

A PLACE to be YOUNG

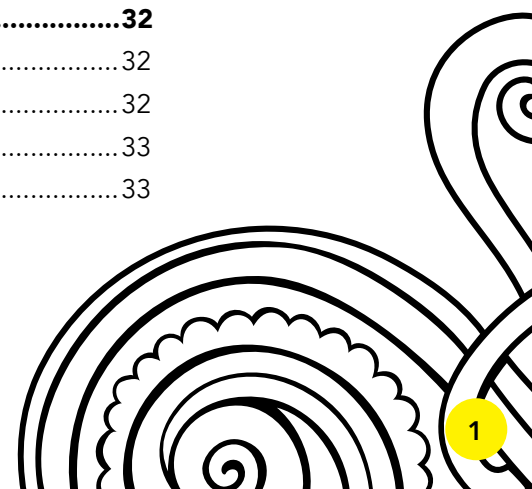


STRATEGIC PLAN
2017-2019



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OVERVIEW OF THIS PLAN

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

Sphere 17 provides a high-quality youth service to young people between the ages of 10 – 24, in the region of Dublin 17. Most of the neighbourhoods that we serve are categorised as disadvantaged or very disadvantaged areas. We provide many different services to young people, based on their needs, issues and interests.

The services include educational and issue based group work programmes, one-to-one support, detached youth work (outreach), outings and residential activities, summer project, the Woodale Youth Justice Project and The Listen Project. There is plenty more information about our community, our service, our team and our vision, mission and values contained in first two sections of this plan.

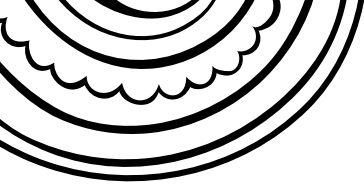
ABOUT THIS PLAN

This strategic plan builds on our previous strategic plan, which ran from 2014 – 2016. It provides a road map for what Sphere 17 hopes to achieve over the coming three years, and how we plan to achieve it. To make sure that our plan is in line with what is happening in the youth work sector, and is taking account of relevant policy, we reviewed some key documents to inform this plan. This is detailed in the 'National Context' section. There is also information about this plan and how it was developed in Section Two.



SUMMARY OF OUR GOALS

We have agreed on six key goals that we aim to achieve over the coming three years. The goals, and our plan to achieve them, are explored in more detail in Section Three of this plan.



1: INNOVATING OUR ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT

We want to be leaders in the youth sector in providing high quality one-to-one support, so we want to improve this vital part of our work. **We will provide all young people, who need it, with a programme of structured one-to-one support to meet their needs.** We hope, by doing this, that young people in Dublin 17 can access structured one-to-one support to identify their needs and address these needs, if and when they need it.

2: UNDERSTANDING OUR IMPACT

We hear great stories about the impact our work is having on the lives of many young people. We want to make sure that we are having a positive impact on the lives of as many young people as possible and that we are using our resources to affect a positive impact in all the services we provide. **We will develop, pilot and implement a system of impact measurement, data collection and reporting on our impact, incrementally, over the three-year period.** We hope that by doing this we will have a much clearer understanding of how our work is helping young people, so we can do more of what is working well, and continue to improve our service to make it the best it can be.

3: PROVIDING BETTER MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

In Sphere 17, we regularly work with young people who are managing challenges in relation to mental health, and proactively addressing and supporting this is a priority for us. **We will train all staff to respond to, and refer appropriately, young people who may be experiencing mental health difficulties.** We hope that by doing this young people experiencing difficulties around their mental health will, when they need it, have access to high-quality information on the specialised mental health supports available to them, and how to access these supports.

4: PROVIDING BETTER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Youth unemployment remains one of the highest in Europe. We want to provide practical, tangible and young-person focussed support for young people who wish to avail of internships and employment opportunities. **We will develop a young employment mentoring service in partnership with local businesses,** which we hope will give young people attending our service positive experiences of work and work placement, and improved employability skills.

5: IMPROVING OUR COMMUNICATIONS

We want to make sure that young people and other stakeholders are receiving the information they need from us, and about us, in the way that they need it. **We will develop a communications strategy that clearly communicates who we are, what we do and our positive impact to a range of stakeholders, including young people, parents, the community, our funders and our partner organisations.** By doing this, we hope our stakeholders will be able to find out what they need about our service from accessible, engaging and high-quality information online, on paper and in person.

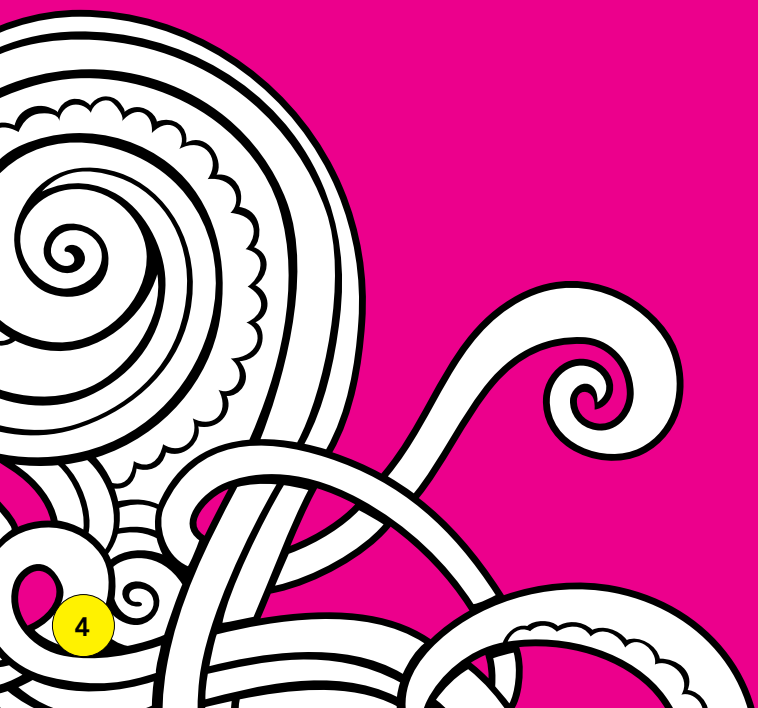
6: AUDITING OUR PROGRAMMES

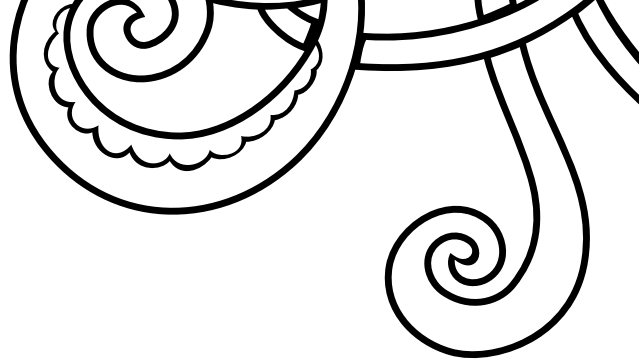
We want to make sure young people and other stakeholders have a chance to tell us if they're happy with the job we're doing. **We're going to formally audit services and programmes, focussing on one to two areas of service provision each year.** We hope that as a result of doing this, we will have a better understanding, on an on-going basis, of how well young people are enjoying our services. We'll also know whether we can improve how we are working with young people in any way, and where different parts of our service fit in with the overall range of services being provided to young people in D17.

SECTION I

WELCOME

& CONTEXT





FOREWORD

There are 5, 234 young people living in Dublin 17, many of whom we in Sphere 17 are lucky to have worked with over the past number of years. This plan highlights the valuable work that is done by our teams across our three youth centres by our committed and dedicated staff and volunteers. It is the passion, dedication, care and respect shown by our team to the young people of Dublin 17 that drives our organisation. Ensuring that the young people of our community and those who care for them know that we are there for them, to help them develop and grow is hugely important to us.

The work highlighted in this plan and our achievements over the last number of years are a source of pride and motivation for us. We have achieved our success by using our resources carefully and by working closely with all of our stakeholders. We aim to do even better in the future having listened to what our young people and other stakeholders have told us.

Over the coming three years, we will focus on strengthening our core - enhancing our understanding of our impact so we can provide better services, improving the 1-2-1 support we provide to those young people who need it, improving our ability to support young people around the issues of mental health and employment, auditing our services to make sure they are as effective as possible, and developing a robust communications strategy.

We know that our sector is increasingly professionalising and seeking to improve. What this means for us is that rather than following change, we are going to lead it, because we believe that the young people we serve deserve the highest quality, most effective services to help them fulfil their potential and reach their goals.

We wish to thank all those who helped us in developing this plan: the young people who use our services, parents and guardians of young people, partner organisations, our dedicated Board and staff team, and our colleagues in Quality Matters who facilitated the planning process.

We also would like to acknowledge the important, on-going support we receive from our key funders/funding support agencies: Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the City of Dublin Youth Services Board, and the Irish Youth Justice Service.

We look forward to working collaboratively with young people, our partners and funders over the coming years to achieve our ambitious plan.

Nessan Vaughan
Chairperson

Mick Ferron
Regional Manager

INTRODUCTION

Sphere 17 provides a high-quality youth service to young people between the ages of 10 – 24, in the region of Dublin 17. We are independent; this means that a government body does not run us, but instead a local, community based organisation does. We provide services from three different centres with three different youth work teams: the Bonnybrook Area Team, the Darndale Area Team and the Priorswood Area Team. We also manage a Garda Youth Diversion Project, known as the Woodale Youth Justice Project, which covers the Darndale and Priorswood area.

This strategic plan builds on our previous strategic plan, which ran from 2014 – 2016. It provides a roadmap for what Sphere 17 aims to achieve over the coming three years, and how we plan to achieve it.

The strategic planning process itself gave our staff, our young people, parents and the Board of Management a chance to pause and reflect on our work, and how we can improve it. It gave us a chance to see if our 'mission statement' and our 'values' are still relevant to the needs of the young people with whom we work.

We took time to see if there was any way we can better meet the needs of young people in Dublin 17. This process gave us a chance to come together, renew our commitment and our core values and look to the future, to where we see ourselves in three years.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

OVERVIEW

To ensure that our plan is in line with what is happening in the youth work sector, and is taking account of relevant policy, we reviewed some key documents to inform this plan. Some of the important points from this are summarised here.

THE VALUE OF YOUTH WORK

Youth work in Ireland is recognised as one of a number of important services to help young people live fulfilling and healthy lives, and achieve outcomes that have been identified in *Brighter Outcomes Better Futures*. Recent research into the economic value of youth work estimated that 43.3% of the total population aged between 10 and 24 were using youth work services, and that 53.3% of young people participating in youth work organisations in Ireland were from economically or socially disadvantaged backgrounds(1).

The report stated that for every €1 invested in youth work, there was a saving of €2.20 to the state. Although the impact of youth work is not well documented, this is a promising finding. It suggests that there may be widespread real and valuable changes being supported in the lives of young people and their families through youth work. To truly communicate the value of youth work to young people and their families, to organisations and to the state, there is a need to better understand what actually changes for young people as a result of using our services. This desire to prove the value of youth work has informed a number of our strategic goals.



WHAT CHANGES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE? OUTCOMES AND EVIDENCE

Ireland's National Children's Strategy, *Brighter Outcomes Better Futures*(2), has at its core the aim to support all children to achieve five outcomes.

These outcomes are that children and young people:

1. Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental well-being
2. Are achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development
3. Are safe and protected from harm
4. Have economic security and opportunity
5. Are connected, respected and contributing to their world

The national strategy also emphasises quality and evidence in young people's services, which is captured in one of the 5 'transitional' goals of the strategy noting that:

“Government investment in children will be more outcomes driven and informed by national and international evidence on the effectiveness of expenditure on child related services, with the aim of improving child outcomes and reducing inequalities. Resource allocation within services will be based on evidence of both need and effectiveness, and services that are not working will be decommissioned”.

The role of youth work organisations in supporting young people to achieve better outcomes in relation to their social and personal development is enshrined in law. Section 3 of the Youth Work Act 2001 defines youth work as:

“A planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training; and provided primarily by voluntary youth work services.

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs suggest that there are seven particular areas of skills and strengths, referred to as 'potent mechanisms' that young people attending youth services should be supported to develop(3), including:

- Communication skills
- Confidence and agency
- Planning and problem solving
- Relationships
- Creativity and imagination
- Resilience and determination
- Emotional intelligence

Understanding this strategic context, and the guidance for youth work services at a national level has helped to inform a number of our strategic goals for 2017 – 2019.



YOUTH WORKERS AS A VITAL SUPPORT

Ground-breaking research undertaken by Jigsaw and UCD in 2012 on the lives and experiences of young people showed that a significant minority of young people are living with, or have experienced mental health difficulties. Over 20% of young people had self-harmed at some point, and 7% had attempted suicide(4). Crucially, suicidal thoughts, rates of self-harm and suicide attempts were found to be higher in young adults who did not seek help or talk about their problems, and thankfully, young people who have support from a special adult have lower levels of depression and anxiety. The survey notes that:

“The absence of One Good Adult is linked to higher levels of distress, anti-social behaviour and an increased risk for suicidal behaviour.

The importance of the youth worker / young person relationship was highlighted previously in a literature review by the Centre for Effective Services(3), where they concluded that:

“A significant factor in the success of interventions such as the YPSPF and SPY programmes, and the LDTF scheme is a positive relationship between workers and young people. This is especially the case when workers interact with young people on a regular basis and support participants in achieving educational and developmental goals together.

The importance of the youth worker / young person relationship, and the prevalence of mental health difficulties among young people in Ireland have informed a number of our strategic goals in this plan.

OUR COMMUNITY

OVERVIEW

In the National Strategy for Children, the government recognises “the importance for children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with disabilities of having timely and affordable access to quality, inclusive services and supports” (2). This section provides an overview of the socio-economic profile of our community, highlighting that we are serving a community where young people are less likely to enjoy as many advantages as those in more affluent areas.

OUR TARGET GROUP

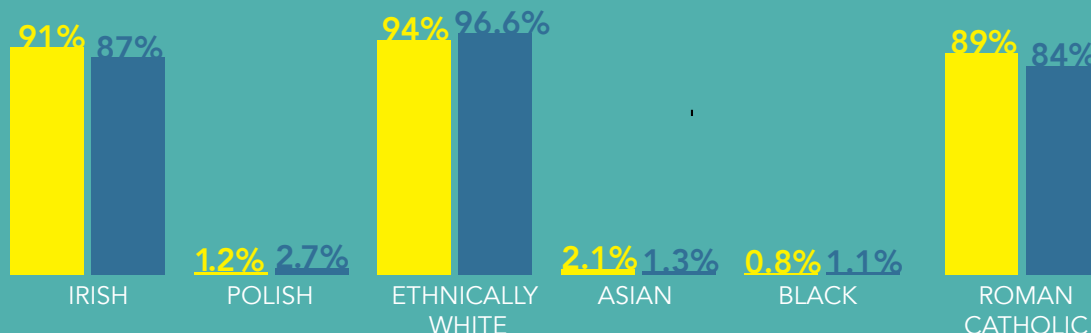
Currently, Sphere 17 provides a service to young people from the Dublin 17 area aged 10 – 24, based on presenting needs, issues and interests. Most of the neighbourhoods that we serve are categorised as disadvantaged or very disadvantaged areas. Through improved collection of information, and understanding the needs of our young people, we hope to confidently evidence that we meet the National Strategy’s aim for “community-based programmes for those most at risk, experiencing the greatest disparities and with the greatest opportunity for impact and main-streaming”, over the coming three years.

DUBLIN 17

Dublin 17 is a postal district that borders North Dublin City and County, and includes the neighbourhoods of Belcamp, Bunratty, Cara Park, Clonsbaugh, Priorswood, Darndale, Riverside and The Glin.

NATIONALITY & RELIGION⁴

KEY ■ Dublin 17 ■ Nationally



POPULATION

21,796 DUBLIN 17 HAS A POPULATION OF 2011 CENSUS

Female
11,366



Male
10,430

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

14.5% Dublin 17 **6.6%** Nationally
OVER TWICE THE NATIONAL RATE

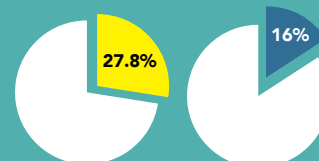
UNEMPLOYMENT DUBLIN 17 HAD HIGHER RATES OF UNEMPLOYMENT FOR BOTH MALES AND FEMALES THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

EDUCATION²



JUST OVER ONE IN TEN PEOPLE IN DUBLIN 17 (12%) HOLD A PRIMARY DEGREE, THIS IS 2.5 TIMES LOWER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE (30%).

Educated to primary level only



AGE¹

DUBLIN 17 HAS A YOUNG POPULATION COMPARED TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

5,234

People of this age living in the Dublin 17 area.

10-24

The age group that Sphere 17 serves.

LONE PARENTS RATIO⁵

21.6% Nationally
30.3 - 61.9% Dublin 17

THE RATIO IS PARTICULARLY HIGH IN PRIORSWOOD B & C, AND IN KILMORE C IT IS OVER 2.5 TIMES THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

¹ CSO - <http://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2011smallareapopulationstatistics/saps/B>

² Pobal - <https://www.pobal.ie/Pages/New-Measures.aspx>

³ Dublin 17 male unemployment rates ranged from 23.5% - 49.2% compared to a national average of 17.4%. Female unemployment ranged from 17.4% - 32.5% compared to the national average of 15%. The rates were particularly high for males in the electoral district Priorswood B where rates were more than twice the national average. The rates were particularly high for females in the electoral districts Kilmore C and Priorswood B where the rates were more than twice the national average.

⁴ CSO - <http://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2011smallareapopulationstatistics/saps/>

⁵ CSO - <http://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2011smallareapopulationstatistics/saps/>

PROFILE OF DEPRIVATION IN DUBLIN 17

There is a national index of deprivation, which measures the level of disadvantage in communities across Ireland. When we have a better understanding of which communities are experiencing poverty and exclusion from wider society, this can help to ensure that these communities can be given the resources and supports so that they have equal opportunities in relation to education, work and community life⁶.

For the purposes of understanding the population, Dublin 17 is divided into eight different electoral areas⁷. Table 1 illustrates that five of the eight areas in Dublin 17 are classified as very disadvantaged and disadvantaged, while three areas are 'marginally below average' but not disadvantaged. This indicates that the Dublin 17 area has a high concentration of deprivation, and helps us to understand, at a more general level, the experiences of the communities where our young people live.

Table 1: Dublin 17 Electoral Districts and Deprivation Index Score

Electoral District	Deprivation Index Score	Deprivation Level
Priorswood A	-7.3	Marginally below average
Priorswood B	-20.1	Very disadvantaged
Priorswood C	-11.7	Disadvantaged
Priorswood D	-16.5	Disadvantaged
Priorswood E	-9.4	Marginally below average
Kilmore C	-20.4	Very disadvantaged

6 Pobal - <https://www.pobal.ie/Pages/New-Measures.aspx>

7 CSO - <http://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2011smallareapopulationstatisticssaps/>



SECTION 2

ABOUT SPHERE 17



OUR CORE INFORMATION

OUR YOUTH CENTRES



Address: Sphere 17 Regional Youth Facility, Darndale, Dublin 17

Company Number: 410276

Charity Number: CHY17125

Registered Charity Number (RCN): 20063115

Locations: we have three centres located in Bonnybrook, Darndale and Priorswood, which are illustrated in the map above

Opening Hours: The service typically operates a 6-day week and opens until 10pm in at least one of the areas/centres from Monday to Friday.

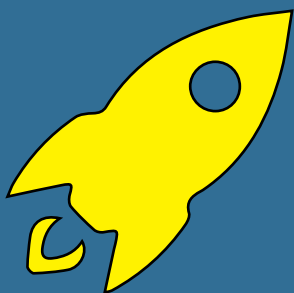
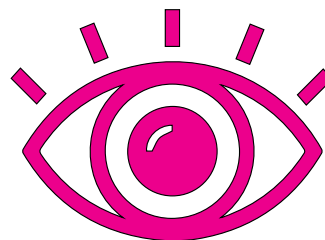
Funding: We are funded primarily by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), through the City of Dublin Youth Services Board (CDYSB).

HOW OUR ORGANISATION IS STRUCTURED



OUR VISION

Sphere 17 hopes for a future where all young people are valued. We want to see a society where young people have a voice, where young people are respected, and where they feel included, no matter what community they are from. We hope for a society where young people can get high quality support and have a real chance to be the best that they can be.



OUR MISSION

Sphere 17 believes all young people can achieve great things; some may need some support to do that. Our mission is to support young people to be the best that they can be.

We provide support in different ways, for different young people, as they need it. We do this through drop-ins, group work, one-to-one work, outreach and outings.

OUR VALUES

YOUNG PERSON CENTRED:

We are committed to being young person centred, where young people are the focus of the service.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:

We believe in voluntary participation as a core to our Youth Service provision; young people should always be using our service by choice.

EQUALITY AND RESPECT:

We promote the acceptance and understanding of others through all service activity and we hold that all people have unique value, rights, needs, beliefs and potential.

DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH:

We believe that Sphere 17 is a place of on-going learning and opportunity for growth.

SAFETY AND SUPPORT:

We promote a safe and supportive environment in all our service provision.



OUR SERVICES

We provide the following services, on which we provide more information in the next section:

- Drop-in
- Educational and issue-based group work programmes
- One-to-one support
- Detached youth work (outreach)
- Outings and residential activities
- Summer project
- Woodale Youth Justice Project
- The Listen Project

OUR APPROACH

- We actively promote the participation of all young people in all aspects of our service
- We aim to deliver our service in line with established best practice and in keeping with the equality and community based ethos that informs our work.
- We deliver services based on young people's needs, interests, issues and age profile
- We provide a range of services including recreational, educational, health, personal and social development.
- We provide professional services, by trained and Garda-vetted Youth Workers
- We engage in a way that is open, creative and positive



YOUNG PEOPLE

the most important people in our organisation are the young people that we serve. They come and see us in one of our three sites, on any of the six days of the week we open. They come to hang out, to speak to a Youth Worker, to take part in some of our group or one-to-one activities. If there's anything they need, they just speak to one of our staff.

YOUTH SERVICE AREA TEAM

In each area, there is a youth service area team; Bonnybrook Area Team, Darndale Area Team and the Priorswood Area Team. The teams comprise a Project Leader and (2 – 5) Youth Workers / Youth Activity Workers, with other youth service staff including Youth Justice Workers and/or Jobs Initiative /Community Employment workers, as available. They are the 'front-line' of our service, working with the young people every day, providing them with a range of different services from one-to-one support to fun group work activities. If the Youth Service Area Team need any help to meet the needs of the young people, the Project Leader is there to help them.

PROJECT LEADERS

Project Leaders are the team leaders for each area team. Their main job is to make sure that the Youth Workers and other staff have the support they need to provide our essential services to the young people. If there are any challenges the Project Leaders can't resolve, they bring this to the Manager, who helps them to problem solve and plan services.

REGIONAL MANAGER

Our Regional Manager's primary role is to make sure that the Project Leaders on each of the three sites have everything they need to support staff teams to deliver all the different services to our young people. They are also responsible for reporting to our funders and to the Board, providing them with the information they need to oversee the work of the whole organisation.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The Board oversees the whole organisation. Their job is to make sure that all areas of the organisation are working in line with good practice. The Board supervises and supports the Regional Manager. They make sure he has everything he needs to keep Sphere 17 safe, effective and enjoyable for staff and young people.



OUR COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY FOR THE BOARD

Our Board oversees all areas of the organisation. They are charged with providing rigorous and appropriate oversight, accountability and governance transparency. Their job is to make sure they support our Regional Manager to effectively run Sphere 17 and that staff have everything they need in order to support our young people. A proud achievement for the Board of Management in 2016 was becoming fully compliant with the Governance Code for Community and Voluntary Services. The Governance Code is a national standard of good practice for Boards of Management of community and voluntary services. It lists all the processes and policies that a Board needs to have in place in order to be considered 'good practice' in the sector.

Through a robust process of review, policy development and practice improvement, the Board was pleased to reach full compliance with the Code, in late 2016. The Board established dedicated committees to further support Board responsibilities, recruited members with expertise in areas of finance, human resources and governance, and put in place a thorough process for agreeing our governance goals and working towards them. The following Board committees operate to make sure that they fulfil all their requirements, and that we continue to work efficiently as a Board:

- Audit and Finance
- Staffing/Human Resources
- Governance and Services Oversight Committee
- Occupational Health and Safety

In recent years, the Board focussed, in particular, on:

- Organisational health and safety and risk management, in order to provide for the safety and well being of staff and young people
- The organisation's legal and regulatory obligations including the Charities Regulator, the Lobbying Act and Companies Act 2014

Sphere 17 will continue to strive for the highest standards of governance over the coming three years. To this end, the Board will, with the support of the Governance and Services Oversight Committee, systematically conduct an annual review of the implementation of the Governance Code and make adjustments/ further improvements as required.

CDYSB SERVICE REVIEW

In addition to achieving the Governance Code, Sphere 17 was also engaged in a review by our funder, the City of Dublin Youth Services Board (CDYSB) as part of their quality monitoring of funded services. The team welcomed the opportunity to show our good practice, and learn about potential areas for development.

We received very positive feedback from CDYSB, and some key information for our future development which was considered for this plan.

The report recommendations are aimed at helping the organisation bring the service to the next level, and have been reflected in both operational plans and here in the goals of this strategic plan.





NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS FRAMEWORK (NQSF) / VALUE FOR MONEY AND POLICY REVIEW OF YOUTH PROGRAMMES

In 2016, Sphere 17 completed the third year of the NQSF cycle, progressing our Continuous Improvement Plan, which was developed earlier in the cycle. Our team are eager to ensure that we meet sector standards – we will continue to strive for this when the national standards are reviewed. In anticipation of this, and the implementation of the Value for Money report recommendations, many of our strategic goals in this plan address developments that we anticipate will be prioritised in redevelopment of national standards, and the sector generally, including impact measurement, needs assessment and targeted support work for young people.

ON-GOING SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Sphere 17 don't just want to keep up with change; we want to lead it. To ensure our organisation is continually working in line with emerging evidence of what works, and that we are working in a way that is complementary to our partners in the sector, our Board and our Regional Manager have forged strong links with our funders. By regularly communicating with them, we can stay informed about what is happening at a national level. Also, in developing this plan, we reviewed a number of different research reports and national strategies to make sure that we are prepared for changes in the sector.

CONSULTATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

As part of our commitment to being young-person centred, and to on-going service development, we regularly survey young people on their views of life as a young person in Dublin 17. The benefits of this are that we can:

- Learn about the current issues and interests of local young people
- Learn about what is important to our young people in relation to the service we provide
- Learn about how we can tailor our programmes over the coming years to ensure we meet their needs.
- Emphasise the value to young people of expressing their views.

In Autumn 2016, over 150 young people took part in the Sphere 17 RYS Youth Survey; key findings indicated that between 68% - 79% of young people would definitely / probably talk to their youth worker if they had a problem, and in response to the question 'who do you trust most in your community?', all three age cohorts surveyed (10-12 years, 13-15 years, 16+years) ranked youth workers highest.

The main findings from this survey helped to inform our focus group discussions with young people for the strategic planning. Our continued consultation with young people means that our services are regularly adapted to meet their changing needs.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2014 - 2016

This is our second strategic plan and builds on the successful implementation of our previous plan, developed to cover the three-year period of 2014 – 2016. Our previous plan included a broad range of actions addressing areas such as governance, volunteering, capacity building and improving our facilities, which was reviewed regularly over its lifetime. We are proud to say we successfully implemented the majority of the actions in the plan.



SECTION 3

DEVELOPING THE PLAN



GATHERING IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE: WHO WE CONSULTED WITH

To make sure that our plan for the coming three years would be the best it can be, we wanted to get as many ideas as possible from people who are interested in the work of Sphere 17.

We wanted to know what people think of our service, and how we can make it better for young people, for our team and for our community over the coming three years. We consulted with 95 people including:

- 53 young people in focus groups
- 15 parents through survey
- All staff and management in surveys and focus groups
- The Board, through phone and face to face interviews
- Four service providers who work with our young people, through survey

YOUNG PEOPLE	PARENTS	STAFF	BOARD	SERVICES
53	15	16	7	4

EXPLORING IDEAS

When we had collected information from all those groups, the staff team came together to look at the feedback and see what gaps there were, and identify things that could improve. Staff did research on some different ideas to see what would work for the young people using Sphere 17. Many of the ideas will help to improve our day-to-day work over the coming years, and some of the ideas became those six strategic actions included in the plan, to guide our work for the coming three years.

We also spoke to our funders; the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the City of Dublin Youth Services Board, to see which ideas were the most important for youth services in general, over the coming three years. We also looked at national plans and strategies relevant to our work to make sure that our plan would be in line with them. This helped us to prioritise some of the great ideas we received.

REVIEWING OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

It was an important part of our journey towards completing this plan that as a team, and with the Board, we reviewed and updated our 'vision, mission and values'. Our vision is a statement that describes what Sphere 17 believes an ideal world looks like for the young people we work with. Our mission statement describes the work that our team does, to help make that vision a reality. Our values, which were previously developed with the young people using our service, describe how we do our work – how we behave in doing our work with young people.

FINALISING THE PLAN

The plan was finalised when the Manager and Project Leaders from the three services came together to think, logistically, what the plan would look like year by year from 2017 to 2019. After this, a draft of the plan was sent to the Board for consideration and input, and to give final 'sign-off' on the plan.

GETTING SUPPORT TO MAKE OUR PLAN

Throughout the planning process, we were helped by another charity, Quality Matters, who collected the information from the different partners, put it into reports for us, and helped us to make decisions in workshops and focus groups.

SECTION 4

THREE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN



ON-GOING WORK OF SPHERE 17

- **Drop-in**
- **Educational and issue-based group work programmes**
- **One-to-one support**
- **Detached youth work (outreach)**
- **Outings and residential activities**
- **Summer project**
- **Woodale Youth Justice Project**
- **The Listen Project**



DROP IN

In all of our three sites, we have drop-ins running several times a week. During drop in time, our door is open for young people to drop in, catch up, hang out with other young people, see what's happening in the service, and seek support or a listening ear if they need it. This is the space where many young people first make contact with our service and it has a valuable role in helping young people to engage with us.

EDUCATIONAL AND ISSUE-BASED GROUP WORK PROGRAMMES

Over the course of each year, we run groups for young people that address specific educational / developmental needs, or interests the young people have identified. The groups can focus on topics that are social, emotional, health-related, civic and political or creative. The groups typically run from between 4 and 8 weeks, and are generally targeted at specific ages or groups of young people with unique needs. As part of our commitment to be inclusive to all young people, one of the key groups we seek to engage is young Travellers.

ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT

We provide individual support to young people, including those who need to work through something that might be going on in their personal lives. It might be, for example, relating to physical or mental health, relationships, friendships, family or study. We usually work with the young person to explore options and help them to better manage, or cope with, the challenges in their lives.

DETACHED YOUTH WORK (OUTREACH)

We provide a detached youth work service, where our team go out into the community to try to meet young people. The aim of detached youth work is to share information about Sphere 17 and to provide a non centre-based service to young people.

OUTINGS AND RESIDENTIAL ACTIVITIES

Several times a year we organise outings and residential activities, with the aim of helping young people to experience new things, go to new places, try new activities and expand their experiences of life in Dublin and beyond. Where we can, we use these activities as an opportunity for young people to learn new skills, either as part of the activity itself, or in helping to organise and plan for it.

YOUTH JUSTICE PROJECT

In this Garda Youth Diversion Project, which we run in partnership with the Irish Youth Justice Service, we provide a range of tailored one-to-one supports and group activities to young people who may have come to the attention of the Gardaí. The aim of this programme is to help young people to find positive alternatives to the behaviours that may have led to them being in contact with the Gardaí.

SUMMER PROJECT

Every summer, Sphere 17 puts on a range of programmes and activities to engage young people at that time of the year when they are not in school and have more time to spend on activities that they might enjoy. This includes outings and centre based age-appropriate activities over a number of weeks.

THE LISTEN PROJECT

The Listen Project is a listening service where young people, 12 -21 years, are provided with a safe space in Listen Sessions with a qualified counsellor to talk, explore and be heard on any issue/s that they are concerned about, and where they can be provided with meaningful support. The sessions are accessed through a free-phone service managed by the youth service, and young people are not required to disclose any reason in advance for accessing the project. Young people are provided with up to 8 Listen Sessions free of charge. The service supports young people to articulate their feelings, reflect on their experiences, and to develop their resilience; recognising the value of minding their mental health.



STRATEGIC GOALS:

OVERVIEW OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS

GOAL ONE

INNOVATING OUR ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT

Rationale: We want to be leaders in the youth sector in providing high quality one-to-one support, based on identified needs, to all of the young people who need it. Young people tell us that they appreciate the support that we provide them when they are going through tough times. We want to make sure we are doing this as well as we can.

Action: Provide all young people who need it with a programme of structured one-to-one support to meet their needs. To do this, we will introduce a system of needs assessment and support planning for all young people who want and need this type of support.

What We Hope Will Improve: Young people in Dublin 17 can access structured one-to-one support to identify their needs and address these needs, if and when they need it.

GOAL TWO

UNDERSTANDING OUR IMPACT

Rationale: We hear great stories about the impact our work is having on the lives of many young people. Hearing these stories helps us to know that we have helped those young people, but we want to make sure that we are having a positive impact on the lives of as many young people as possible. It is also important to us that we are using our resources to make a positive impact in all the services we provide. We know that collecting information on what's changing for young people, when they work with us, is the way to do that. So, we are going to implement a better system of impact measurement for our organisation.

Action: Develop, pilot and implement a system of impact measurement, data collection and reporting on our impact, incrementally, over the three-year period.

What We Hope Will Improve: Sphere 17 will have a much clearer understanding of how our work is helping young people, so we can do more of what is working well, and continue to improve our service to make it the best it can be.



GOAL THREE

PROVIDING BETTER MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

Rationale: Mental health difficulties affect one in four young people in Ireland, and in Sphere 17 we regularly work with young people who are managing challenges in relation to this. Developing a proactive approach to supporting positive mental health, and supporting young people to access high-quality specialised support is a priority of the team in Sphere 17.

Action: Train all staff to respond to, and refer appropriately, young people who may be experiencing mental health difficulties. This will be undertaken in tandem with the development of a needs assessment, through which young people will be invited to identify any supports they need in relation to their mental health, and where they will be provided with information or referral as appropriate.

What We Hope Will Improve: Young people experiencing difficulties around their mental health will, when they need it, have access to high-quality information on the specialised mental health supports available to them, and how to access these supports. They will have access to trained, confident staff who can help them work out what they need in relation to their mental health.



GOAL FOUR

PROVIDING BETTER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Rationale: Although the economy is improving, youth unemployment remains one of the highest in Europe, and in an area like Dublin 17, it's even higher. We want to provide practical, tangible and young-person focussed support for young people who wish to avail of internships and employment opportunities.

Action: Develop a youth employment mentoring support service in partnership with local businesses and/or service providers that will provide young people with opportunities to increase their skills and improve their employability, through time-limited highly supported employment placements in local businesses.

What We Hope Will Improve: Young people attending our service will have positive experiences of work and work placement, and improved employability skills.



GOAL FIVE IMPROVING OUR COMMUNICATIONS

Rationale: We have a lot of people who are interested in our work - the young people who use our services, parents of young people, people from the community, our staff, our Board and many more. We want to make sure that people are receiving the information they need from us, and about us, in the way that they need it. We'd like to review how we communicate, and develop and implement a plan to improve that.

Action: Develop a communications strategy that clearly communicates who we are, what we do and our positive impact, to a range of stakeholders, including young people, parents, the community, our funders and our partner organisations.

What We Hope Will Improve: Our stakeholders will be able to find out what they need to know about our service from accessible, engaging and high-quality information online, on paper and in person. Our team will have a way to communicate about Sphere 17 that is clear, consistent and focussed on young people.

GOAL SIX AUDITING OUR PROGRAMMES

Rationale: We provide a broad range of services. We're confident that young people are generally happy with our services, but we think in some areas we can improve, and we want to make sure young people and other stakeholders have a chance to tell us if they're happy with the job we're doing. Along with ensuring that we are making an impact (which we hope to achieve through Goal Two: Understanding Our Impact) we want to make sure that: what we are providing is good enough for young people; isn't duplicating the work that other organisations are doing; and is the best use of staff skills and time.

Action: Formally audit services and programmes, focussing on one to two areas of service provision each year.

What We Hope Will Improve: We will have a better understanding, on an on-going basis, of: how well young people are enjoying our services; whether young people and other stakeholders are happy with the services we are providing; whether we can improve how we are working with young people in any way; and where different parts of our service fit in with the overall range of services being provided to young people in D17. All stakeholders will regularly have an opportunity to feed into how programmes can improve.

STRATEGIC PLAN: YEAR BY YEAR

GOAL ONE

Provide all young people, who need it, with a programme of structured One-to-one support to meet their needs.

Steps	Time frame	Lead & Support	Outcome
<p>A Set up a working group to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review standards of good practice, and models of one-to-one work (including needs assessment, support-planning and referral) from other sectors Consult with staff and young people on what they want/need for one-to-one working Recommend a model or standards for Sphere 17 for one-to-one support, considering priorities of young people and staff. 	Q2 – Q4 2017	Manager Working group	A model, policy and tools/forms for one-to-one working are drafted
<p>B Develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies and procedures detailing target group, approach, interventions, referrals, tools/forms, data collection etc. A plan for how the new model will be piloted and reviewed – e.g. in what service, with which staff/young people, for how long? 	Q1 2018	Working group Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Policies, procedures and tools for one-to-one work are agreed, ► A plan for pilot is agreed
C Train staff on good practice in undertaking one-to-one work and implementing the procedures outlined in b)	Q1 2018	Manager Working group	Staff are trained and confident to undertake one-to-one work in line with policies agreed
D Pilot the process for 6 months and undertake a formal review	Q2 2018 – Q1 2019	Manager Youth Workers	Strengths and challenges of the model are identified
E Make any changes needed from the review, embed further into the organisation (e.g. extending to some or whole organisation as agreed)	Q1 – Q4 2019	Whole team	If needed, changes are made and the model is rolled out into other areas of the service

GOAL TWO

Develop, pilot and implement a system of impact measurement, data collection and reporting on our impact incrementally over the three-year period.

Steps	Time frame	Lead & Support	Outcome
<p>A</p> <p>Choose one suitable part of the service – for example a selection of group programmes – to pilot improved outcome measurement. With staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a logic model for the area of service provision • Identify outcomes and indicators (align with national policy where possible) • Identify or develop suitable tools (validated or bespoke) to collect outcomes data • Agree a process for collecting the data • Ensure staff are confident to collect the data in the way agreed • Engage external expertise to guide in this area, if required 	Q3 2017 – Q4 2017	Manager Project Leaders	A suitable area of the service is identified to pilot impact measurement, and suitable outcomes and data collection tools are identified, which staff are confident to use.
<p>B</p> <p>Review the process of implementing the new outcomes system on a pilot basis as in a), which may involve consulting with staff and service users. Make any necessary changes, implement changes.</p>	Q4 2017	Project Leaders Staff	Outcome measurement system for pilot programme is trialled, reviewed and embedded
<p>B</p> <p>Identify 2-3 additional areas of the service to trial, and undertake the same process as in a-b above</p>	Q1 – Q3 2018	Manager Project Leader	Outcome measurement system for additional areas is trialled, reviewed and embedded
<p>D</p> <p>On a continual basis, work with funders (and when possible, with IT partners) to implement national guidance in to the organisation's impact measurement / data collection system</p>	On-going	Manager	The outcome measurement system of Sphere 17 is in line with national good practice and developments in relation to IT

GOAL THREE

Train all staff to respond to, and refer appropriately, young people who may be experiencing mental health difficulties.

Steps	Time frame	Lead & Support	Outcome	
A	Train all staff in a Mental Health for Youth Workers training programme	Q4 2017	Project Leader	Staff are confident in discussing mental health difficulties with young people, providing appropriate support, and supporting young people to access specialised services if required
B	Develop policies and procedures that clarify: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Processes for needs assessmentReferral processesLimits to the staff role in relation to young people's mental healthAny other relevant guidance	Q1 2018	Project Leaders Staff	There are policies and procedures that detail how staff will undertake this work in the project, that are aligned with 121 working model
C	Implement the policy and review the process to ensure staff are appropriately supported and feel they are providing effective support	Q2 2018 – Q2 2019	Project Leaders Staff	Implementation of the training and policies are reviewed for effectiveness and improved based on the review



GOAL FOUR

Develop a youth employment mentoring support service in partnership with local businesses and relevant service providers

Steps	Time frame	Lead & Support	Outcome
<p>A Identify a suitable employment support model by researching evidence-based youth employment mentoring programmes. The model should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give young people the opportunity to identify their support needs for taking up employment • Include partnership with local businesses to supply employment opportunities • Provide mentoring support to young people in employment 	Q1 2018	Project Leader Manager	Model or supports identified that have been proven to support young people to sustain employment
<p>B Develop a pilot programme proposal with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear description of the support to be provided, • The role of business partners • Supports to be provided to business partners • Supports to be provided to young people • Time frames • Procedures for managing difficulties arising 	Q2 2018	Project Leader Manager	Programme plan developed
<p>C Engage relevant local businesses to support a limited pilot project</p>	Q2 2018	Project Leader Manager	Business partners engaged
<p>D Implement the pilot within existing resources, accessing employment opportunities and providing employment support to an agreed number of young people</p>	Q3 2018 – Q2 2019	Project Leader Staff	Young people engaged in employment with mentoring support
<p>E Review the model to assess need and effectiveness. This should clarify that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for the programme • There is no duplication of services in the region • The model is effective <p>If this is clarified, seek funding (e.g. under the youth employment initiative) to develop and roll this programme out for additional young people</p>	Q2 –Q4 2019	Project Leader Manager	Model is reviewed, and pending success, funding is sought to provide the programme on a continual basis

GOAL FIVE

Develop a communications strategy for the organisation

Steps		Time frame	Lead & Support	Outcome
A	Undertake a formal review of current communications including internal and external, considering all stakeholders, including young people, parents, partner organisations and the wider community	Q4 2017	Manager Staff	There is a clear understanding of strengths and gaps in current communications within the organisation, and with external stakeholders
B	Agree and implement a communications plan for all key stakeholders that details: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who we communicate with, about what, and how,• How we communicate with parents of young people about ourselves and our work with their children• The means/media through which we communicate• How we target groups of young people who are under- represented in service figures	Q1 2018 – on going	Manager Staff	A plan for revising and developing communications is agreed and implemented incrementally
C	In collaboration with young people and with expertise from website development professional, review our website and social media and improving it to ensure it works best for them	Q2 2018	Project Leader IT	A new, accessible website that represents the ideas, priorities and needs of young people is developed

GOAL SIX

Formally audit services and programmes, focussing on one to two areas of service provision each year.

Steps	Time frame	Lead & Support	Outcome
<p>A Agree a system for undertaking service audits addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will be reviewed • What methods will be used to review (e.g. review of data / mapping of other services locally / interviews / surveys) • What stakeholders will be engaged (e.g. staff, young people, parents, other services etc.) • Who will collect information • Who will analyse it • How it will inform change/developments to the programme • The time frame for collecting information, reporting and incorporating changes 	Annually	Manager Project Leaders	Methodology for the annual review is agreed and responsibilities allocated each year
B Develop a schedule of service reviews for the coming three years, with the Summer Project prioritised for 2017	Q1 2017	Manager Project Leader	Priority areas are identified and scheduled for review
C Undertake the review, and implement any changes to the service arising from the recommendations	Annually	Manager Staff	Area of service provision is improved in line with priorities of relevant stakeholders and the organisation's strategy



APPENDIX:

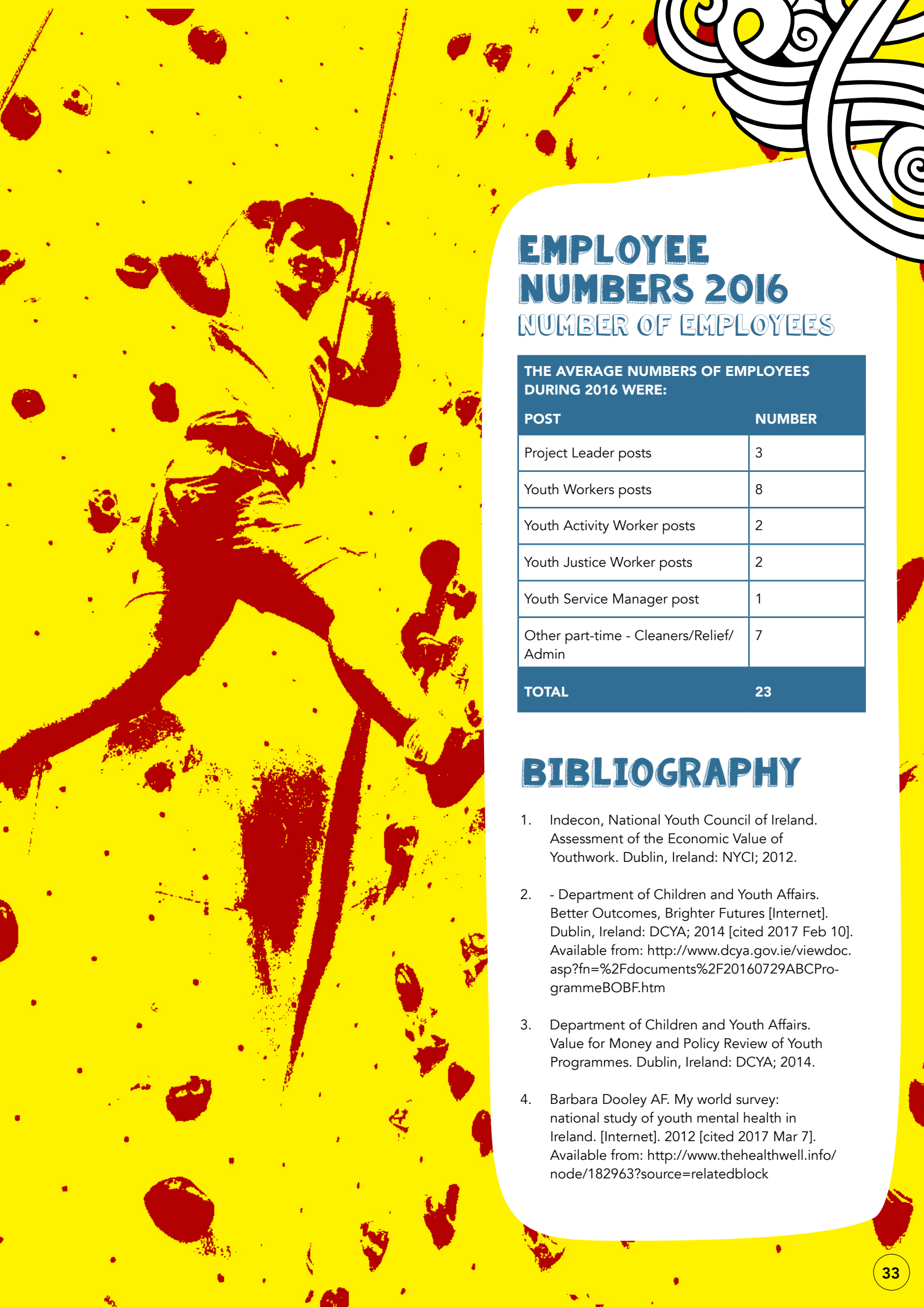
STAFFING, INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR 2016

OVERVIEW

To provide an understanding of the levels of staffing and resources we usually work with, we provide here an overview of our income and expenditure for the two years before the development of this plan, and the staff we had in 2016.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2015 & 2016

	2016	2015
	€	€
INCOME		
DCYA / CDYSB / YPFSF I	34,542	33,699
DCYA / CDYSB / YPFSF II	401,392	372,090
DCYA / CDYSB / SPY	247,197	241,168
DCYA / CDYSB / LDTF	115,108	112,301
DCYA / CDYSB / General Fund	-	10,000
DCYA / IYJS / ESF	128,500	128,500
Other Income	48,734	57,031
	975,473	954,789
EXPENDITURE		
Payroll expenses	714,283	688,879
Programme expenses	92,125	85,902
General administration	106,848	122,314
Audit & accountancy fees	14,631	13,654
Depreciation	17,821	18,734
	945,708	929,483
Surplus	29,765	25,306



EMPLOYEE NUMBERS 2016

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

THE AVERAGE NUMBERS OF EMPLOYEES
DURING 2016 WERE:

POST	NUMBER
Project Leader posts	3
Youth Workers posts	8
Youth Activity Worker posts	2
Youth Justice Worker posts	2
Youth Service Manager post	1
Other part-time - Cleaners/Relief/ Admin	7
TOTAL	23

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