus provides 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 encourages **collaborative practice**. We 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 believes 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.

# Training and Supervisions 2016

**"I run Parents Plus programmes all of the time in my work. The lasting message that parents take away is to 'Press the Pause Button'. In our lives, we all need to press that button now and again. It's ok to get frustrated. It's how we deal with that frustration; whether as parents with their children, or humans with other humans."**

*Parents Plus Facilitator, Family Support and Community Outreach*

## Parents Plus Training and Supervision

2016 was a busy year for Parents Plus in relation to training.

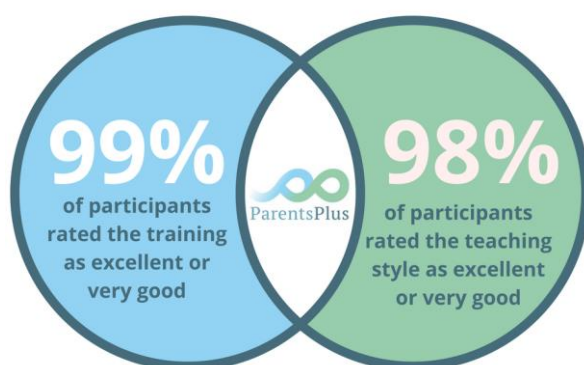
**616** professionals attended a Parents Plus facilitator training and/or supervision workshop in one of our five parenting and mental health programmes.

**111** new professionals in 2016 were sponsored to deliver the programmes throughout Ireland with the help of the 3Ts charity.

**38** people attended Parents Plus Information Seminars in 2016.

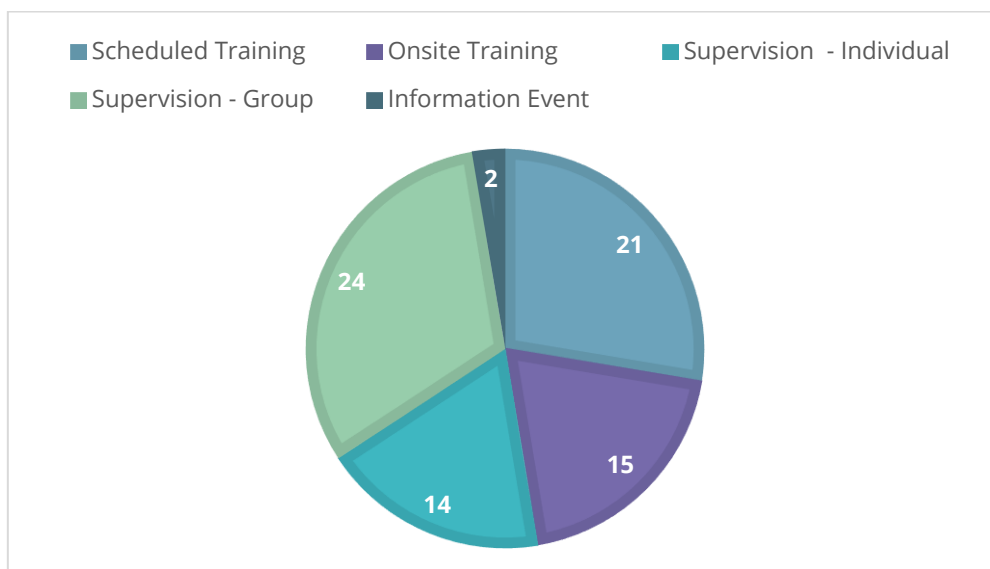
## Impact

Using a modest estimate that each professional has delivered Parents Plus Programmes to an average of 15 families each, this suggests that at least **72,525 families** have benefitted since the first Parents Plus Programme in 1998.



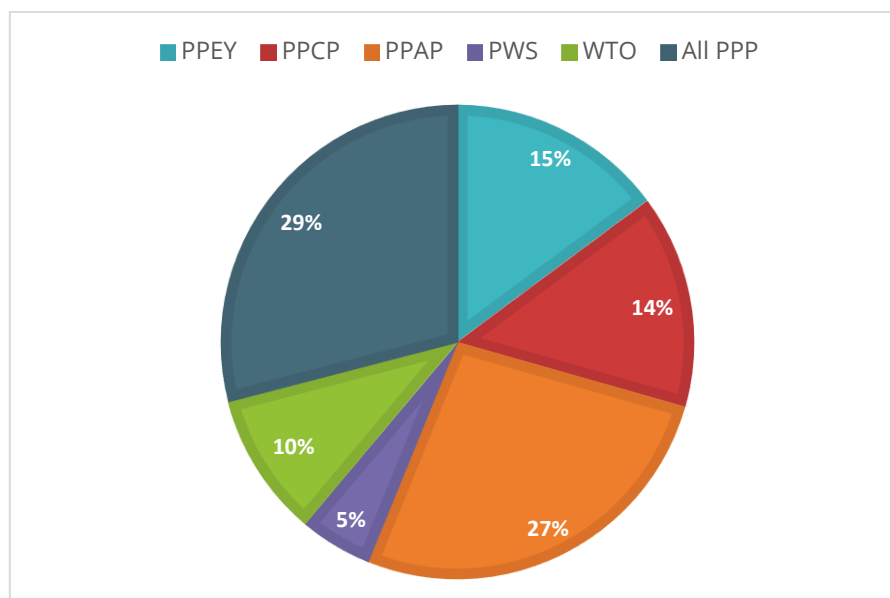
**Figure 1 – Breakdown of Training Type – number of training sessions**

The Facilitator Training can be categorised into Scheduled Training run by Parents Plus in Dublin; Onsite Training which is PP training in collaboration with other organisations usually run onsite in their agency; as well post-training supervision (individual and group). See figure 1 below for the breakdown of the number of each type of training session (or information event) that took place in 2016.



**Figure 2 – Facilitator Training by Programme**

Figure 2 outlines the number of facilitators by what programme they trained in.

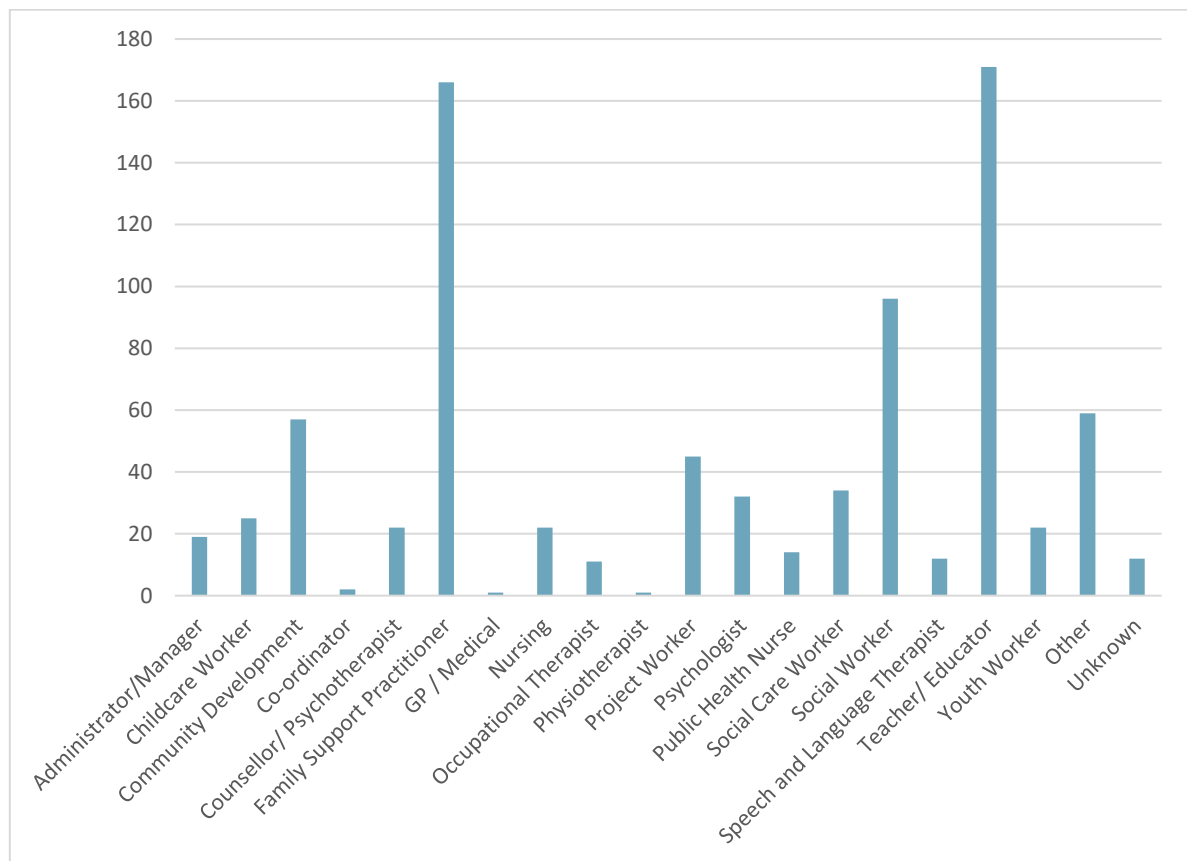


*\*PPEY = Parents Plus Early Years Programme, PPCP = Parents Plus Children's Programme, PPAP = Parents Plus Adolescents Programme, PWS = Parenting When Separated Programme, WTO = Working Things Out Programme*

*\*All PPP refers to training which covered more than one PP Programme and this category also includes those who attended Information Events.*

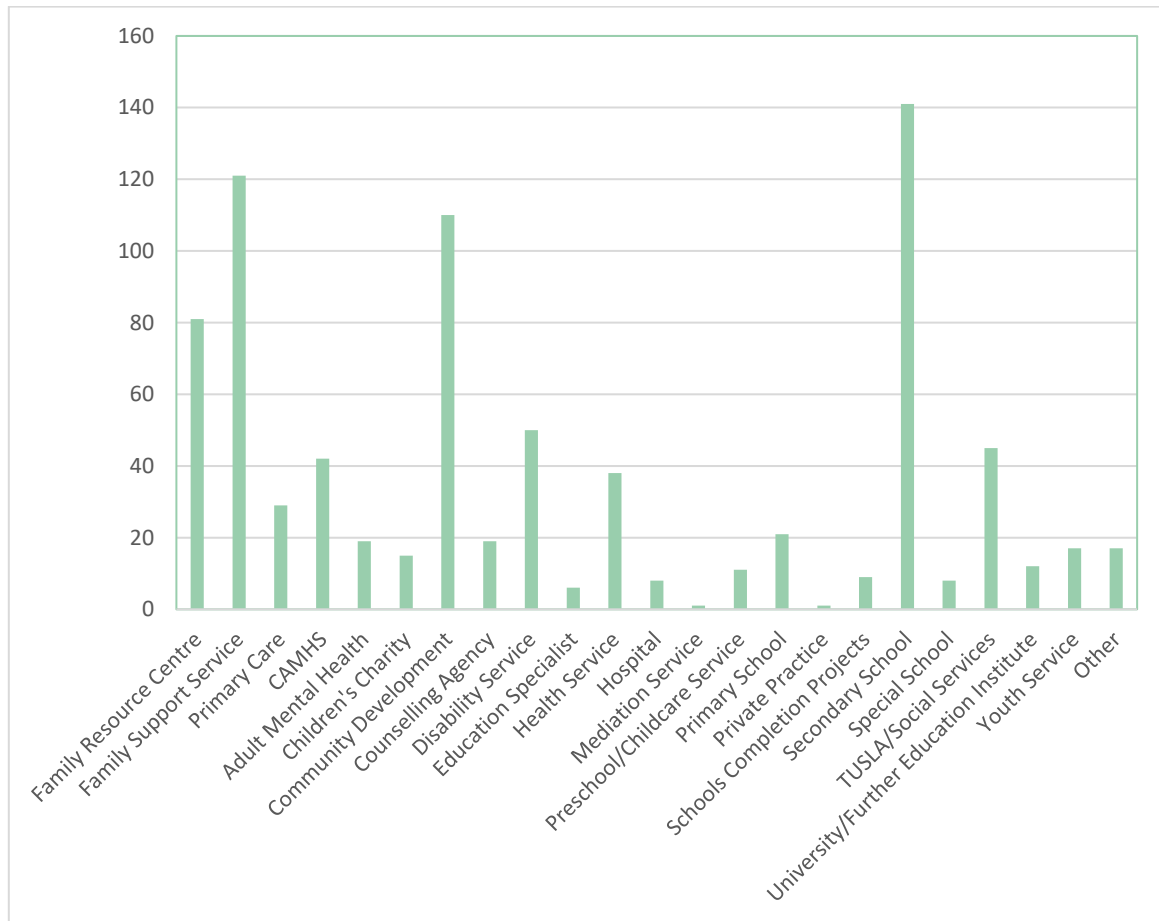
**Figure 3 – Facilitator Training by Profession**

Facilitators who trained were from a wide range of professions. Most professions were represented across the educational, health and community sector agencies.



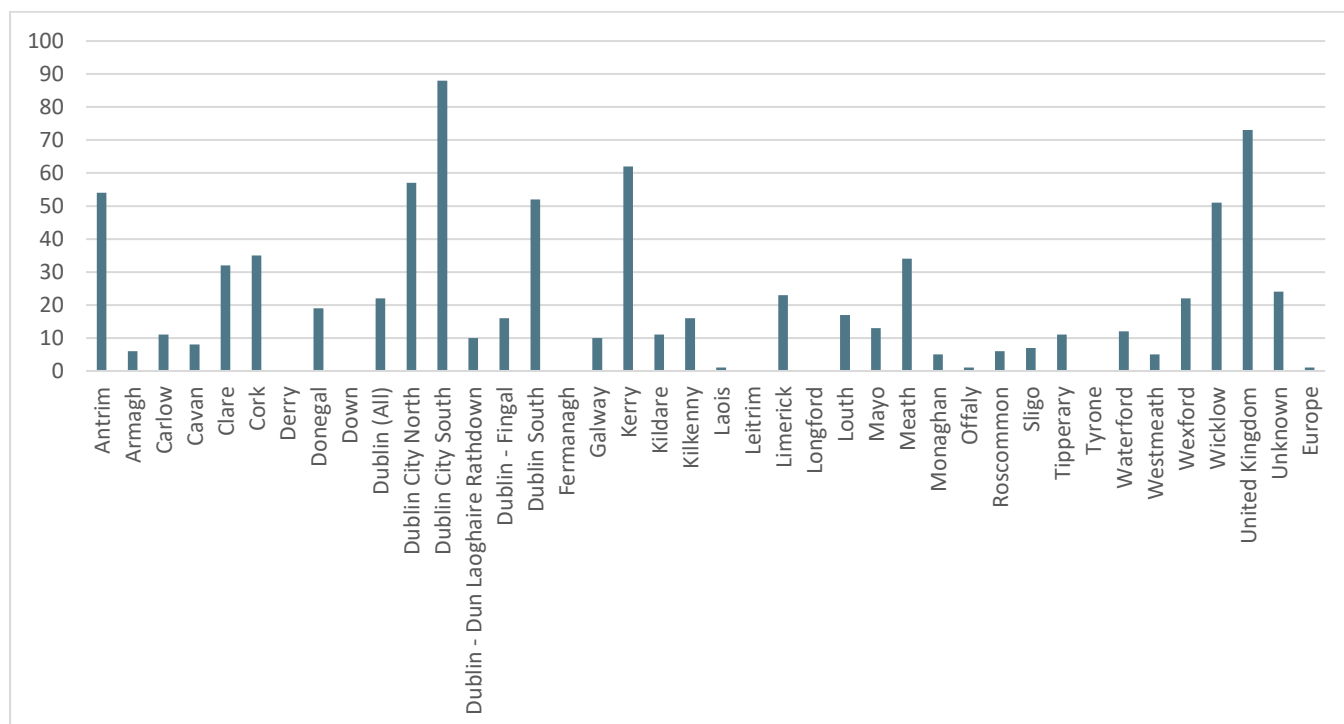
**Figure 4 – Facilitator Training by Organisation Type**

Professionals who trained came from a variety of educational, health and community sector agencies.



## Figure 5 – Facilitator Training by Location

Figure 5 outlines where the facilitators (and their agencies) who trained with Parents Plus are based. The agencies served were from throughout Ireland (26 out of 32 counties) and 73 professionals were trained in the United Kingdom.



\*The 'All Dublin' location refers to a facilitator/agency who isn't located in one specific area in Dublin but covers all of Dublin city and county.

**"I have noticed that the young people and parents who attended the Parents Plus and Working Things Out Programmes have needed significantly less intervention."**

*Principal Social Worker, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service*



# Activities and Projects

**“Hitting the Pause Button does wonders for me – if we quarrel or if Daniel becomes too angry – I walk away and don’t entertain it. I only talk later when everyone is calmer. Then I make sure to listen to his side of the story”.**

*Single Mother, Parents Plus Adolescents Programme*

## Activities and Projects



As well as the [scheduled training](#) that is run by Parents Plus, there were many major activities and projects that took place throughout 2016. Below is a sample of the most significant projects.

### 3Ts Mental Health Project

The [3Ts Mental Health Project](#) is a national project to deliver family-based mental health services using the [Adolescents](#) and [Working Things Out](#) programmes. The project is funded by 3Ts (Turn the Tide of Suicide) charity. During the first two years of the project (2014-2016), 136 professionals were trained delivering groups to 540 families in mental health and specialist school settings. In 2016, 111 professionals were trained under this project to run groups with families. Significant benefits were gained by participating families as evidenced by two studies ([Wynne, Doyle, Kenny, Brosnan & Sharry, 2016](#)) and Doyle, McGrath, and Sharry (2016).

In September 2016, we started the third year of the project with the aim of expanding the benefits to a wider group of families. In particular:

- **45 new agencies and teams** were recruited to deliver the groups from all over Ireland under this sponsorship scheme.
- **111 professionals** were trained to run the groups with parents and children with a further 12 to be trained in 2017.
- **56 groups with parents and adolescents** will be run in 2017 and 2018 by a variety of community, education and mental health services with the support of Parents Plus all over the country.

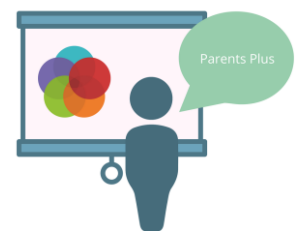


## Redevelopment of the five Parents Plus Programmes

One of the biggest achievements for Parents Plus in 2016 was the redevelopment of the Facilitator Manuals and Parent Materials for all five [Parents Plus Programmes](#). A new Parents Plus logo and visual identity was created for Parents Plus to highlight the work we do with professionals and to reflect on the organisation's values – evidence-based, collaborative, empowering. The new materials, include new topical material (such as, dealing with social media and technology) for facilitators, which is laid out in a more engaging fashion. The redevelopment means that Parents Plus now has a consistent layout and branding for all five programmes. The new programmes were available for the November trainings in 2016 and will be formally launched in March 2017.

## Post Training Support

In order to increase outcomes for families, a key [strategy](#) for Parents Plus is to increase the engagement of facilitators in [supervision post training](#). Parents Plus ran 38 individual and group advanced practice supervision sessions all over the country in areas including Cork, Dublin, Kilkenny, Waterford, Clare, Kerry, Monaghan, Limerick and Donegal, as well as in Gloucester and Rochdale in the UK. A total of 184 facilitators participated in supervision sessions and 12 facilitators progressed through the PP [accreditation process](#) in 2016.



Parents Plus also offers further post training support in the form of the facilitator's / [members area](#) of the website which has been developed to include resources to help facilitators to promote their groups. Resources on this section of the site for facilitators, include, 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 of the monthly facilitator newsletter, and information on the accreditation process and quality assurance protocol. Parents Plus Facilitators are also kept informed after training with regular emails and contact from Parents Plus.

## **SPECS Project Bray**

In 2016, Parents Plus worked closely with the SPECS (Supporting Parents and Early Childhood Supports) project in Bray (one of the nine national ABC programmes) to support the delivery of the Parents Plus Early Years Programme and as part of a multi-agency population centred approach providing preventative courses to families as well as targeted interventions. In 2016, groups were offered in the PP [Adolescents](#) and [Parenting When Separated](#) programmes with positive outcomes.

## **Parenting Monaghan**

Building on the success of the county-wide roll out of the Early Years programme in 2015, a group of agencies under the coordination of the CYPSC (Children and Young People's Services Committees) formed Parenting Monaghan (<http://parentingmonaghan.ie/>) to coordinate the delivery of the Parents Plus Programmes in Monaghan. In 2016, Parents Plus provided implementation support and in 2017 training will take place county-wide in the [Children's](#), [Adolescents](#) and [Parenting When Separated](#) programmes.

## **Family Links – Prisons Project**

In partnership with the Childhood Development Initiative (CDI), and the Irish Prison Service, Parents Plus continued to support the delivery of an adapted version of the Children's Programme to families with a father in prison. Significant achievements in 2016, included the expansion of the service to include Wheatfield Prison, the creation of new DVD materials and a draft manual for a prison specific delivery.



## **Disability Network**

In 2016, Parents Plus established a network group to support the delivery of the Parents Plus programmes in disability settings that included representation from experienced facilitators in Scoil Chiaráin, St John of Gods and Western Care services. The goal is to develop practice guidelines and to deliver advanced practice workshops in 2017.

## **Parents Plus and HSE Mental Health Services**

In 2016 with the support of the HSE, Parents Plus provided special training to both Adult and Child and Adolescents services with a focus on supporting the delivery of parenting groups in these specialist services. In particular, there was a focus on integrating the [Working Things Out programme](#) in Adolescents services and trying to address the needs of new parents in adult mental health services.

## **Family Wellbeing Programme**

Parents Plus has started initial consultation in partnership with Dr Adele Keating, Psychologist, about the development of special programmes to families to tackle the problems of childhood obesity. The goal is to have a programme that could be delivered in both clinical and community settings. As part of this process a community parenting talk, 'Healthy Eating' along with a survey of needs was delivered in Bray in Autumn 2016.

## Organisational Development

Key milestones in 2016 included:

- **April - December 2016:** Recruitment of new [Board members](#).
- **June 2016:** Rebrand completed for Parents Plus Logo and Identity.
- **September 2016:** Recruitment of Operations and Communications Manager to the [Parents Plus team](#).
- **October 2016:** Recruitment of new Assistant Psychologist to the Parents Plus Team.
- **November 2016:** Completion of the redesigned and redeveloped Parents Plus Programmes for the Winter Training Schedule.

## Communications



### Parents Plus Website

[The website](#) was redesigned as part of the redevelopment process in 2016. The new website improves communications with professionals and others seeking information about Parents Plus. It also provides an easy way to access information for those using the programmes in their services. The [homepage](#) was updated to clearly highlight what Parents Plus does. New content and resources were added to the site, particularly to the private [Member's Area](#) for trained facilitators. Each programme page was updated with new headers and text colour to reflect the new branding. [Staff](#) and [Governance](#) pages were added to the site as well.

The site is also fully integrated with the relationship management software that Parents Plus uses to communicate with professionals. This fully integrated system improves the flow of communications from early interaction via the website through to contact with Parents Plus staff about bookings and other queries.

## Social Media Channels

The Parents Plus [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts were updated with the new branding and continued to be developed with new content in 2016. There was an increase in engagement with the Parents Plus audience on social media in 2016. For example, by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016, likes on the Facebook page had increased by 344 (that's an increase of 54 per cent in Facebook followers). Parents Plus are continuing to develop a strategy to engage with people via these social channels.



## Email Communications

Parents Plus also continued to engage and build relationships with professionals via email in the form of the monthly Parents Plus newsletter and via other relevant email communications about training, supervision support, events and extra resources. A review of the email communications and a new strategy has been put in place for 2017.



## Snapshot of Parents Plus Stats from 2016



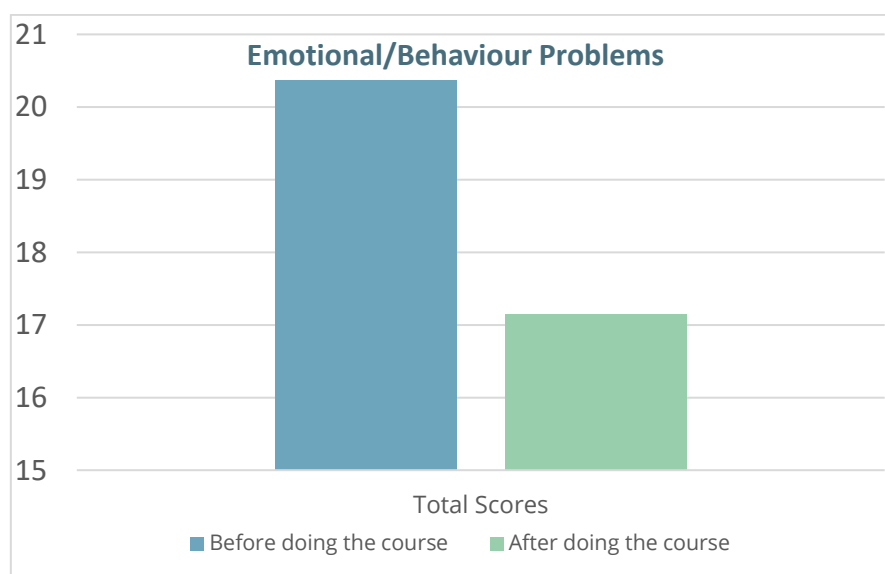
## Research

There is now a substantial body of evidence demonstrating the high impact of the Parents Plus Programmes in terms of 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. All of the research details are available on the [Parents Plus website](#).

### Research in 2016

In 2016, Prof. Alan Carr, University College Dublin, [meta-analysis of the Parents Plus evidence-base](#) was published in the international Journal Family Process (Carr, Hartnett, Brosnan & Sharry, 2016). This analysis highlighted the significant benefit for families who attend the Parents Plus courses, both post-treatment and importantly, at follow-up.

In addition, two outcome studies into the benefits of the Parents Plus Programmes in schools and mental health settings were completed highlighting the benefits for adolescents with mental health problems. One study was published in the Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health ([Wynne, Doyle, Kenny, Brosnan & Sharry, 2016](#)).



This graph highlights how parents noted a significant decrease in emotional/ behavioural problems with their children as measured by the total score on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

*\*Wynne, C., Brosnan, E., Doyle, C., Kenny, R., Sharry, J. (2015) A first-level evaluation of a family intervention for adolescent social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in child and adolescent mental health services, Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health.*

In 2017, Parents Plus hope to conduct an implementation study on a national roll of the programmes to explore the factors which facilitate and hinder agencies to successfully deliver the programmes.

# Governance and Organisation

**“Parents Plus was by far the best course for parents we ever put on in the school. Our parents loved taking part and didn't want it to end. They universally reported huge improvements in how their families communicated and solved problems together”**

*Home School Liaison Teacher, Secondary School*

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 c' organisation for the purpose of the Governance Code. You can read the Parents Plus Governance statement, adopted by our Board, on the website: <http://www.parentsplus.ie/about/governance/>.

## Board

The [Board of Directors](#) – who meet six times annually – have responsibility for the governance and strategic direction of Parents Plus in liaison with the Chief Executive Officer and senior staff members. During 2016The Board of Parents Plus comprises of the following members (31<sup>st</sup> December 2016):

- Michael Drumm (Chairperson)
- Catherine McIntyre (Accredited Parents Plus Facilitator)
- Eoin McGlinchey (Solicitor)
- Mary Fanning (Director)

John Sharry (Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder) and Breda Flood (Finance Manager and Company Secretary) attend the board meetings also.

We also have recruited three new board members notably, Jane Morgan, Dr Charlotte Wilson and Philip Mudge, who will start in January 2017.

## Training Sub-committee and Parents Plus Trainers

The Parents Plus training sub-committee provides a forum for all the Parents Plus accredited trainers to meet to review training and supervision standards for Parents Plus and to make representations to the Parents Plus Board as appropriate. Parents Plus currently works with [10 accredited trainers](#) to do this.

## Staff

Parents Plus has six part-time staff members and one full-time staff member:

- Dr. John Sharry, Chief Executive Officer
- Breda Flood, Financial Controller
- Eileen Brosnan, Senior Trainer
- Grainne Hampson, Senior Trainer
- Siobhán Dolphin, Operations and Communications Manager
- Una O'Maonaigh, Administrator and Finance
- Alex McDonald, 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. We were successful in having this funding renewed for a further three years in 2016.
- The Parents Plus Directors on 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 moved to a new home at 15 St Vincent Street North, Dublin 7 in August 2014 and the Parents Plus team still work from here in 2016.
- Parents Plus secured a major three year grant from the 3Ts charity to start a national family based mental health project in 2014 which continued into 2016.

## **Finance**

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

- Accounts are audited annually by Robert J Kidney & Co.
- 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

**"I have made a huge amount of progress since the start of the WTO Course. It has allowed me to pinpoint exactly what I need to do to get to a good and happy place".**

*16 year old girl, Working Things Out Programme*



# Parents Plus Limited – Financial Information for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016

## Summarised Financial Information

<b>Income &amp; Expenditure Account Extract</b>		<b>12 months ended 31/12/2016</b>	
	€		€
<b>Incoming Resources</b>			
Programme & Training			246,328
Grants received			143,133
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>			<b>389,461</b>
<b>Resources Expended - Ongoing Expenditure</b>			
- Training & Other Costs			282,871
<b>Administration Costs</b>			
- Administration Costs	54,402		52,188
<b>Sub-Total Resources Expended - Ongoing Expenditure</b>			
- Depreciation			2,859
<b>Net Incoming Resources for the Period</b>			<b>52,188</b>
<b>Balance Sheet Extract</b>			
			€
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Leasehold Improvements & Office Equipment			6,435
<b>Current assets</b>			
Accounts Receivable			45,270
Cash at bank			256,123
Stock			52,068
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>			
Operating Creditors			(51,051)
<b>Accumulated Net Funds (2014-2016)</b>			<b>308,845</b>

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