



An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh  
The Probation Service

YOUNG PERSONS PROBATION

# The Families Behind the Children: Beyond Criminal Justice, October 2012

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# Objectives:

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- ❑ Who we are & What we do
- ❑ Development of Strengthening Families Programme in Ireland – A multi-agency response to reducing risk including offending behaviour
- ❑ Value of an evidentially researched programme based on a strengths theoretical model
- ❑ Demonstrate a practical application of Strengthening Families Programme
- ❑ The dream and goals for the development of the programme in Ireland

# The Probation Service: An Overview

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## □ Who:

- Agency of the Department of Justice & Equality

## □ What:

- The management of community sanctions and measures
- The effective assessment and management of offenders
- Facilitating the integration of ex offenders

## □ Why:

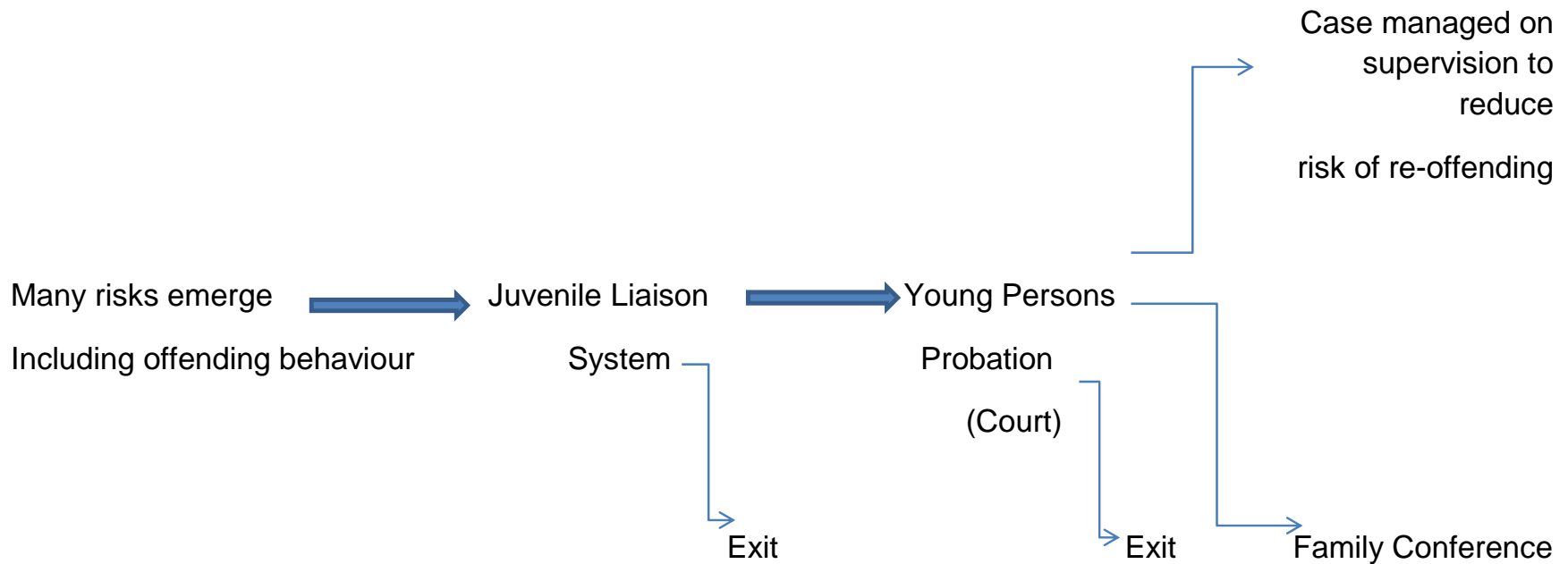
- To reduce re-offending and contribute to a safer Ireland through the supervision and reintegration of offenders
- Create better lives for children

# Young Persons' Probation (YPP)

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- ❑ Division of the Probation Service
- ❑ Established in 2004 (expanded 2007) - Children Act 2001
- ❑ Work specifically with young persons aged 12-18 years
- ❑ Before the courts, in the Children Detention Schools or St Patrick's Institution
- ❑ Dedicated teams in Dublin, Cork & Limerick
- ❑ Dedicated YPP posts on Probation Service teams nationwide

# How Young People Are Referred Into Young Persons Probation



# Challenges & Opportunities: A Balancing Act

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Diversion

Need

Support

Rights

Young Person



Intervention

Risk

Monitoring

Responsibility

Community

# Principles & Approach (1)

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- Prevention → Diversion → Intervention
- Level of intervention = Level of Risk of re-offending
- Educational ethos
- Rights of Children
- Role and Responsibilities of Parents
- Rights and Interests of Victims

**Detention = Last Resort**

## Principles & Approach (2)

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- Creative
- Flexible
- Child Centred
- Outreach
- 'Stick-ability'
- Inclusivity
- Assessment (continuous)
- Case Management
- Partnerships:
  - ✓ Funded Projects
  - ✓ Mentoring
  - ✓ Strengthening Families
  - ✓ Community Supports



# Arrival of Strengthening Families Programme

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- ❑ 2005 – Dr Karol Kumpfer Presentation Trinity College
- ❑ 2007 - Pilot Strengthening Families Programme in Cork, led and funded by HSE Drug & Alcohol Services, Local Drugs Task Force and Regional Drugs Task Force
- ❑ 2008 – Le Chéile as a funded project of Irish Youth Justice Service/ Probation Service became involved in coordinating the programme nationally on behalf of Young Persons Probation.

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- ❑ Nationwide inter-agency development involving Young Persons Probation and Le Chéile took place.
  - ❑ A strategic development to meet the needs of families presenting with parenting risks linked to Young Persons Probation.
  - ❑ 2008- 2012 Inter-agency developments where many other agencies took the lead e.g. Ballymun Network, HSE, Regional and Local Drugs Task Forces, North West Alcohol Forum and Derry Healthy Cities

# Risks That Present In Families Referred To Young Persons Probation/ Other Agencies



# Why Involve A Family in Strengthening Families Programme?

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- Focus on clients strengths, abilities, resources and accomplishments not on their problems, deficits and labels. It is

*“ A way of viewing the positive behaviours of all clients by helping them see that problems areas are secondary to areas of strengths and that out of what they can do well can come helping solutions based upon the successful strategies they use daily in their lives to cope with a variety of important life issues, problems and concerns.”*

(Glicken, 2004: 03)

# Values Underpinning a Strengths Perspective

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- ❑ Respecting the dignity and worth of every individual regardless of their circumstances or presenting situation.
- ❑ Positioning the client not the worker centrally within this perspective.
- ❑ Valuing and collaborating with the client is key.

# Risks Presenting from a Strengthening Families Programme Perspective for Young People in Young Person's Probation/ Other Agencies



# Case Study: 17 Year Old Male, High Risk/ Need

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- ❑ Risk Factors: Pro criminal associates including family members, ***Substance Misuse/ behavioural***, Issues with authority, Limited parental support , Lack of constructive activity, poor response to previous supervision
  
- ❑ Protective Factors (Limited): Interest in learning, number of community based services committed to the family
  
- ❑ Key Interventions:
  - Support/ Encourage interest in learning
  - Strengthening Families Programme
  - Mentors assigned, including a parent mentor
  - Gardai & HSE involved in developing & support the plan
  - Daily contact with the services ( at the stage the plan coming together)



# Practical Demonstration of Strengthening Families Programme

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- ▣ Some Fun!





# Strengthening Families Programme to Empower

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- ❑ Strengths based skills for teenagers and significant adults
- ❑ Effective group work as an intervention
- ❑ Embracing the multi-agency ethos effectively
- ❑ A personal journey for all families and multi-agencies involved
- ❑ Move away from the risks and concentrating on the strengths of making family bonds
- ❑ Building a cohesive inter-agency intervention/ style of work where all agencies are on the same journey.
- ❑ As an inter-agency effort we must move away from scratching the surface based on a particular risk that presents towards a targeted focus.

# The Dream

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- For at risk families that present in all our agencies.....



# The Dream

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- ❑ Further develop Strengthening Families Programme on an inter-agency basis nationally.
- ❑ To ensure best practice across programmes nationally.
- ❑ Funding to ensure that families continue to benefit from the programme.
- ❑ Inter-agency training to ensure that Strengthening Families Programmes are strategically planned and implemented nationwide.
- ❑ Develop a national inter-agency panel which would guide and mentor the development of the programme.

# Contact Details & Website Details

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