



# ParentsPlus

## Annual Report 2021

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Empowering Professionals to Support Families



**Improving outcomes  
for families and children,  
through established services,  
with evidence-based parenting  
and mental health programmes.**

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# Message From CEO

2021 was a great year for Parents Plus with many new projects and programmes coming on stream.

After three years of development, we were delighted to launch the [new Parents Plus Healthy Families Programme](#), on 26th November, with over 400 professionals signing up for this special online event. The Healthy Families Programme was developed in response to the growing obesity and mental health epidemics facing children and families. Tackling the challenges of healthy eating, screentime, sleep, fun activity and positive mental health, the programme has never been more relevant for families, and is particularly important as we recover post-covid in 2022. We were delighted that the programme was selected by the [Healthy Communities Initiative](#), through [Slaintecare](#) in the [Health Service Executive \(HSE\)](#), as a flagship programme for nine community services throughout Ireland. We also recruited and sponsored eight primary care and family resource centres to run the Healthy Families Programme in 2022 as part of a [Randomised Controlled Trial](#) study, supervised by the Department of Psychology in University College Dublin.

2021 also saw the start of the development of [New ADHD Children's Programme](#) in partnership with [ADHD Ireland](#); Adaptation of the Parents Plus Early years Programme for delivery with Traveller Families in partnership with [Tusla Child and Family Agency](#), as well as family link workers who have been recruited from the Traveller community; and also a special individual delivery format of the Parents Plus Early Years Programme for parents with intellectual disabilities, in partnership with [SPECS \(Supporting Parents and Early Childhood Services\)](#) in Bray. We are looking forward to these projects taking shape in 2022.

The [international reach of Parents Plus](#) has been extended even further in 2021 with our first Early Years Programme training delivered online to Turkish practitioners. This is the fruition of five years of work with Dr's Onur Dursun and Bahadir Turan in Turkey. They have piloted the groups, translated the materials and are in the process of becoming accredited Parents Plus trainers. Their [study demonstrating the effectiveness](#) of the Parents Plus Children's Programme with parents of children with ADHD has been published recently [in the Behaviour Change Journal](#).

Another important innovation in 2021 was [our partnership with Parentline](#) to offer Parents Plus groups directly to the public. These online groups have increased the accessibility of parent support to families who may not be able to avail of groups in their local HSE or family support services. Initial feedback from parents has been excellent, and the groups will be formally evaluated in a study supervised by Trinity College Dublin in 2022.

Finally, in 2021 we were delighted to secure the [Rethink Ireland Social Enterprise Development Fund](#) and to participate in their [six-month Business Accelerator Programme](#). This was an incredible process and has helped Parents Plus develop a clear strategic plan for the next five years as we continue to grow and scale our impact with services and families, both in Ireland and internationally.

I would like to take this opportunity to [thank all the Parents Plus team](#) for their hard work during 2021. Despite the challenges of a second year of Covid restrictions, they have shown great dedication, commitment to the Parents Plus mission, creativity to keep the high standards of our training and services online, and to support all our Parents Plus facilitators to continue to reach and support families in need. [Thanks also to Dr. Michael Drumm and to all of the Parents Plus board](#), who have yet again committed so much of their expertise and time in supporting the work of Parents Plus throughout 2021.

Professor John Sharry

# Chairperson's Message

Welcome to the Parents Plus Annual Report for 2021. The Board and I are pleased to present this to you on behalf of our team at Parents Plus.

Parents Plus is an Irish charity that researches, develops and delivers evidence-based parenting and mental health programmes to professionals working with families, children and parents. **Our programmes follow international best-practice** and have been **independently reviewed** by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence in the UK, Early Intervention Foundation, NHS Educational for Scotland and the National Parenting Academy and were **awarded top ratings**. Parents Plus as an Irish registered charity complies with the Charity Act 2009 and meets all the core standards outlined in the Charities Governance Code.

**Our mission** is to improve the well-being of children, young people and their parents, and to strengthen families, by empowering professionals to deliver our evidence-based programmes in their services. We train and support hundreds of professionals as facilitators each year throughout Ireland, the UK and internationally. In 2021 we trained 838 professionals across Public Health, Psychology, Education, Community Services, the Disability Sector, Social Services and voluntary organisations. We also sponsor services across disability, mental health, education, primary care, child protection, early intervention, youth work and community service, who have limited funding, or where there is an absence of national funding to support specific and vulnerable groups. We also provide post training support to services to ensure the programmes are embedded in long term service delivery, supporting further families in local communities.

Parents Plus has **continued to adapt to the COVID-19 crisis throughout 2021**. We facilitated online training of professionals in each of our evidence-based programmes, and whilst challenging, trained facilitators communicated that there were many advantages in delivering the Parents Plus parenting and mental health programmes online to families, not least ease of access, as well as reducing the impact of geographical limitations to reach more families within their community.

2021 also saw the launch of the new **Parents Plus Healthy Families Programme** in November last and I am delighted to report that the programme was **selected by the Health Communities Initiative**, through **SlainteCare in the HSE**, as a flagship programme for community services throughout Ireland. Furthermore, in 2022 the Healthy Families Programme will be part of a **randomised controlled trial study** in University College Dublin, School of Psychology.

We **partnered with Parentline providing accessible evidence-based parenting programmes direct to the public via the Parentline website**. To date 188 families availed of Parents Plus programmes through Parentline and 40% of those families saw both parents participate. The feedback has also been very positive, with high engagement and few dropouts. Trinity College Dublin will be formally evaluating the groups in 2022 and we will continue to work with Parentline to sustain this online delivery in to the future.

We have successfully run the **Parents Plus Special Needs Programme in England, Scotland and Ireland** in 2021. Parents Plus is working with **Family Carers Ireland** to provide the Parents Plus Special Needs Programme online throughout Ireland to parents of adolescents with an intellectual disability. Also in collaboration with Trinity College Dublin, and to add to the randomised controlled trial results of 2020, we are evaluating the long-term benefits of this evidence-based programme through a **longitudinal study** and initial results are showing positive benefits.

As part of a **national project led by Tusla**, Parents Plus supported twelve regions across Ireland to deliver our **Early Years Programme to families from the Traveller Community** and we hope to expand this training into next year.

Parents Plus also collaborated with **Tusla Education Support Service (TESS)** to support the training and provision of 12 Home School community Liaison (HSCL) staff in the Parents Plus Early Years Programme, across five different sites around the country.

Internationally, Parents Plus has continued to grow and deliver programmes across the UK, Scotland and England, as well as in **Singapore and Turkey**.

In responding to identified needs of families and children, Parents Plus **developed a new Parents Plus Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Programme** to support parents of a child with a diagnosis of ADHD. Over the next year Parents Plus will trial the programme through four Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Ireland and the UK, and through ADHD Ireland, to families in the community. The new programme will be launched in 2022.

Parents Plus is **most grateful to all of our generous funders** who support us to make a positive difference to the services and families that we support. We are primarily funded through the sale of programme training and materials, and the grant from the Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO) funded by the Government of Ireland through the Department of Rural and Community Development. The SSNO grant is administered by An Pobal and we are extremely appreciative of their continued support. Parents Plus also receives occasional project funding from corporate and grant making organisations.

In 2021, Parents Plus were one of a small number of awardees who received funding from **Rethink Ireland, through the Social Enterprise Development Fund**, as well a valuable place on their six-month business accelerator programme, to support scaling the impact of our evidence-based programmes, supervision and outcome tracking, as well as developing our strategic plan for the next five years.

We were also delighted to be chosen by the **JP McManus Benevolent Fund** to deliver the Parents Plus Special Needs Programme training to professionals in Limerick and Clare to support adolescents and young adults with intellectual disabilities. The continued support from **Sunbeam House Trust** allowed Parents Plus to fund training of services in Wicklow in the Special Needs Programme. Also our continued partnership with **Ecclesiastical Movement for Good in the UK** has allowed us to roll out the Parents Plus Special Needs Programme further in the U.K.

**Special thanks to the Mater Hospital** for the continued support of Parents Plus through the provision of accommodation, services for training and support for the programmes in general.

We are **deeply grateful for the hard work and dedication of our Parents Plus team and trainers**. They have worked tirelessly this year and their expertise and skills have ensured Parents Plus continues to thrive. I would also like to **thank my fellow Directors for their continued dedication and commitment** to Parents Plus. We look forward to 2022 with hope and optimism, and a deep commitment to further develop Parents Plus, and empower professionals and services to deliver our evidence-based programmes to parents to improve the well-being of children and young people, and strengthen families and communities.

**Dr Michael Drumm, Chairperson**

# ABOUT

"As **parents are brought together** with different skills and opportunities they learn to **help and support each other**, and to solve their own challenges."

**PARENTS PLUS ADOLESCENT  
PROGRAMME FACILITATOR**

ALISON WHITEOAK





## 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 hundreds of 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 [eight 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 to 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.
- The [ADHD Programme](#) to support parents of children with ADHD aged 6 to 12.

## 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**.

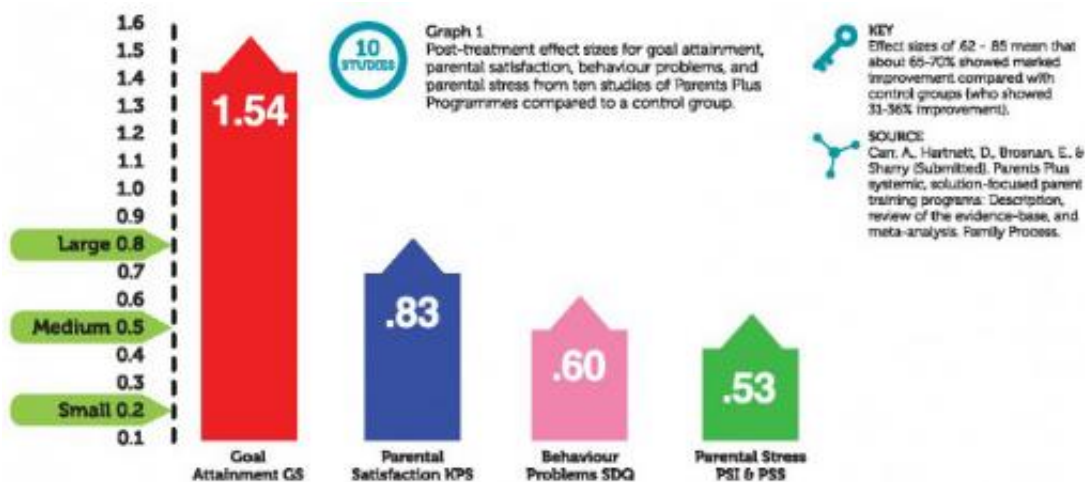


# Meta-Analysis of the Parents Plus Evidence Base

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. 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)

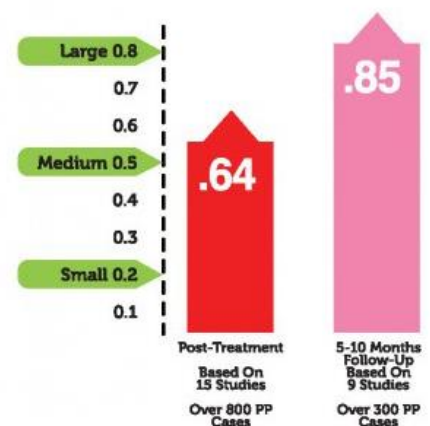


2. The results have been observed with **over 1,000 families in specialist settings**, such as **mental health** and **disability services**, as well as **preventative community settings**, such as schools and family centres.

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)

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](#)

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.



## 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.



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 2021

"We now offer either **online or face to face** sessions to provide **flexibility** for the parents. Evening online sessions have worked well as some parents need to work during the day."

PARENTS PLUS FACILITATOR  
PARENTING WHEN SEPARATED

JULIE ASPELL

# Responding to Covid in 2021

## Supporting Services to continue support of families online

As a response to the continued Covid-19 crisis through 2021, **face-to-face support of families remained limited**, yet thousands of families needed support, and were under immense additional stress, due to the crisis.

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.

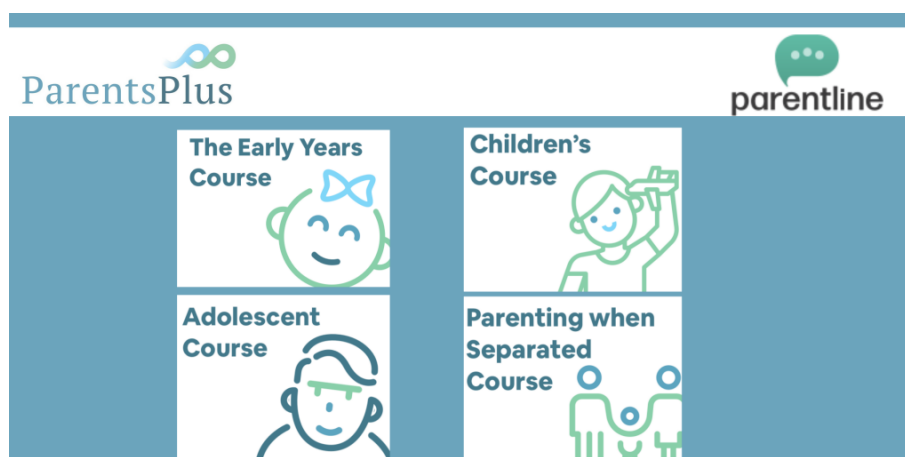
Parents Plus continued to facilitate **online workshops to support those on the ground to reach families** and maintain strengths-based practice with online service delivery. The online 'introduction to remote working' was attended by 49 professionals in 2021.

Programmes continued to be rolled out online by facilitators throughout Ireland and the UK, whilst supervision was also carried out online. Through delivering evidence-based training and supervision online, Parents Plus have extended the reach of the programmes, in turn enabling those who may have been unable to attend training previously in person to attend. This means that more families can be supported within the community.

## Parents Plus join forces with Parentline

**The collaboration between Parents Plus and Parentline began in spring 2021 as a response to the demand for parenting support during Covid 19.** Parentline were processing a high volume of calls from families experiencing challenges around managing behavioural issues, teenage anxiety and other mental health challenges. The stresses of parenting alone increased pressures for parents who were separated or divorced and a range of other parenting issues, many of which were exacerbated by the impact of Covid restrictions.

**The Parentline Parents Plus collaboration (Spring 2021 - ongoing)** focuses on the roll out of accessible evidence-based and online parenting programmes, all available for self-booking, to parents in Ireland, via the Parentline website.



The project involves online delivery of the **Parents Plus Early Years, Children's, Adolescent and Parenting when Separated Programmes**. To date, 188 families have/are availing of the programmes, with almost 40% of these families having two parents participating.

The provision of online parenting groups such as the Parents Plus programmes allows **parents to access evidence-based, high-quality parenting techniques and tools**, as well as connect with other parents from the comfort of their own homes. It also allows them to create an online intimacy with each other providing moral support and sharing of strategies in a facilitated environment (Suárez, Byrne & Rodrigo, 2018). After the intervention, parents attending the programmes were asked to provide feedback on their experiences of attending and what impact it had for them and their families.

For parents, there was an **overwhelmingly positive response to the online delivery**. One mother of a pre-schooler who joined the Early Years Programme reported:

“We found the course very interactive, there was a true sense of community during the sessions despite it being online. We enjoyed chatting to others in breakout rooms. The techniques covered worked really well for us and our child, and we definitely **feel better equipped in handling problems**. It is also work in progress. Having an opportunity to discuss and share during the Parents Plus group was very reassuring, more than we expected.”

Many parents said they **would not have been able to attend had it been an in-person programme**, particularly those living in rural areas, and other barriers, including how busy their lifestyles were raising children and working. “I'd been trying to do this course for 3 or 4 years, but it was never on a night that suited me with parenting responsibilities.” Another parent explained, “I hadn't to commute.”

Several parents also highlighted the content of the programmes and the parent book resources as being impactful for them and their children. **“All of the strategies really changed the way I approach parenting. I'm enjoying my children more.”**

Feedback from the programme facilitators included comments about the online delivery from a group process perspective. There was a wide acknowledgement that the online provided wider accessibility and convenience for families allowing parents to log in regardless of geography, across cultures and a mix of backgrounds and life experiences. This brought its own richness to the groups. “There was something great in seeing **parents attend from across the country**. You could have a parent based in West Cork supporting a parent based in Donegal or Dublin.”

A core focus when running a Parents Plus group is to provide a setting where parents can share and listen to each other in a **non-judgemental, respectful environment**. One facilitator commented regarding online facilitation “initially, it requires you to be more directive than you might be comfortable with.” “When you put out a question to the group, you wait a few moments for them to process and start contributing. Online, these moments can seem longer. You might be more direct in drawing people in for comments initially, but then this regulates, and people get used to coming in with ideas and **sharing their experiences** and **offering each other support**.”

### Research Study

For Parents Plus, this project has been a great opportunity to develop the online delivery format. There is now an evaluation study underway in collaboration with the School of Psychology, Trinity College Dublin, investigating the outcomes for families using a pre-post and follow-up methodology.



# TRAININGS, SEMINARS & SUPERVISION

"My colleagues and I continue to engage in **one to one and group supervisions** with Parents Plus. It is so beneficial to have a platform to link with **other facilitators** across the country, with **Parents Plus experts** there for **guidance and feedback.**"

PARENTS PLUS PARENTING WHEN  
SEPARATED FACILITATOR

CLIODHNA CUNNINGHAM

# Trainings, Seminars and Supervision 2021

## Continuing our programme trainings Online

Parents Plus **continued to respond to the emergency needs of services** with continued online deliver of our programmes trainings for professionals, for online delivery. Through **online training of professionals**, and **post training supervision** and **implementation support**, we continued 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**.

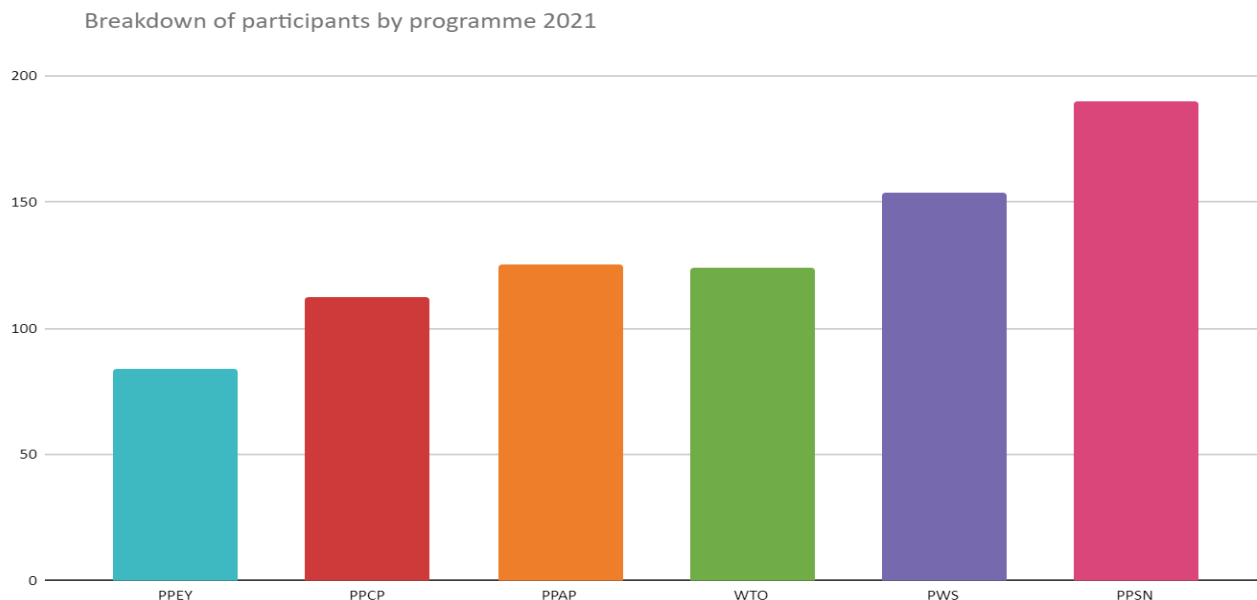


# Trainings

Of the **838 professionals** that we trained in 2021 in our range of programmes and supports, **789 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](#) and the Parents Plus ADHD Children's programme are not represented in the above statistics as the programmes are still in their pilot stage.

## 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 continued to integrate **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	130 *Individual supervisions can include 2 people
Total number of Group Supervisions	142

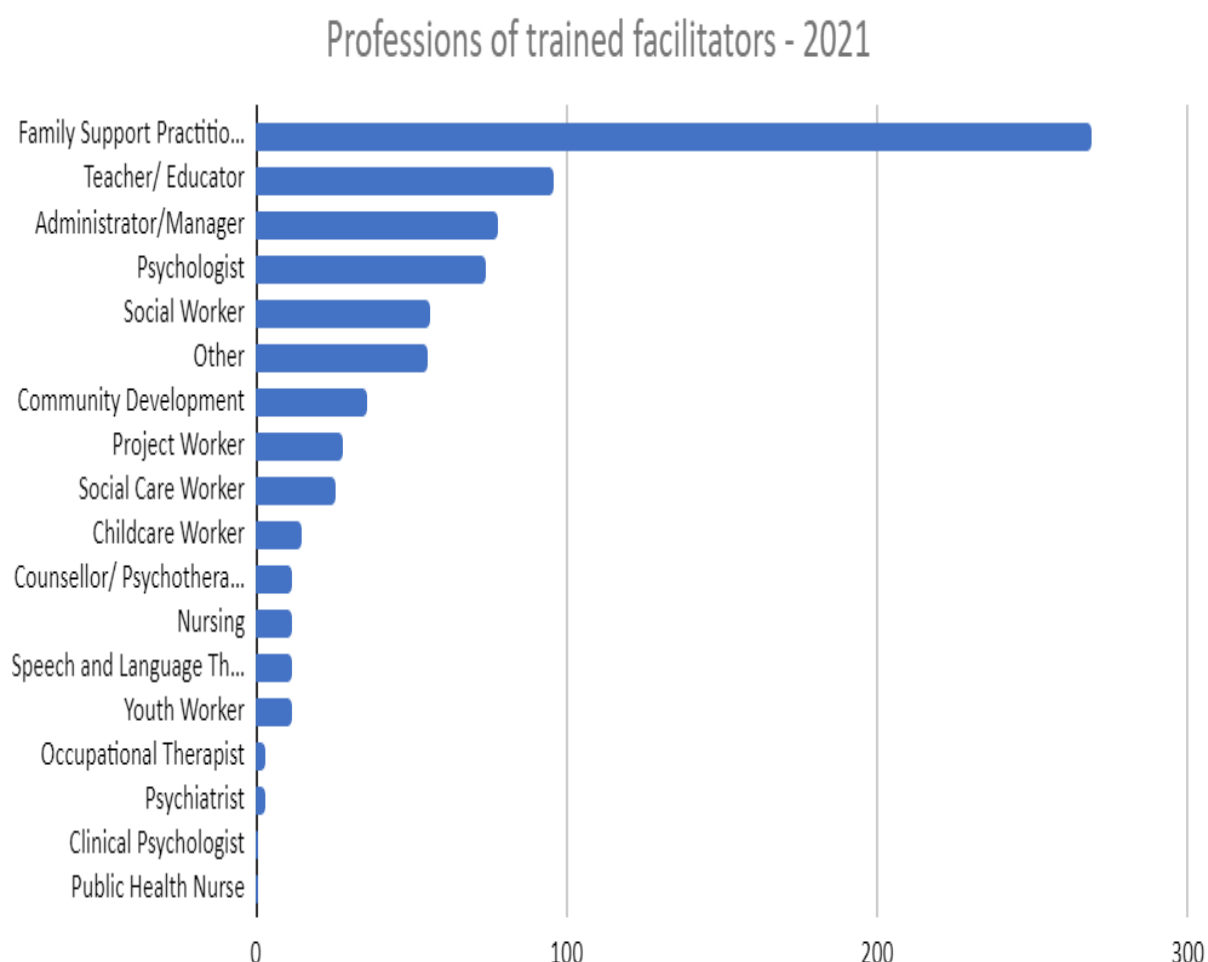
A total of **272 facilitators** participated in **supervision sessions**, and **7** facilitators were accredited in 2021.

## Introduction Sessions to the Parents Plus Programmes

**162 professionals** attended one of our online introduction sessions, which gave an overview of **5** of the Parents Plus Programmes, and how the programmes can be best implemented within individual services.

**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**.



2021 saw a high level of Family Support Practitioners, Teachers/Educators, Managers, Psychologists and Social Workers, 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.





# New Parents Plus ADHD Programme

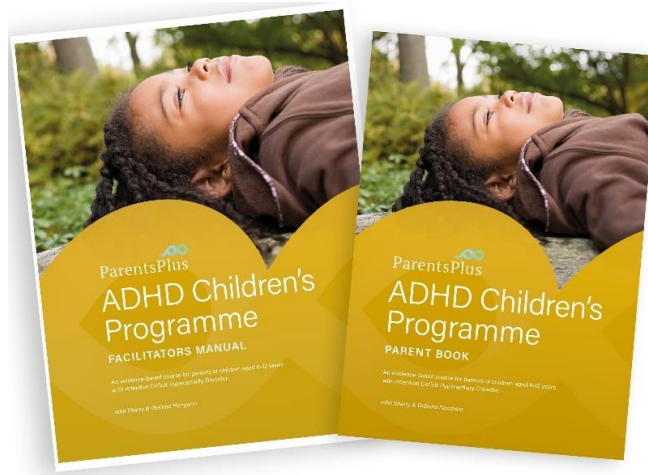
"The **Parents Plus ADHD Children's Programme** is a **fundamental tool** to **effective ADHD care**.

Professionals gain confidence from the use of a **structured programme using evidence-based strategies.**"

CONSULTANT PSYCHIATRIST

DR. BLÁNAID GAVIN

# New Parents Plus ADHD Children's Programme



## Responding to the Needs of Families bringing up a child with ADHD

**Consultant Psychiatrist Dr Blánaid Gavin** who was involved in the **development of the new Parents Plus ADHD Programme** explains the importance of this new programme for parents and the services that support them:

**“The importance of developing a programme for parents of children with ADHD cannot be overstated. Firstly, we know from the scientific literature that parent programmes are crucial to ensuring the best possible prognosis for children with ADHD. Clinically, we know how much parents are struggling to access the necessary information and support.**

**The key benefits parents report to me** are a sense of **empowerment**, where previously they felt that nothing can change. Parents identify having a **greater understanding of ADHD** and moving away from a ‘blame perspective’ as crucial. In addition, parents highlight the benefit of having the chance to **listen and learn from other parents**, not least just having the opportunity to feel less alone as a parent. Parents highlight the **positivity of the messaging of the programme**, the digestible format of the sessions and the focus on practical changes. Invariably parents who complete the programme report identifiable progress in at least one aspect of their families’ daily lives.

**Professionals who train in the programme** develop a greater **understanding of ADHD**, the real-life **challenges of parents** and how to most effectively use helpful **solution focused** therapeutic strategies to enable positive behaviours. Experiencing the encouraging outcomes of the programme, enhances therapeutic optimism, itself key to professionals’ ability to facilitate constructive change.”

## Why develop a Parents Plus ADHD Children's Programme?

Parent education and support is an important part of the treatment for children diagnosed with ADHD. For many years the **Parents Plus Children's Programme** (PPCP) has been run in mental health services and community settings with parents of children with ADHD with positive results. A **controlled study with 46 families in Turkey showed** that children whose parents attended the PPCP group **improved significantly** more over time on Conners’ Parent Rating Scale-Revised, Family Assessment Device, and Parent Stress Index than those in the control condition (Turan et al, 2021).

The Parents Plus Children's Programme is a **general behavioural parenting intervention**, usually delivered to mixed groups of parents dealing with many different challenges. Based on feedback from parents attending through ADHD Ireland, in 2021 we decided to **publish a special ADHD edition of the PPCP that would include additional bespoke modules for children with ADHD**, which would make the programme easier to deliver in ADHD specific settings. The additional modules include the experience of raising a child with ADHD, supporting education and homework, talking about ADHD, supporting friendships, helping siblings and the role of medication.

**Over the next year Parents Plus will trial the programme** through four **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)** in **Ireland and the UK**, and through ADHD Ireland, to families in the community. The new programme will be launched in 2022.

## The Parents Plus ADHD Programme content

Based on feedback from parents attending through ADHD Ireland, in 2021, we decided to develop a special ADHD edition of the PPCP that would include bespoke modules for children with ADHD that would make the programme easier to deliver in ADHD specific settings. The additional modules include:

- The 12 challenges of ADHD
- The unique experience of raising a child with ADHD,
- Supporting education and homework
- Talking about ADHD to children
- Supporting friendships
- Helping siblings and family relationships
- The role of medication

## What Parents Attended the Pilot Programme Had to Say

"This course really **gave me a positive understanding** and realisation of the actual effects ADHD effects the day-to-day things taken for granted. **I hadn't realised how difficult my son found the simple things**. I now find that I am able to incorporate simple repetitive daily tasks that is giving my son the independence to have a routine and help his confidence and self-esteem. I find I am able tune into his inattentiveness. I have a better understanding of ADHD so **I am beginning to separate him from his condition** while at the same time realising it is who he is. **I learned how to encourage by using positive language** and how to phrase things a little differently than I used to before. This seems to be working hand in hand with the consequences, it's as if we are getting there step by step and things are falling into place. We have started to talk about our emotions, and it is working a treat."

"When I signed up for this course, I wasn't so sure that I would find it so useful, but I found it **really useful**. It was great to see parents in the same boat as you were. Some people would come on and they were after dealing with a huge meltdown. It was great because you just felt like you were **not the only person**, and that **other people were dealing with the same thing**. It was great because you got **lots of little tips** that can help. I found it very useful."

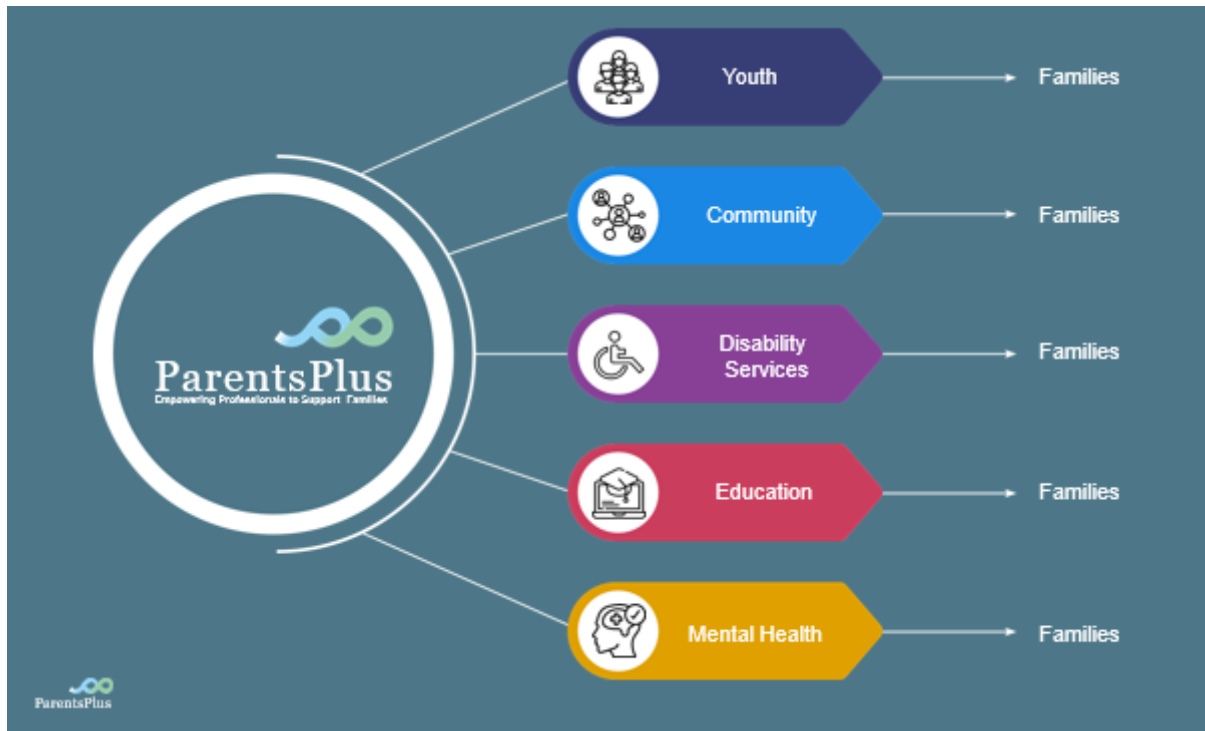
# PARTNERSHIPS & PROJECTS

"The programme guided me weekly in my support of parents so they could **share their personal experiences** safely and **access peer support** from other parents who had similar experiences. "

PARENTS PLUS SPECIAL NEEDS  
PROGRAMME FACILITATOR

SPONSORED BY JP MC MANUS  
BENEVOLENT FUND

## Partnerships for 2021



### Family Carers Ireland

Parents Plus are working with [Family Carers Ireland](#) to provide the [Parents Plus Special Needs Programme](#) online throughout Ireland to parents of adolescents with an intellectual disability. The first group will be starting in June with a wider rollout scheduled in the Autumn. As a family-centred organisation, **Family Carers Ireland** are well-placed to **provide this vital support to families**, and crucially **many of the facilitators will be family carers who have direct experience of the needs of families with adolescents with intellectual disabilities**.

### TUSLA Home School Community Liaison Project



A collaboration with [TUSLA Education Support Service \(TESS\)](#) to support the training and supervision of 12 Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) staff in the [Parents Plus Early Years Programme](#), across five different sites around the country, had a key focus on supporting parents of children in the early years to build positive relationship in their families, support education, language development, building good routines and positive parenting skills.



## U.K.

**Professor John Sharry visited the UK to deliver the first Parents Plus Children and Parents Plus Adolescents facilitator trainings in over a decade ago.** Since then, Parents Plus has been **steadily establishing a presence** with courses being embedded in services such as **Rochdale, Newcastle, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire, Devon, and North Somerset.** 2021 has seen a period of consolidation and exciting new developments for Parents Plus in the UK.

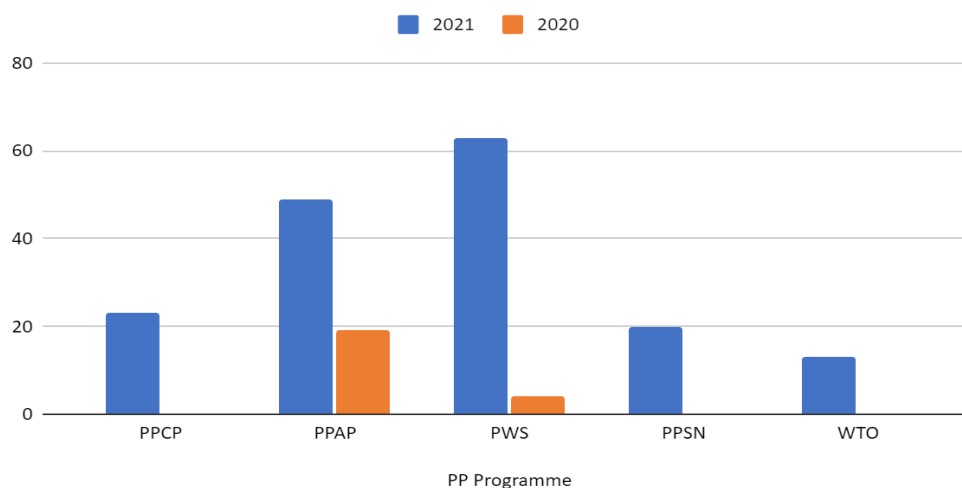
Over the past year, a number of practitioners have engaged in the Parents Plus **Accreditation process.** Two of these, Lisa Whitlock and Jon Baker-Churchill, having successfully completed their accreditation, have now gone on to **begin their apprenticeship as supervisors.**

Bristol and South Gloucestershire **commissioned further onsite facilitator trainings** to maintain their capacity, while North Somerset commissioned their two first **Parents Plus Adolescent Programme** facilitator trainings, which ran in January and April. The supervision and accreditation of practitioners offering Parents Plus Children's Programmes, Parents Plus Adolescent Programmes and Parents Plus Parenting When Separated remains ongoing and will help to consolidate further the offering of our courses to UK parents.

**Figure 4 – Comparison of 2021 and 2020 training places by UK residents**

Figure 4 outlines the number of professionals that completed training in 2021 compared to 2020.

2021 and 2020 Comparison of training places for UK residents



As well as expansion in the UK, there have been some exciting opportunities for further development. The **Department of Work and Pensions selected Parents Plus as a provider of choice for their Reducing Parental Conflict Programme,** which has seen **Parenting When Separated expand across the North of England.** As a result, onsite trainings have been commissioned by Rochdale (who already offer the adolescent programme), Durham, Northumberland, Derby, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Gateshead and Sunderland. This brings the total number of Services in the UK commissioning Parenting When Separated onsite trainings to ten, with **Relate** and the **Tavistock Institute** starting delivery in 2019.



In addition to this, thanks to a generous Grant from [Ecclesiastical Movement for Good](#), a cohort of services in Scotland and England have received sponsorship to train practitioners in the **Parents Plus Special Needs Programme**. They have since been participating in an **evaluation** alongside Parents Plus and **Trinity College Dublin**, which started in the second quarter of 2021 and will run for 18 months. A wide range of statutory and third sector agencies are now offering the Parents Plus Special Needs Programme to families in the UK, with the possibility of more to follow. Furthermore, the newly developed Parents Plus ADHD Programme is also being evaluated alongside CAMHS services in Gloucestershire, again with a view to further roll-out.

## Singapore

Throughout 2021 the Parents Plus Early Years Programme and Parents Plus Children's Programme continued to run online in [Filos Community services](#), Singapore. Carrie Chan achieved her Accreditation in the Parents Plus Children's Programme and continues to deliver full group programmes, as well as universally offered topic-based workshops, for parents of preschool and school age children.

## Turkey

In International Parents Plus developments, Parents Plus saw the successful completion of the first training in the Turkish version of the Parents Plus Early Years Programme (PPEY). Twelve practitioners are now ready, as Parents Plus trained facilitators, to deliver the programme to parents of children 0 - 6 years, in their services across Turkey.

**The journey started when Dr. Bahadir Turan was working as a visiting Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist in the CAMHS service in Gloucestershire, UK.** He joined a training being provided by Fred Ehresmann, one of our U.K. based Parents Plus Trainers, and since then he and his mentor, **Dr. Onur Burak Dursun, have collaborated closely with the Parents Plus team to bring about a fully translated version of the Parents Plus Early Years parent book and facilitator manual, with dubbed video scenes.** The next stage of translation is already underway on the materials for the Parents Plus Children's programme. Dr. Turan and Dr. Dursan, who are now becoming accredited Parents Plus Trainers for Turkey, have spent many hours preparing the way for the successful first delivery of the PPEY Training in Turkey, which was completed in December 2021. The training was supported by Fred Ehresman and Dr. Eileen Brosnan from Parents Plus, and delivered via Zoom, with the help of a translator.

Some very positive outcomes have been reported in a **study conducted in Turkey by Dr. Turan and Dr. Durson** using the **Parents Plus Children's Programme** as an intervention with parents of children with ADHD, published in the [Behaviour Change journal](#).

## Research

### Scaling up Parents Plus Special Needs Programme (PPSN)

Building on last year, and with a view to scaling of the delivery of the Parents Plus Special Needs Programme in 2021 and beyond, we successfully ran four programme information and launch events to draw in services to participate in sponsored training and supervision for practitioners, as well as an associated roll out of parent groups in services in England, Scotland and Ireland. This scaling up initiative was made possible with funding from [Ecclesiastical](#) Movement for Good, the [JP McManus Benevolent Fund](#) and [Rethink Ireland](#), and in collaboration with [ARC Scotland](#).



**RETHINK  
IRELAND**

### Sunbeam House Trust

The larger-scale implementation of the Parents Plus Special Needs Programme has supported the running of twelve groups to parents in October to December 2021, with a further fourteen groups scheduled from January to May 2022. The outcomes for participating parents are being evaluated as part of a study (Parents Plus and Trinity College Dublin) being conducted in Ireland and the UK, where parents are supported to complete a set of standardised measures, pre and post the intervention, and again at six and twelve months follow up. This **longitudinal design looks closely at how the benefits of this evidence-based programme ‘holds’ for families**, even a year after they attend the programme. **Initial data are showing positive benefits**, and the qualitative feedback from families and practitioners reinforces the power of the peer support via the group delivery format.

### Working with Traveller Families – A National Project

As part of a national project led by [Tusla](#), Parents Plus supported twelve regions across Ireland to deliver the Early Years Programme to families from the Traveller Community. Family Link workers will be recruited from the Traveller Community in each of the six regions and they will be trained along with existing professionals from existing family support services to deliver tailored programmes to families. We will be working with services and consulting with families over the summer and the training will be delivered in September with groups started in later Autumn. Already, several other regions have expressed an interest in being involved and we hope to expand this training later in the year.

## Parents Plus through Parentline

One of the silver linings of the Covid crisis has been the development of online Parents Plus Courses which have been able to reach large numbers of parents nationally. Online delivery has made the groups more accessible and have reached parents who would not have been able to attend previously. As part of a pilot project in 2021 Parents Plus have delivered five online parenting groups, via [Parentline](#), in the Early years, Childrens, Adolescent and Parenting when Separated programmes. Over 75 parents attended these groups, and the feedback was very positive, with high engagement and few dropouts. A second phase of the pilot is continuing in Autumn 2021, and we are working with Parentline to sustain this online delivery on an ongoing basis.

## 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.

Karin Todd and Wendy Taylor now work as part of the Parents Plus Trainer and Supervisor team involved with the Healthy Communities programmes, training and supervising new facilitators in the Parents Plus [Children's Programme](#) and Parents Plus [Early Years Programme](#), with four further people in the trainer 'apprenticeship' process. Clíodhna Cunningham is now assisting with the [Parenting when Separated Programme](#) training and supervision work.

## 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.

# IMPACT OF PARENTS PLUS PROGRAMMES

"I hadn't realised **how difficult my son found simple things**. Since this course, we are incorporating simple repetitive tasks into his day. His **independence and self-esteem are growing** as a result."

ADHD PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT  
PARENT



# Practitioner Impact

## Impact – Public Health

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

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

## Impact – Family Support

“My own **professional practice has been enriched** since I undertook Parents Plus Training and Programme delivery. I have learned to **focus more on a parent’s strengths**.”

**Martha Potter, Parent Support Worker**

## Impact – Community

“I have been an enthusiastic supporter of the parents plus model for many years and facilitating their programmes has been a **valuable addition to my role** working with parents and families.”

**Wendy Taylor, Family Support**

## Impact – Separation and Divorce

“By attending training and facilitating programmes I have gained a **wealth of knowledge and resources** I can use in practical settings. It's like having a **toolbox and I feel equipped** when new situations arise, and I also learn a lot from meeting other parents. After completing programmes parents were left with **tools they could use when faced with challenges**, these ranged from how to respond, pausing the situation, and considering best action, managing stress and a gained confidence in parenting skills.”

**Parenting when Separated Facilitator**

## Impact – Disability

“The programme helped parents in terms of **confidence**, and it helped them **feel more empowered** as a parent of a child with a special need.”

**Special Needs Programme, School Link Co-ordinator**

# What Parents Say About Our Programmes

"This course made me **appreciate my child's strengths**, his wit, and the ADHD strengths. Before the course I wasn't inclined to listen to him, **but now I'm able to tune into his inattentiveness**. I am calm and can deal with the situations. I've helped him establish simple daily routines around things like dressed so he's not overwhelmed. Before he used to get stressed at all the jobs, he had to do but now he's doing them without realising it and without me repeating myself or the constant 'I've asked you to do it a hundred times', and an argument. I would **definitely recommend this course** for all families with a child with ADHD."

**ADHD Programme – Parent**

"My son was always in trouble at school for not sitting, interrupting, play acting in class. I did the Children's Programme in our local family resource centre, more because I didn't know what else to do. The **facilitators were great**. The course helped me with praising my son, but also positive discipline. **We haven't looked back** since. He's much better behaved in school and more inclined to spend time on his homework too. He's a happier boy and **I am a happier mum**."

**Children's Programme - Parent**

"Lockdown really affected my kids. One in particular. I went on the Parents Plus Adolescent Programme, and I have to say that it was a blessing for us. It **helped me help my daughter** with the right tools. I felt surer of myself as a parent as you got the chance to discuss issues and **work together to find solutions**."

**Adolescent Programme – Parent**

"I knew myself that the kids were stuck in the middle, and we were making it worse. We were caught in a blame game. I was embarrassed about going to the course as I thought there'd be no other men there but there were. **Since the course, myself and my ex speak to each other much better**. We don't involve the kids. We're showing them that we respect and care for each other even though we live apart. **The kids are in much better form** and that's the most important thing."

**Parenting When Separated Programme - Parent**

"We had got into bad habits. The kids getting treats everywhere they went, had far too much screen time and the constant pestering meant I kept giving in. Now **we have positive rules around screens**, bedtime and they know they can have treats a few times a week instead of a few times a day. We're all well slept, not irritated by the screens and **doing far more together as a family**. Thanks Parents Plus Healthy Families Programme."

**Healthy Families Programme - Parent**

# GOVERNANCE & ORGANISATION

"Delivering Parents Plus Programmes has been an **integral and much-valued part of my work** in community-based family support for many years. It is always both **a privilege and a very enjoyable experience** to accompany parents through the programmes and to **see them create the positive change** they want in their family relationships."

PARENTS PLUS TRAINER

KARIN TODD

# 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 report annually on their compliance, which commenced 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 2021 the Board of Parents Plus comprises of the following members (31<sup>st</sup> December 2021):

- Michael Drumm (Chairperson)
- Jane Morgan (Trustee)
- Dr Charlotte Wilson (Trustee)
- Carol Maricle (Trustee)
- Andrew Bourke (Trustee)
- Reynagh O'Brien (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.

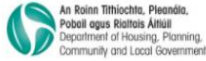
## Staff

In 2021, Parents Plus has nine staff members

- Dr. John Sharry, Chief Executive Officer
- Breda Flood, Financial Controller
- Eileen Brosnan, Head of Implementation and Practice
- Cherie Tyner, Business Development and Communications Manager
- Claire Raftery, Programme Manager
- Ciara Ni Raghallaigh, Parents Plus Special Needs Programme Co-Ordinator
- Grainne Hampson, Senior Trainer
- Keith Cregan, Research Psychologist
- Lesley Lally, Research Psychologist

# FINANCE

# Funding



Sunbeam House Trust

## RETHINK IRELAND

**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.

In 2021 Parents Plus were **one of a small number of social enterprises out of hundreds of applicants across Ireland to receive funding from [Rethink Ireland](#)**, through their Social Enterprise Development Fund, as well as a **place on their six-month business accelerator programme**, to support scaling the impact of our evidence-based programmes, supervision and outcome tracking.

We were also delighted to be chosen by the **[JP McManus Benevolent Fund](#)** to sponsor free training and supervision to professionals providing services to adolescents and young adults with an intellectual disability in Limerick and Clare in delivery of the Special Needs Programme.

2021 also saw continued support from **[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, to continue funding the training of services County Wicklow in the Special Needs Programme.

Parents Plus also continued our partnership with **[Ecclesiastical, the specialist insurance and financial services company](#)**, through 2021, as Parents Plus were one of ten charities out of 1,000 applicants to receive funding to roll out the Parents Plus Special Needs Programme in the U.K.

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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021

## Summarised Financial Information

Income & Expenditure Account Extract	12 months ended 31/12/2021
	€
<b>Incoming Resources</b>	
Programme & Training	227,324
Grants received	517,796
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>	745,120
<b>Resources Expended - Ongoing Expenditure</b>	
- Training & Other Costs	523,330
<b>Administration Costs</b>	
- Administration Costs	62,259
<b>Sub-Total Resources Expended-Ongoing</b>	
- Depreciation	1,501
- Other Income (Return on Investment)	304,631
<b>Net Incoming Resources for the Period</b>	462,661

Balance Sheet Extract	12 months ended 31/12/2021
	€
Fixed Assets - Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment	1,320
Tangible Assets – Financial Assets – Participating Interests	2
<b>Current assets</b>	
Accounts Receivable	120,030
Cash at bank – unrestricted funds	449,948
Cash at bank – designated funds	304,631
Stock	72,122
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	
Operating Creditors	140,998
<b>Accumulated Net Funds (2014-2021)</b>	919,534

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