
Parents Plus Annual Report 2019

Empowering Professionals to Support Families



ParentsPlus

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Message from CEO

When people ask me what Parents Plus is really about, I usually describe it as a community. Parents Plus is a community of professionals who want to make a positive difference in the lives of the families they work with. Collaboration is key in this work.

We want to collaborate with agencies *and* work in partnership with parents to create client-centred, responsive services that really make a positive impact.

2019 was our busiest year yet and we offered more training places than ever before. In this annual report we tell the story of two of our long standing collaborations with SPECS in Bray and Parenting Monaghan, both of whom have worked over many years to create a sustainable network of parent supports in their regions. These collaborations are only the tip of the iceberg and I am delighted to say that in 2019 we have also collaborated with many other multi-agency groups including services in Turkey, Bristol, Devon, Newcastle, Cavan, Leitrim, Donegal, Monaghan, Wexford, Dublin, Waterford, Mayo, Galway, Limerick, Cork, Sligo and Northern Ireland. Through the support of our funders we were also able to sponsor 166 professionals to attend training, who may not have otherwise had the opportunity.

2019 was a momentous year for Parents Plus, and the disability services and families, who were involved in the development of the Special Needs Programme – the first programme of its type in the world. In 2019, 24 professional and 2 parent led services completed training and have started to deliver the programme. By the end of 2019, 13 parenting groups have been run to over 130 parents, with a further 13 groups to start in 2020. Listening to the feedback of the attending parents has been heartening. One of our facilitators described how two fathers in her group spoke movingly for the first time about the experience of having a child with a disability – this had a transformational effect on their relationship with their partners and was inspirational to the other parents in the group. We look forward to launching the Special Needs Programme in 2020 to allow a much wider roll out of the programme so many more groups can be run.

As we move into 2020, I would like to thank our dedicated board and staff team, our trainers and supervisors throughout the country and all our facilitators who deliver the programmes to families in their agencies and communities. It has been a privilege to witness the difference you are making in the lives of families.

Professor John Sharry

Chairperson's Message

Welcome to the 2019 Parents Plus Annual Report. It has been a very busy year for Parents Plus and the annual report gives an overview of the impressive work and enormous activity undertaken in 2019.

Parents Plus is an Irish Charity that develops practical, evidence-based parenting and mental health programmes and trains professionals, working with children and their families, to deliver the programmes in communities and clinical settings.

Parents Plus has developed seven flagship programmes:

The Early Years Programme

Children's Programme

Adolescent Programme

Working Things Out Programme

Parenting when Separated Programme

Special Needs Programme

Healthy Families Programme

Parents Plus continues to provide on-going sponsorship places to support professionals and agencies with limited budgets to access and implement our evidence based parenting and mental health programmes within local services.

The positive impact of the Parents Plus Programmes across communities is extremely heartening and the Parenting Monaghan Consortium and the SPECS Initiative in Bray are particular highlights.

In 2019 we launched the first parenting programme in the world for parents of adolescents with intellectual disability, in partnership with families affected by intellectual disability, and with disability services across Ireland.

A Randomised Controlled Trial study began in 2019 with disability services in Ireland and in partnership with Trinity College Dublin. Initial

results are extremely positive and official launch of the programme is due in autumn 2020.

In 2018 Parents Plus was awarded a QCBI grant from TUSLA to develop the Healthy Families Programme in collaboration with the Irish Heart Foundation, Healthy Ireland and Safe Food Ireland. We received additional funding in 2019 and a pilot programme was run in SPECS, Bray and Primary Care, Dun Laoghaire and initial findings in relation to evaluation will be available in June 2020.

Parents Plus onsite training in 2019 was the busiest year to date. We trained 739 professionals in 2019 and the reach of Parents Plus continues to grow in Ireland, the UK and further abroad.

A series of Advanced Practice workshops took place across the country in 2019 and Parents Plus provided integrated post-training supervision into all training packages to further improve outcomes for families and support and increase engagement of facilitators following completion of their training.

We are grateful to all our funders who make this work possible, notably the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government SSNO grant via An Pobal, the QCBI grant from TUSLA, Electric Aid and the continued support of the Mater Hospital.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Directors of Parents Plus for supporting me in my role as Chair. They give so generously and willingly of their time and expertise and it is greatly appreciated. We look forward to welcoming two new board members, Andrew Bourke and Reynagh O'Drien, both due to start in 2020. I would also like to thank Parents Plus Chief Executive, John Sharry and all the Parents Plus staff for their support and commitment.

It is a privilege and an honour to serve as Chairperson of Parents Plus Charity.

Dr Michael Drumm
Chairperson

ABOUT

"The Parents Plus Training has had the most significant impact on the way that I **work as a Speech and Language Therapist with children and parents. The biggest change has been learning to become solution focused to empower families to make long term positive changes."**

**C.A.M.H.S SPEECH & LANGUAGE
THERAPIST**

GER BUCKLEY

Evidence based interventions that work



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.

The Professionals We Train

Parents Plus trains several hundred 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, family support workers, public health nurses, 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; and disability services.

Our Programmes

Parents Plus has developed [seven 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.
- The [Special Needs Programme](#) to support parents who have an adolescent with an intellectual disability.
- The [Healthy Families Programme](#) to support healthy, active and positive family lifestyles.

Impact of The Parents Plus Programmes

Based on 25 years of research, the Parents Plus Programmes have a strong evidence-base that demonstrates positive outcomes for families who complete the programmes. There are over 25 published studies conducted in clinical, community and disability settings attesting to their effectiveness for families dealing with a variety of challenges and issues. These studies have all been independently supervised by Universities, namely University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin and the University of Limerick.

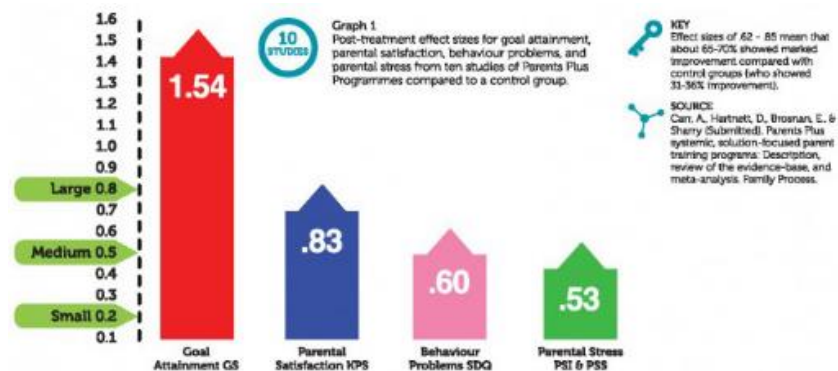
The Parents Plus Programmes follow international best-practice guidelines and have been listed as evidence-based interventions by many international bodies including the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF), NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and the National Parenting Academy (NPA).

Summary of Research

In 2016, Professor of Clinical Psychology, Alan Carr, University College Dublin, conducted a meta-analysis of the Parents Plus evidence base. This analysis highlighted the significant benefit for families who attend the Parents Plus courses, both post-treatment and importantly, at follow-up. In particular, Professor Carr concluded:

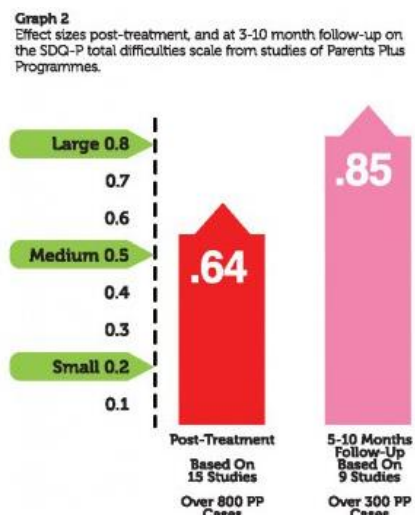
1. The Parents Plus Programmes have a significant impact on:

- Reducing child emotion/ behaviour problems
- Reducing parent stress
- Increasing parent satisfaction
- Increasing therapeutic goal achievement (Graph 1)



2. The results have been **observed with over 1000 families in specialist settings, such as mental health and disability services, as well as preventative community settings** such as schools and family centres.

3. Most significantly the **gains made by families are maintained 3 to 10 months after completing the groups** and in some instances the benefits have increased. (Graph 2)



4. With an average effect size of .6 across all the studies, the effectiveness of the Parents Plus Programmes **compares favourably with other international parent training programmes with large evidence bases.**

The study was published in the International Journal Family Process. Read full paper [here](#)

Mission and Values

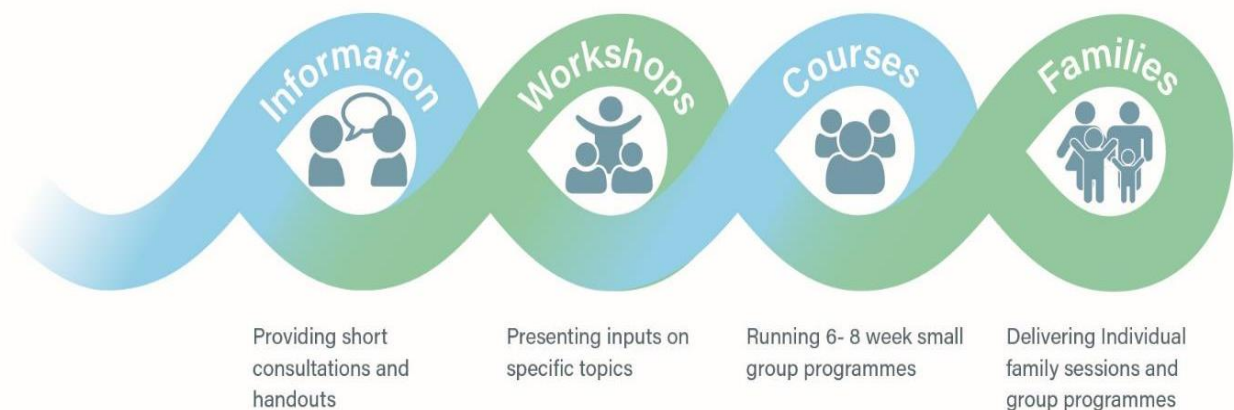
The Parents Plus mission is to improve outcomes for families by empowering professionals to deliver evidence-based mental health and parenting programmes to families.

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 programmes are important **universal, early intervention** and **prevention** interventions.

Parents Plus focuses on **partnership**. We work 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.



TRAININGS & SUPERVISION 2019

Trainings and Supervision 2019



Parents Plus Facilitator Training can be categorised into:

Scheduled Training run by Parents Plus in Dublin

Onsite Training, which is Parents Plus training, run onsite in partner agencies

Post-training Supervision Individual and group sessions

Figure 1 –Percentage breakdown of training type

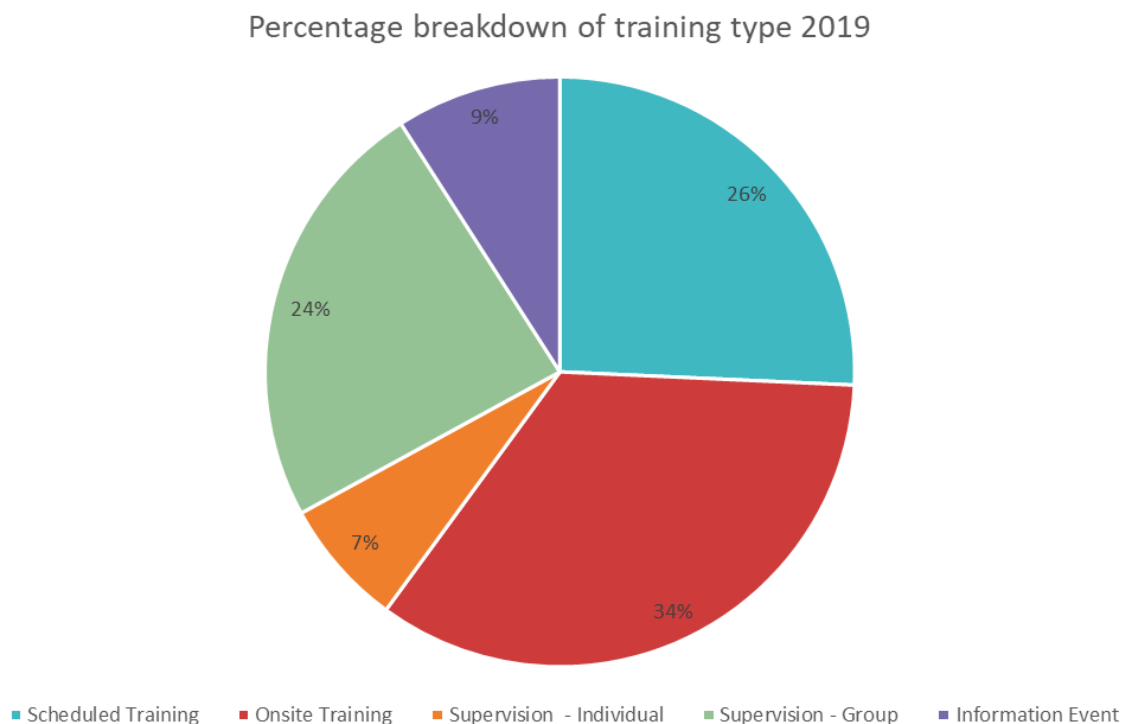


Figure 2 – Facilitator Training by Programme

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

No. of trained facilitators by programme 2019

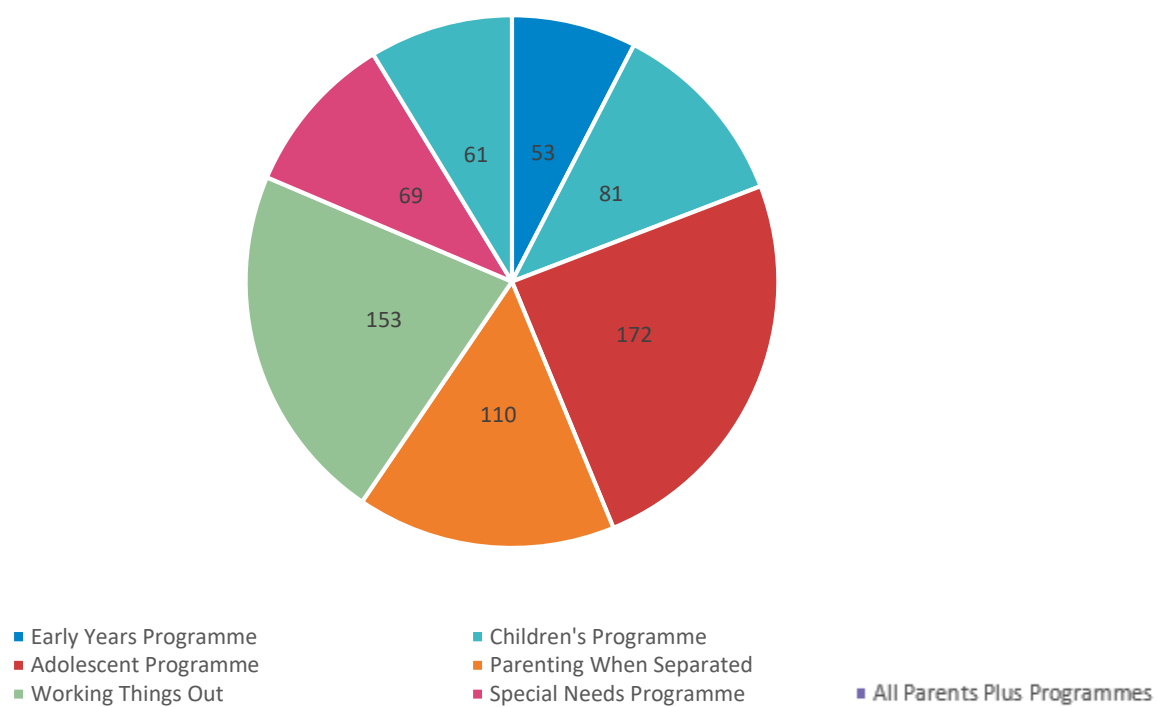
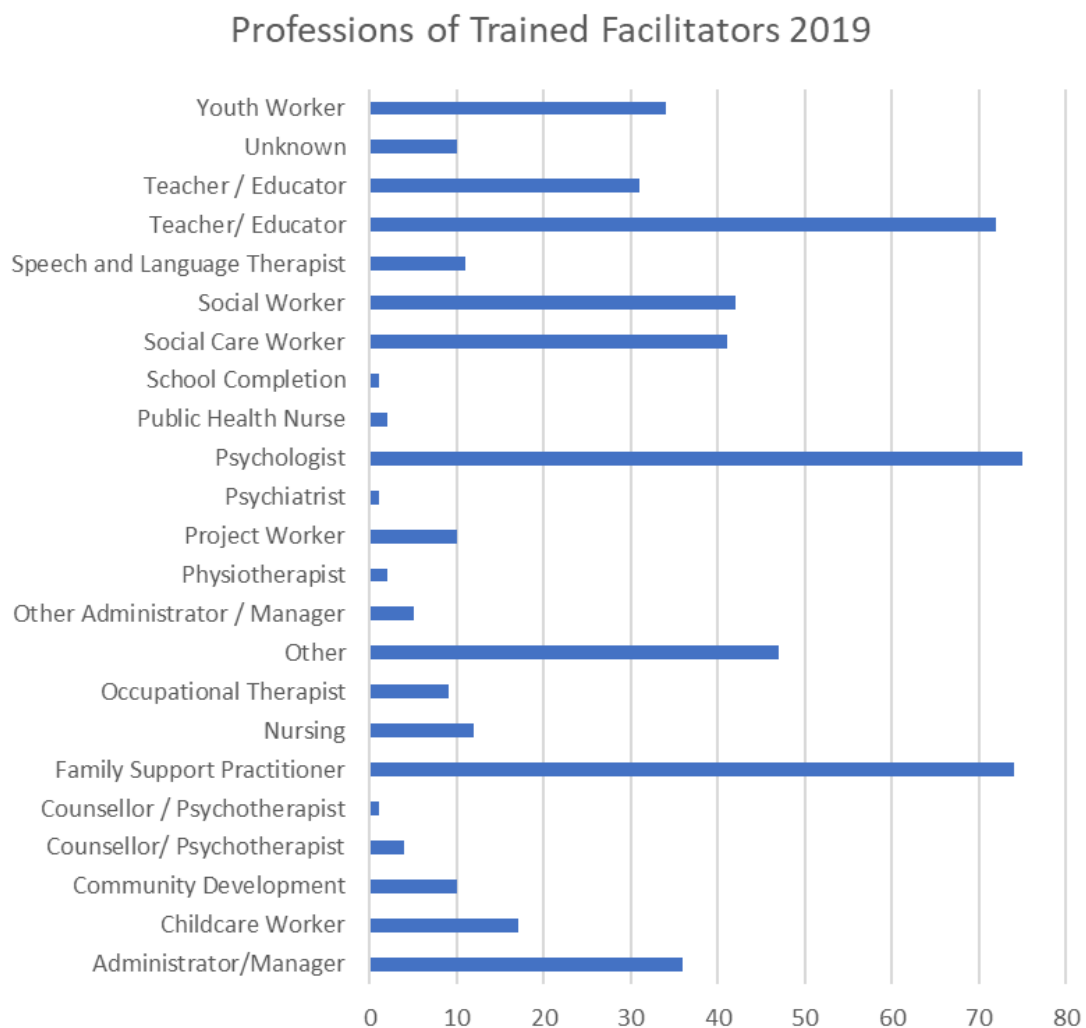


Figure 3 – Facilitator Training by Profession

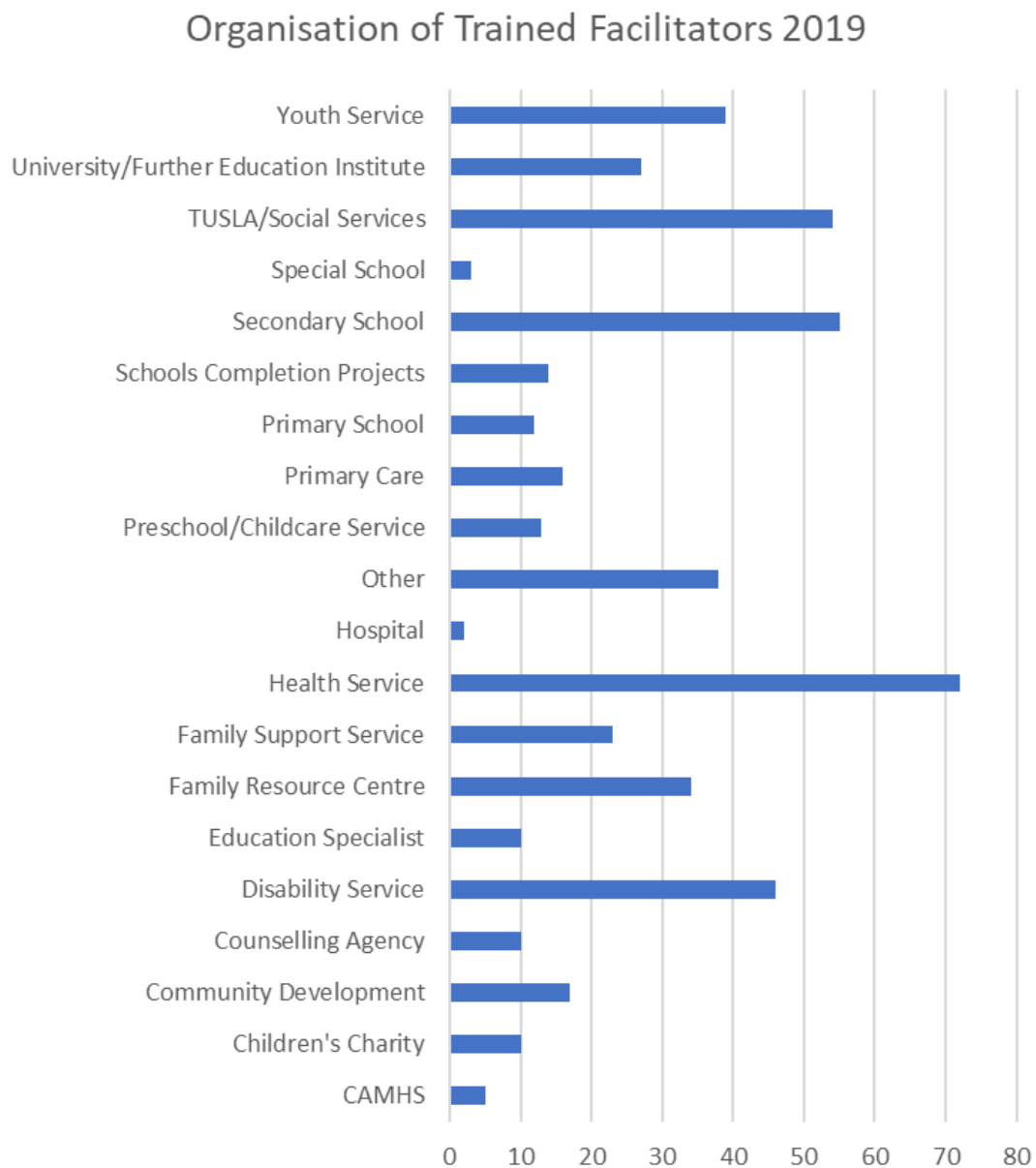
Facilitators who trained were from a wide range of professions. Most professions were represented across the **Psychology**, **Community** and **Education Sectors**.



Similar to 2018, 2019 saw a high level of Family Support Workers, Psychologists and Teachers train in our programmes.

Figure 4 – Facilitator Training by Organisation Type

Professionals who trained came from a variety of **Health**, **Social Services** and **Community Sector** agencies.



FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD

“There are no other specific parenting programmes for parents of adolescents and young people with special needs, yet they have very specific support needs. This programme has **significant positive benefits for young adults with intellectual disabilities, given the central role that parents continue to play in their lives.”**

**STEWARTS CARE
PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER**

COLMAN PARKER

The Special Needs Programme

Launch of Pilot Study - 19th of June 2019 (Press Release)



Dr. Charlotte Wilson, Assistant Professor in Clinical Psychology, Trinity College Dublin,
speaking at launch of Pilot Study in The Aisling Hotel, Dublin

‘The first Parenting Programme in the world for parents of adolescents with intellectual disabilities partners with disability services across Ireland to evaluate the programme impact.’

Professionals working in the field of intellectual disability came together on Tuesday 18th of June at the Aisling Hotel, Dublin, as part of a research group to evaluate the new ‘Special Needs’ parenting programme for parents of adolescents with an intellectual disability developed by Parents Plus.

The first of its kind in Ireland and the world, the programme was developed by Parents Plus’s Professor John Sharry, Speech and Language Therapist Grainne Hampson and Assistant Psychologist Aoife O’ Leary, in partnership with families affected by intellectual disability and with disability services across Ireland.

The research will be carried out in the form of a Randomised Controlled Trial with the disability services that gathered at the event and in partnership with Trinity College Dublin’s Dr. Charlotte Wilson, Assistant Professor in Clinical Psychology, Psychologist in Clinical Training, Suzanne McMahon and Parents Plus over the next six months.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Wilson explained “This means that the Parents Plus Special Needs Programme, as the first of its kind to undergo a Randomised Controlled Trial, can be used across the world as a valuable tool to help families with an adolescent with an intellectual disability. The partnership with the professionals here today to engage in a Randomised Controlled Trial is not only the gold standard, but will prove that it is this specific programme that is making the difference for families. To see Parents Plus leading the way in developing this programme for parents of adolescents with an intellectual disability is truly remarkable. Indeed, it is because of their focus on developing evidence based programmes and the impact of their other flagship parenting and mental health programmes that I am delighted to be involved in such a momentous piece of research.”

Professor John Sharry of Parents Plus highlighted that “In developing the Special Needs Programme we worked extensively with disability services throughout the country and conducted focus groups with 97 parents who are raising an adolescent with special needs. Their involvement and contributions are vital to ensuring that this programme is relevant and will really make a difference. Parents of adolescents with an intellectual disability face unique challenges as their child becomes a young adult. Research shows that this is a time of high levels of parental stress and significant difficulty. Feedback emphasised that current parenting programmes do not meet their needs. For us as an organisation, it is absolutely critical that we hear the voices of all families in Ireland and equip professionals to support these families through this journey. They should never be left behind. The Parents Plus Special Needs Parenting Programme will meet this need.”

Parents Plus will launch this much needed programme in autumn 2020 and with a long waiting list of services eager to begin training in and running of the programme, the team look forward to training professionals to finally reach the thousands of families across Ireland and globally who are calling out for a programme of this kind.

Special Needs Programme

Addresses the complex and under-served needs of marginalised young people with intellectual disabilities (12-25 years) and their families.

Through training in the Special Needs Programme, you will learn how to empower parents to positively manage the many hidden challenges and isolation that can be common for parents of adolescents with an intellectual disability, as well as improve well-being of all family members and prepare young people for future transitions and adulthood.

Drawing on parents strengths, you will also learn how to support parents to build positive relationships with their adolescent and strengthen links with other parents and essential support systems in the communities in which they live.

You will also learn how to support parents to:

- Manage behaviour and emotional problems
- Advocate for their child or adolescent
- Support all relationships in the family
- Deal with puberty, sexuality and relationships
- Support education and development
- Reduce their own stress as parents

The programme is suitable for parents, relatives or guardians of an older child or adolescent with a mild, moderate or severe intellectual disability and who may also have an additional diagnosis, such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or a physical disability.



ACTIVITIES & PROJECTS

"Parents Plus gives parents and guardians the **tools** to help them **manage the many challenges of parenting teenagers**. As a secondary school teacher, the course has enabled me to have a better understanding of the experiences of our young people outside the school setting and this has **made me a better teacher**."

ST. JOSEPH'S SECONDARY SCHOOL
HOME SCHOOL LIAISON

YVONNE KIELY

Onsites and Regional Roll Outs

2019 was one of the busiest years to date in Parents Plus for onsite trainings across the country and internationally, and which included extensive training of professionals across Disability Services, as part of the pilot of the Special Needs Programme.

Onsite trainings took place in: Turkey, U.K., Cavan, Leitrim, Donegal, Monaghan, Wexford, Dublin, Waterford, Mayo, Galway, Limerick, Cork, Monaghan, Sligo and Northern Ireland, with services such as The Schools Completions Programme, The National Council for Special Education, Tusla, the H.S.E., Enable Ireland, Brothers of Charity, Childcare Committees and The Northern and Southern Health and Social Care Trusts.

U.K.

Parents Plus were commissioned to train and roll out Parenting When Separated with 20 U.K. Local Authorities and supported by the Department of Work and Pensions in the U.K. The roll out took place in Newcastle and Tavistock, and was led by Parents Plus Senior Trainer and Mental Health Lecturer Fred Ehresmann.

Further U.K. training also took place in Bristol and Devon, with professionals from across community, health and education settings attending the Parents Plus Adolescent Programme and Children's Programme Trainings.

National Sponsored Rollouts

Parents Plus launched a National Sponsored rollout of the Early Years Programme with preschool and infant school teachers across Ireland. This initiative saw applications from services across the country and those selected commenced training on May 1st.

Further Sponsorships for the Children's Programme and Parenting When Separated, to support professionals working in education, community and mental health settings, took place in Autumn 2019. Such sponsorship supports professionals and agencies with limited budgets to access and implement our evidence based parenting and mental health programmes within their local services.

Research

Special Needs Programme

The Special Needs Programme Study was launched with a seminar on June 18th with 60 professionals and 28 services in attendance. 25 disability services were finalised for the rollout and Randomised Controlled Trials to take place with the Department of Psychology in Trinity College Dublin.

As part of the pilot, training took place in September, and 11 Disability agencies and 2 Parent led support groups delivered the Parents Plus Special Needs Programme to 135 parents throughout Ireland in Autumn 2019. A further 11 agencies will deliver groups in February 2020 to another 125 parents, bringing the total to 260 families who will benefit so far.

The initial 24 groups are being independently evaluated by the Department of Psychology in Trinity College Dublin, and results are extremely positive, showing reduced stress for all family members and improved family functioning.

Healthy Families Programme

In 2018, Parents Plus was awarded a QCBI innovation grant from TUSLA to develop the Healthy Families Programme, with a further €25,000 funding received in 2019. The programme will assist families in tackling the problems of childhood obesity and promoting healthy families in both clinical and community settings. 2019 saw further development of the programme with Dr. Adele Keating, Psychologist, Our Lady's Hospital Crumlin, and with assistance from Niamh Doody, Assistant Psychologist.

A series of focus groups and workshops were carried out across Ireland, and collaboration took place with agencies such as the Irish Heart Foundation, Healthy Ireland and Safe Food Ireland, in the development of this important intervention. Roll out of the 8 week programme was piloted in SPECS, Bray and Primary Care, Dun Laoghaire and Dublin, with programme materials developed and subsequently reviewed by professionals who specialise in the area of childhood obesity. The programme is currently being tested with four groups of parents in primary care and school settings and initial findings will be available in June 2020.

Information Seminars, Workshops and Events

Advanced Practice Workshop with Accredited Facilitators

A series of Advanced Practice workshops took place with Parents Plus accredited facilitators in Cork, West Cork, Limerick, Sligo, Donegal and Dublin. Facilitators were supported to;

- Further develop their group facilitation skills
- Set up and deliver programmes effectively
- Manage challenges
- Enhance strengths based engagement with parents

Introduction to the Parents Plus Programmes

These events took place in Dublin in March and April. Professionals who attended were given an insight into the five Parents Plus programmes and how they can best be implemented within individual services. Samples of each programme were presented, as well as the evidence base, along with a number of implementation strategies for getting the programmes off the ground both within individual services and larger organisations.

New Supervisors

13 Parents Plus Accredited Facilitators began a Supervisor Mentorship Programme – 8 in Ireland and 5 in the U.K. The new team of supervisors attended individual mentorship sessions as well as group training throughout 2019.

Post-Training Support

Evidence emphasises that in order to further improve outcomes for families, professionals must be supported, post training, to implement parenting and mental health groups within their own settings. Thus, a key strategy for Parents Plus is to increase the engagement of facilitators in post training supervision. With this in mind, Parents Plus **integrated post-training supervision into all training packages**. From 2019, all professionals trained will be offered follow up supervision (a) two-week post training call to offer support (b) up to two supervision sessions within year one, and (c) further sponsored supervision available by application.

Total number of Individual Supervisions	71 <i>*Individual supervisions can include 2 people</i>
Total number of Group Supervisions	208 professionals

Parents Plus ran 83 individual and group advanced practice supervision sessions all over the country in areas including, Dublin, Monaghan, Donegal, Cork, Sligo, Limerick and West Cork. These were carried out in person, and via Zoom and Skype, to enable cross-country meetings. A total of **333 facilitators participated in supervision sessions**, and 24 facilitators were accredited in 2019.

Parents Plus also offers further post training support in the form of the facilitator's [member's 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 include streaming of the Parents Plus programme DVDs, 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.

Facilitators can also avail of support to promote their groups locally via Parents Plus Communications Manager who issues press releases to print media, as well as promoting facilitator groups on Parents Plus Twitter and Facebook pages.

Parents Plus Facilitators are also kept up to date on valuable resources and research to aid their practice after training with regular emails and contact from Parents Plus.

IMPACT OF PARENTS PLUS PROGRAMMES

"Nobody talks about the mental health problems that parents of teenagers with special needs can experience. **The stress and having no one to turn to breaks people.** We weren't given a manual on how to deal with all of this. Now we have this course, it will help parents deal with the issues that arise during adolescence. It will keep families together, connect them with other families. **This will save families.**"

SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAMME
PARTICIPANT

PARENT

A NEW WAY OF WORKING



The SPECS Initiative in Bray makes a life changing impact

The SPECS Initiative in Bray has worked with hundreds of parents, reached over 1,000 children and collaborated extensively with local agencies to meet the needs of parents and children in the greater Bray area. Indeed, the success of their approach is clear from the findings of their recent evaluation report. The report, entitled, 'A New Way of Working', emphasises the impact that the SPECS Initiative has made from 2015 – 2017 and is an excellent case study from which we can all learn from. Indeed the report emphasises how much can be achieved to improve outcomes for parents and children when services work together on prevention, early intervention and use evidence based programmes such as those developed by Professor John Sharry and his team at Parents Plus.

We caught up with SPECS Initiative Coordinator Mary Rose Costello to congratulate her on the success of this life changing project, a project that she and her team have worked tirelessly on in order to improve outcomes for 1,000 plus children and parents across Bray.

Speaking of the work that both she and her team have achieved, and why they chose Parents Plus programmes, Mary Rose Costello explains "Since we began in SPECS, we have found using the Parents Plus Programmes with parents really useful, both with groups and one to one. It has also been so beneficial to have the direct support from Parents Plus through supervision and the accreditation process, which has helped us ensure the highest quality and impact when working with parents and children."

The evaluation report further highlights that "a decision was made by the Consortium, led by Bray Area Partnership, that Parents Plus was more suited to the needs in Bray. The reason for this was that it had been difficult to retain parents' engagement for the 14 weeks required for another parenting course and the shorter 6-8 week timeframe in the Parents Plus programme was seen as more manageable.

Consortium member organisations reported that behaviour management was the main need being reported by parents in Bray and Parents Plus was seen as a more suitable approach addressing these identified needs earlier in the course along with the development of play techniques.

The Outcomes

Over 97% of parents who completed the Parents Plus Early Years programme reported improvements in their goals from an average score of 3.65 to 7.4 for goals set for their children and 3.9 to 7.5 for goals set for themselves.

We at Parents Plus would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the SPECS Initiative team and Bray Area Partnership for the work that they have achieved to date and we wish them continued success making a difference to the lives of children and parents in their community. Their commitment to prevention and early intervention is truly remarkable.

To learn more about the impact of SPECS in the greater Bray area, see '[SPECS. Supporting Parents and Early Childhood Services. Evaluation Report 2015 - 2017](#)'.

Impact – Parenting Monaghan Consortium

'Parenting Monaghan' lead the way in Parenting Support with launch of Evaluation Report



(Source: The Northern Standard Newspaper)

The Parents Plus range of parenting courses, which are offered free of charge to all parents in County Monaghan by the organisation Parenting Monaghan, has led to significant improvements in parenting confidence and skills as well as improvements in child behaviour, positive discipline and family relationships, according to an evaluation report which was launched by Parenting Monaghan at the Glencarn Hotel in Castleblainey, yesterday, the 4th of December.

Data from parents who attended the Parents Plus courses also indicates important improvements in their children's ability to process their emotions and parent child communication.

The report, a collaboration between Parenting Monaghan and Parents Plus, and based on evaluations from 124 Monaghan families who attended the courses, evaluates and documents the effectiveness of using the Parents Plus 'Parenting' Programmes by Parenting Monaghan, between 2017 and 2018.

The report clearly demonstrates that offering universal parenting courses to parents, such as the evidence based Parents Plus programmes commissioned by Parenting Monaghan, delivers measurable and tangible benefits to parents and their children, proving further the importance of investing in evidence based parenting programmes in order to deliver long-term benefits for families and communities across Ireland.

Speaking at the launch of the report, Ellen Mc Meel, Parenting Monaghan Coordinator explains,

“Parents are overwhelmed by the amount and type of parenting information that is out there. Parenting Monaghan wanted to respond to the needs of parents in Monaghan in the most effective way. This is why we chose to train in and offer the Parents Plus programmes. They allow parents to cut through this noise and have access to practical information, developed by parenting experts, which is relevant to their experience as parents in Ireland. Parents aren’t given an instruction manual when their children are born, so these free courses are an invaluable resource to all parents with children from 1 to 16 years old. They are an excellent way for parents to come together to learn proven strategies that will actually work for their families.”

Parenting Monaghan chose to commission the Parents Plus range of parenting courses as the courses have been clinically proven to work and their focus is on empowering parents to make the necessary positive changes in their lives.

A results based model of parenting support offered by Parenting Monaghan

One parent who attended the Parents Plus Early Years Programme with Parenting Monaghan describes how “Since the course I have been able to introduce good routines for the kids, there are very few behaviour issues, I am more consistent as a parent and I have learned tools that every parent should learn. To be honest, it doesn’t matter what your background or where you are from, every parent should do the Parents Plus courses. The course will change your children lives and your life for the better.”

The report not only emphasises the major impact that Parenting Monaghan is having on families in County Monaghan, but also the long term differences that investment in collaborations such as this have on the future of families when given access to evidence based parenting courses.

Continuing the partnership with parents of Monaghan

Mc Meel concludes “The Parenting Monaghan approach of delivering the Parents Plus programmes matters to parents and shows that working in partnership with all parents really works. We welcome all parents to contact us to book their free place and to ask any questions that they might have. Parents shouldn’t be left isolated in their responsibility to bring up their children. Parenting Monaghan wants the parents of Monaghan to know that we are all in this together. As the old proverb says, It takes a village to raise a child. This is certainly clear from our evaluation and from the strong feedback from the parents involved.”

Parenting Monaghan was formed in August 2016 to address parenting needs across Co. Monaghan. It is a multi-agency project. The agencies involved in Parenting Monaghan are Monaghan Integrated Development, Monaghan County Childcare Committee, ISPCC Child and Family Networks, Tusla Child and Family Agency, HSE Primary Care, HSE Public Health Nursing, HSE Adult Mental Health Services, Children and Young People’s Services Committee, Monaghan County Council, School Completion Programme, Monaghan Education Centre, Cavan Monaghan Education and Training Board, Foroige/Garda Youth Diversion Programme, Youth Work Ireland, Monaghan, Teach na Daoine Family Resource Centre, Cavan Monaghan Drug Awareness and Enable Ireland.

Impact – Family Contact Services

“Since training in Parents Plus we now have a great resource to reference during access visits to assist us in promoting positive relationships between parents and their children. We now **run individual Parents Plus sessions** for parents who want to improve/build confidence in their parenting skills. As a result of working with parents in this way, we have seen **improvements in the quality of the access visits**. Parents have more confidence in their ability to parent their child in areas such as discipline, play and cooperation.”

TUSLA Family Contact Service, Jacinta Doyle

Impact - Separation and Divorce

“The Parenting when Separated programme has **benefitted my work greatly** as I now have the information needed to support parents. The information is concrete and the sessions are easy to follow. It is great having this course to use both on an individual basis with a parent and in group settings.

It works well in our service as we receive referrals from across the board so can link the parent into the group if it is something they are struggling with. We did the training in response to a need that arose from social work so this has benefitted us greatly as we can now cater to that need.

Parents have found the information very useful in both supporting their children and in how to talk to them appropriately about the separation/divorce. Parents have also reported that it has **reduced conflict** and **improved communication** with their ex.”

Separation, Susanne Lynott

Impact – Secondary School, Wicklow

“The programme has helped us to support families reporting emotional and behavioural difficulties. **Parents have reported vast improvements** in relationships with their children and their own skills in parenting. The group aspect of the programme also gives parents a sense that they are not alone with many creating supportive bonds that last well beyond the span of the course.

As a HSCL, facilitating the Parent Plus Programmes has helped me build relationships with parents and the school community. Delivering the course has supported social interaction among parents who might not otherwise engage with the school or other agencies. Teachers have also noted a corresponding **improvement in behaviours** and social interactions of the children of parents who undertake the course.”

Home School Liaison Coordinator, Paddy Kinsella

What Parents Say About Our Programmes

“My ex and I were at loggerheads. We couldn’t agree on anything and it was causing the children terrible stress. I signed up to do the Parenting When Separated course and it has **made family life much better**. I learnt great tips and my ex and I are communicating way better now. The children are happy. I would definitely recommend this course. I think all parents who attended really did change the way they parent and communicate.”

Parenting When Separated - Parent, Limerick

“We were **struggling to help our daughter**. She was finding the teenage years difficult to get through. My G.P. recommended the Parents Plus Adolescent Programme and we haven’t looked back. Anyone with children should do this course. They will feel prepared for the teenage years then. It really has been the best thing that we have done and our daughter is in a much better place. We really were adding fuel to the fire. We didn’t mean to. Now we have the information from Parents Plus and know how to respond. Our **home is a much nicer place to be**.”

Adolescent Programme - Parent, U.K.

“Toddlers don’t come with a manual. There is just too much information out there on parenting and half of it is conflicting. **I felt that my head would explode**. Then my friend told me about Parents Plus and I looked it up. I loved that it was so positive so I signed up for the Early Years course. I came out of the course thinking I am able to this. I have the right tools now. It **really has made a difference to me, my son and my husband**. Excellent course.”

Early Years Programme - Parent, Donegal

“We had gotten into **such bad habits** – junk food, no exercise, screens, screens, screens. All taking away my family’s health. I saw an ad for this course and signed up. It was brilliant. Really empowering and has given me the confidence and the skills to educate my kids about junk food. **I am able to manage the screen use much better** and the kids are in much better form as we are getting out more. We are spending more quality time together. Any time I feel I need support I go straight to my Parents Plus course book and I am back on track. I would **highly recommend this course** to parents who want to give their family a better future”

Healthy Families Programme - Parent, Wicklow

GOVERNANCE & ORGANISATION

Participants reported improvements in their ability to remain calm, to listen and to be more understanding and patient. Statements included 'I stay calm and I tune in', 'I learned to listen more' and 'I can now see things from my son's perspective'. Parents felt that they had become **more responsive to their children's needs** after the programme had finished.'

**PARENTS PLUS ROLL OUT
ACROSS DONEGAL**

EXTRACT FROM EVALUATION REPORT

Governance and Organisation

Parents Plus CLG is an Irish registered charity and complies with the Charity Act 2009. Parents Plus is constituted as a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital, registered with the company number 530105. Parents Plus CLG is registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority with registered charity number 20043124 and has been granted charitable tax exemption by the Office of the Revenue Commissioners with the CHY reference number 13664.

Governance Code and Compliance

Parents Plus complies with all of the core standards outlined in the [Charities Governance Code](#). In compliance with the Charity Act 2015, Parents Plus will be reporting annually on their compliance starting in 2020. In addition, the charity has and continues to submit an annual report to the Charities Regulator. In 2018 and 2019, Parents Plus completed a review of our constitution which was formally adopted by the board in June 2019.

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 2019, the Board of Parents Plus comprises of the following members (31st December 2019):

- Michael Drumm (Chairperson)
- Mary Fanning (Trustee)
- Jane Morgan (Trustee)
- Dr Charlotte Wilson (Trustee)
- Carol Maricle

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

Board Sub-committees

To maintain and continually improve standards, Parents Plus have three subcommittees that meet throughout the year and report to the Board

1) Finance Subcommittee – Meets to review financial procedures and to produce a draft budget and financial plan for the board.

2) Training Subcommittee - 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.

3) Governance Subcommittee – Meets to review all governance procedures and to ensure the highest standards of accountability and governance.

Staff

In 2019, Parents Plus has six part-time staff members and two full time Assistant Psychologists (who have been employed to work on the development of the two new Parents Plus programmes).

- Dr. John Sharry, Chief Executive Officer
- Breda Flood, Financial Controller
- Eileen Brosnan, Senior Trainer
- Grainne Hampson, Senior Trainer
- Siobhan Dolphin, Operations and Communications Manager
- Cherie Tyner, Social Worker/Communications Manager
- Claire Raftery, Administration Manager (Commenced May 2019)
- Niamh Doody, Assistant Psychologist, Healthy Families Programme
- Aoife O'Leary, Assistant Psychologist, Special Needs Programme

FINANCE

Financial Reporting

Parents Plus follows strict financial procedures and complies fully with all reporting requirements as detailed by the Charities Regulatory Authority. Parents Plus salaries are benchmarked with equivalent grades in the HSE and TUSLA. Our finances are carefully managed by our Finance Manager and reviewed at each board meeting. Our accounts are independently audited and our current auditors are [Robert J Kidney and Co.](#)

Funding

Parents Plus is grateful to all of our generous funders who support us to make a positive difference to the lives of families across Ireland. Parents Plus is primarily funded through the sale of programme training and materials and a SSNO grant for national organisations. The SSNO grant is the Scheme to Support National Organisations, and is funded by the Government of Ireland through the Department of Rural and Community Development. The SSNO grant is administered by An Pobal.

Parents Plus is also funded by occasional project funding from non-profit and grant making organisations. Most recently Parents Plus received funding, as part of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs QCBI Scheme, to develop the Healthy Families Programme.

Thank you to the Mater Hospital for their continued support of Parents Plus through the provision of accommodation, services for training and support of the programmes in general.

All profits from sales of programmes and training are re-invested in developing new materials and sponsoring facilitator training.



Parents Plus CLG – Financial Information for Year Ending 31st December 2019

Summarised Financial Information

Income & Expenditure Account Extract	12 months ended 31/12/2019
	€
Incoming Resources	
Programme & Training	309,064
Grants received	95,902
Total Incoming Resources	404,966
Resources Expended - Ongoing Expenditure	
- Training & Other Costs	453,828
Administration Costs	
- Administration Costs	53,011
Sub-Total Resources Expended - Ongoing Expenditure	
- Depreciation	4,395
Net Incoming Resources for the Period	-106,268

Balance Sheet Extract	12 months ended 31/12/2019
	€
Fixed Assets	
Leasehold Improvements & Office Equipment	5,176
Current assets	
Accounts Receivable	68,289
Cash at bank	228,882
Stock	69,201
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	
Operating Creditors	(60,245)
Accumulated Net Funds (2014-2019)	311,303

Parents Plus CLG Mater Hospital, Eccles Street Dublin 7
www.parentsplus.ie admin@parentsplus.ie 00353 1 854 5185

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Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/parents_plus

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