Hope is a tangible thing

SWAN Youth Service
Strategic Plan 2021-2023

Vision
Our vision is that all young people will live in an equal, inclusive society where they feel connected to and are part of their own community, have control of their own lives, own their own destinies and reach their full potential.

Mission
Our mission is to empower and facilitate young people to be critical thinkers, to have an equal voice, to make informed life choices so that they are valued in their own right, are active participants in their own lives, in their communities and in wider society.
Values and Principles

1. ADVOCACY: SWAN Youth Service advocates for and on behalf of all young people engaged in the service and particularly on behalf of those most vulnerable, marginalised, socially excluded and at risk in the community. SWAN YS also encourages and supports young people to advocate and speak up for themselves and their peers.

2. SOCIAL JUSTICE: SWAN Youth Services operates from a Critical Social Education Model of Youth Work and encourages young people to think critically about social justice and social change. In this regard, SWAN YS works with young people to identify their role and contribution to social justice and social change at local and global levels.

3. INCLUSION: SWAN Youth Service is committed to the inclusion and involvement of all young people irrespective of their background or personal or social circumstances and strives to include those young people most at risk in the community.

4. PARTICIPATION: SWAN Youth Service works with all young people ‘where they are at’ and strongly encourages young people towards meaningful and active participation in programmes as well as in shaping and planning the delivery of the Service. SWAN YS believes in the voluntary participation of young people but actively targets those young people who are most marginalised and most at risk. SWAN’s goal is the sustained engagement and participation of these young people in the Service.

5. ACCEPTANCE: SWAN Youth Service acknowledges the individuality and diversity of all young people engaged in the service and works with young people in a non-judgmental and open-minded way.
6. **RESPECT:** SWAN Youth Service works in a respectful way with all young people involved in the service and strives to instil respect in young people for one another, their families, community and wider society.

7. **EQUALITY:** SWAN Youth Service believes that all young people deserve, need and have a right to the same chances and opportunities and strives to ensure equality of opportunity for all young people.

8. **EMPOWERMENT:** SWAN Youth Service works to empower all young people to take ownership and responsibility for themselves, their lives, their community and wider society. Young people are empowered to have pride in and take ownership of the Service.

9. **SAFETY:** SWAN Youth Service believes that everyone has a right to a safe and secure environment, free from violence, coercion and intimidation. SWAN also works to ensure the safety of all staff and volunteers who work with young people.

10. **ENJOYMENT and FUN:** SWAN Youth Service believes that all young people participating in our service have the right to have fun and enjoy themselves as they are participating in our programmes, activities and events and that this is the best way for learning to happen.
‘When a person comes into Swan they might be happy or they might come in and pretend they’re happy then watch them open up, build bonds and change’

‘One day you will look back and won’t know who you are. When you open up to the right people, you get the best help possible’
11. COLLABORATION: SWAN Youth Service works in partnership with key agencies and organisations in the community to ensure that young people have the maximum access to the supports, programmes and services they need. In this regard, we have identified a number of principles for collaboration as follows:

• Critical Social Education – this is the model we work from and it is important that those with whom we collaborate have an understanding and appreciation of this model.

• Aim and objectives of collaborative working – it is vital that the aims and objectives of any collaboration have been clarified and agreed between all parties involved and that any work is primarily for the benefit of the young people involved, rather than addressing agendas of other stakeholders.

• Roles and responsibilities – we require clarity on who will be involved and what their accompanying responsibilities will be.

• Trust and relationship building – we will work to develop a culture of trust which leads to the implementation of creative, innovative and sustainable responses to the needs of the young people in this community. We seek to develop collaborative relationships with other relevant services and agencies who are similarly motivated. We also recognise and appreciate the skills and qualities of our partners in collaboration.

• Communication – Methods and frequency of communication will be agreed in advance of implementing the collaboration to ensure that all stakeholders have all necessary information on an ongoing basis to facilitate effective working.

• Transparency and accountability – All decisions and actions agreed will take place in a transparent manner and we will all be held to account for our contributions to the collaborative process.

• Policies and procedures – Relevant joint policies and procedures, including codes of conduct, reporting procedures, referral protocols, confidentiality, complaints procedures etc. will be identified and agreed in advance of any collaborative working.

• Monitoring and review – mechanisms for monitoring and review of any collaborative working will be identified and agreed in advance and implemented throughout the time frame for this work. This includes measuring outcomes in relation to this work, as well as identifying and addressing any challenges which may arise.
Foreword by the Chairperson of SWAN Youth Service

It has been my honour and pleasure to sit as Chairperson of SWAN Youth Service and to witness the incredible dedication and creative work of SWAN Staff for the past number of years. Therefore, I am delighted to present the Swan Youth Service Strategic Plan 2020-2023.

I have lived in the NEIC for the past 35 years and I love living in this vibrant and dynamic community. However, we are all aware of the scars that the legacy of intergenerational inequity, inequality and poverty has left in our communities. We continue to have deficiencies in early years and childcare services, our formal educational and school services are constantly under stress, we have issues with early school leaving, poor vocational training, persistent unemployment and low paid employment. These are social determinants and contributing factors to poor health, family breakdown and risk factors that threaten the welfare, wellbeing and mental health of our children and young people. Too many of our young people are locked outside of the normal pro-social and productive pathways to social and economic success, and find themselves drifting into alternative anti-social and harmful lifestyles. However, Dublin’s North East Inner City is a community with a long history of resilience and survival. SWAN Youth Services has been at the forefront in providing strong local and visionary leadership, working to enhance young people’s social and economic opportunities. We work to empower young people to be critical thinkers and active participants in the outcomes of their own lives. In this they make meaningful choices so that they value themselves and are valued by others.

SWAN has grown over the past five years, with a larger catchment area, staff team, and number of young people involved in various projects. During this time the service has developed innovative programmes and broader collaborative initiatives including the Youth Employment Programme and the Detached Street work Programme. Our core youth work programmes funded under UBU continue to focus on the North Wall and North Strand areas and the GYDP in North Wall is now being expanded to the East Wall area. SWAN’s continued success and growth can be attributed to its ability to put the needs of young people front and centre in everything it does. SWAN YS invites young people into a non-judgemental, diverse, inclusive and nurturing safe space where they can feel connected, have fun, be happy and be part of a community.

This strategic plan builds on our previous plan maintaining our critical social education approach. We will continue to empower young people to confront inequity, inequality, prejudice and discrimination. The Strategy will focus on young people’s health and wellbeing, their
education and career pathways, reaching out to young people who are seldom heard. SWAN will provide leadership and advocate for positive policy and practice that responds better to the new and emerging needs of young people. We will continue to show leadership in cooperation and collaboration with other services in the NEIC, and cultivate new partnerships in developing integrated ways of working as a means to respond to the totality of young people’s needs. SWAN prides itself on the quality of its work and professionalism of its staff and we will continue to emphasise continuous professional development to improve the quality our youth work.

The Covid-19 Pandemic era has been a testing time for everyone and more so for front line human services of which SWAN is one. I am very proud at the way SWAN YS has maintained its service to the young people, families and the community of the NEIC during this period. They have responded in complex, creative and innovative ways of engagement with young people through maintaining safe face to face contact and through remote and on-line activities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Management, Project Leaders and Staff of SWAN for their successful delivery of the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan and wish them all the best in the delivery of our new plan. I also want to thank all the volunteers and students who have contributed to the work of SWAN.

I would like to thank all of our funders listed in this report for their ongoing support and commitment to our work and to assure you that every euro you invest in SWAN is money very well spent. Your valued support is essential to our work and we look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you during the three years of this Strategic Plan. I would also like to acknowledge and thank all of the youth and community services in the North Inner City who work in partnership with us on a daily basis and who will also be our partners in the implementation of this plan.

Finally, I want to thank my colleagues on the SWAN Board of Management and Trustees who have been fantastic in bringing their skills, knowledge and dedication to the work of the Board. They have given generously so much of their voluntary time to support the effective oversight of the Operations, Policies, Human Resources, Finances and Governance of the Company. I look forward to working with you, together with our staff, peers, colleagues, our statutory and community partners and of course the young people of the NEIC in the implementation of this Strategic Plan over the next three years.

Patrick Gates
Chairperson
The current landscape of youth work in Ireland. SWAN’s perspective

In terms of national policy and strategy, Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, the national policy framework for children and young people (2014-2020) and its successor framework will continue to inform the work of the youth work sector as well as other relevant sectors. The other related strategies including the National Youth Strategy, National Strategy on Children’s and Young People’s Participation in Decision Making, National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy and their successor strategies, inform the work of this sector moving forward. The most recent development has been the launch of UBU Your Place Your Space in 2020 under the auspices of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and administered by the ETB’s. UBU takes account of the 7 Personal and Social Outcomes; Communication Skills, Confidence and Agency, Planning and Problem Solving, Relationships, Creativity and Imagination, Resilience and Determination and Emotional Intelligence. UBU aligns with BOBF and its associated strategies; which on the balance of evidence should support the achievement of positive life outcomes for young people. The impending Youth Justice Strategy (2020 – 2026) aims to increase collaboration across all sectors of government and society in the development and delivery of opportunities for children and young people and to harness support in their families and communities in order to strengthen their capacities to live free from crime and harm. SWAN Youth Service welcomes the ongoing focus on young people who are currently experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing poor outcomes. We hold fast to the belief that young people in areas of disadvantage should not be problematised or viewed as a dysfunctional group that needs to be managed.

The developments in the North East Inner City since 2016 has led to a more unified approach in responding to the complex issues which exist in the community. The NEIC Strategic Plan for 2020- 2022 provides the local context for SWAN Youth Service. The initiative involves a co-ordinated approach to ensure developments in key areas through 6 working groups. The aim of the program is to seek long term sustainable outcomes, ensure alignment of objectives across sub-groups, enhance cross team collaboration, and ensure accountability of priority actions. SWAN Youth Service continues to contribute and engage in this process.
Covid-19: In 2020 the country was faced with a global pandemic resulting in national closure of businesses and services. The youth sector was hit in March when it was deemed a non-essential sector. SWAN YS Street Work project sought to be deemed an essential program and resumed face to face work in April while the remainder of the service continued to provide programs to its' target groups through zoom, and linking those most at risk with the SWAN YS Street Work program. Following youth agency engagement with DCDEIY, the Youth Sector Road map was developed. We can engage young people from level 1 through to level 5 and continue to be flexible and responsive to environmental and individual factors. For the duration of the strategic plan we will be working in a global pandemic, continuing program delivery with young people. SWAN’s work through the Covid-19 period has proved to build our resilience through the most challenging of situations.
The Local Community Context, Swan’s perspective

SWAN Youth Service works in the North East Inner City catchment area. Our UBU funds are applied specifically to the North Wall and North Strand/St. Agatha's areas. The Youth Justice funds are applied to SWAN GYDP in the North Wall area, and, as from 2021 the East Wall area. The Youth Employment and Career Leap Programmes (funded by ETB), and NEIC Detached Youth Work Program (funded by the NEIC initiative) has a remit for the wider North East Inner City area. The NEIC area spans from O’Connell’s St. to East Wall and East Docks (West to East), and from Dorset St to the North Docks (North to South).

Dublin’s NEIC is an area marked by prolonged disadvantage and systemic inequalities has led to an array of complex issues impacting the people living in this community. The rising presence of more prosperous residents and areas of physical redevelopment and gentrification has somewhat masked the true impact of those issues on people living in the community. Amidst this wealth, over one third of the smaller areas are defined as disadvantaged or very disadvantaged areas (Trutz Haase, 2013). In response to a gangland feud which led to the death of 15 people, the Mulvey report was commissioned by the Department of An Taoiseach in 2016.
Mulvey’s ‘Creating a Brighter Future’ (2017) outlined a 10-year vision for the area and four key areas were identified for development:

- Policing and Crime Prevention, Tackling Crime and Drugs
- Maximising Educational, Training Opportunities, Creating Employment Opportunities
- Creating an Integrated System of Social Services
- Physical Infrastructure – Refurbishment

A broad range of socio-economic issues have impacted on the lives of those living locally. Unemployment has been a key issue in the NEIC since the 1960’s when traditional trades in the area such as Dock work and manufacturing began to decline. While there have been some improvements in recent years with regard to wider unemployment figures (unemployment for Dublin stood at 12.9% in Dublin City in 2016, an improvement on the 2011 census), in more disadvantaged areas of the NEIC, unemployment rates were as high as 26.7% and 23.3% for men and women respectively.

The ability to access employment is influenced heavily by the level of educational attainment. Marked disparities exist in this regard, with up to 24% of people within some areas in the NEIC having only completed primary level education compared to 1% - 5% in more affluent areas of the country. While there has been some increase in the last census in the numbers accessing third level education from the more disadvantaged areas in the NEIC, these figures lag far behind the national figures. The statistics indicate that 56.2% of the general population have attained a third level qualification, compared with 22% in some of the smaller areas in the NEIC. (Source 2016 census figures). In addition, Swan Youth Service Street Work Pilot project highlighted the difficulties experienced by many young people with regard to education, including negative views of the formal education system and the lack of guidance counselling.

The NEIC is home to an increasingly diverse population of young people. Approximately 59 per cent of NEIC residents were born in Ireland while the total number of non-Irish born residents in the NEIC is 9076. The largest cohort of non-Irish born residents resides in the Mountjoy B division. In terms of nationality, there are 11,557 Irish and 8,556 non-Irish nationals in the NEIC (1449 respondents did not declare their nationality). Of respondents who did specify their nationality, the percentage of non-Irish nationals as a proportion of the total population in the NEIC is 39.6 per cent. The figure for Dublin City as a whole is 17.3 per cent (CSO, 2017a).
However, according to projects and services in the area, international young people are not always visible in the community and many do not engage with local services and supports. The barriers to engagement of international young people with local services and supports has been previously highlighted. LYCS produced a report in 2018, ‘Securing Roots’ Integrating Minority Ethnic People into Local Community Services in the North East Inner City which highlighted a number of barriers and challenges for ‘new communities’ and their engagement with local services, including a lack of knowledge of what is available, lack of English language supports, anxiety and fear caused by the then recent upsurge in gang-related violence and heightened police presence, and inadequate social supports such as childcare.

Considerable work has been completed in the area to identify the key issues of concern for young people. Research (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017. Building Hope for Brighter Futures. Dublin,) conducted in the area has identified concerns including drugs, local facilities and homelessness. Emergency accommodation in Dublin 1, Dublin 7 and Dublin 8 provides for 42 per cent of homeless people in the county. Dublin 1, which covers the north inner city, has the highest number of homeless beds with 1,488 people. (Source RTE News 2019)

We have taken cognisance of these concerns in our day to day work and in our strategic plan. We are also very aware that, despite all of the challenges facing these young people, there has always been, and continues to be an incredible community spirit, where people look out for each other and care for each other. The young people we work with have hopes and dreams for a brighter and better future and we have witnessed first-hand, the amazing resilience and achievements of these young people. We have been inspired by the support and encouragement given by parents, grandparents and the wider community. We have also experienced the benefits of collaborating with other services in the wider area to work towards addressing these concerns. This is a community with incredible potential and, to quote from one of the young people, ‘Hope is a tangible thing’.
Census 2016 SAPS and Deprivation Index, YPAR Reach Out Report, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pobal Deprivation</th>
<th>Number Small Areas</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Disadvantaged</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginally Below Average</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginally Above Average</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affluent</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Affluent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

Average Male Unemployment 2016

Average Female Unemployment 2016
Average percentage of Third Level Education by categories of deprivation 2006 – 2016 Reach Out, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average % 3rd Level Categories of Deprivation</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Disadvantaged</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantaged</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginally Below Average</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginally Above Average</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affluent</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Affluent</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>13</td>
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</table>
### Breakdown of NEIC initiative area by ED/Small area populations by citizens and birth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>12486</td>
<td>11557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other EU 28</td>
<td>3207</td>
<td>3366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of World</td>
<td>4396</td>
<td>4049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21562</strong></td>
<td><strong>21562</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CSO 2016 – Reach Out, 2019

### Breakdown of NEIC initiative area by ED/Small area populations by citizens and birth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electoral Area</th>
<th>Populations</th>
<th>% Irish Born</th>
<th>% Foreign Born</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballybough A</td>
<td>3,567</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Small Areas</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ballybough B</td>
<td>1,535</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Small Areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy A</td>
<td>4,723</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Small Areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy B</td>
<td>3,896</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Small Areas</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>North City</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Small Areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dock C</td>
<td>1,817</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Small Areas</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotunda A</td>
<td>2,482</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Small Areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,910</strong></td>
<td><strong>59%</strong></td>
<td><strong>41%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Breakdown of NEIC initiative area by ED/Small area populations by citizens and birth CSO 2016)
ORGANISATIONAL MAP

Staff Team

Board of Directors

CLAIREDUNNE
KENHOARE

ANNAQUIGLEY
THOMASWALSH

DECLANLYNCH
PATGATES(CHAIRPERSON)
SWAN Youth Service’s Model of Youth Work

The work of SWAN Youth Service is predominantly underpinned by the critical social education model of youth work. This model views the social issues which young people face as created by society's structures and through its institutions, e.g. education system, economics (government policies, operations of multinationals), family structure, etc. In this model, education takes a central role. In particular, the model is critical of an education system which is technical in approach as it teaches young people facts and formulas rather than educating and empowering them to think for themselves.

This approach, through a process of ‘social analysis’, educates young people in a way that is relevant to their world and enables them to understand where they stand in the world. First, the young person explores where they are at, i.e. ‘their position’, their experiences of social structures (like schools, church/religion, health), where they stand in their community (looking at power- who has it/ where does it lie) and where this fits within the wider societal context (power structures). It encourages young people to identify blocks and barriers for them, to identify ways to challenge and make changes in their community and society and ultimately in their lives. Empowerment of the person and of communities is central to this process.
SWAN Youth Service
Interagency Partnerships and Collaborations

NEIC Initiative
An Garda Siochana
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Department of Education and Skills
Department of Justice and Equality
Irish Youth Justice
City of Dublin Youth Service Board
YPAR
CYPSC
City of Dublin ETB
Tusla The Child and Family Agency
LYCS
Belvedere Youth Club
Bradog
East Wall Youth
ASP
HAY
Foroige
The Wexford Centre
The Cavan Centre
National Youth Council of Ireland
ICON
Dublin City Council
Dublin City Community Co-op
Community Action Network
YES project – CDETB
Career L.E.A.P. – Trinity College
The Business community
Foundations Project
Ana Liffey Drug Project
Focus Ireland

Ozanam House
City Connects
Crosscare
Crinan Youth Project
Crysalis
Jigsaw
Playful City
Waterways Ireland
HSE Addiction Support
Social Inclusion Hub
Streetline Residential Services
SAOL
Local Primary and Secondary Schools
Inner City Helping Homeless
Larkin Centre for the Unemployed
Lefroy House
Tabor House
Talbot Centre
Neighbourhood Youth Project 1
Neighbourhood Youth Project 2
Ballybough Youth Project
Youth Work Ireland
Local businesses
Career L.E.A.P. and Youth Employment Partnership
Trinity College
Detached Youth Work Network
HOPE
Youthreach & Community Training Centres (CTC)
Mud Island Community Garden
NCI Early Learning Initiative
Health Outcomes

We work to address health inequalities across our community and in doing so take account of the wider determinants of health.

Strategic Objectives:

We adopt a whole organisational approach to our health-related work with young people, staff and volunteers.

We work to improve health outcomes for young people in our community.

We work to support the development of young people's physical, mental, emotional and sexual health.

We work to address issues for young people in relation to substance use in the community.

We take a holistic and humanistic approach in working with young people experiencing issues re substance use.

Our health-related work is in line with existing and evolving best practice and is aligned to national policy and strategy.

Our health-related work is externally recognised in terms of the Health Quality Mark (NYCI), as a Gold Standard Health Promoting Youth Organisation.

We aim to provide a supportive environment to enable young people to make ‘the healthier choice the easier choice’.

We work with a range of agencies to meet the health-related needs of young people.

We implement a range of initiatives to respond to critical, urgent and complex situations.

We facilitate young people to engage with the arts and derive the accompanying health benefits from this engagement.

Goal 1

Actions

We identify the health-related needs of young people, staff and volunteers.

We implement a variety of responses in relation to the health needs of young people including:

• Promotion
• Awareness and education
• Intervention
• Referral

In working to create a fun environment for young people, we reflect that experience for staff in their work. This happens through direct work with young people, with co-workers, with the wider team and annual fun day for staff.

We integrate trauma informed practice and a restorative approach in our health-related work for young people, staff and volunteers.

We provide harm reduction information to young people and support them to understand the impact of their substance use.

We inform young people about appropriate services that can support them to address their dependency on substances and we support them throughout the referral process.

We continue to provide a supportive presence for young people with substance use dependency and encourage them to maintain their engagement in relevant services.

We deliver a range of health-related programmes, activities and interventions in response to the health-related needs of young people including:

• Sexual health, Consent, Healthy Relationships
• Drugs education
• Mental Health Programmes.
• Physical Health Programmes including
• Young Women in Sport Programme
Goal 1 (continued)

- Running Group
- Football and indoor sports activities.

We develop and implement a range of health-related policies including:

- Anti-Bullying
- Child Protection
- Challenging Behaviour
- Substance misuse
- Complaints Procedure for Parents and Young People.
- Grievance procedures for staff.
- Anti-Bullying and Harassment in the workplace
- One to one work
- Street Work
- Equality
- Health and Safety
- Risk Management with risk HIRACs

We continually monitor and update our health-related work in line with the criteria for the Health Quality Mark to maintain our Gold status.

We ensure that our physical, social and cultural environment takes account of the health needs of young people and supports them in making healthier choices, including providing access to healthier alternatives.

We actively seek to identify and work with agencies with a range of specialist skills who are well placed to address particular health related needs, including substance use and mental health.

We implement and update a range of referral protocols, as required, in order to support young people to access specialist help.

We implement our critical incident policy as necessary.

We participate in the Community Critical Incident Group as required.

We implement a range of suicide prevention and mental health promotion programmes and initiatives.

We implement ASIST in order to support young people and members of the community who are experiencing suicidal ideation.

We provide support and referral to specialist services for young people in the aftermath of bereavement, including bereavement through suicide.

We deliver a range of arts based programmes, including:

- SYS Studios
- What’s Your Issue?
- Reckless Arts
- Dance Programmes
- STEAM Programmes.

These enable young people in SWAN Youth Service to develop their skills in specific arts practices, explore issues impacting them and their community and use arts practices to express their ideas and opinions.
Education and Employment

We work through a critical social education model to enable young people to achieve their full potential in formal and non-formal learning and education and to access meaningful employment opportunities.

Strategic Objectives:

We work in partnership with schools and other relevant professionals to identify and support young people at risk of early school leaving.

We advocate with and on behalf of young people who have been excluded from school or who have been placed on reduced timetables in order to ensure their right to education is upheld.

We work in partnership with key stakeholders on a range of interagency initiatives designed to enable young people to access training and further education opportunities.

We work in partnership with third level institutions to enhance the professional development and training of youth workers.

We work in partnership with East Wall Youth, Trinity College and businesses to implement the Career L.E.A.P. and Youth Employment Program for the North East Inner city.

We develop our business engagement, building links with potential employers to support our work and enhance training and employment opportunities for the young people we work with.

We advocate with employers to support the sustainability of meaningful employment.

We advocate with and on behalf of young people with disabilities and young mothers to access training opportunities and meaningful employment.

Actions

We identify the health-related needs of young people.

We continue to implement our education strategy.

We deliver a range of employment and education related programmes, activities and interventions in response to the needs of young people and young adults such as:

- Providing a space for young people to explore their educational and training options
- GYDP Individual Supports in School (taking place outside of school during Covid-19)
- Career L.E.A.P. Programme (& Covid-19 version)
- Employability Initiative which includes training on Safe Pass, Manual Handling, Barista
- Provision of grinds and one to one support for identified young people in collaboration with Business Partners
- Education Live nights
- Job application support and interview preparation
- Provide ongoing support to young people who are experiencing anxiety in this regard.
- Information on educational grants/bursaries
- Creating networks with access programmes
- College application and funding application support
- Continued support to young people in college to sustain their educational journey.

We continue to use the Check and Connect Programme to ensure that young people are supported to transition through secondary school successfully with the collaborative support of youth workers, teachers and their family.
We provide work experience to transition year students in the area.

We continue to provide placement opportunities for youth work students from third level institutions including MU, TUD, TCD, IT Carlow and the Liberties College, which enhances the learning environment within the service.

We adapt all of our education and employment supports in line with national guidance on Covid-19 and provide Covid-19 specific work place training.

We implement business engagement actions as follows:

We work in collaboration with business partners in the implementation of the Career L.E.A.P. programme.

We provide work placement opportunities.

We reach out to local community and youth groups which in turn link in their participants who would benefit from the Youth Employment Program.

We connect with businesses to create Employment access routes.

We refer young people to the ‘Bridging the Gap’ scholarship program with Central Bank.

We continue to build networks and access Internship opportunities for graduates.

We access sponsorship from the business community for training programmes and access to venues to meet the emerging needs of young people looking to access employment.
Disenfranchised young people

We engage disenfranchised young people who are seldom heard in a process to counteract and address structural inequalities.

Strategic Objectives:

We identify and build relationships with disenfranchised young people in the area.
We continue to provide a street work service and seek to attain the mainstreaming of this service.
We deliver the street work service in partnership with ASP, Ana Liffey DRI, Crinan Youth Project, Ballybough Youth Project, Belvedere Youth Club, Bradog, East Wall Youth, LYCS, the MOST the YES Project, as well as others who choose to engage.
We work to maintain a visible and consistent presence in the community
We continue to provide a range of programmes and initiatives for young people from the area in our centre-based work.
We seek to affect change in structures and policies which result in inequalities among young people, and in particular young women.
We advocate for increased investment directed toward young people who are socio-economically disadvantaged.
We continue to work in partnership with specialist services such as addiction, homelessness and mental health in order to ensure young people can access the relevant support.
We deliver our services in the context of stark disadvantage, including poor educational attainment and intergenerational unemployment in smaller areas, and a backdrop of gangland feuding and crime. We are aware of the impact of this on young people, staff and the community in terms of their well-being and safety.

Actions

We harness local knowledge in order to identify young people in need of support.
We deliver a range of programmes and interventions in response to the needs of vulnerable young people through our:
- Street Work Programme
- GYDP Youth Justice Project
- International Youth Group
- LGBTI+ young people
- Young people experiencing homelessness
- Substance misuse awareness and addiction support
- Mental health support
- All programs addressing social engagement needs.

We engage in local networks and community-based responses to address these complex needs e.g. YPAR, Meitheal, City Connects, etc.

We co-ordinate the NEIC Detached Youth Work Network to form an area-based approach in detached youth work.

We seek increased funding to engage young people targeted by SWAN Youth Service for both core work and additional projects, targeting disenfranchised groups.
Goal 4

Leadership, Policy and Research

We work to provide leadership and advocate for positive change in local process and national policy to achieve a more just situation for the young people and local community.

Strategic Objectives:

We work to enhance Swan Youth Service’s leadership capacity and innovative role in developing creative ways of engagement and community development.

We develop the leadership capacity of young people in our community and in our service using creative and meaningful approaches relevant to young people’s experiences.

We work to ensure that the needs and experiences of young people in our community are captured in research and reflected in policy development.

We work to generate positive perspectives of young people’s capacity and leadership through promoting their agency in the community.

We contribute to evolving good practice in youth work.

Actions

We provide youth leadership opportunities, for young people through:

• Youth committees
• Peer Youth Mentorship roles
• Youth Leadership Training
• Mentorship Support (in conjunction with the NEIC Advanced Leadership Training Programme

We participate on the NEIC Leadership working group.

We draw on our practice wisdom and actively seek opportunities to influence local and national policy.

We work with local and national networks to raise issues, highlight areas of development and collaborate for positive outcomes for young people.

We share good practice and learning with the sector and conduct research relevant to the needs of our young people.

We contribute to research projects conducted at both a local and national level.
Goal 5

Social and Political Activism
We work to challenge the inequities and inequalities impacting young people in the community using a Critical Social Education approach.

Strategic Objectives:
We work to develop young people’s capacity for social analysis through consciousness raising.

We support, facilitate and encourage young people to become socially and politically active to bring about social change.

We advocate with and on behalf of young people on a range of issues that impact their wellbeing.

We embed the principle of youth participation throughout all of our work.

We raise the awareness of young people on the issue of climate justice and ensure the inclusion of their voices in conversations and actions to address climate justice.

Actions
We support young people to identify key issues which they recognise as impacting them.

We support young people to develop effective responses to these issues.

We support young people to take action on issues impacting them and others.

We work with young people to develop empathy with others and show solidarity.

We support and facilitate the engagement of young people in programmes and workshops to develop their analysis of climate justice and involvement in forums and events to advocate for change such as the NYCI Climate Justice ‘Future Generations’ Programme.
Interagency Collaboration

We work with local services and agencies to ensure a coordinated approach which maximises our combined resources leading to better outcomes for young people in this community.

Strategic Objectives:

Through our interagency work we seek to impact on broader policy and structures to attain fairer communities with a great degree of equality.

We actively seek to build relationships with relevant services and agencies.

We work in a collaborative way to address the needs of young people in our community.

We operate from our core values and principles in relation to our interagency work (see principles of collaboration above).

Our interagency work is underpinned by a Critical Social Education model.

Actions

We work with the NEIC initiative and relevant sub-groups

We participate in local, regional and national networks and initiatives including:

- YPAR
- Meitheal
- CDETB Youth Service Network
- CYPSC
- Collaborative arts networks
- Equality & Inclusion Support Network
- Halloween Steering Committee
- NYCI Working Groups
- Independent GYDP Network
- IJJS Networks
- NEIC Detached Youth Work Network

We work in partnership with An Garda Síochána through the delivery of community induction programmes for new Gardai coming into the area.

We engage with the Juvenile Liaison structures and local Community Gardaí.

We participate on NEIC sub group 1 ‘Enhancing policing’ to develop new ways of working together in the area.

We participate in NEIC sub group 6 ‘Alignment and Integration of Social Services’

We work with local youth services and projects in the CDETB Network to work towards improving integrated working.

We continue to collaborate with our partners in the delivery of the Career L.E.A.P. Initiative, i.e. Trinity College Dublin, East Wall Youth and local businesses.

We work with the business community to access training, venues, technical support, internships and employment.

We identify opportunities for collaborative working on an ongoing basis.
Goal 7

Staff, Board and Infrastructure
We work to ensure the wellbeing of our staff, volunteers and board members and seek to build their capacity on an ongoing basis.

Strategic Objectives:
We ensure that staff and volunteers are supported and their well-being and safety is a key consideration.

We continue to seek funding to resource appropriate staffing levels.

We work to build the capacity of the board on an ongoing basis and ensure that the organisation complies with good governance and adheres to quality standards.

We work to ensure organisational policies are needs-led and in line with national guidance and best practice.

The Board/Management ensure a strategic approach to funding and ensure income diversification and the financial sustainability of the service.

We work to ensure that the physical spaces/buildings used by Swan are appropriate.

Actions
We invest in staff and volunteer wellbeing and safety and promote a healthy working environment.

We work to support self-care for our staff and volunteers taking account of particular issues such as secondary trauma.

We work to build the capacity of our youth work/frontline/support staff and ensure that they access all necessary training and supports.

We work to build the capacity of our volunteers and ensure that they access all necessary training and supports so that they benefit from their work with us.

We will grow our youth work/frontline/support staff in line with the growth of the service.

We ensure that the organisation is compliant with all relevant legislation and corporate good practice and adhere to quality standards in relevant areas, including NQSF and HQM.

The Board ensures it is responsive and effective in its role (and undergoes induction and development opportunities).

We work to ensure that young people are represented at Board level and ensure that we build their capacity to fulfil their responsibilities in this regard.

We ensure that all organisational policies continue to be reviewed and updated and new policies are developed as required.

We continue to build relationships with funders and potential funders in order to advocate for a more sustainable funding model.

We strive to access appropriate and suitable facilities.
Goal 8

Response to Covid-19
We work to ensure ongoing delivery of our service in the midst of this pandemic ensuring that our responses are in line with national guidance and local circumstances.

Strategic Objectives:
We ensure young people are safe and protected in all of their engagements with Swan YS.
We work to ensure the safety and well-being of our staff in relation to Covid-19.
We work to ensure we are responsive in meeting the needs of young people in relation to Covid-19.

Actions
We ensure young people and staff adhere to all safety measures in relation to Covid-19 and provide any necessary PPE.
We develop appropriate and innovative youth work programmes (both on and off-line) to continue to engage with young people while any restrictions are in place.
We monitor the effectiveness of these programmes and responses and continually adapt and change accordingly.
We continually engage with disenfranchised and vulnerable young people in line with government guidance.
The health and safety committee continue to play a pivotal role in overseeing this work.
We consider and capture information on the mental health effects on young people throughout Covid-19.
We work with specialist services e.g. mental health and addiction services to respond to emerging issues, such as bereavement, suicide, relapse etc. through any future restrictions.
We work to ensure our policies are updated in line with national guidance and that our staff are trained in infection control and managing risk in this regard.
We provide staff with specific support and supervision in relation to issues arising out of Covid-19.
We take cognisance of, and adapt according, to the increased demands and complexity of issues facing staff during Covid-19.
Implementation and Oversight of this Strategic Plan

This plan is a living document which will guide our work for the next 3 years. It will form the basis of our annual work plans. We will monitor the implementation of the plan through our team meetings, planning sessions and supervision sessions as appropriate. We will measure our progress in relation to the goals, strategic objectives and actions in the quarterly and annual evaluations of our work. We will collate this progress in the relevant reports we submit to funders and other relevant stakeholders. Oversight of this plan rests with the Board of Management and this will be an agenda item for Board meetings at regular intervals, where the implementation of the plan will be monitored and supported.
Strategic Plan 2021-2023

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