



ParentsPlus

Empowering Professionals to Support Families

Strategic Plan

2019 - 2023



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Mission

The Parents Plus mission is to improve the outcomes and well-being for children and adolescents and their families by empowering professionals to deliver evidence-based mental health and parenting programmes through services in local communities. Parent Plus particularly wishes to support families affected by significant challenges such as disability, mental health problems and socio-economic disadvantage.

Parents Plus is committed to developing evidence-based therapeutic and educational materials for families and to providing high quality training and implementation support to professionals to ensure successful delivery of the programmes.

Parents Plus was established as a registered charity under the auspices of the Mater Hospital in 2001 (Charity No. CHY 13664) and a company limited by guarantee in 2013 (CRO 530105). All profits from sales of programmes and training are re-invested in developing new materials and sponsoring facilitator training and services.

Values

- Evidence-Based Service – committed to researching outcomes and developing effective programmes, as well as encouraging facilitators to continually evaluate their practice to ensure their groups meet their families needs.
- Collaborative Practice – working closely with families to ensure the programmes meet their goals and to ensure their experience and knowledge is central to the content of the materials.
- Empowerment – the programmes are focused on encouraging children, adolescents and parents to achieve their potential and the professional training is focused on encouraging professionals to achieve the highest standards of excellence and to build sustainable family support projects within their local communities.

Governance and Organisation

Parents Plus Ltd 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 Ltd is registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority with registered charity number 20043124 and has been granted charitable tax exemption by the Office of the Revenue Commissioners with the CHY reference number 13664.

Governance Code and Compliance

Parents Plus complies with all of the core standards outlined in the [Charities Governance Code](#). In compliance with the Charity Act 2015, Parents Plus will be reporting annually on their compliance starting in 2020. In addition the charity has and continues to submit an annual report to the Charities Regulator.

In 2018 and 2019, Parents Plus completed a review of our constitution which was formally adopted by the board in June 2019.

Board

The [Board of Directors](#) – who meet six times annually – have responsibility for the governance and strategic direction of Parents Plus in liaison with the Chief Executive Officer and senior staff members. During 2019, the Board of Parents Plus comprises of the following members (31st December 2019):

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

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

Board Sub-committees

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

- 1) Finance Subcommittee – Meets to review financial procedures and to produce a draft budget and financial plan for the board.
- 2) Training Subcommittee - Provides a forum for all the Parents Plus accredited trainers to meet to review training and supervision standards for Parents Plus and to make representations to the Parents Plus Board as appropriate.

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

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.](#)

Staffing

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

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

Key Achievements 2015-2018

1) Evidence-based parenting and mental health programmes

In collaboration with Irish families, Parents Plus has developed a series of educational and therapeutic programmes that teach communication skills, behaviour management, and relationship building to families. Delivered by trained and supervised professionals over 8-12 weeks to families, the courses illustrate communication skills with DVD footage, backed up by group exercises, discussion, and homework in order to support participants to manage problems and to improve the quality of family life. Currently Parents Plus offers five flagship programmes:

- *The Early Years Programme* (parents of children aged 0 – 6 years)
- *The Children's Programme* (parents of children aged 6 – 11 years)
- *The Adolescent's Programme* (parents of older children and adolescents)
- *Working Things Out Programme* (a structured therapeutic and educational programme for adolescents on dealing with depression and other mental health problems)
- *Parenting When Separated Programme* (psycho-educational course for parents who are preparing for, going through or have gone through a separation or divorce)

Committed to addressing disadvantage, over the last three years, Parents Plus has provided adapted delivery protocols for mental health services and DEIS schools. In addition, Parents Plus co-developed the Family Links programme with the Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) and the Irish Prison Service, which was an innovative parenting programme involving both prisoners and their partners. During 2018, Parents Plus started the development of disability specific and Healthy Families programmes to prevent childhood obesity.

2) Extensive Dissemination

First developed in 1998, the Parents Plus Programmes are used throughout Ireland with over 4800 professionals across over 900 agencies and teams from all 32 counties in Ireland having received training and support in the last ten years alone. Further, Parents Plus has a growing international presence, with programmes used in the UK, Europe, Australia and Asia.

Parents Plus has substantially increased the number of training and supervision places offered yearly, moving from an average of 470 (2012-2014) to 617 (2015-2017).

In recent years, Parents Plus has established long-term involvements with several multi-agency clusters, who deliver the Parents Plus Programmes on an ongoing basis in a particular regions, such as Donegal (first onsite training in 2014 and continued training into 2019); Monaghan (since 2015); Cavan, (since 2016); Galway (first training 2012, and large second

phase supported by Tusla in 2017); Bray SPECS ABC project (who deliver four out of five of the PP programmes since 2014). Some regions run a particular PP programme while running other parenting programmes (e.g. Limerick run PWS and PPAP while using other programmes for younger children).

In addition, Parents Plus has provided a growing number of trainings to regions in the UK, including the Northern Trust in NI, Gloucester, Bristol, Devon, Rochdale, and Swansea. The Parenting When Separated Programme has been commissioned for a multi-region roll out by the Department of Work and Pensions in the UK in 2019.

3) Professional Training and Implementation Support

Parents Plus has an established Quality Implementation protocol to ensure quality delivery of the programmes that lead to positive outcomes for families. The Parents Plus Quality Protocol includes facilitator training, post-training supervision and an accreditation process for professional and community agencies working with families.

This Parents Plus Quality protocol has been successfully used in some major initiatives in Ireland, such as the Early Learning Initiative, run by the National College of Ireland, the Early Childhood Services run by the CDI in West Tallaght, the Fingal Parenting Initiative supported by the NEYAI and national school based programmes run by the National Behaviour Support Service, as well as the SPECS service in Bray.

Parents Plus are committed to post training support and provide a range of services to facilitators to ensure high quality practice including:

- Facilitator newsletter and member's section on the PP website
- Online practice forum and ongoing practice development
- Individual support and supervision
- Advanced practice workshops and regional supervisions delivered throughout Ireland
- Specific topic workshops for particular settings (e.g. Schools and Disability settings were targeted in 2018)
- Parents Plus Champions programme to support agencies who regularly deliver Parents Plus

Parents Plus also provides sponsorship and support to agencies who cannot pay for services, particularly those who are working with disadvantaged families.

4) Research Basis

There is now a substantial body of evidence demonstrating the high impact of the Parents Plus Programmes in terms of reducing emotional/behaviour problems for children, alleviating parental stress, as well as improving children's learning within the home. Positive outcomes have consistently been demonstrated in a variety of contexts including preventative parenting programmes within primary and secondary schools (Hand et al, 2013 Nitsch, et al 2011), and early years prevention services (Kilroy et al 2010, Hayes et al 2012), as well as within mental health and disability settings (Hand et al 2013 , Coughlin et al, 2009, Griffin, et al, 2010) and with separated parents (Keating, 2013). See www.parentsplus.ie/research.

Between 2015 and 2018, Parents Plus has published six further papers, demonstrating a commitment to evidence-based programmes and developing the highest standards of practice.

Strategic Goals 2019 – 2023

New Programme Development

To respond to the new needs and societal challenges, Parents Plus is looking to develop new evidence-based programmes in the following two domains:

- 1) **Parents Plus Disability Programme:** Targeting the needs of parents of adolescents and young adults with special needs, this programme will aim to support this high need group who are often underserved in agencies.
- 2) **Parents Plus Healthy Families Programme:** Focusing on the prevention of childhood obesity, this programme will support parents to promote healthy lifestyles in their families.

Initial developments of both programmes have started in 2018 and will continue through 2019, 2020 and 2021, with facilitator and parent materials being developed, along with specific training for facilitators, and a national roll out to evaluate effectiveness.

These new programme developments will be the major focus of Parents Plus' effort over the next three to five years.

Parents Plus are also in the early stages of developing supplementary mental health programme material for families, notably the Parents Plus Anxiety Programme. This may be developed into a full programme over the course of the next five years depending on the progress of the Disability and Healthy Families programmes.

Facilitator Training

Parents Plus will continue to deliver high quality professional training in each of the five current Parents Plus Programmes and to develop new training protocols for the new Disability and Healthy Families programme.

We want to respond to the increasing demand for Parents Plus training, both within Ireland and internationally in the UK and further afield. Parents Plus currently has requests for training in several locations in the UK, Turkey, Malta and Singapore. In particular, we want to build a process to increase the number of PP supervisors and trainers that maintain the quality of the programmes and the training, while disseminating them more widely.

Post- Training to ensure Quality Implementation of Parents Plus Programmes

Parents Plus will continue to increase the level of post training support to agency groups to ensure long-term quality delivery of programmes. In particular, we aim to:

- Increase our engagement with all facilitators post training using as many different means as possible (social media, events, newsletter, forums, video blogs etc.)
- Continue to support the Parents Plus Champions initiative
- Complete documentation of standards for facilitation, supervision and training

- Continue to collaborate with multi-agency groups and commissioners, such as Tusla, HSE, schools and disability services in the delivery of the Parents Plus Programmes for specific communities.

Support the skill development and capability of the Parents Plus Facilitators via

- Providing advanced practice and special topic workshops
- Increasing the number of supervision and coaching sessions throughout Ireland
- Increasing the number of facilitators who complete the accreditation process

Increased access by high need and disadvantaged groups

We plan to continue to support sponsored programme delivery to agencies working with high need groups who do not have access to resources to pay for services.

In 2019 and 2020, we aim to carry out a National Sponsored rollout of the Parents Plus Early years programme targeting preschool and infant school teachers. The transition to primary school is a crucial period in the life of children and is the time when many emotional and behaviour problems start. It is also critical time to intervene and to support preschool teachers and parents to prevent later school based problems.

Research

To continue to research and evaluate our programmes to ensure they are effective. Specific research projects going forward include:

- 1) Evaluation of Parents Plus Disability Programme in partnership with the School of Psychology in TCD.
- 2) Evaluation of Parents Plus Healthy Families Programme in partnership with the School of Psychology in UCD.
- 3) Evaluation of National roll out of the Parents Plus Early Years Programme in particular to determine the impact on professional practice in preschools.
- 4) Supporting regional roll outs to produce local evaluation and audits of services to ensure they achieve the best outcomes for the families they work with.

Governance and Administration

Maintain the quality of governance within Parents Plus particularly by

- a) Revising Parents Plus constitution to allow a broader range of members to be recruited for Parents Plus.
- b) Recruiting new trustees/ directors to ensure representation from stakeholders such as Parents Plus trainers and key agency collaborators as well as trustees/ directors with key strategic skills in areas such as finance, and organisation development. Ongoing review of Parents Plus Governance to ensure we meet the standards of the newly formed Charities Regulation Authority.

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