

Supporting Professional Development

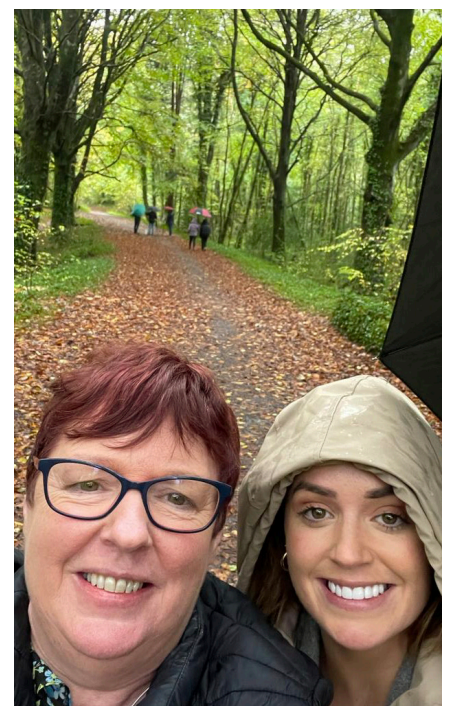
During the second half of 2023, great strides were made in developing our new E-Learning Programme, Introduction to Suicide Prevention. Following best practice guidelines, Shauna Diamond, Project Manager and Mary Mulcahy, Training and Policy Officer for the National FRC Mental Health Promotion Project, continue to develop, create and consult with HSE Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention and the Family Resource Centre National Forum Training Sub-Committee to realise this evidence-based E-learning programme which is scheduled to be launch in Q2 2024.

The E-learning programme will include online content, interactive questions, and scripted scenarios replicating real-life situations that FRC staff may encounter, ensuring the training is contextually relevant, evidenced-based, realistic, engaging and easily accessible.

Although the E- COP training programme will provide

valuable evidence-based information on responding to suicide, it is not designed to replace the full-day in-person FRC Suicide Prevention Code of Practice (FRC SP- COP), particularly for frontline staff. The most important difference between the two is that the in-person training is co-facilitated by an HSE Suicide Prevention Resource Officer from the local area, who provides a wealth of local knowledge, shares suicide prevention intervention information, and discusses up-to-date knowledge about suicide within their region. Furthermore, this in-person training offers an opportunity for FRC staff to connect with their local HSE Suicide Prevention Resource Officer and to learn about other key local organisations delivering mental health, suicide prevention and recovery services in their area.

For more information about this and other training, please get in touch with Mary Mulcahy.



Mary and Shauna on location creating video content for our new E-Learning Programme - Introduction to Suicide Prevention.

Building Partnerships

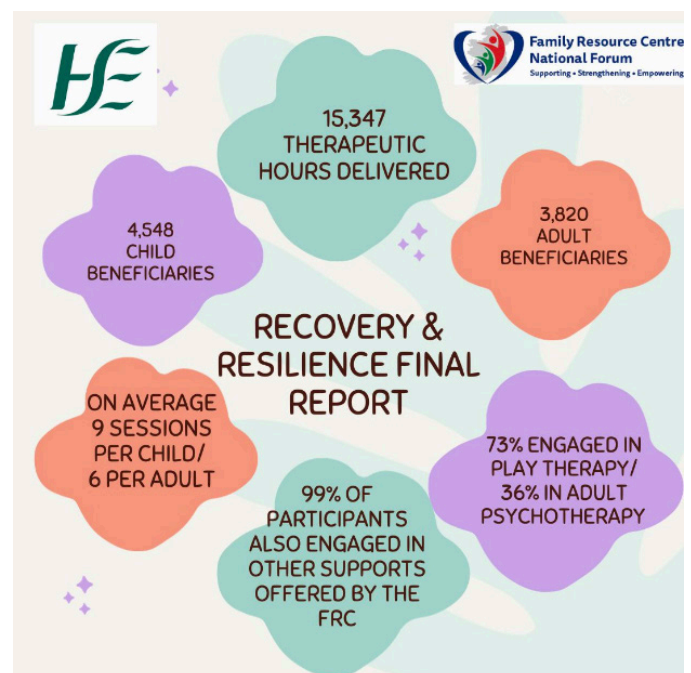
This year, the Family Resource Centre National Forum (FRCNF), in partnership with the HSE Mental Health Integrated Care Team, administered once-off Recovery and Resilience funding for therapeutic community support across 83 FRCs.

The Recovery and Resilience Programme has had an incredible impact across the 83 Family Resource Centres to date, enabling them to reduce their waiting lists, plan and provide new and enhance existing therapeutic interventions. Furthermore, this funding allowed several FRCs to develop outreach therapeutic services to enhance accessibility and better serve their wider communities. A key component of the Recovery and Resilience Programme is research to capture the voices of children aged 0-12 and their families, which will document their experiences and the impacts they endured as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The outcome of this important research will be published in the coming year.

FRC therapeutic services funded through this program delivered 15,347 hours of therapeutic services to 8,368 adults and children, of which 99% engaged with other services and programs offered by the FRC. It is

no surprise to the FRCNF that 85% of the referrals to these services were self-referrals, reconfirming our assertion that FRCs are ideally placed, are extremely good value for money with strong links across the community and are held in high regard as a trusted source of support.

Grace Kearney, the FRCNF Counselling and Therapeutic Supports National Lead is very proud of the outcome and is exploring new opportunities to secure funding to help sustain and further develop these vital services.



An Opportunity for FRC Staff and Volunteers

We are delighted to announce that Mary Mulcahy, the FRC Mental Health Training and Policy Officer, completed WRAP Advanced-level Facilitator Training. Mary is now qualified to offer WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Planning) Seminar 2 facilitator training to FRC staff and volunteers who have completed the 2-day WRAP Seminar 1 training. Upon completing the WRAP Seminar 2 facilitator training course, participants will be qualified to deliver WRAP Seminar 1 training within their community. WRAP is an evidence-based programme that helps participants take control over their health, wellbeing, and recovery and helps to bring about positive personal change. Mary plans to deliver WRAP Seminar 2 in Q2 of 2024 and will continue to offer WRAP Seminar 1 in different regions throughout the coming year as part of her suite of training. If you would like to become a WRAP Seminar 1 trainer, please contact Mary via email at marymulcahy@familyresource.ie.



Developing Policy and Sharing Resources

Working to support the FRC Voluntary Boards of Management and FRC staff, several policy templates have been created, which are available on the [members area of the FRC National Forums website](#). There are 29 FRC Governance Policies, and 15 Financial Policies Templates created using best practice principles to help FRCs comply with the Charities Regulator Governance Code. In addition, there is also a document outlining what policies Family Resource Centres require to fulfil the 6 Principles of the [Charity Regulator Authority](#) (CRA) Compliance Record Form requirements and an excellent resource from the [Carmichael Centre](#) to help implement the CRA Governance Code.



Responding to Far-Right Activity

During the first half of 2023, the FRC National Forum organised a series of workshops for Family Resource Centres focused on understanding and responding to the right activity. The workshops were facilitated by The Hope and Courage Collective (formerly the Far-Right Observatory) and Community Work Ireland.

Of particular value to FRCs, the final workshop explored strategies and ways to build community capacity and solidarity. Feedback was very positive from FRCs, who felt these workshops were timely and informative. Following on from these workshops, the [Hope and Courage Collective](#) guidance documents and slides are available to all FRCs on the members area of the FRC National Forum website. In addition, the Hope and Courage Collective and [Community Work Ireland](#) have offered additional support and guidance to the FRC National Forum and all FRCs on responding to Far-Right activities or rhetoric in their communities.

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Participants' comments we received after the workshop.

“The workshops were very informative and timely given the current situation in Ireland.”

“Great workshop - Information sharing on what is happening nationally at the moment/understanding of the correct approach in countering hate speech and Far Right narrative”.

“Important to hear what others are thinking and ideas exchange. Also, the guidance for FRCs being community groups”.

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National Problem Gambling Service

In 2023 advancements were made in the pilot in the area of developing best practices for the Gambling service. The co-production of appropriate intake, assessment, evaluation and screening tools were developed. Training was facilitated for the therapists who delivered the therapy over the course of two days.

The benefits of having this service in an FRC are that it ensures the service user can avail of wrap-around and step-down aftercare supports. This is not only for the person with the addiction but also for the family and concerned significant others. FRCs offer various other therapies, family support and the opportunities to engage in social activities, which then forges social support networks- aiding the recovery journey.

With the funding from GAT, the FRC National Forum is now able to respond with the development of the “Lighthouse Behavioural Skills Program”, an 8-week program for concerned significant others. This was designed by Sinead Raftery, the clinical lead of Boyle FRC, with input from a person with lived experience- Tony O'Reilly and the National Forum staff member Shauna Diamond.



This programme aims to:

- Improve the Concerned Significant Others quality of life
- Reduce loved ones gambling behaviour
- Encourage access to treatment- proactively creating conditions for change
- There is evidence that people with addiction problems choose to seek treatment due to the influence of their loved ones. This is going to be piloted over the coming months- with rollout across the FRC sites that deliver this service.

In 2023, there have been, to date, a total of 1897 one-to-one therapy sessions delivered through this programme.



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Addressing Period Poverty

Family Resource Centres (FRCs) are well placed within communities to facilitate local actions to address the challenge of period poverty and roll out mitigation initiatives. FRCs across the country have continued raising concerns about food and associated period poverty.

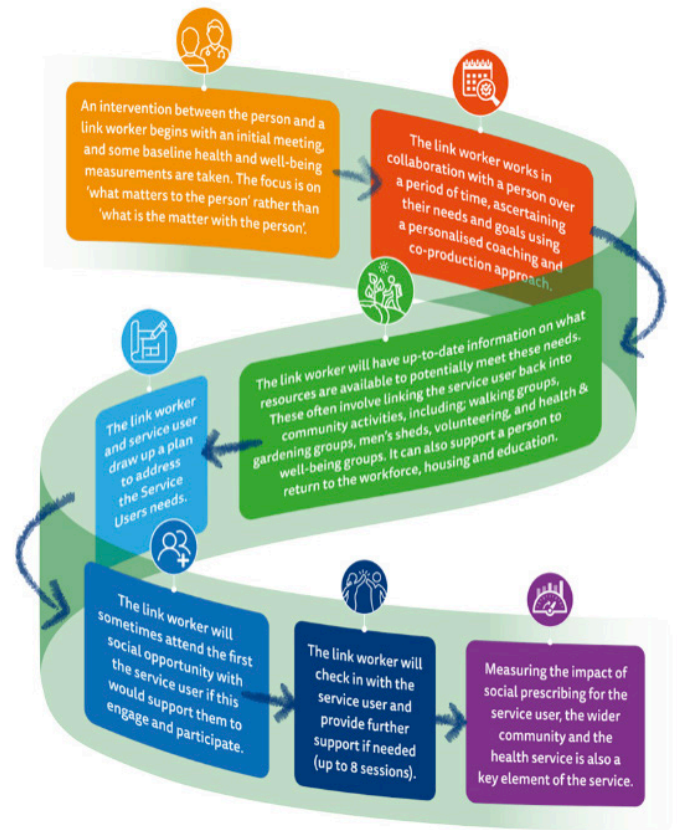
In 2023, the FRC National Forum was granted funding from the Department of Health to support 43 FRCs in rolling out Period Poverty provision measures and mitigation initiatives. Period Poverty projects included consultations with community women groups, the provision of free period products, awareness-raising events, and campaigns to address the stigma associated with periods and the prevalence of period poverty. Some FRCs have utilised Irish, sustainable and reusable products and provided information booklets and resources on menstrual health as part of their initiative. In early 2024, all FRCs will be able to access Period Poverty resources in the members area of the FRCNF website to utilise when running workshops and information-sharing events for their service users.



Social Prescribing

Pathway to Health and Wellbeing

Launched at the FRC National Conference, The Cork/Kerry Social Prescribing Service Annual Report 2022 proposes that the success of this project is a testament to the commitment of and strong collaboration between the key stakeholders – the Link Workers, the HSE Health and Wellbeing, Family Resource Centre National Forum, FRCs, CDP, Community groups, GPs, Primary Care Teams, Mental Health Services and Social Prescribing Service Users. Co-authored by Rita Bevan and Shauna Diamond, this report also includes an External Review of Service Quality and Impact. You can read the full report here: [The Health and Wellbeing Cork/Kerry Social Prescribing Service Annual Report 2022](https://familyresourcementalhealth.ie) (familyresourcementalhealth.ie)



Building Partnerships

Rita Bevan, the FRC Social Prescribing Regional Coordinator for Cork/Kerry, supports engagement with national and local agencies, creating a cohesive, integrated approach that benefits the social prescribing service user and all stakeholders.

Working with the Kerry County Council, funding was secured through The Creative Ireland Programme, which is supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. The aim of this project is to provide Social Prescribing Service users with the opportunity to engage with their creativity – through participation in the various arts and creative activities, with a view to this engagement supporting their positive wellbeing and health. This funding has also been used to help remove barriers to participation, such as the lack of transport and childcare.

A similar funding application was successful for the Cork region. This funding provides opportunities for Social Prescribing Service Users, FRCs and the wider community to foster creative engagement. It also supports the upskilling of arts facilitators around working with community members who may require additional support to engage and participate with creative opportunities.

The outcomes and impacts of this funding are being measured and reviewed, and a report will be issued in due course.



Creating Awareness of What We Do



Rita Bevan, the FRC Social Prescribing Regional Coordinator for Cork/Kerry, presented at a Lunch & Learn event as part of Irish Childhood Bereavement Network Awareness Week 2023. Rita gave an overview of the Family Resource Centre Program, the therapeutic support available within the FRC Programme, the problem gambling support services, and a more detailed presentation on social prescribing. In total, 132 attendees from

different public sectors and community organisations attended this event, and the information was very well received.

Advancing the Cause

As strong advocates of Social Prescribing, members of the Cork/Kerry Social Prescribing – Health & Wellbeing Community Referral Programme are linking in with the HSE and Trinity College Dublin as part of a research project to find appropriate, service-user-friendly evaluation tools that can evidence the excellent work of Social Prescribing.



Further still, Rita Bevan, the regional coordinator, has been working as a part of the organisation team for the delivery of the Echo Learning Hub for Social Prescribing. This learning hub aims to provide 10 issue-focused learning sessions annually to support the development of social prescribing and to support the link workers in delivering social prescribing services.



National Forum of Family Resource Centres CLG

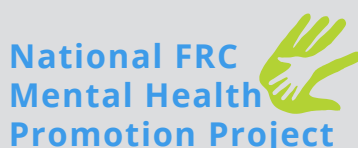
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