

# IRISH AFTERCARE NETWORK

*Providing Support to People Working With Care Leavers*

Dear Member,

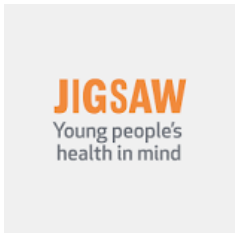



We are happy to bring you updates on the work of the network since our last newsletter in March.

As always, if the network can help you in anyway, please get in touch, all our contact details are at end of this newsletter.

## Irish Aftercare Network Members Meeting, March 2023

We were delighted to organise a network meeting for our Munster members in The Absolute Hotel in Limerick on 31<sup>ST</sup> March. The meeting provided an opportunity for robust discussion on a number of topics impacting aftercare provision in the region.

We had four excellent presentations on the day.

	<p>Dr Cian Aherne from Jigsaw gave an overview of their service and how it operates. Dr Aherne discussed The Power Threat Meaning Framework and how it informs the clinical work they do with their clients. Of particular interest was how power operates within relationships and how understanding it's role can help us to understand distress in young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'What has happened to you?' (How is power operating in your life?).</li> <li>• 'What sense did you make of it?' (What is the meaning of these situations and experiences to you?).</li> <li>• 'What did you have to do to survive?' (What kinds of threat response are you using?). <a href="#">Jigsaw</a></li> </ul>
	<p>Adapt Domestic Abuse Services spoke about the trauma-informed way that they work with their clients. They offer a refuge that is open 365 days per year. Their other services include emotional, financial, health, legal, housing supports, a 24/7 free confidential helpline and various outreach supports. <a href="#">Adapt</a></p>
<p><b>Limerick Homeless Action Team</b></p> 	<p>The Limerick Homeless Action Team from Limerick County Council facilitated a discussion about how their team is structured, the tasks of their youth resettlement role, the complexity of the social housing application process, and the current existing pathways out of homelessness for youth. They also presented the new proposed Youth Strategy 2023-35. <a href="#">HAT</a></p>
	<p>Lastly, we heard from GOSHH (Gender, Orientation, Sexual Health, HIV), who outlined their history, stats for their supports given throughout 2022. GOSHH assist their clients with information on HIV testing, provide condoms to the public as a partner of The HSE National Condom Distribution Scheme, provide support to individuals who are working within the sex industry and they also provide a personal support and counselling service. <a href="#">GOSHH</a></p>

## Working Together to End Youth Homelessness



On April 13<sup>th</sup> last, the Irish Coalition to End Youth Homelessness held an event called '*Working Together to End Youth Homelessness: The Importance of Effective Collaboration*'. Following the publication of the government's youth homelessness strategy, the purpose of the event was to bring together all relevant government departments, statutory bodies, and non-profit service providers and facilitate an open discussion on the need for an integrated whole-of-Government approach to implement the actions contained within the strategy, and what improvements we can collectively make in this endeavour. The event was attended by:

- Dept. of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- Tusla
- Dublin Regional Homeless Executive
- Health Service Executive
- Office of the Children's Ombudsman
- Housing Agency
- City of Dublin Youth Service Board

The event was also attended by all 18 members of the Coalition, as well as other organisations from across the charity sector, Approved Housing Bodies sector, and a number of academics. The headline component of the event was a panel discussion featuring Strategy Steering Group representatives from Dublin Region Homeless Executive and Tusla, chaired by Prof. Stephen Gaetz and Melanie Redman, of the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and A Way Home Canada respectively, international experts on youth homelessness who generously gave an hour-long presentation on successful measures utilised in Canada which may be applied in the context of the Irish Strategy. The event also featured four young people with lived experience of youth homelessness who gave incredibly useful accounts of their experiences, as well as roundtable discussions on three of the vulnerable cohorts identified in the government's strategy, including care-leavers. There was widespread agreement that much more needs to be done for care-leavers, in particular with regard to their housing needs. The current housing crisis has increased the risk of homelessness for young people leaving care and all relevant stakeholders must work together to ensure that other housing pathways are identified and that no young person should leave care unless secure housing has been sourced. Attendees were hopeful that Tusla's upcoming aftercare strategy would include measures to improve stakeholder collaboration, in particular a commitment to work more closely with local authorities to identify young people most at risk.

***Neil Forsyth, IAN Committee Member & Head of Youth Services, Focus Ireland***

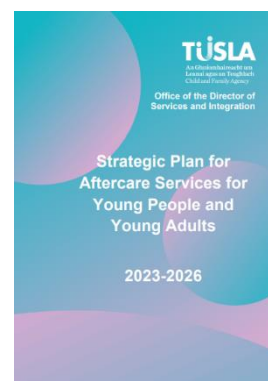
---

## Tusla Strategic Plan for Aftercare Services

Please find the link for the Tusla Strategic Plan for Aftercare Services for young people and young adults 2023-2026. This plan is the third phase of the Agency's overall approach to improve Alternative Care services across the continuum of care, for children, young people and young adults who cannot or have not been able to live at home for periods of their lives.

You can view this strategic plan at the following link:

[\*\*Tusla Strategic Plan on Aftercare Services for Young Adults 2023-26\*\*](#)



The network will be hosting an online meeting for members to hear their feedback on the strategy. We will be compiling a submission with feedback to Tusla. Date of meeting to be confirmed.

## Meeting with Ombudsman for Children



On 15<sup>th</sup> March, Daniel Keogh (Chairperson), Ciaran Kenny (Vice-Chairperson), Neil Forsyth and Dr Eavan Brady (Communications Officer's) of the Irish Aftercare Network met with the Ombudsman for Children, Dr Niall Muldoon and his colleague Dalila Pinto.

### Issues raised and discussed:

1. **Housing.** Neil spoke about the challenges faced by care-leavers in the context of the current housing crisis, and the need for legislative and policy changes in order to meet the complex needs of our client-base.
2. **The two-tier aftercare system.** Daniel and Ciaran discussed the network's proposal that the two-tier aftercare policy be scrapped, in favour of a one tier approach in which all care-leavers become entitled to an aftercare service until 23 years of age regardless of their full-time attendance in education and training. Also discussed here was how learning style is individual to each young person, and so the decision for what is approved as an acceptable training course should be made on a case-by-case basis, and not purely based on the course being 'full-time' or accredited.
3. **Extended care.** Eavan discussed the policy approach of 'extended care' which is established to varying degrees in different jurisdictions (e.g., England). This arrangement, once agreed to by both young person and carers, could see the age of leaving care extended beyond 18.

Dr Muldoon agreed to twice-yearly consultations with the network going forward, with the next one confirmed for 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023. This meeting was very positive, with important and salient points communicated to the Ombudsman. Dr Muldoon is very committed to assisting the network with our advocacy, and the commitment to on-going consultation evidences this. We invite contributions from our members in relation to the issues raised above so we can bring your views to him when we meet in September. Please email any views to [info@breakingthrough.org](mailto:info@breakingthrough.org).

---

## Online network meeting with guest speaker

The Irish Aftercare Network hosted an online network meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> May 23. Members attended for a very informative and powerful talk by Pieta.

**Tom McEvoy, Community Fundraising Manager**, spoke about Pieta's vision, mission, values and the history of the organization., as well as the locations they operate in across Ireland. Over 670 families were supported by their Suicide Bereavement Service in 2022. **Clare Mc Kim, Pieta's National 24hr Crisis Helpline & Therapy Service Line Manager**, provided an overview of Pieta's clinical services, incorporating their three pillars of prevention, intervention and post-vention. There was a questions and answers section for members after the presentation, which members found informative and helpful for their work with care-leavers.



The second half of our webinar was all about networking and providing a space for members to offer their views on the three issues that the network will be discussing with The Ombudsman for Children in our follow-up meeting with him this coming September. Attendees were put into three break-out rooms to discuss the following issues: 1. Housing, 2. The abolition of the two-tier aftercare policy, 3. Extended care. There was incredible engagement across all three issues, and attendees also made new connections with other members of the network across Ireland. We are so grateful to all who attended and very much look forward to communicating their views to The Ombudsman in September.

	<h1>DATE FOR THE DIARY</h1> <h2>IRISH AFTERCARE NETWORK</h2> <h3>ANNUAL CONFERENCE</h3> <p>SHERATON HOTEL, ATHLONE 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023</p>
---	---

	<h2>Irish Aftercare Network</h2> <h1>LinkedIn Page</h1> <p>We now have a new LinkedIn page to keep you all informed, please click the link below and follow us</p> <p><a href="#">Irish Aftercare Network: LinkedIn</a></p>
---	---

---

### Dan's walk across Ireland for Make-a-Wish Ireland

The committee would like to wish Irish Aftercare Network Chairperson, Daniel Keogh, the best of luck as he walks the width of Ireland, from Grand Canal Dock Dublin to Galway Bay along The Grand Canal, starting on 4<sup>th</sup> June and finish on 8<sup>th</sup> June. That's pretty much a marathon a day for 5 straight days!



<https://www.makeawish.ie/>

You can donate here -

<https://www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/dankeogh>

## Tusla DNC Aftercare Initiative

This coming June 14<sup>th</sup> will see a magical day of football and fun as a Tusla DNC aftercare initiative comes to a conclusion at Richmond Park, the home of St. Patrick's Athletic. Ten young people all with care experience have come together over the past number of weeks to play football and meet afterwards to discuss their own engagement and experience of dealing with professionals while coming through care. The young people have engaged in group and individual work reflecting on what worked well and areas needing improvements from their own personal journey through care.

The forum is being coordinated by Irish Aftercare Network's vice chairperson Ciaran Kenny and his colleague in Tusla Stuart Lynch. The young people have been coached weekly by special guests such as League of Ireland legends Conan Byrne and Roddy Collins. The young people will get a chance to showcase their talent against former professionals on the day, including the likes of former Irish International Keith Treacy. Replicas of the Premier League, Champions League, World Cup, and FA Cup, along with Sam Maguire will be on display for all to get a picture with on the day. The young people involved in the project will be rewarded for their efforts with a trip to Glasgow in August to see Celtic FC play. The event is free, so come out and support the amazing young people engaged in this great project in what is sure to be a memorable evening. For more information contact Ciaran on 0873586301 or email [ciaran.kenny@tusla.ie](mailto:ciaran.kenny@tusla.ie)



	<a href="tel:016060858">01 6060858</a>
	<a href="http://www.irishaftercare.com">www.irishaftercare.com</a>
	<a href="mailto:info@breakingthrough.org">info@breakingthrough.org</a>
	<a href="https://twitter.com/AftercareIrl">twitter.com/AftercareIrl</a>
	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/irishaftercare">www.facebook.com/irishaftercare</a>
	<a href="#">Irish Aftercare Network: LinkedIn</a>

Breaking Through CLG (Co-ordinators of The Irish Aftercare Network) *under The Scheme to Support National Organisations is funded by the Government of Ireland through the Department of Rural and Community Development*

