



ParentsPlus

Annual Report 2020

Empowering Professionals to Support Families



In the last 10 years Parents Plus has supported **over 100,000 families**, and empowered **over 1,000 organisations** to create sustainable change in their service delivery.

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Message from CEO

2020 has been the year dominated by the Covid-19 crisis, which unfortunately brought increased stress on children, young people and families. When all of our projects and training services were interrupted in March, we fortunately were able to quickly move to remote working and to deliver all our training and supervision online. **Parents Plus also took the lead nationally to support agencies and professionals throughout Ireland and the UK to move their parenting groups and services online.** We designed a special training course on 'remote working' for Parents Plus Facilitators and 374 professionals attended this course in 2020.

The move to online working has been a resounding success and it has allowed families to be supported in new ways during the most challenging times of Covid-19. Several of the services we have supported have been able to overcome geographic limitations and extend the delivery of groups to an even wider audience of parents who have been easier to access online. Innovatively, some of our services have used the opportunity of online working to collaborate from distant counties to co-facilitate the same Parents Plus group. In Parents Plus, we have worked hard to maintain the human contact and therapeutic power in online working and have integrated this into our training.

2020 also saw the launch of the Parents Plus Special Needs Programme (PPSN) to an online audience of over 190 professionals. The impressive results of the Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) study demonstrate the benefits for families attending and mark the PPSN as the first international evidence-based programme for parents of young people with an intellectual disability.

With the support of the Sunbeam Trust, the PPSN is being rolled out to families in Wicklow, through established services across the county. We also secured funding from the Ecclesiastical Movement for Good fund to deliver the programme in England, Wales and Scotland in 2021. Indeed, 2021 promises to be an important year for this much needed programme.

During 2020 we also continued our partnerships with many national services to roll out the Parents Plus Programmes, including the Homes School Liaison service, to establish a pilot of the Early Years Programme in junior schools; our continued work with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) to roll out the Adolescents and Working Things Out Programmes in secondary schools, and supporting the Tavistock and Relate services in the UK to deliver the Parenting when Separated Programme.

We are also delighted that the pilot of the new Parents Plus Healthy Families Programme was completed online in 2020, and will be more widely distributed in 2021.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Parents Plus team for their hard work during a very challenging 2020. I'd also like to thank the Parents Plus staff who worked from home while minding children, our trainers who so creatively adapted to the online world, and all our Parents Plus facilitators who worked so hard to continue to reach families in need. Thanks also to Dr. Michael Drumm, and the wonderful Parents Plus Board, who have supported the work of Parents Plus so well in this challenging year.

Professor John Sharry



Chairperson's Message

Welcome to our Parents Plus Annual Report for 2020. The Board and I are pleased to present this to you on behalf of our team at Parents Plus. Parents Plus staff, our trainers and facilitators showed remarkable ability to pivot when Covid-19 interrupted our training services in March 2020 and with great effort moved seamlessly to delivery all our training, supervision and post-training support online. A special online training course, 'Engaging Families Remotely,' was developed by Parents Plus to support our facilitators and professionals to successfully move their parenting groups and services online. This allowed services to deliver groups to an even wider audience, collaborate across geographic locations, and extend the delivery of groups to an even wider audience of parents who have been easier to access online.

Over the year, we aimed to continue to **maximise the delivery of high-quality Parents Plus services in a COVID-19 environment**. From April onwards Parents Plus rolled out the **'Remote Engagement with Families' training** to professionals and services, to support organisations through the evolving landscape of delivering their services and the Parents Plus programmes online.

Backed by over 25 years of research, the Parents Plus Programmes have a strong evidence-base that demonstrates positive outcomes for families who complete our programmes. In addition, Parents Plus CLG is an Irish registered charity and complies with the Charity Act 2009 and we are aiming to ensure that we also comply with all of the core standards outlined in the Charities Governance Code.

In 2020 Parents Plus launched the first international evidence-based programme for parent of young people with an intellectual disability. The result of the large Randomised Controlled Trial of the **Parents Plus Special Needs programme (PPSN)** demonstrated the benefits for families attending the PPSN. The PPSN Programme was officially **launched by the Minister for Children, Disability, Equality, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman** with over 200 delegates in attendance from disability services across Ireland, as well as parents who shared the importance of this evidence based programme to the lives of thousands of families. We received funding from the Ecclesiastical Movement for Good to deliver the PPSN programme in England, Wales and Scotland in 2021. Also Parents Plus, with the support of the Sunbeam House Trust, were able to roll out the PPSN programme to families in county Wicklow, and 2021 promises to be an important year for this much needed programme.

We were delighted to launch our **new Parents Plus website** in 2020. The feedback has been excellent and we now have a better and easier booking page, more interactive resource pages and a revamped parents page. In addition, Parents Plus developed web resources for services and parents on how they could support children and families during the Covid-19 crisis.

Parents Plus is primarily funded through the sale of programme training and materials, and our funders, in particular an SSNO grant administered by An Pobal from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government. As well as the SSNO grant, we remain immensely grateful to all our funders who make this work possible. Parents Plus also received funding from RTE Does Comic Relief, through The Community Foundation for Ireland, who chose to support our project 'Transforming health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly in high need and disadvantaged communities, with the Parents Plus Healthy Families Programme.' Most recently, Parents Plus were one of ten charities out of 1,000 U.K. and Irish applicants to receive funding from Ecclesiastical, the specialist insurance and financial services company, to roll out the Parents Plus Special Needs Programme in the U.K. In addition, Sunbeam House Trust, the Wicklow based Trust dedicated to supporting developments that enable people with disabilities to maintain full and meaningful lives in their communities, committed to funding the training of services in County Wicklow in our new Special Needs Programme. Thanks also to the Mater Hospital for their continued support of Parents Plus through the provision of accommodation, services for training and continued support of the programmes in general.

All profits from sales of programmes, training and supervisions are re-invested in developing new programmes to respond to the evolving needs of families, and to sponsor facilitator training and supports of services with limited budgets, and who work with high need families.

We are deeply grateful to the hard work and dedication of our Parents Plus team, Dr. John Sharry, our Chief Executive Officer, Breda Flood, Financial Controller and Company Secretary, Eileen Brosnan and Grainne Hampson, Senior Trainers, as well as Cherie Tyner, Development and Communications Manager, and Claire Raftery, Programme Manager.

We welcomed three new board members in 2020 - Mr Andrew Bourke, Ms Reynagh O'Brien, and Ms Carol Maricle who all joined in July 2020. Ms Mary Fanning resigned from the Parents Plus board in 2020, and while we were sorry to see her go, we wish her well in her retirement and thank her most sincerely for her years of dedication to Parents Plus. She has made a remarkable contribution to Parents Plus as one of the founding members of Parents Plus, and long-time member of the board.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Directors for their continued dedication and commitment to Parents Plus. Their expertise and skill ensure that Parents Plus is a dynamic, well governed, fully compliant organisation that is strategically focused on our mission to improve the well-being of children, young people and parents, and to strengthen families, by empowering professionals to deliver our evidence-based programmes in their services into 2021 and beyond.

Dr Michael Drumm, Chairperson

ABOUT

"Parents Plus have a **strong track record** and **really impressive results delivering positive outcomes for families**. Parents Plus Special Needs programme is a **MOMENTOUS piece of work** that will have **real benefits for families with children with special needs**."

MINISTER FOR CHILDREN, DISABILITY,
EQUALITY, INTEGRATION AND YOUTH

RODERIC O'GORMAN



In the last 10 years Parents Plus has supported over 100,000 families, and empowered over 1,000 organisations to create sustainable change in their service delivery.

About

[Parents Plus](#) is an Irish charity that researches, develops and delivers **evidence-based parenting** and **mental health programmes**. Our mission is to improve the well-being of children, young people and parents and to strengthen families, by empowering professionals to deliver our evidence-based programmes in their community, educational and clinical services.

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 and supports several hundred professionals as facilitators each year throughout Ireland, the UK and internationally. Our **bespoke train the trainer model** ensures that professional **service providers are best equipped to improve the lives of thousands of families and young people 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.

We also **sponsor services** across disability, mental health, education, primary care, child protection, early intervention, youth work and community services, **who have limited funding**, or where there is an absence of national funding to support specific and vulnerable groups.

We provide **post-training and implementation support**, to ensure the programmes are **embedded within long-term service delivery**. 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.

Our Programmes

Parents Plus has developed seven flagship programmes in **response to the evolving needs** of families and young people, and includes their specific experiences. Our programmes combine a social learning model with a solution-focused preventative framework that encourages and empowers parents, young people and children to 'take charge' and make positive changes in their lives.



Our programmes include:

- 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

Backed by **over 25 years of research**, the Parents Plus Programmes have a strong evidence-base that demonstrates positive outcomes for families who complete our programmes.

There are **24 internationally recognised 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 University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin and the University of Limerick.

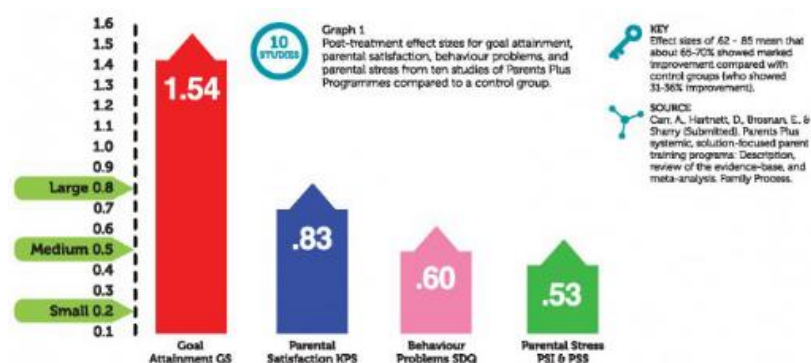
The Parents Plus Programmes follow **international best-practice** guidelines as described by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence in the UK, and have been **independently reviewed** by the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF), NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and the National Parenting Academy (NPA), and were **awarded top ratings**.

Meta-Analysis of the Parents Plus Evidence Base

In 2016, Professor of Clinical Psychology, Alan Carr, University College Dublin, conducted a meta-analysis of the Parents Plus evidence base, with **over 1,000 families in specialist settings**. 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 1,000 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)

Graph 2
Effect sizes post-treatment, and at 3-10 month follow-up on the SDQ-P total difficulties scale from studies of Parents Plus Programmes.



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

Our mission is to **improve the well-being of children, young people and parents** and to strengthen families, by **empowering professionals to deliver our evidence-based programmes** in their services.

Our Programmes are Effective



Universal

For all families
raising children



In Prevention

For disadvantaged
and at risk families



As Interventions

For high need families
with complex problems

Parents Plus provides an **evidence-based service**. We are committed to researching outcomes and developing effective programmes in response to the needs of families and young people, as well as supporting 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.

Our programmes are **tailored** to the needs of local communities, and can be delivered as a one to one, in groups or online, so as to reach the most at risk families.

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.

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.

RESPONDING TO COVID IN 2020

“With school closures, lockdowns and increased isolation, **2020** has been a very challenging year for families. **Many agencies have struggled to continue to provide service** during remote working. During 2020 **Parents Plus have supported hundreds of agencies to rise to these challenges** to reach out and to deliver quality parenting groups and mental health supports online.”

CEO
PARENTS PLUS
PROFESSOR JOHN SHARRY

Responding to Covid in 2020

Supporting Services to move to online

With the advent of the Covid-19 crisis, **face-to-face support of families has been reduced**, yet thousands of families are in need of support, and are under immense additional stress, due to the crisis.

Early on, and **in response to a significant number of professionals seeking our advice**, Parents Plus identified that one solution was to support organisations to effectively move services online. To this end, we developed, and facilitated **online workshops to support those on the ground to reach families** and maintain strengths based practice with online service delivery.

Indeed, while there are challenges to online working, we identified that there are also many advantages in that many families prefer it and there are no geographical limitations to reaching families.

Through our ['Supporting families online and by phone' workshops](#), we worked with **374 professionals and services**, across education, mental health, disability and community, to explore the principles of effective remote working using the Parents Plus Programmes, and by providing participants with the tools to strengthen families.

Developed by Prof John Sharry and Dr. Eileen Brosnan, topics covered include:

- Choosing the best mode of remote support
- Remotely delivering strengths-based support to families
- Confidentiality and data protection considerations
- Structuring individual and group sessions
- Addressing core topics such as self-care for parents, conflict management
- Supporting family mental health.

Parents Plus Resources for families during the Covid-19 Crisis

- In addition to equipping services with tailored tools to support families, we developed a **One-Stop web resource for services and parents** with tools on how they can support children and families in these difficult times. Updated regularly, resources range from those for young children with limited language, or for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, autism or other additional needs, who can find this time particularly anxiety provoking, as well as Covid-19 Parenting Questions answered by Professor Sharry.

TRAININGS, SEMINARS & SUPERVISION

"The Parents Plus approach to solving family problems is a well-established model. Due to the **proven efficacy** of the **Parents Plus Adolescents Programme (PPAP)** in improving outcomes for parents, carers, children and young people, **Bristol City Council** has **committed to funding PPAP facilitator training for 8 years.**"

**PARENTING SUPERVISOR,
BRISTOL FAMILY IN FOCUS**

DEBORAH DAVIS

Trainings, Seminars and Supervision 2020

Moving our programme trainings Online

With much research and commitment from our team, **we responded to the emergency needs of services through adapting our programmes trainings for professionals, for online delivery.** Through online training of professionals, and post training supervision and implementation support, we continue to ensure a sustainable and effective delivery of our programmes within agencies and communities **to improve outcomes for families at a national and international level.**

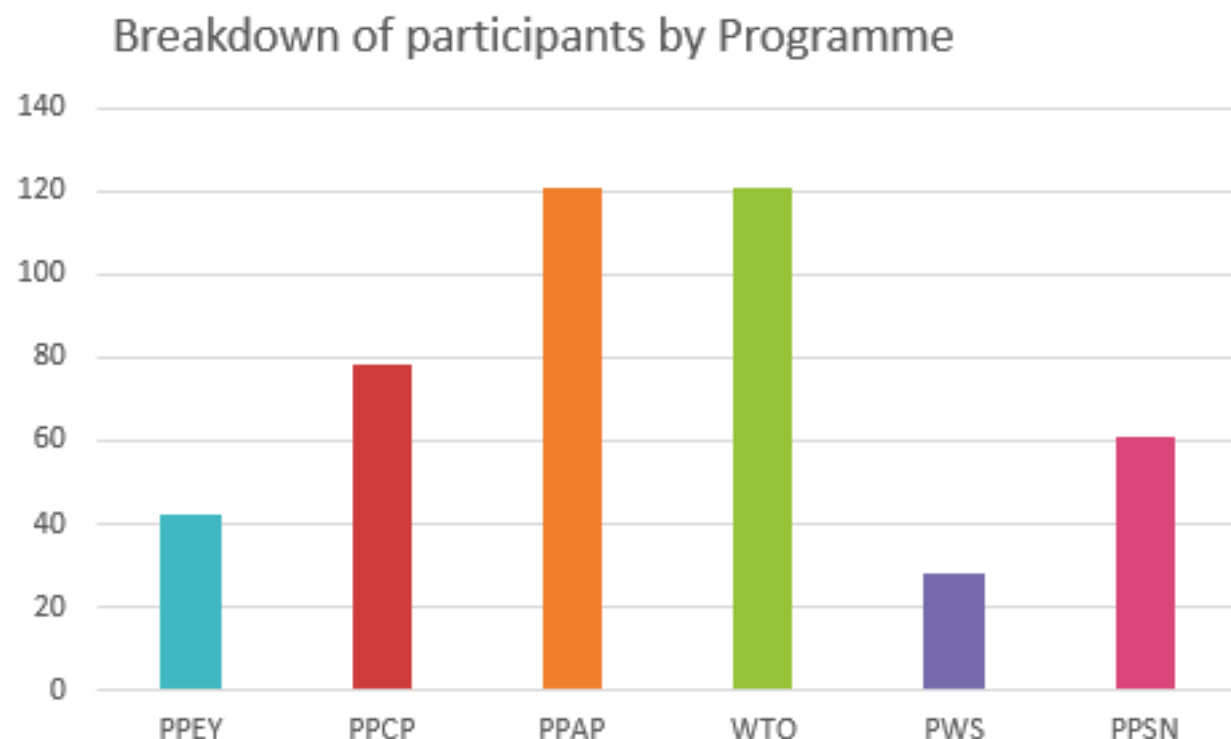


Trainings

Of the **837 professionals** that we trained in 2020 in our range of programmes and supports, **451 professionals completed a full programme training in one of our evidence based parenting and mental health programmes.**

Figure 1 – Facilitator Training by Programme

Figure 1 outlines the number of facilitators by what programme they trained.



Note: The [Parents Plus Healthy Families Programme](#) is not represented in the above statistics as the programme is still in its pilot stage.

New Online Training on ‘Engaging Families Remotely’

From April onwards Parents Plus rolled out the ‘[Remote Engagement with Families](#)’ training to **374 professionals and services**, to support organisations through the evolving landscape of delivering their services and the Parents Plus programmes online. This training is delivered via Zoom, with some further sessions on MS teams to support [HSE](#), [TUSLA Child and Family Agency](#) and other services using this platform. We have also welcomed practice inputs from the extensive network of [Parents Plus Accredited Facilitators](#) in these sessions specifically focusing on their experiences and learning in delivering their own Parents Plus programmes online.

Post-Training Support and Supervision

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 are 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	88 *Individual supervisions can include 2 people
Total number of Group Supervisions	105

Parents Plus ran 63 individual and group advanced practice supervision sessions all over the country and online for international facilitators and to enable cross-country attendance. As the pandemic progressed these sessions were carried out via Zoom and Skype. A total of **193 facilitators** participated in **supervision sessions**, and 17 facilitators were accredited in 2020.

Introduction Sessions to the Parents Plus Programmes

322 professionals attended one of our online introduction sessions, which gave an overview of each of the seven Parents Plus Programmes, and how the programmes can be best implemented within individual services.

Advanced Practice Workshops

A series of Advanced Practice workshops took place with Parents Plus facilitators and hosted by organisations including [Southern Health and Social Care Trust](#), Northern Ireland, as well as free online Advanced Practice Workshops with services such as [Foroige](#), [Family Resource Centres](#), Secondary Schools, [School Completion Projects](#), [Belfast Health and Social Care Trust](#), [SPACE](#), [YMCA's](#), Barnardos and Fostering Services.

Facilitators were supported to;

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

For the remainder of 2020, Parents Plus supervision and support to practitioners took the form of helping practitioners to adapt to remote engagement, and building their skills and confidence to facilitate online groups.

Launch of New Special Needs Programme

The Parents Plus Special Needs Programme was officially launched by the [Minister for Children, Disability, Equality, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman](#) with **over 200 delegates** in attendance from disability services across Ireland, as well as parents who shared the importance of this evidence based programme to the lives of thousands of families. (Read more about this important development for families and services on p.17)

Figure 2 – Facilitator Training by Profession

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



2020 saw a high level of Public Health Nurses, Teachers, Psychologists and Services Managers from across Community, Clinical and Education settings train in our programmes.

Figure 3 – Facilitator Training by Organisation Type

Professionals who trained came from a variety of Education, Community, Disability Sector and Social Services agencies and charities.



LAUNCH OF FIRST IN THE WORLD

"We need interventions that work, tools that help parents better manage. Parents Plus have been very consistent in exposing themselves to **constant evaluation** which is **for the betterment of all.** The Parents Plus programme is strengths based, solution focused, family centred practice. This **course is needed.**"

NATIONAL DISABILITY CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES TEAM, H.S.E.

DR. MICHAEL BYRNE

First International Evidence Based Programme



"It is a constant fight for your child. This course is truly invaluable. **For all services listening, please look into training in this course.** There are so many families who need this now."

Parent who attended the Parents Plus
Special Needs Programme

Launch of Special Needs Programme - 18th of September 2020

The Parents Plus Special Needs Programme was officially launched by the [Minister for Children, Disability, Equality, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman](#) with over 200 delegates in attendance from disability services across Ireland, as well as parents who shared the importance of this evidence based programme to the lives of thousands of families. Parents also stressed the need for more services to provide this programme early on to families.

Though parents of children with learning difficulties receive tailored support during the early years, these supports often reduce during the adolescent years, when families can experience significant difficulties, such as increased challenging behaviour, communication and sexual problems, as well as difficulties promoting independence for their young person. However, **until now there has been no tailored, evidence based parenting programme** to help families during this time.

Parents Plus Special Needs Programme

The [Parents Plus Special Needs Programme \(PPSN\)](#) was developed to respond to the complex, underserved needs of young people with a learning difficulty, 12 - 25 years, and their families. This seven-week parenting group can be delivered by professionals to support parents to:

- Manage behaviour and emotional problems
- Deal with puberty, sexuality and relationships
- Reduce their own stress as parents
- Support their child's education in school
- Prepare their child for adulthood and future transitions

First international evidence-based programme

In 2019/2020, in a [large Randomised Controlled Trial \(RCT\) with Trinity College Dublin Psychology Department](#), parents attending the Parents Plus Special Needs Programme reported significant improvements in:

- Parenting practices
- Problem behaviours
- Parental satisfaction
- Self-efficacy, and
- Goal attainment

Dr Charlotte Wilson, of Trinity College Dublin, who led the RCT, highlights "We know internationally there has never been a randomised controlled trial of a programme like this. The ParentsPlus Special Needs Programme fills the massive gap in service provision. This Programme provides access for parents to expert information, from professionals facilitating the group, the manuals, information from other parents. This matters to families. They are no longer alone."

The Irish Times

The Irish Times featured a moving article on the **impact of the new Parents Plus Special Needs Programme for families**. "Wayne Mc Sweeney only agreed to take part in a programme for parents of adolescents with intellectual disabilities because he thought he might finally come face to face with the right person to give out to about the lack of State services for families like his. . .

You can read the full article [here](#)

When special needs and adolescence collide

First in the world programme from the Parents Plus charity that helps parents to support each other has proven to be highly effective



Sheila Wayman

Wayne McSweeney only agreed to take part in a programme for parents of adolescents with intellectual disabilities because he thought he might finally come face to face with the right person to give out to about the lack of State services for families like his.

"We had ended up what kind of support we needed but we didn't get it," he says from his home in Malton, Co. Co. A single-supermarket with the Street Corner Markets, one of his sons has just been selected for consideration for the 2020 Christmas programme.

Many of the professionals and benefits Jen have encountered with their son, Christine, now aged 16, do their best to acknowledge, but they have their practice on academic models, not about language and have limited time to work with families. Ideally, he suggests, they should be spending the first six or eight weeks getting to know the family and the child, to see the child in their world (the car, the house, the school).

By Wayne's own credit account, on Christine's worst days, "it was like something from the pit of hell." At times it boiled like my poor wife was in domestic violence because of the injuries she would sustain - he'd pull her hair, bite her, scratch her."

Her husband, Wayne, is a workaholic for the lack of services because it seemed the only way to keep his own resources to cope with their own verbal son, who has severe autism but also "Coping, anxiety, dyspraxia, dyslexia and a million other things we don't even know," says his father.

"We would 24 hours a week, we couldn't remember what the referral was for. We had given up on the possibility to be the experts in behaviour."

Wayne was under a great deal of pressure, through collaboration with more parents and organisations. Parents Plus wanted to support what Christine's mother, Sheila, described as "high-needs under-served" group of parents.

Raising a child with an intellectual disability is challenging enough, he points out, but with adolescents, you have to deal with aggression and sexuality, they're not easy years. This, he says, is what makes something very difficult for families.

That's where "other parents" come in, from whom in this point, it is to provide them with materials that are suitable for young children because they don't know where to turn with adolescents."

Sheila, a former professor at University College Dublin's school of psychology and just 10 years parenting columnist, talks of the "unheard challenges" families have to cope with. For example, these teenagers



Wayne McSweeney with his son Christine, 16, his wife Michelle, and daughter Christine, 16, at the Parents Plus Christmas Markets, Co. Cork.

the other half on a waiting list for it, independent review from Trinity College Dublin found significant improvements in parenting practices, problem behaviours, and in parental satisfaction and self-efficacy, while parents moved closer to goals they had set themselves.

In conclusion, the researchers, led by Charlotte Wilson and Suzanne McMahon, said "We are seeing positive changes in several domains including adolescent behaviour, family relationships, and parental wellbeing. Parents put this down to enhanced skills in managing advice and information from other parents, from expert facilitators, and from the content of the programme."

Wayne was relieved when he and Jen walked into the room for the first time to see that the wasn't the only man. Within an hour, members of the group felt comfortable with each other as it became clear they had shared experiences.

In the weeks unfolded, we could say that it was really nice to sit in a group with people who wouldn't judge you. There are things that go along with raising a child with intellectual disability or autism that a lot of people would be embarrassed by."

However, the isolation of this new programme was as much to encourage parents to deliver group support, as anything else. There is a growing need of support for families.

While Lachlan and Kim in Cork were "happy" to receive, it was in getting up from them in this point, it is to provide them with materials that are suitable for young children because they don't know where to turn with adolescents."

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Lauren's story A 'typical' teen with messy bedroom

When Niamh Kerrigan's younger child, Troy (15), turned to her in the car about a month ago and said how sad he felt that he didn't have a friend, she knew she really needed to do something.

Sheila, a former professor at University College Dublin's school of psychology and just 10 years parenting columnist, talks of the "unheard challenges" families have to cope with. For example, these teenagers

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PARTNERSHIPS & PROJECTS

"I think the **Parents Plus course was fantastic.** Each day coming out of it I just felt more confident. I left with a tool box to help me make better decisions as a parent. These tools, and this course, are **the reason my family are now in a better place.** Thank you!"

ADOLESCENT PROGRAMME
PARTICIPANT

PARENT

New Partnerships for 2020

Ecclesiastical Insurance & Finance Co.



Parents Plus were one of ten charities out of over 1,000 applicants to receive £50,000/€55,195 funding from [Ecclesiastical](#), the specialist insurance and financial services company. This **three year partnership** will see Ecclesiastical fund the training and supervision of professionals delivering services to families of young people with an Intellectual Disability **across the U.K.**, in the new [Parents Plus Special Needs Programme](#).

RTE Does Comic Relief



Parents Plus received funding from [RTE Does Comic Relief](#) for our initiative 'Transforming health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly in high need and disadvantaged communities, with the [Parents Plus Healthy Families Programme](#).' Parents Plus would like to express our thanks to all involved in making this fund a reality, including the Community Foundation for Ireland, Government of Ireland, RTE and all who donated to this fund.

Sunbeam House Trust

Parents Plus are also delighted to announce their **three year partnership** with [Sunbeam House Trust](#). The partnership will see Sunbeam House Trust fund the training of professionals delivering services to families of adolescents and young adults with an intellectual disability from the Wicklow area in our new [Special Needs Programme](#). The trust is dedicated to supporting developments that enable people with disabilities to maintain full and meaningful lives in their communities. Based in Co. Wicklow, the trusts focus is on developing partnerships with and funding projects that improve outcomes for individuals with an intellectual disability and their families.

Trustee of Sunbeam House Trust, and former Principal of Dalkey School Project National School, Chris Lennon adds, “**The Trust are delighted to partner with Parents Plus on this first in the world initiative.** As someone who has worked in the area of special needs for many years, I welcome this valuable support for both parents of children with an intellectual disability and the professionals who work to support them. It is vital that we ensure that parents receive tailored and relevant tools throughout the adolescent years. The Parents Plus Special Needs Programme will give parents the tools and support that they need to positively manage the many challenges that are experienced during this time.”

New Partnership - TUSLA Education Support Service



Though starting primary school is a very important transition in a child’s life, it can present many challenges for families. Some children can find larger structured classes difficult and may not be ready for the extra demands placed on them. In supporting vulnerable children it is crucial to also support parents and to build effective partnerships between parents and teachers.

In [partnership with Tusla Education Support Service \(TESS\)](#), Parents Plus are delighted to announce a **pilot initiative to support the roll out of the Parents Plus Early Years Programme (PPEY) in DEIS communities.** In previous studies, PPEY has been shown to enhance the home learning environment, and represent a crucial support to families during the transition to primary-school.

The delivery of this project commenced in 2020, and will come to fruition in 2021, with 5 pilot sites across schools and early childhood settings getting ready to engage their parents in supportive group work to develop their parenting strategies and build connected relationships with their young children.

Speaking of the initiative, **Anne-Marie McGovern, TESS Integrated Services Manager**, explains "Five sites have been identified nationally through the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Scheme and training will take place in January 2021. **Primary Principals, HSCL Coordinators, Teachers and Early Years staff** will be involved and will begin rolling courses to parents in Spring 2021." We look forward to working with TESS to roll out this important initiative.

Onsites and Regional Roll Outs

2020 was one of the busiest years to date in Parents Plus for trainings with services 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.

We also continued to support 100's of regional rollouts to ensure services achieve best outcomes for families and young people, such as delivery of our Parenting when Separated Programme with Tavistock and Relate, part of Reducing Parental Conflict Project, Department of Work and Pensions.

Onsite trainings involve Parents Plus training agencies or teams, which can prove a very cost-effective way to access Parents Plus training for whole teams. In addition to the onsite training, Parents Plus provide tailored support to these services in the roll-out and evaluation of the programmes, to ensure effective community wide delivery.

Onsite trainings in 2020 took place with services such as Education Welfare Services, Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC), Families in Focus U.K., The Schools Completions Programme, TUSLA, The National Council for Special Education, The H.S.E., Clinical Psychology Department U.C.D., Enable Ireland, Brothers of Charity, Childcare Committees and The Northern and Southern Health and Social Care Trusts.

A Snapshot of Parents Plus in Limerick

2020 saw '**Parenting Limerick**', with a network of services throughout the city and county, continue to roll out the Parents Plus programmes to families. [**Limerick Children and Young People's Services Committee \(CYPSC\)**](#) has also supported the roll out of the 'Intro to Supporting Families Online' to Limerick services, many of whom have now set up [Parents Plus Parenting When Separated](#), [Parents Plus Early Years Programme](#), and [Parents Plus Adolescent Programme](#) via Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

Cork South Training Network awarded €10,000 to train in Parents Plus Programmes

Press Release - Cork South Training Network, a new initiative set up to address parent support needs, has been awarded €10,000 from The Wheel, to train in Parents Plus evidence based parenting and mental health programmes.

Cork South Training Network, a group of community and voluntary services supporting parents, children and young people, are delighted to announce that they have been successful in their grant application to the [Training Links Programme, run by the Wheel](#).

The group of voluntary and community organisations had identified a clear need for increased parenting supports in the Cork South region. Recognising this gap in service and programme delivery, as well as the training needs and capacity of staff, the network made the decision to apply for the Training Links grant to train their teams in the Parents Plus parenting and mental health programmes. Speaking of the networks success in securing the grant, [Coordinator of the Network and Manager of Carrigaline FRC Chris O'Brien](#) explained, "As a group of voluntary services, we needed to identify suitable funding to help us support parents, yet resources are limited in our sector. The Training Links fund was the perfect match. We chose Parents Plus to help us address this service gap as their parenting and mental health programmes have a solid evidence base. They also have the most comprehensive range of programmes, which are reflective of and will help us meet the needs of the families that we work with. These include early years, children, adolescent and special needs parenting programmes, as well as parenting when separated and the working things out CBT programme for adolescents. Our goal is to utilise this funding to train staff from across the Network to deliver the full suite of Parents Plus programmes to parents in the Cork South region on an ongoing basis."

The network includes Carrigaline Family Support Centre, Good Shepherd Cork Support and Advocacy Service, Barnardos South City Project, Ballincollig Garda Youth Diversion Project, Yew Tree Project, Bishopstown UBU project, Cork Rainbow Centre for Autism, YMCA Cork City, and Ballincollig, Togher, Mahon and Bandon Family Resource Centres. This grant is part of a package provided by Training Links, and funded through The Wheel.

Reaching Families in Rural Locations

Parents Plus delivered a range of onsite trainings this year, PPEY, PPAP, and Online Programme Delivery, with services in areas such as Sligo/Leitrim going from strength to strength in delivering Parents Plus parenting and mental health groups, particularly in quite rural locations. Many of these services have now moved to online delivery of the programmes. Same for Donegal, Sligo/Leitrim and many out services throughout the country particularly the Family Resources Centres and family Support Services who have been very innovative in their efforts to adapt to online delivery.

U.K.

Parents Plus continues to flourish in the U.K. as we successfully move our programmes and support online. Practitioners have not only been signing up for our [popular 'New Online training on Engaging Families and Young People Remotely'](#) webinar, but also getting in touch for Supervision to support them in developing their delivery in this new online environment.

The success of the '[Parenting When Separated](#)' programmes, run by [Relate](#) in Newcastle and [Tavistock Relationships](#) in the South East of England, has led to a continuation of funding from the [Department of Work and Pensions](#) in the new financial year. Practitioners offering this programme are seeking both regular supervision and accreditation, and are reporting high levels of satisfaction in this aspect of their work.

North Somerset is the latest addition to our portfolio in the U.K., with 10 practitioners trained in February to deliver the [Parents Plus Adolescent Programme](#), a further 15 practitioners lined up for April, and 15 practitioners signed up to train in our new [Parents Plus Special Needs Programme](#).

There has also been active interest from practitioners in the U.K. to move forward from Accreditation to Supervisor and Trainer status, with Deborah Davis at Bristol City Council joining us as the newest addition to our group of highly skilled Facilitator Trainers

Bristol City Council Fund PPAP training for 8 years

Deborah Davis, Parenting Supervisor with Family in Focus, Bristol, explains [why services across Bristol will train in the Parents Plus Adolescent Programme over the next 8 years](#).

"Due to the proven efficacy of the Parents Plus Adolescents Programme in improving outcomes for parents, carers, children and young people, Bristol City Council has committed to funding facilitator training for 8 years. Bristol families have benefited from a solution focused and strengths based approach to group work delivered by practitioners from varied disciplines and organisations, including charitable, early and statutory intervention services.

As a result, Parenting Specialists, Youth Offending Team workers, Strengthening Families key workers, Education Sector staff, Social Workers and Family Support Practitioners are able to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to co-facilitation. The Parents Plus approach to solving family problems is a well-established model and the Pause Button truly is a gift!"

Research

The [Parents Plus Healthy Families Programme \(PPHF\)](#) is an 8-week universal parenting programme aimed primarily at parents of children under the age of 12, promoting family health and well-being. Over eight sessions, the focus is on promoting Healthy Habits across the whole family and empowering parents to make changes. The sessions are as follows:

1. Empowering Parents
2. Healthy Food Routines
3. Healthy Mealtimes
4. Active Play
5. Managing Technology
6. Restful Sleep
7. Happy, Healthy Mind
8. Family Connection

In 2020, the pilot of the Parents Plus Healthy Families was interrupted by the Covid-19 crisis when our pilot groups had to be cancelled mid-way. Thankfully, we were able to restart the groups online in October 2020, and three pilot groups were conducted in

- A school-based group delivered by Home School Liaison and Primary Care
- A national online group delivered by Parents Plus
- A community group in partnership with Specs Bray and Letterkenny Youth & Family Service

The groups were all run successfully, and we will be evaluating the results in 2021, with the view to conducting a national roll out.

Expanding our 'Train the Trainer Model' - New Trainers and Supervisors

As well as our core team of expert trainers, we now have a further group of new supervisors and trainers working with us regularly, offering supervision and mentoring to newly trained facilitators, as well as to those who are participating in the Parents Plus Programme Accreditation process. This is a positive development for Parents Plus as it expands our 'Train the Trainer' model to include accredited experienced practitioners who have extensive practice and programme delivery skill and knowledge to share. As part of the 'Intro To Remote Engagement with Families' new training initiative we have had practice learning inputs from our Accredited facilitators on adapting to remote delivery of the programme.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues to the Parents Plus team:

- Marian Monaghan, Senior Clinical Psychologist, Primary Care Services, Galway.
- Mary Rose Costello, Service Manager, Supporting Parents and Early Childhood Services (SPECS), Bray.
- Clíodhna Cunningham, Service Co-ordinator, Connect Family Resource Centre, Drogheda.
- Gill Moses, Social Worker, Clarecare.
- Wendy Taylor, Family Services Manager, Family Resource Centre.
- Karin Todd, Family Support Practitioner, Family Resource Centre

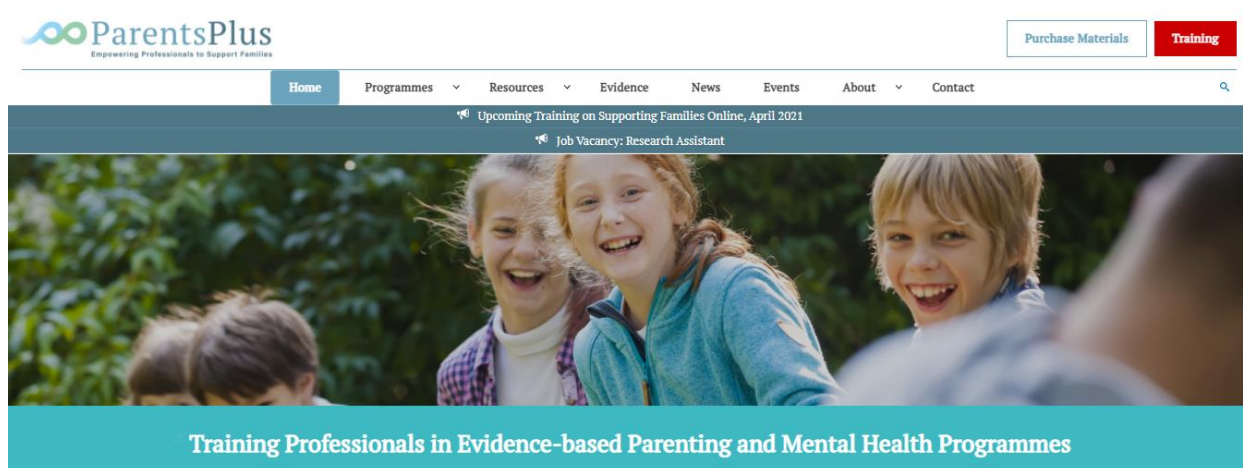
Post-Training Support

In addition to supervision and post training implementation support (p.15), 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.

Launch of New Parents Plus Website



We were delighted to launch our new website in 2020. Since the inception of the charity, the mission and vision of Parents Plus has always been to empower services and strengthen families and young people, using our evidence based parenting and mental health programmes.

With a better and easier booking page, more interactive resource pages and a revamped parents page, the feedback from users has been excellent. Trained facilitator can now access streaming of the Parents Plus Programme DVDs online, including the Children's Programme, Adolescent Programme, Children's Programme and Healthy Families Programme.

The introduction of our new website will help us to further achieve our mission and vision, and ensure that professionals, services, funders and potential investors enjoy a user-friendly browsing experience that is tailored, informative and showcases our sustainable and wide-reaching impact in Ireland, the U.K. and internationally.

IMPACT OF PARENTS PLUS PROGRAMMES

"The **Parenting When Separated Programme** has **greatly benefited my practice** when working with separated parents. Parents have reported that it has **reduced conflict** and improved **communication** with their ex-partner. They have also found PWS very helpful in **supporting their children.**"

SPRINGBOARD,
DUBLIN SOUTH

SUSAN LYNOTT

Impact – Child and Adolescent Mental Health

“The Parents Plus programmes are effective in providing parents with support, and **achieving best outcomes**. The training also provides knowledge and skills which are applicable to everyday practice, whilst the programmes are organised, and easy to run.”

Marguerite Lehane, Social Worker, H.S.E. CAMHS, Cork

Impact – Primary Care

“We have been facilitating Parents Plus in our Primary Care service for a number of years. The experience of doing so and the feedback is consistently very positive. The programmes allow us to build respectfully on the vast experience of parents themselves and on their desire to be the best that they can be for their children. It allows facilitators to demonstrate how focusing on what is being done well and reinforcing that is the most **powerful way to effect real change** and promote confidence.

I always find our **final sessions very moving** as each parent takes time to share the progress he or she has made over the programme and the ways in which things have changed for them and for their children.”

Dr Rosario Power, Senior Clinical Psychologist, H.S.E. Kildare

Impact – H.S.E. Public Health

“As a **Public Health Nurse**, I have facilitated Parents Plus programmes in community settings for the past four years. We receive very positive feedback from parents, and when meeting these parents at a later stage, they often **report the programme having ‘changed their lives.’**

I offer the programme to all parents at their children’s developmental checks. Many report the positive feedback they have also received from their friends who have done the ParentsPlusProgrammes.”

Noreen Gorman, Public Health Nurse, H.S.E., Wicklow

Impact – Education

“I would **recommend these programmes** for anyone thinking of working with young people and parents using **evidence based models**.”

Rachael Murphy, Schools Completion Programme, Dublin

What Parents Say About Our Programmes

“2020 took its toll on our family. My **teenager was struggling**. Struggling with the isolation, no school, not allowed to meet friends. Everything that mattered to him gone. I could see him giving up and it had me sick with worry.

The Parents Plus Adolescent Programme was **our lifeline**. It helped me to help my son and the rest of the family. I can't thank you enough. I don't know what we would have done without this course.”

Adolescent Programme – Parent, U.K.

“We were in a rut. Our toddler was **awake half the night**, a fussy eater and always cranky. The public health nurse recommended we give the Early Years course a go.

Since we did it, you wouldn't think our son is the same child. We have a positive routine now. He is sleeping better, eating better. He **now is a happy little boy** and **we are happier too**. Thank you Parents Plus”

Early Years Programme - Parent, Ireland

“My **daughter didn't want to go to school**. It got out of control. Then I saw an ad on Facebook for the Parents Plus Children's Programme, and I thought it can't hurt.

Every parent should do this course. It helped us with more than we could have imagined. My daughter is much happier, home is calmer, and we are no longer up the walls with worry.”

Children's Programme - Parent, Ireland

“I would **say to any man, do the Special Needs programme**. This will help you support your family, support your child, support yourself.

I went along initially to complain about not getting services. The secret turned out to be to sit in a room with parents who know what you have been through. We **should have had this course 12 years ago**.”

Special Needs Programme - Parent, Ireland

GOVERNANCE & ORGANISATION

"The **Parents Plus** approach **makes sense to parents** who participate in the courses I run. It is respectful to every member of the family and this is part of its success. Parents say they are **less stressed** and **more relaxed** with their families after attending the course. The **techniques parents learn transform life at home.**"

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
WORKER, BALLYHOURA DEV CLG

MARION CLARKE

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 2020 the Board of Parents Plus comprises of the following members (31st December 2020):

- Michael Drumm (Chairperson)
- Jane Morgan (Trustee)
- Dr Charlotte Wilson (Trustee)
- Carol Maricle (Trustee)
- Andrew Bourke (Trustee)

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

Staff

In 2020, Parents Plus has six part-time staff members

- Dr. John Sharry, Chief Executive Officer
- Breda Flood, Financial Controller
- Eileen Brosnan, Senior Trainer
- Grainne Hampson, Senior Trainer
- Cherie Tyner, Development and Communications Manager
- Claire Raftery, Programme Manager

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, as well as corporate partnership investment. Most recently Parents Plus were one of ten charities out of 1,000 applicants to receive funding from [Ecclesiastical](#), the specialist insurance and financial services company, to roll out the Parents Plus Special Needs Programme in the U.K.

[Sunbeam House Trust](#), the Wicklow based Trust dedicated to supporting developments that enable people with disabilities to maintain full and meaningful lives in their communities, committed to funding the training of services County Wicklow in our new Special Needs Programme.

[RTE Does Comic Relief](#), through [The Community Foundation for Ireland](#) chose to support our Healthy Families (PPHF) project, 'Transforming health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly in high need and disadvantaged communities, with PPHF.'

Thank you also 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 of services with limited budgets.



Parents Plus CLG – Financial Information for Year Ending 31st December 2020)

Summarised Financial Information

Income & Expenditure Account Extract		12 months ended 31/12/2020	
		€	€
Incoming Resources			
Programme & Training			382,438
Grants received			103,523
Total Incoming Resources			485,961
Resources Expended - Ongoing Expenditure			
- Training & Other Costs			287,354
Administration Costs			
- Administration Costs			48,541
Sub-Total Resources Expended - Ongoing Expenditure			
- Depreciation			4,496
Net Incoming Resources for the Period			145,570

Balance Sheet Extract		12 months ended 31/12/2019	
			€
Fixed Assets			
Leasehold Improvements & Office Equipment			1,353
			2
Tangible Assets			
Financial Assets and Participating Interests			
Current assets			
Accounts Receivable			56,228
Cash at bank			450,613
Stock			72,122
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year			
Operating Creditors			123,445
Accumulated Net Funds (2014-2020)			456,873

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

CHY 13664