

# Blooming Minds Club

2023-2025  
Evaluation Report



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# Executive Summary

The Blooming Minds Club is a testimony to youth making their mark in society and giving voice to their aspirations. It is a club filled with young artists and their adult mentors who together created a world of artistry—combining stories waiting to be heard with visual art making that made an impression. Art out loud, art in full colour and art out of bounds—these were the anthems of young people who became activists in their own lives and out there in terms of youth rights. The significance of the programme was everywhere to be seen. Designed by young people, supported by CAMHS mental health professionals, endorsed by family members, and co-produced with artists, designers and creatives, this was a project that composed a studio of life.

The project was a collective enterprise which brought art therapy and CAMHS mental health professionals into a partnership with creative industries artists and designers. The project's home at Creative Spark encouraged young people to take a chance, to be part of something that took them to new places within themselves and the world around them. Blooming Minds participants were there for each other and represented the dreams of a generation in blossom, eager to influence and to be the content creators for a future in becoming.

## Dr. Pamela Whitaker

Project Evaluator  
Belfast School of Art, Ulster University

# Introduction

On behalf of the entire team at Creative Spark, it is my pleasure to introduce the evaluation report for the Blooming Minds Club.

This pilot project was inspired by a powerful and necessary collaboration between the arts and clinical mental health services, led by Artist and Art Therapist, Jenny Slater and Edel Gavin, Assistant Director of Nursing Louth Meath CAMHS. Our partnership with Louth Meath CAMHS was founded on a shared belief in the transformative power of creativity to support the well-being of young people.

This report is a testament to that belief. It outlines the project's methodology, its outcomes, and, most importantly, the profound impact it has had on the lives of its participants. The findings confirm that our co-produced model, which positions young people as experts in their own experience, is not just innovative but also effective. The report's insights are invaluable and will serve as the foundation for our future plans to expand and scale this vital initiative. We are immensely proud of what our team and our incredible participants have accomplished together.

I would like to express our sincere gratitude to Creative Ireland for their support through the Creative Youth Nurture Fund, which made this pilot project possible.

## Sarah Daly

Executive Director  
Creative Spark



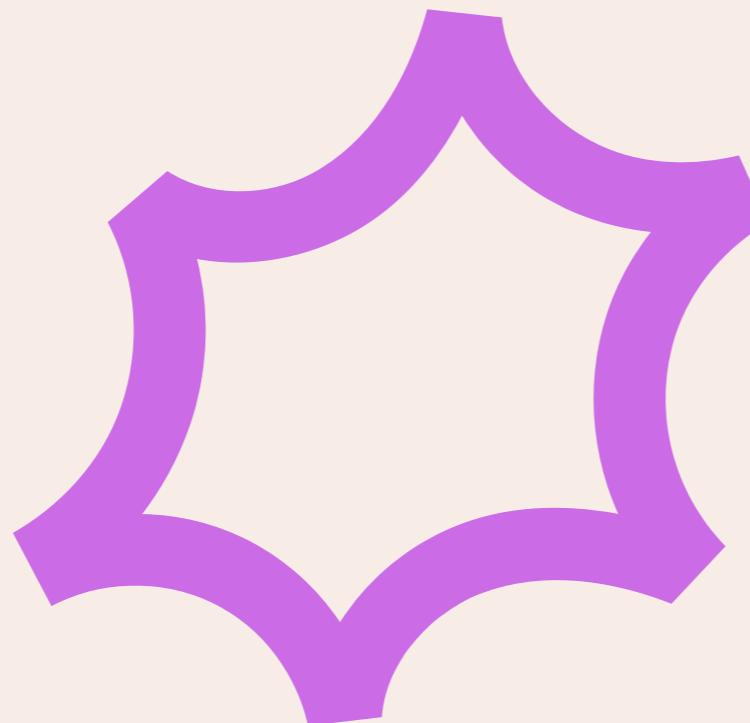
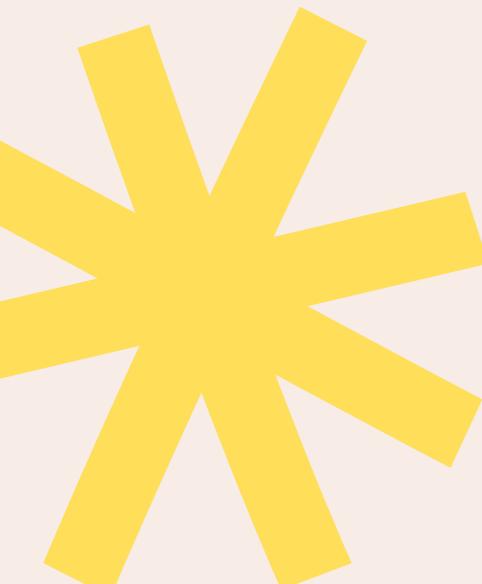
# Preface

The Blooming Minds Club is an innovative project where mental health services and the arts community have come together to provide a creative space for young people attending CAMHS. Mental health difficulties can negatively impact many aspects of a young person's life including reduced quality of life, isolation and struggles to engage with everyday activities such as school. The Blooming Minds Club provides a space for young people that supports their recovery journey. Within this nurturing space young people meet others with shared experiences, they begin to make new connections and find a sense of belonging. Through the creative process they can start to take risks, try new things and find a sense of enjoyment in art making. Throughout this evaluation report you will hear testimonials from young people of the many ways that the Blooming Minds Club has positively impacted their mental health. They describe increased confidence, improved self-esteem, reduced stress and fun experiences with their peers. CAMHS clinicians view the Blooming Minds Club as a valuable resource that enhances their work with young people, supporting positive mental health outcomes.

The CAMHS service are very grateful to all at Creative Spark, the art therapist and community artists who have generously shared their talents, skills and experience with the young people in the Blooming Minds Club. We also wish to express our gratitude to Creative Ireland and the Creative Youth Nurture Fund, which has made this project possible.

## Edel Gavin

Assistant Director of Nursing  
Louth Meath CAMHS



# Acknowledgements

The vision of the Blooming Minds Club was an initiative designed by Artist and Art Therapist Jenny Slater in collaboration with Sarah Daly, Executive Director of Creative Spark, Edel Gavin, Assistant Director of Nursing, Louth Meath CAMHS and Gráinne Murphy, Print Studio Coordinator and Technician at Creative Spark.

Artists affiliated with Creative Spark through their studio practices, artist portfolios, artist residencies or arts and health experience delivered a series of art courses to young people attending the club. The following is a list of the course facilitators for the Blooming Minds Club.

- Adrian + Shane, Print and Collage
- Julie Corcoran, Photography
- Anthony Corrigan, Animation
- Paddy Critchley, Painter
- Oscar Diaz, Digital Fabrication
- Siobhán Donlon, Special Effects Makeup
- Susan Farrelly, Painter & Artist in Residence CAMHS
- Cathy Fitzmaurice, Multimedia
- Stephen Hurley, Graphic Design
- Karen Lavelle, Candlemaking
- Claire McAteer, Textile Artist
- Rebecca McDermott, Silversmithing
- Megan McGuigan, Fashion
- Ian Moore, Stop Motion Animation
- Colleen Eilís Murphy, Print and Paint
- Gráinne Murphy, Printmaker
- Caoimhe O'Dwyer, Artist in Residence CAMHS
- Omin, Graffiti Artist and Muralist
- Artur Labuz, Signwriter
- Etaoin O'Reilly, Ceramics
- Violet Shirran, Textiles
- Helena Tréglová, Digital Storytelling

The following CAMHS mental health professionals offered informative and detailed feedback about the Blooming Minds Club, which both acknowledged the effectiveness of the programme for young people and recommendations for the future:

- Edel Gavin, Assistant Director of Nursing (Louth Meath CAMHS)
- Melissa Casey, Clinical Nurse Specialist (South Louth CAMHS, Child and Family Centre, Drogheda)
- Caitlin McKinley, Senior Social Worker (North Louth CAMHS, Dundalk)
- Shona Keating, Social Care Leader (South Louth/East Meath CAMHS, Drogheda)
- Deborah James, Psychotherapist (South Louth CAMHS, Child and Family Centre, Drogheda)

Helena Tréglová designed the evaluation report and produced the documentation video, showcasing her skills in graphic design and creative media production.

The evaluation report was written by Dr. Pamela Whitaker, Lecturer in Art Psychotherapy at the Belfast School of Art, Ulster University in partnership with Blooming Minds Club participants who occupied the role of artist researchers. Gratitude is extended to Jenny Slater, Gráinne Murphy, Sarah Daly and Edel Gavin for their detailed reflections and contributions to this evaluation.

The Blooming Minds Club would not have been possible without the support of Creative Ireland's Youth Nurture Fund and its vision to offer opportunities for seldom heard young people to make art out loud. This investment in youth creativity is transformative for Irish society, as it honours young people who strive to make their mark and embrace the art of living as a generational influence.

# The Blooming Minds Club

**"Blooming Minds works because it is designed by young people. It is activity focused with courses and field trips which helps me to get out more and to have a community of people who are kind to me in my life."**

*(Blooming Minds Club participant)*

The Blooming Minds Club is an opportunity for young people with moderate to severe mental health difficulties to develop agency in both art and life. Its ambition was the implementation of an arts and health programme situated at Creative Spark Dundalk in partnership with CAMHS mental health professionals.

The Blooming Minds Club is a service to support partnership working and cross-sectoral cooperation (Healthy Ireland, 2023). In addition to clinical care situated at CAMHS, community mental health assets address the wider determinants of wellness, particularly in relation to lifestyle choices and healthy behaviours (Healthy Ireland, 2023).

The club is co-produced by Creative Spark, a centre for innovation located in Dundalk, County Louth and CAMHS services in Louth and Meath for the purpose of offering art studio experiences for young people with lived experiences of mental health challenges. As creatives these young people have developed a portfolio of artistic skills through a series of art courses facilitated by local artists.

The Blooming Minds Club is voluntarily attended by young people who are self-referred in liaison with mental health professionals from CAMHS services. Participants become part of Creative Spark's community of artists, designers and makers and thrive on the ethos of Creative Spark to activate potential and to help people to realise their ideas and ambitions.

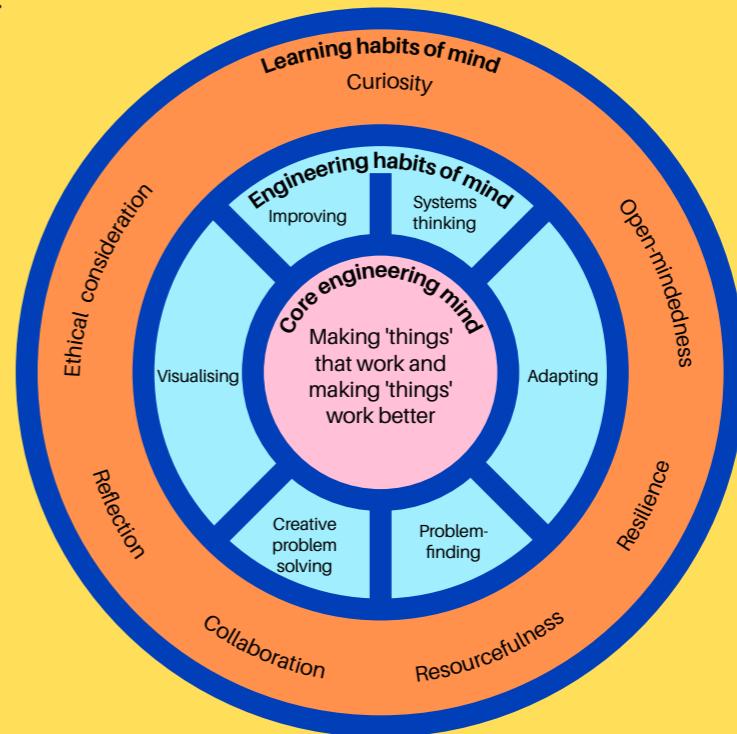
Young people co-design their art experiences in partnership with an art therapist, project manager and artists who are course facilitators. The art therapist also supports young people to develop confidence, self-efficacy and the determination to become artists in their own right. "Research suggests that building a good foundation for self-esteem is key to supporting adolescence, an important life stage during which self-esteem can easily decline due to peer pressure and social comparisons" (Smyth, 2020). The art therapist is a mental health professional registered with the Irish Association of Creative Arts Therapists and the Health and Care Professions Council (UK). The role of the art therapist ensures an overall duty of care to young people participating in the Blooming Minds Club, including psychological safety, risk aversion, and participation.

The Blooming Minds Club aligns with Winchester University's Centre for Real World Learning, which identifies curiosity, investigation, reflection, open-mindedness, critical thinking and co-operation as habits of knowledge making (Creative Ireland, 2023). The Creative Youth Plan of Ireland adds to this list the significance of resilience and imagination (Creative Ireland, 2023). The real-world learning in this context has a connection to higher education, enterprise and employability. The Blooming Minds Club is cultivating learning resources which promote inquiring habits of mind and the ability to embark on creative problem solving, which is also part of design thinking's stages of ideation, testing and prototyping.

Healthy Ireland's Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 identifies the significance of a cross-society approach to wellness, which situates cultural and creative groups as contributors to positive mental health outcomes (Healthy Ireland, 2021). Designing their own life maps, whereby a young person explores new places, people and activities in their locality, is a mental health asset focused on their ability to make life-enhancing decisions along new routes of travel (Healthy Ireland, 2021).

Young Ireland's policy framework recognises young people as active citizens participating in civic life. Young Ireland spotlights youth mental health as an urgent topic to "deepen and enhance cross-government responses to key areas of challenge in order to enhance the state's responsiveness to children's lives" (Department of Children, Disability and Equality, 2025). Opportunities for influence and collective decision making within the Blooming Minds Club, partners with the aspirations of Young Ireland by prioritising the consultation of young people in its design of courses and creative activities.

The Blooming Minds Club offered an alternative experience for young people who do not participate in arts and creative activities due to embarrassment, peer pressure and bullying, the number one reasons for non-attendance listed in the Arts Council's report on Children, Young People and the Arts (2022). In contrast The Blooming Minds Club made young people feel happy, relaxed and amazing, the top three positive feelings associated with participation in the arts (Arts Council, 2022).



Lucas, B. (2025). Centre for Real World Learning, Learning Habits of Mind, University of Winchester.

# The Blooming Minds Club Timeline

## 2023

### June

- Application to Creative Ireland Nurture Fund submitted by Sarah Daly (Creative Spark, CAMHS and Jenny Slater)

### August

- Approval Awarded

### Sep/October

- Ambassadors Group (Terms of Reference, Project Planning, Core Meetings)

### October - November

- Lasercut and Acrylic Jewellery Making with Oscar at the Creative Spark Enterprise FabLab

### October 28th

- Halloween Horror Make-Up and Special Effects Workshop

### September - October

- Graffiti Walk Dundalk Tour with Smeer Ahmit & Muralist Omin
- Mural with Omin for Drogheda CAMHS Waiting Room

### November

- Identity/brand and logo design for the Blooming Minds Club with graphic designer Stephen Hurley

### December 3rd

- Youth-led and managed Christmas stall at Creative Spark Downtown Christmas Market

### December 13th

- Christmas Party and Craft Night in the FabLab

## 2024

### January 10th - February 7th

- Introduction to Sign Writing led by sign writer and muralist Artur Labuz from Signs by Oner

### February - March

- Ceramics with Etaoin O'Reilly

### March 27th - May (8 weeks)

- Textiles with Violet Shirran and Gráinne Murphy

### Easter break

- Gallery trip to Dublin (National Gallery of Ireland and National Museum of Ireland)

### March

- Artist in Residence with Caoimhe O'Dwyer in Dundalk CAMHS

### April

- Artist in Residence with Susan Farrelly in CAMHS Drogheda

### May 28th

- Working with Young People Experiencing Mental Health Difficulties - An Art Therapist's Perspective (Talk and Experiential Workshop)

### July 8th - 12th

- Summer Camp with:  
Megan McGuigan of Seeking Judy (Textiles)  
Adrian + Shane (Print and Collage)  
Oscar Diaz (Scratch, Digital Embroidery and Laser Cutting)  
Paddy Critchley (Painting)

### September 4th (8 weeks)

- Introduction to Animation with Anthony Corrigan

### September 19th

- Exhibition Showcase at Creative Spark Downtown

### November 6th (6 weeks)

- Painting with Susan Farrelly (Course at Drogheda Library)

### December 10th

- Artist in Residence, Christmas Cardmaking Workshop with Jenny Slater at CAMHS Drogheda

## 2025

### Jan 15th - March 5th (8 weeks)

- Photography Course with Julie Corcoran

### March 20th

- Belfast Day Trip and Photo Walk followed by Gallery visits to The MAC and Belfast Exposed
- Tour of Ulster University Belfast School of Art with Pamela Whitaker to the Print and Photography Departments with talks by university lecturers

### March 19th - May 7th

- Feltmaking with Claire McAteer

### March 29th and April 5th

- Digital Storytelling Workshop with Helena Tréglová

### May 17th - June 4th

- Stop Motion Animation with Ian Moore

### June 23rd - 27th

- Graffiti Camp with Muralist Omin

### July 7th - 11th

- Summer Camp with:  
Etaoin O'Reilly (Ceramics)  
Karen Lavelle (Solaise Candles)  
Rebecca McDermott (Silversmithing)  
Julie Corcoran (Photography)

### September 15th

- Exhibition Showcase at Creative Spark Downtown Hub
- Blooming Minds Club Celebration and Evaluation Launch at Creative Spark Downtown Hub

# Participation Profile

The Blooming Minds Club at Creative Spark was attended by 34 young people. In addition, 32 young people participated in artist residencies funded by CAMHS, bringing the total to 64 participants for Blooming Minds Club courses, field trips, exhibitions and CAMHS artist residencies.

In addition, 13 parents attended the artist residencies at CAMHS accompanying their young people in groups which taught skills in emotional regulation, mindfulness and communication. Parents also attended a therapy group featuring skills to enhance quality of life, coping and the creation of a life worth living.

Blooming Minds Club participants decided to limit course attendees to 8 participants to ensure accessibility supports and opportunities for shared communication and peer learning. It also facilitated more personalised interactions with art course facilitators.

Blooming Minds Club Profile of Participation in Art Courses at Creative Spark		
Animation	Days: 8	Contact Hours: 16
Ceramics	Days: 5	Contact Hours: 10
Upcycling Textiles	Days: 8	Contact Hours: 16
SFX Makeup	Days: 1	Contact Hours: 4
Laser Jewellery	Days: 4	Contact Hours: 8
Signwriting	Days: 4	Contact Hours: 8
Claymotion	Days: 4	Contact Hours: 8
Textiles	Days: 8	Contact Hours: 16
Photography	Days: 8	Contact Hours: 16
Graffiti Camp	Days: 5	Contact Hours: 25
Painting	Days: 6	Contact Hours: 12
Digital Storytelling	Days: 2	Contact Hours: 8
Graphic Design	Days: 2	Contact Hours: 4
Drogheda Mural	Days: 3	Contact Hours: 12
Summer Camp 2024	Days: 5	Contact Hours: 25
Summer Camp 2025	Days: 5	Contact Hours: 25
Christmas Studio 2024	Days: 1	Contact Hours: 3
Christmas Studio 2025	Days: 1	Contact Hours: 3
Total Course Days: 80		Total Contact Hours: 219

Blooming Minds Club Profile of Participation in Field Trips		
Field Trip to Dublin	Day: 1	Contact Hours: 7
Field Trip to Belfast	Day: 1	Contact Hours: 7
Total Field Trip Days: 2		Total Contact Hours: 14

Blooming Minds Exhibition Showcases		
September Exhibition Showcase 2024	Day: 1	Contact Hours: 7
September Exhibition and Evaluation Showcase 2025	Days: 3	Contact Hours: 21
Total Exhibition Days: 4		Total Contact Hours: 28



# Participation Profile

## CAMHS Supported Artist Residencies

### March 2024 Skills Development Group Dundalk, North Louth CAMHS

Group Goal: Helping young people identify difficult emotions and challenges that they may experience in day-to-day life.

Group Aims:

- To support young people who are experiencing emotional challenges.
- To create an increase in awareness and language for different emotional states.
- To help identify possible triggers for more difficult emotions and how to support and use skills to manage these challenging emotional states.

Participants: 6 adolescents

Artist in Residence: Caoimhe O'Dwyer

### April 2024 Decider Skills Group Drogheda (South Louth East Meath CAMHS)

Group Goal: Resources for living and building positive experiences

Group Aims:

- To teach life skills in a fun, creative and interactive style using music and visuals to aid learning.
- To identify core skill sets for coping and flourishing: distress tolerance, mindfulness, emotional regulation and interpersonal effectiveness.

Participants: 6 adolescents and 6 parents (12 total)

Artist in Residence: Susan Farrelly

### May 2024 Decider Skills Group Drogheda (South Louth East Meath CAMHS)

Group Goal: Resources for living and building positive experiences

Group Aims:

- To teach life skills in a fun, creative and interactive style using music and visuals to aid learning.
- To identify core skill sets for life satisfaction: distress tolerance, mindfulness, emotional regulation and interpersonal effectiveness.

Participants: 5 adolescents and 5 parents (12 total)

Artist in Residence: Caoimhe O'Dwyer

### July 2024 Dialectical Behaviour Therapy for Adolescents and Multi-Family Skills Group Drogheda (Louth DBT team)

Group Goal: Evidence based interventions focused on teaching skills to manage intense emotions, reduce risky behaviours and improve relationships.

Group Aims:

- To reduce and eventually stop impulsive and unhealthy behaviours.
- To help young people manage difficult emotions and improve relationships.
- To assist young people gain a sense of control in their lives and create a life worth living.
- To learn and practice mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotional regulation and finding balanced thinking.

Participants: 2 adolescents and 2 parents (4 total)

Artist in Residence: Caoimhe O'Dwyer

### December 2024 - Skills Development Group Dundalk (North Louth CAMHS)

Group Goal: Skills development helping young people identify difficult emotions and challenges that they may experience in daily life.

Group Aims:

- To support young people who are experiencing emotional challenges.
- Creating an increase in awareness and language for different emotional states.
- Identifying possible triggers for more difficult emotions and how to support and use skills to manage these challenging emotional states.

Participants: 6 adolescents

Artist in Residence: Jenny Slater

### May 2025 Compassion Focused Therapy Group Drogheda (South Louth East Meath CAMHS)

Group Goal: Developing compassion to reduce psychological distress.

Group Aims:

- To activate the soothing system
- To reduce shame and self-criticism
- To develop self-care attributes
- To enhance emotional resilience
- To empower self-compassion

Participants: 7 adolescents

Artist in Residence: Caoimhe O'Dwyer

Artist in Residency Total Contact	
Days: 6	Total Contact Hours: 6

# Participation Profile

## Training Seminars Delivered, Arts+Health.ie

**Jenny Slater, Workshop for Professional Artists: Working with Young People Experiencing Mental Health Difficulties (May 28th, 2024)**

Day: 1  
Contact Hours: 2  
Organised by: Creative Spark  
Location: Creative Spark, Dundalk

This training workshop was attended by 22 participants from professional backgrounds ranging from the arts, research and arts and health management.

<https://www.artandshealth.ie/2024/04/26/workshop-for-professional-artists-working-with-young-people-experiencing-mental-health-difficulties/>

**Edel Gavin, Arts+Health: Check-Up Check-In 2025 (April 30th, 2025)**

Day 1:  
Contact Hours: 2 (1 hour Panel Presentation and 1 hour Q+A)  
Presented by: Réalta, the national resource organisation for arts and health in Ireland  
Location: Esker Arts, Tullamore

Conference Panel Title Sticking Points: What to do when you get stuck? Four individual practitioners share challenges they have faced in their work/practice and explore possible solutions. There were 96 people in attendance - artists, healthcare professionals, researchers and policymakers. There was also representation from senior policy makers from the Arts Council, HSE and Creative Ireland in attendance.

<https://realta.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Arts-and-Health-Check-Up-Check-In-2025-Schedule.pdf>

Blooming Minds Club Total Contact	
Days: 92	Total Contact Hours: 267

## Publicity

Changing Ireland (Autumn 2024) Art draws young people out of themselves: Funding focus in Dundalk is on quality over quantity by Kathy Masterson. Feature article promoting Louth Youthwork and Mental Health showcasing the Blooming Minds Club.

The Blooming Minds Club was also featured in the local newspaper, Dundalk Democrat, on two occasions.

<https://www.dundalkdemocrat.ie/news/home/1281055/creative-spark-s-ait-eile-new-creative-arts-hub-for-young-people-in-louth-and-east-meath.html>

<https://www.dundalkdemocrat.ie/news/home/1561360/blooming-minds-club-in-dundalk-hosts-first-summer-camp.html>

## Blooming Minds Club Administration Hours

### **Jenny Slater, Art Therapist**

Programme Administration, CAMHS Outreach, Blooming Minds Club Participant Meetings, Co-Facilitation of Artist Led Courses, Summer Camps, Field Trips, Exhibitions, Focus Group Facilitation for Evaluation Meetings, Training Sessions for CAMHS and Artist Facilitators  
= **80 Days** Supported by the Creative Youth Nurture Fund

### **Gráinne Murphy, Project Manager at Creative Spark**

Budget and Programme Administration, Blooming Minds Club Participant Meetings, Co-Facilitation of Artist Led Courses, Summer Camps, Field Trips, Exhibitions, Focus Group Facilitation for Evaluation Meetings  
= **30 Days** Supported by the Creative Youth Nurture Fund in addition to 30 Days In-Kind Contributions

### **Sarah Daly, Executive Director at Creative Spark**

Project Administration Meetings, CAMHS Administration Meetings, Budget and Programme Administration, Evaluation Report Consultations  
= **30 Days** In-Kind Contributions

# Context of Youth Mental Health in Ireland

The World Health Organisation has defined mental health in terms of the ability to cope with the stresses of life, to realise abilities, to learn well and contribute to community life (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (2023b). The spotlight on the mental health of children and young people in Ireland indicates a need for enhanced life satisfaction, problem-coping behaviours, help-seeking skills, and acquiring a sense of belonging, all of which are mental health protectors (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2023b). The core values of Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone identifies respect, compassion, equity and hope as key for a strengths-based approach to service delivery and recovery. Positivity, empowerment, generosity and rapport are also essential to respect dignity and the life experiences of services users at CAMHS and within the HSE (Health Service Executive, 2023).

The ambition of the Creative Youth Plan of Ireland is that every young person will have a chance to access creative experiences (Creative Ireland, 2023). Creativity is a vital life skill that offers meaning, purpose and life vision. However, the following mental health realities for young people in Ireland portray a need for the arts to reach out even further. The Blooming Minds Club offers a solution focused resource to address the prevalence of mental health concerns for young people in Ireland.

**Anxiety and depressive disorders account for almost 63% of mental disorders for young people in Ireland, followed by ADHD (16%) and conduct disorders. Ireland has had a higher prevalence of mental health disorders than the European Union. The number of children in receipt of clinical psychology services in Ireland increased by over 150% between 2019-2020, while the number of children admitted to inpatient Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service has increased by almost a third between 2020-2023 (Mental Health Commission, 2023).**

**Findings from research by the Royal College of Surgeons demonstrated that by the age of 13 years, 1 in 3 young people in Ireland are likely to have experienced some type of mental health difficulty. By the age of 24 years that rate had increased to over 1 in 2. Of particular concern is the fact that the suicide rate for young people aged 15-19 years is the fourth highest in the EU (National Youth Council of Ireland, 2025).**

The National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020 identified priorities for the voices of young people including—**influence in their local communities, health and social services, government decision making and policy, participating in decisions that affect their lives, improving mechanisms for the participation of seldom-heard and vulnerable children and involving young people in decision-making and the monitoring of government initiatives** (Department of Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2023). The goal of this strategy was to represent the citizenship of young people and their expertise by lived experience.

**"Children and young people have expertise in their own lives...adults do not always know how children feel, what they think or what they**

like and, accordingly they have a duty to give due weight to children and young people's views in decision-making processes." (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2023).

Since 2007 the Lundy Model, developed by Professor Laura Lundy of Queen's University in Belfast, has been "adopted by national and international organisations, agencies and governments to inform their understanding of children's participation, generating a sea-change in global understanding of child rights-based participation in both policy and practice" (Lundy, 2025). Below are four categories of engagement featured in the Lundy Model - space, voice, audience and influence - which will be identified in relation to their significance in delivering the Blooming Minds Club.



## Creative Spark: Enterprise as Activation

The Blooming Minds Club is an artist collective composed of young people making art with artists in the context of a larger arts and design environment at Creative Spark, a centre for creativity and innovation. The significance of Creative Spark is its distinction as a community homeplace for art and design production. Composed of an Enterprise FabLab (digital fabrication laboratory), fine art print studio, artist studios and professional work environments it is a hive of activity for enterprise in the creative industries.

Creative enterprise invigorates mental health attributes that support agency, purpose, endeavour, activity and action. Creative Spark's promotion of enterprise also aligns with employability. There is a connection between the Blooming Minds Club and future education and career potentials in the arts and creative industries for young people. As young artists-in-residence within Creative Spark, the Blooming Mind Club participants belong to an artist community of creatives, which generates a sense of belonging and mattering.

**"Blooming Minds is welcoming and a home away from home"**

*(Blooming Minds Club participant)*

The National College of Art and Design (NCAD) has partnered with Creative Spark to deliver a Professional Diploma in Digital Making introducing learners from all backgrounds to a range of digital fabrication methods. The diploma is the first of its kind in Ireland and equips participants with design and production skills using digital, technological and ecological fabrication. A Blooming Minds Club parent has enrolled on this training, which testifies to the impact of Creative Spark to be a catalyst for access to technology, enabling opportunities for personal and professional development. The NCAD training partnership adds to the significance of Creative Spark as an impetus for people to realise their ambitions in the creative industries.

Blooming Minds Club course facilitators modelled a career trajectory in the arts. These artists, practitioners in—animation, film making, digital storytelling, graffiti art, jewellery making, print making, mixed media, fashion, digital printing, laser cutting, felt making, photography, zine making, etc.—exemplified professionalism in their facilitation and teaching roles. The delivery of art courses (rather than art workshops) was the preferred method of engagement for Blooming Minds Club members. The Blooming Minds Club is part of a community of practice within Creative Spark that nourishes the relevance of becoming a maker both in one's own life and as a career pathway. The Blooming Minds Club represented young people's endeavours as creatives and co-producers within studios of potential. This aligns with the Creative Youth Plan's aim to inform young people about how their creative skills can be used for employment (Creative Ireland, 2023).

**"I feel very comfy here"**

*(Blooming Minds Club participant)*

Creative Ireland is contributing to the Government of Ireland's promotion of digital creatives and content creation industries for "sustainable and resilient employment, export growth and regional development" (Government of Ireland, 2024). This is significant as "employment in design-intensive sectors has the potential to grow by over 20 000 jobs in the coming years" (Government of Ireland, 2024).

As content creation is an essential component of social media, art-based innovations in content production can transform the detrimental impacts of social media for young people—encouraging youth to become influencers and advocates for resiliency based social media. Content creation can be considered an attribute of mental health, as it aligns to activism and agency.

Creative Spark offers short courses on topics related to design and innovation, which also bestows to the Blooming Minds Club an ethos of co-curation and design thinking. This context of making nurtures characteristics of wellness for young people, particularly in terms of empowerment, achievement and flourishing (developing positive and thriving levels of life satisfaction) (Kleszczewska et al., 2022). Art making within a safe and non-judgmental environment encourages curiosity, experimentation and positive risk taking which extends a young person's lifescape outside of the Blooming Minds Club. Blooming Minds Club participants remarked on the positive attributes of coming to Creative Spark, in terms of being respected and having a voice within the organisation.

**"It is a comfortable and welcoming environment where you can pick up skills while having fun"**

*(Blooming Minds Club participant)*

# Space

## Creative Health and Young People: Mobilising Community Assets

Creative health identifies the significance of community assets for health promotion. As a contribution to existing health services, it encourages place-based health belonging and mattering. Blooming Minds has achieved its aim to reduce feelings of isolation among young people who gain creative and wellness benefits from attending courses, summer schools, field trips and special events.

As experts with lived experience of mental health services, young people attending the Blooming Minds Club are ideally suited to become consultants for the enhancement of mental health supports that make a difference. The Lundy Model is compatible with Creative Health in its promotion of Space, Voice, Audience and Influence. The Lundy Model supports the co-production of youth services and the contributions of young people as experts by experience.

Creative health aligns with systemic health that helps young people realise their potential in the world at large. The Blooming Minds Club is an example of creative health which operates largely within community settings. The Health Service Executive's Mental Health Promotion Plan (2022) defines functioning well as being influenced by interactions and engagement in the wider community, which is determined by "how satisfied we are with our lives, our sense that what we do in life is worthwhile, our day-to-day emotional experiences (happiness and anxiety) and our wider mental wellbeing and the circumstances that promote it" (Health Service Executive, 2022). One of the benefits of positive mental health is the confidence to face challenges and to enjoy life more (Health Service Executive, 2022). Young people who feel isolated are subject to low mood and self-esteem, which impacts their capacity to try new things and meet new people. The Blooming Minds Club is a strengths-based resource that acts as a protective factor against mental health adversities.

Staying connected in everyday settings and promoting self-help and community protective factors, scaffolds competency and empowerment (Barry, 2024). The Blooming Minds Club is an enabling environment which involves young people as part of its social and creative ethos. This is reflected in the Young Ireland report which identifies the potential silo effect of youth mental health services recommending instead that "mental health supports need to reflect the modern society that young people experience" (Government of Ireland, 2023). The Blooming Minds Club responds to the realities of young people's lives in contemporary society and therefore reflects their desire to be content creators and change makers both within their own lives and the world at large.





The first Strategic Action Plan for Creative Arts and Health (2025) is jointly produced by the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport (Creative Ireland), the Department of Health (Healthy Ireland), the Health Service Executive and the Arts Council. One of its key aims is capacity building, equipping “creative and healthcare professionals to work together to embed creative and cultural activity in the health service of Ireland” (Government of Ireland, 2025b). Developing ecosystems of collaboration is a key feature of the strategy.

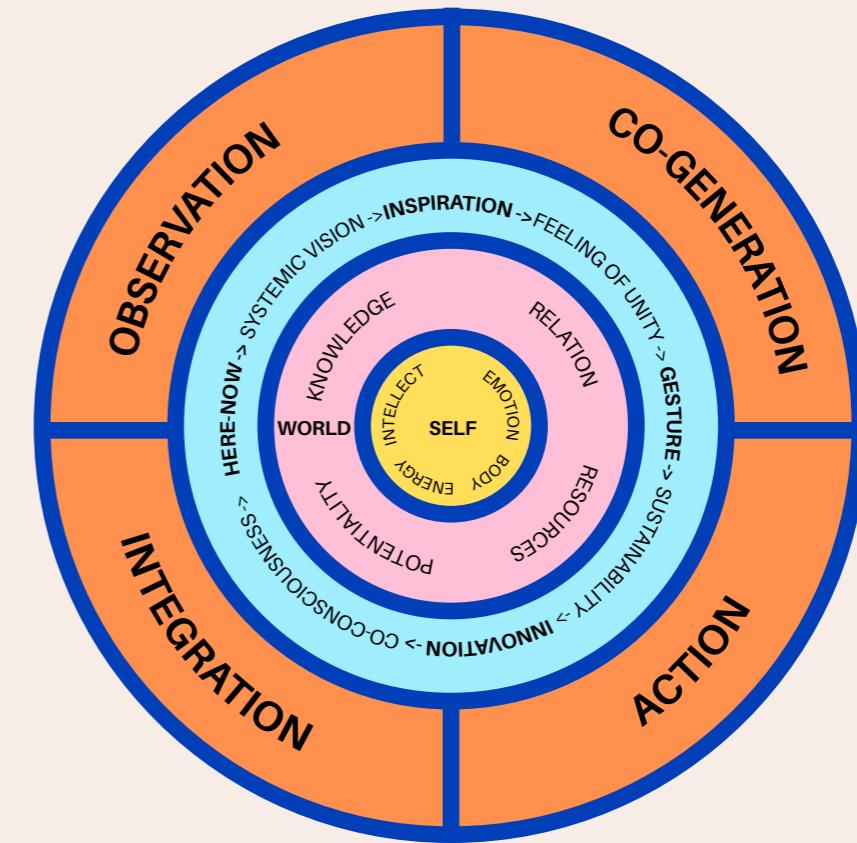
In 2024, 15% of health complaints to the Ombudsman for Children’s office included issues of access to CAMHS services (Ombudsman for Children’s Office, 2024). Community focused services such as the Blooming Minds Club can support CAMHS, extending its range of influence and access for young people. Young people can also become ambassadors and consultants regarding how to reach young people who are isolated and in need of social and mental health supports.

As “creativity supports the development of resilience, critical imagination and the ability to develop novel solutions” (Creative Ireland, 2023), the Blooming Minds Club is a resource for public service consultation. As such the lived experience expertise of young people is valued and incorporated into the planning and delivery of youth mental health services.

The National Framework for Children and Young People (Government of Ireland, 2023) highlights the significance of preparing young people for democratic decision making through valuing their voice in the services that affect their lives. Young people have the right to informed consent and to be advisors for the development and delivery of youth mental services. The Blooming Minds Club offers a chance to develop leadership, advocacy, activism and democratic skills which will benefit young people in their future ambitions.

Children and young people should have timely, appropriate and equal access to evidence-informed mental health supports without fear of discrimination. In recognition of their diverse mental health needs, a multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder approach is required. It is important to strengthen communities and improve social capital through increased participation; and to reduce structural barriers to good mental health through initiatives that reduce discrimination and inequalities (Government of Ireland, 2023).

Blooming Minds Club participants have become ambassadors for Creative Spark’s aims to promote creative enterprise, ambition and potential. The co-creation diagram is applicable to the Blooming Minds Club methodology of joint decision making, through multiple lenses of perception and knowing that encourage a systemic vision of potentials for young people. Experiencing real world learning builds confidence and leadership.



Thiene, F. & Mantovani, S. (2025). Artway: Co-Creation Diagram in Evaluate This! Thinking out Loud on Process-Based Evaluation. An Exchange between Dr. Gráinne Coughlan and Dr. Susanne Bosch. Create, <https://www.create-ireland.ie/activity/evaluate-this/>.

The co-creation diagram above depicts the significance of relationships between self and world, learning by doing, peer-to-peer mentoring, creating an ecosystem of creativity, promoting freedom and unity, working in the here and now, and enhancing quality of life through co-generation. It is an approach for collective enterprise which imagines new social realities. This is a model based on activities leading to sequential outputs, which integrate world and self (Thiene & Mantovani, 2025).

**“I really enjoyed it. The kids were a pleasure to deal with, and I felt I had their attention and engagement throughout. This wasn’t always the case in other courses where I dealt with young people.”**

*(Blooming Minds Club Artist)*

## The Voice of Artists

Artists facilitating courses for the Blooming Minds Club have found the experience to be beneficial in terms of its open studio approach to participation. Young people can choose to engage in taught art activities or produce their own art as a community table approach to artistic practice. There is an artistic kinship amongst Blooming Minds Club participants and professional artists whose studios are located either within Creative Spark or in nearby locations.

**"The group was honest when something wasn't keeping their attention, or they felt they were struggling with a certain exercise. This was appreciated as I could then change my approach and get them back on track. From comments they made throughout, I got the impression they enjoyed the course, both for the content and the social aspect." (Blooming Minds Club Artist)**

**"The participants all took ownership of their own creative ideas and shared these openly with me, so I was able to change gear and tweak my teaching accordingly."**

*(Blooming Minds Club Artist)*

**"I appreciated the collaboration with the art therapist and felt I was best able to deliver to the specific needs of each participant as an artist. Having the course in a public accessible and safe place normalised creative interactions for the young people and personally I think it bolstered their confidence." (Blooming Minds Club Artist)**

As artists in residence at Creative Spark, young people contribute to a larger artist network which supports their artistic ambitions. The open studio approach has an ethos of both personal and collective agency, which enhances the scope of professional practice for artist facilitators, who respond and learn from the young people's artistic practices. As one artist shared, it was a highly beneficial professional development experience, which offered a new career pathway into socially engaged arts and arts and health.

**"This has been an extraordinary experience of letting go of outcomes and embracing the spontaneous inventions of young people who know best." (Blooming Minds Club Artist)**

**"I thoroughly enjoyed facilitating with the Blooming Minds Club—it was very well run and supported and the participants were all very enthusiastic and engaged." (Blooming Minds Club Artist)**

**"The safe space created by working in tangent with Jenny Slater ensured that each participant's needs were met. Comfort was key for participation and attendance."**

*(Blooming Minds Club Artist)*

**"The young people value and adopted techniques and practices learned during the course and embedded them in their daily art routines. Simple things like showing us how they did work at home in their journals was a very rich form of feedback." (Blooming Minds Club Artist)**

**"The Blooming Minds Club is very well run, supportive and professional to both the participants and the facilitator in my experience. It's very participant centred, welcoming and encouraging." (Blooming Minds Club Artist)**

Art therapist Jenny Slater offered a training workshop for professional artists on the topic of working with young people with mental health difficulties on May 28th 2024, which prepared art course facilitators for their role in the Blooming Minds Club. The training was essential for safeguarding young people and assuring course facilitators were equipped with the skills to collaboratively work with young people receiving services from CAMHS.

This workshop was also advertised on the national Arts and Health website as follows:

**Workshop for Professional Artists Working with Young People Experiencing Mental Health Difficulties**

<https://www.artsandhealth.ie/2024/04/26/workshop-for-professional-artists-working-with-young-people-experiencing-mental-health-difficulties/>

In preparation for the delivery of this workshop Jenny received training from Rosaleen Dolan, Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention in Louth and Meath and mentoring consultations with Edel Gavin of CAMHS.

**"I really appreciated the Blooming Minds group and how they interacted creatively with the content."**

*(Blooming Minds Club Artist)*

## The Voice of Family Members

The Blooming Minds Club has been an invaluable resource for family members who have developed peace of mind and trust in the programme to provide positive and transformational changes in the lives of their young people.

A mother of a Blooming Minds Club participant has now enrolled in the National College of Art and Design's Professional Diploma in Digital Making at Creative Spark as an outcome of her daughter's experiences coming to the art courses at Creative Spark.

A bespoke feedback session was arranged for family members whose sons and daughters had participated in the Blooming Minds Club. The family members participated in a watercolour painting workshop with artist Caoimhe O'Dwyer, while reflecting upon the impact of the club on their sons and daughters and family life.

**"It has been a very positive experience, and it has given my daughter the ability to talk confidently to adults. She now has a job and has passed her driving test. She also knows how to take care of herself and create her own future. She can now dream and achieve her dreams. She went from such a dark place to a very bright place."** (Blooming Minds Club, Family Member)

**"I would like to see the club expanded. This club is worth so much and moves the focus from a clinical setting to a more comfortable environment."** (Blooming Minds Club, Family Member)

**"It was wonderful to see her smile and tell stories of what she achieved in the Blooming Minds session each week."** (Blooming Minds Club, Family Member)

**"My daughter is going forward into a creative life after Leaving Cert."** (Blooming Minds Club, Family Member)

**"Our daughter talks about the Blooming Minds Club all week and she is excited to attend the following week."** (Blooming Minds Club, Family Member)

**"It was such a positive experience for her (and us) to see her growth in confidence, which is outstanding. Before this our daughter would not have walked into a shop."**

*(Blooming Minds Club, Family Member)*



**"My daughter has said amazingly positive things about the Blooming Minds Club and has been enthusiastic about attending all of the courses. She has had a very difficult time at school, which has affected her mental health. The club has provided an outlet for her creativity, and it has been a haven for her mentally."**

*(Blooming Minds Club, Family Member)*

**"It gives her freedom to explore a lot of different arts without pressure."** (Blooming Minds Club, Family Member)

**"It has encouraged her to get out and about."** (Blooming Minds Club, Family Member)

**"She feels very comfortable and enjoys meeting teens who are like her."** (Blooming Minds Club, Family Member)

**"We appreciate the role of the art therapist, Jenny Slater, as someone who understands her difficulties, which makes the club accessible."** (Blooming Minds Club, Family Member)

**"My young person is now considering games design and digital media courses in higher education."** (Blooming Minds Club, Family Member)

Family members felt their young people were now living life as an outcome of the "village" atmosphere of Creative Spark, as an extension of the family home into society. As a network of kinship, based on the arts and design, the Blooming Minds Club has connected young people amongst themselves and with other people, so they no longer feel isolated. Their social network has extended beyond the family home and school, into a third space of belonging that has given them a sense of a future.



**"You can see a future."**

*(Blooming Minds Club, Family Member)*

## The Voice of CAMHS

The Blooming Minds Club delivers its art courses to young people with moderate to severe mental health difficulties, who are either receiving services from CAMHS or on the waiting list to receive services. Information sessions presented to CAMHS mental health professionals, facilitated by Edel Gavin (Assistant Director of Nursing Louth Meath CAMHS), accompanied the distribution of brochures and posters to the staff teams of CAMHS. The Blooming Minds Club is prominent within CAMHS locations and on the agenda of beneficial mental health supports within the community.

**"The Blooming Minds Club is an excellent resource for young people who are not into sports."**  
(CAMHS Mental Health Professional)

**"It is a creative arts hub where young people can participate in art activities and projects and meet other people their own age. It provides them with a space where they can communicate their emotions and feelings through art. Not all young people are able to articulate their emotions and feelings verbally. It is a venue where they can meet other young people with similar interests and ideas."** (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)

**"Parents see their young people blossoming through the Blooming Minds Club."** (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)

**"Blooming Minds enhances social connections, creativity and confidence. The club enabled one of my clients to apply for a job because it boosted her confidence."**

(CAMHS Mental Health Professional)

**"Blooming Minds makes a difference in terms of social confidence, friendship making, autonomy and independence."** (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)

Mental health professions at CAMHS, who have referred young people to the Blooming Minds Club, consider the programme to have "contributed tremendously" to the confidence and self-esteem of young people. As a key attribute in the recovery and personalised care plan for young people, it nurtures achievement and the exploration of identity within the world at large. The autonomy and independence obtained is distinct from school experience, and particularly beneficial for young people who do not participate in sports activities. It is a link to civil society and being able to flourish within the world at large. The symbolic holding and positive atmosphere of Creative Spark, as both a physical location and third space, constitutes a welcoming place of belonging in civic society outside of the family home, school and youth employment. A third space is conducive to gathering a team of like-minded people together as a community of practice. Opportunities to learn and network with skilled artists is vital to the effectiveness of The Blooming Minds Club as it nourished hope and their aspirations for the future.

**"A therapeutic space for young people, using art as a creative medium to explore self in the world."** (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)

**"As an excellent creative arts hub, specifically for young people attending CAMHS, it is a really valuable resource that taps into young people's strengths and creativity. It is a space where young people feel they belong and can make art with their peers."** (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)

**"It really boosted confidence and self-esteem. It is a place where they could meet friends."**  
(CAMHS Mental Health Professional)

Of key significance for the CAMHS staff team was the capacity to be involved in conversations that were not "problem oriented" and which did not stigmatise young people (CAMHS Mental Health Professional, personal communication, 2025). As participants of the Blooming Minds Club were attending (or on the waiting list) to attend CAMHS services, there was a solidarity of companionship and "their struggle was normalised" within a community of practice that made something happen productively within a period of challenges and difficulties (CAMHS, Mental Health Professional, personal communication, 2025). CAMHS mental health professionals noted that Creative Spark represented society in a non-judgmental way. It acknowledged young people in a way that made them feel part of something bigger and hopeful.

**"This project has been an amazing resource for the young people attending CAMHS in Louth. It provides a space where they can express themselves creatively, try new things in a safe space, make social connections and really boost their confidence. It is fantastic to have an outlet for young people that is focused on their talents, strengths and resources at a time when they may be experiencing problems in other aspects of their lives."** (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)

**"A safe creative space for vulnerable adolescents."** (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)

**"A creative space for young people with mental health difficulties attending CAMHS."** (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)

**"Parents stated they felt their child was very happy attending and it was good to see them involved in something as they had been very isolated. They felt it was good for their child's confidence."** (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)

**"The Blooming Minds Club promotes living in life."**

*(Deborah James, Psychotherapist, South Louth CAMHS, Child and Family Centre, Drogheda)*

## The Voice of CAMHS

**"It really supports and encourages the idea of helping yourself and being more active and social which helps your mental health." (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)**

Of particular benefit were the artist residencies at CAMHS Louth and Meath locations which partnered artists with therapy and life skills groups for both young people and their family members. The artist residencies also operated as a communication link with the Blooming Minds Club. The residencies were supported by funding resourced through CAMHS. The significance of these bespoke art workshops, within the life of an existing CAMHS group, was highly beneficial in combining art making with therapeutic aims. Participants (including CAMHS professionals from social work, nursing and social care) learned new artistic skills while working together collaboratively. Family members participated as creative companions, in ways that were generative and restorative. The art making was both a welcome distraction and foundation for new ways of relating. Helping one another, as a team, in the art of creation, encouraged curiosity, risk taking, self-efficacy, problem-solving, communication and mindfulness. These therapeutic outcomes of art making were inherent in these creative workshops, which aligned with the wellness and recovery aims of the groups facilitated by CAMHS team members.

**"Blooming Minds offers an alternative entry into mental health and taps areas such as emotional regulation and coping indirectly yet very effectively. It is without a doubt very impactful and should continue to be integrated into CAMHS."**

*(CAMHS Mental Health Professional)*

**"Honestly, I have found this to be a valuable resource and provides a young person with a non-verbal setting to express their emotions and feelings through art. As a clinician we try to encourage mindfulness, to be present in the current moment, and to not focus on negative thoughts. I have observed how staff from Blooming Minds have been able to help the young person do this through art and give them a sense of achievement with every piece of artwork they have created. I hope this service continues as it has enhanced my work with young people."**

*(CAMHS Mental Health Professional)*

Art therapist Jenny Slater was the contact for CAMHS referrals to the Blooming Minds Club, in conjunction with Edel Gavin. Jenny maintained ongoing contact with both Blooming Minds Club participants and their family members. This bridge of communication between the Blooming Minds Club organisers, participants, families and CAMHS was essential for the effective administration of the project and quality assurance. As a registered art therapist with the Health and Care Professions Council (UK) and the Irish Association of Creative Arts Therapists, Jenny contributed professional and ethical standards which optimised outcomes and the impact of the Blooming Minds Club on the quality of life for each young person. Young people were offered creative opportunities to become makers and artistic ambassadors advocating on behalf of their interests and aspirations.

**"One young person stated she was made to feel so welcome by the Blooming Minds staff and other young people attending the club. She said it was fun and although she had been very anxious going, she made friends and loved doing the artwork." (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)**

**"They have enjoyed it and felt connected to others as well as having a supportive outlet for their creativity." (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)**

**"Really positive, the young people love the variety and the outlet for their creativity." (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)**

**"The young people felt so accepted and welcomed. They had such great access to talented and skilled artists. They made new friends and learned new skills." (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)**

**"It was an essential part of their recovery in the community, with improved self-esteem, confidence, social skills and a sense of achievement, particularly when a project they had designed was completed." (CAMHS Mental Health Professional)**

**"The Blooming Minds Club has been a non-judgemental, independent outlet for young people in Louth, with compromised mental health. It acts as an outlet and a support for those who need it. It has been a fantastic asset to CAMHS and the families who attend CAMHS."**

*(CAMHS Mental Health Professional)*

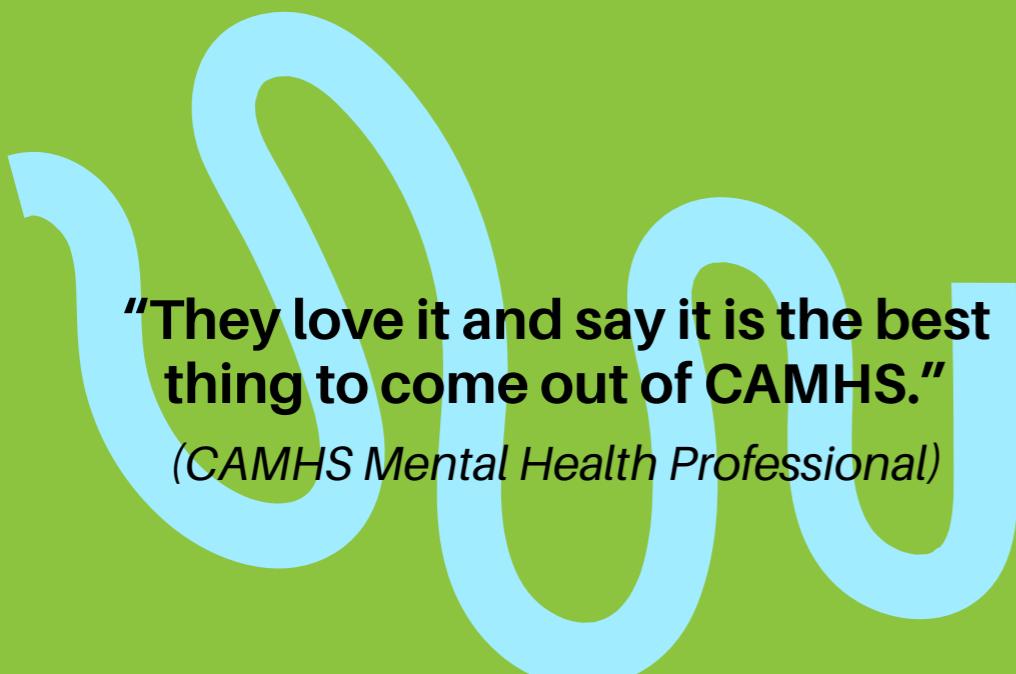
# Voice

## The Voice of CAMHS

Jenny Slater (Art Therapist), Edel Gavin (Assistant Director of Nursing Louth Meath CAMHS) and Melissa Casey (Clinical Nurse Specialist, South Louth CAMHS) delivered the foundation for The Blooming Minds Club through a six-week series of art workshops in April-May, 2023 titled What Matters to Young People in CAMHS, which developed the content for the Creative Ireland funding proposal in June, 2023.

Jenny Slater summarises the key outcomes of this project below:

**"Using dialogue and discussion, word and image, the young people shared a huge variety of topics around the themes of people, place and participation. As we know it can be very difficult for children and young people to articulate into words what is important to them. This project provided young people with the opportunity to tell us what matters to them, through using a variety of creative art mediums. Through the six-week project the young people found their voice through art and created a variety of art pieces that expressed their experience of CAMHS and the issues that matter to them. The resulting art exhibition was very well attended by various stakeholders linked with CAMHS services. Attendees included the young people themselves and their parents. Also in attendance were CAMHS clinicians, members of the CAMHS management team, lecturers from the Dundalk Institute of Technology, School of Nursing and artists from Creative Spark. Those who attended were impressed with the art created and the honesty of the young people involved. There was lots of positive feedback and those attending had the privilege of meeting the young artists who were happy to speak about the art created and their experiences of the project."** (Jenny Slater, *What Matters to Young People 2023, Creative Ireland, Creative Youth Nurture Fund Proposal*)



**"They love it and say it is the best thing to come out of CAMHS."**  
*(CAMHS Mental Health Professional)*

## The Voice of Young People

Each participant of the club had an equal voice in the selection of courses and artists. Initially there were youth ambassadors who represented the voice of participants, but subsequently each young person became an ambassador for the club and developed confidence in sharing their own opinions and recommendations. Young people demonstrated their collaborative ownership and leadership of the club and regularly liaised with the project manager and art therapist.

The weekly feedback from Blooming Minds Club participants was reviewed by the project manager for the purpose of this evaluation and shared accordingly. Participants responded with a 100% approval rate for the club's ability to meet and surpass their expectations.

**100% of respondents stated they wouldn't change anything about their art course experiences.**

The following quotations from young people attending the Blooming Minds Club highlight its impact in relation to Creativity, Socialisation, Belonging, Connection, Confidence and Enjoyment.

### Creativity

**"There are no flaws in art."**  
**"Free art materials and courses are amazing."**  
**"I can now say I am creative."**  
**"Imperfections to exemplar art, all are part of Blooming Minds Club."**  
**"I get free art supplies, and I can draw now."**  
**"It's not like art in school; it's art in action."**  
**"I don't feel pressured, and I can make art in my own way."**  
**"I feel respected as an artist."**

### Socialisation

**"Blooming Minds is about friendship, respect and creating together."**  
**"There isn't a pressure to speak if you don't want to say anything, but I still feel part of everything even if I need time for myself."**  
**"What's important about the group is being kind and having kind people in your life."**  
**"Kindness is being safe with someone and being able to tell the truth to people."**  
**"It's a place to talk."**  
**"I have people I can talk to now."**  
**"We share laughter. I like the humour and being together."**  
**"I feel very comfy here."**

### Belonging

**"Sharing opinions together and learning together is what is important about The Blooming Minds Club."**  
**"Small acts of kindness, especially in person, help young people."**  
**"My opinion and ideas are important."**  
**"Blooming Minds is a meaningful outlet with peace and kindness."**  
**"I am part of the Creative Spark community."**  
**"My way of participating is respected."**  
**"I like the flexibility and the respect for how I do things."**  
**"There is an acceptance of neurodiversity, there is no rush or pressure to make something."**  
**"I can participate in my own way."**  
**"It's okay not to show up and then you can pick up on what you missed the next time."**

## The Voice of Young People

### Connection

"It's a space for young people to come together, to be creative and to gain a sense of belonging through connecting with each other through art."  
"I would suggest to anybody interested in Blooming Minds Club to just go for it. It can be scary at first, but it is worth doing."  
"I appreciate the connection I have to Blooming Minds Club and being given to by people reaching out to me."  
"I like being part of a calm place."  
"No one questions you if you are silent and don't feel like talking."  
"Blooming Minds was designed for me."  
"It's a safe way to be with other people."

### Confidence

"It has helped me to be social and showed me I can do things on my own."  
"It has made me more expressive in my art and mind."  
"Blooming Minds has opened my own mind to what can be achieved through imagining, creating and sharing dreams with like-minded others."  
"I am growing in confidence and stamina."  
"There is encouragement to be yourself."  
"Individual needs are valued, which makes me value myself."  
"There are no stigmas or stereotypes."  
"Blooming Minds Club is somewhere where I can have a break in the middle of the week and enjoy myself."  
"It's fun and I enjoy coming."  
"It is a comfortable and welcoming environment, and you can pick up skills while having fun."  
"There is something for everybody."  
"There is no set of rules."  
"It makes me feel light-hearted."  
"I feel relaxed at Blooming Minds Club, there are no expectations. It's not a class or a lesson."  
"I like the variety of courses, so even if you don't like one art activity, there will soon be a different one."

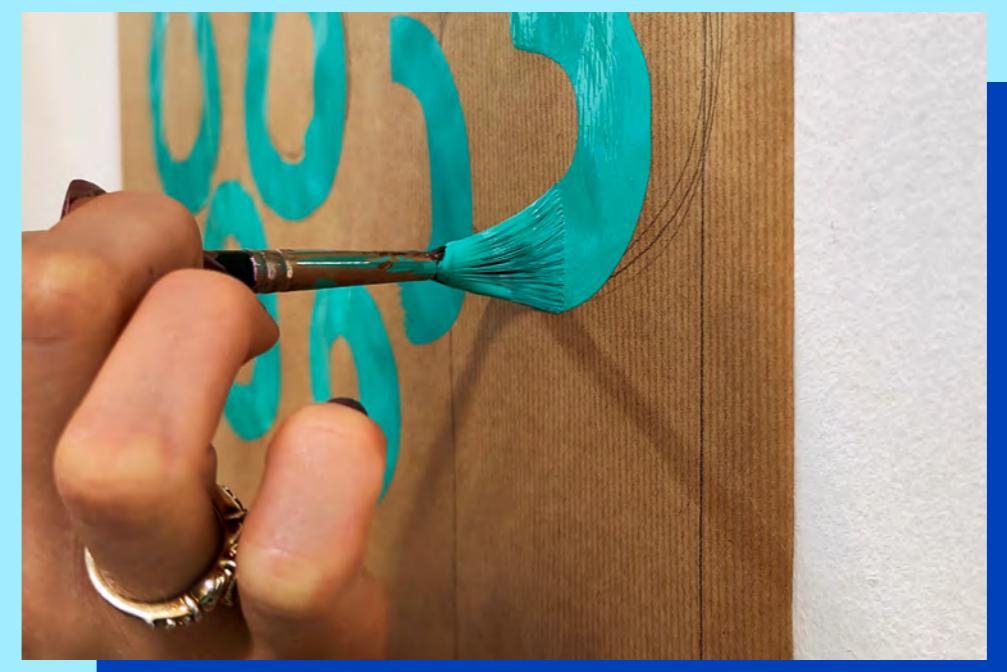
### Self-Efficacy

"I can do more stuff."  
"I experience positive productivity."  
"I am thinking about art now for a future career."  
"I have learned to try out new art materials and learn from different artists."  
"We can work at our own pace, and finish in our own time."

### Voting on Impact

Young people attending The Blooming Minds Club had an opportunity to vote on the beneficial outcomes they experienced from the club. The results are listed in the order of young people's voting responses.

"I am feeling more creative and expressive."  
"I am more confident to share an idea or suggestion."  
"I am more likely to try something new."  
"I have more problem-solving skills."  
"I am better able to commit or stick with something."  
"I am more likely to go somewhere new."  
"I am more confident meeting new people."  
"I feel more connected to people in general."  
"I am more likely to start a conversation."  
"I have better self-esteem."  
"I am better able to cope."  
"I have more of a can-do approach to life."



## Jenny Slater: The Voice of the Art Therapist

The role of the art therapist was crucial for the delivery of the positive mental health benefits of the Blooming Minds Club, and as an assurance of safeguarding for young people. Jenny Slater was the liaison between CAMHS staff members, the project manager, Blooming Minds Club artists, participants and parents/guardians.

With previous experience as an art therapist working in CAHMS within both Louth and Meath, Jenny developed the funding proposal for the Blooming Minds Club (originally known as Áit Eile) in conjunction with the Executive Director of Creative Spark, Sarah Daly.

Prior to the Creative Youth Nurture Fund submission Jenny worked with Edel Galvin (Assistant Director of Nursing, Louth Meath CAMHS) and Melissa Casey (Clinical Nurse Specialist, South Louth CAMHS) to facilitate a six-week creative arts group called What Matters to You (March - May, 2023), which is also included under the Voice of CAMHS section of this report. This focus group formed the foundation for planning the Blooming Minds Club as a youth-led programme advocating for the creativity, voice and influence of the young person.

It is important to note the significance of employing an art therapist on a youth arts programme for seldom heard young people, to ensure that young people are participating with necessary psychological and social supports and to mediate any challenges they may experience. The art therapist ensured that young people were supported not only during Creative Spark courses, but also on day trips, summer schools and Saturday workshops. A young person can spend time with Jenny for additional assistance navigating social and group experiences.

In reflecting upon the significance of the art therapist's role, monthly meetings with CAMHS staff members (referring young people to the Blooming Minds Club) would help to provide a foundation of peer supervision and mentoring. This regular check-in with CAMHS colleagues, as professional reflective practice, will offer assurance that a young person is achieving the psycho-social and community engagement aims included in their care plan. It also provides the necessary scaffolding to alleviate added pressures of lone working as an allied health professional.

Jenny offered a workshop for professional artists on May 28th, 2024 at Creative Spark which covered topics related to youth mental health within community group art sessions. During this two-hour workshop participants learned about potential mental health challenges which could impact young people attending Blooming Minds Club art courses and how to flexibly ensure participation and engagement. This course is also listed at the beginning of this report under the section Training Seminars, Arts+Health.ie.

Jenny wishes to acknowledge the supportive collegial partnerships with Edel Gavin and CAMHS team members in Louth and Meath who referred young people to the Blooming Minds Club. In particular, Edel Gavin offered consistent mentoring and guidance, which assisted with risk management and personalised approaches to meeting the access needs of Blooming Minds Club members.



## Gráinne Murphy: The Voice of the Project Manager

The relaxed surroundings of the Blooming Minds Club are conducive to youth-centric decision making as an arts-based practice encouraging expression and different perspectives. Both the logo and name of the Blooming Minds Club are contributions by club members, which empowered a sense of ownership and an identifiable branding of pride. Blooming Mind Club participants have shared photographs of their artworks on their Instagram accounts and have volunteered their skills in school environments as well. This has initiated valued recognition and admiration from peers, teachers and family members.

The Blooming Minds Club has also contributed to the sessional employment of professional artists which has enriched the local arts economy. It has contributed to the professional portfolio of artists, who developed new approaches to socially engaged art practices through the training and mentoring provided by both the art therapist and project manager. Artists also acquired specialised group facilitation techniques and new skills for their professional tool kits.

The FabLab at Creative Spark offers a widening context of partnership, affiliated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. As a digital fabrication facility, Creative Spark's FabLab is part of a global network of digital making workshop studios. The community focus of a FabLab brings people together to work collaboratively on shared ideas and projects. The core idea is to empower individuals to make and experiment; an ethos with relevance for young people becoming creatives, makers and designers.

"A FabLab is a platform for learning and innovation: a place to play, to create, to learn, to mentor, to invent. To be a FabLab means connecting to a global community of learners, educators, technologists, researchers, makers and innovators, a knowledge sharing network that spans 30 countries and 24 time zones" (Fab Foundation UK, 2025).

Under Gráinne's mentorship young people have requested volunteer opportunities at Creative Spark, assisting with events, craft fairs, and summer art camps for children. For example, a Blooming Minds Club participant was an assistant facilitator for a summer art camp and contributed positively to the success of this initiative.

**"It was a huge help to have this Blooming Minds Club volunteer on board. She brought great energy to the camp. From my perspective, it was a really positive experience. She was reliable, enthusiastic and engaged well with both staff and children. She also expressed how valuable the experience was for her as well."** (Gráinne Murphy, Blooming Minds Club, Project Manager)

## Sarah Daly: The Voice of Creative Spark's Executive Director

Sarah Daly's vision for Creative Spark was to produce a third space in society for social engagement through making, artistry and enterprise. Everyone is welcome at Creative Spark, and it is animated with people-in-production as artists, designers, creative entrepreneurs and life-long learners. Creative Spark is a place of ambition and enthusiasm. Its location within a neighbourhood expresses its link to the potentials of everyday living, and the creation of people's lives with what they have at hand. There is a get-up-and-go enthusiasm within Creative Spark, and the spark in the organisation's name ignites people to experiment with materials that inspire their agency and inventiveness. The accessibility of Creative Spark is conducive to networking professional partnerships between people.

**"We respect people who come to Creative Spark, and we offer a particular welcome to Blooming Minds Club participants. I consider Creative Spark to be an enabling environment. In this way we help participants settle in and be part of the pulse of the place. Blooming Minds Club participants are meeting artists and creatives during their time at Creative Spark. The Blooming Minds Club studio space has windows facing into the thoroughfares of the building. This is a professional environment that is different from school. Blooming Minds Club participants feel at home here speaking with adults about their work and learning about their professional and creative interests."** (Sarah Daly, Executive Director, Creative Spark)

Sarah also noted that the surroundings of Creative Spark help to diffuse anxiety, particularly for young people who were affected by the isolation of COVID. Anxiety and depressive disorders have remained post-COVID and "almost half of all 15-17 year olds and 18-24 year olds reported that their mental health had worsened since the beginning of COVID-19 restrictions." Young people feel they "have missed out on mental health supports during the pandemic" (Department of Children, Disability and Equality, 2023). "Children needing acute mental health care increased significantly following the initial COVID-19 lockdown. It was suggested that long term stressors linked to the pandemic may have created chronic mental health problems" (Health Service Executive, 2023). The Blooming Minds Club is an opportunity for young people to be part of an organisation that is taking people to new places in themselves and the world around them, and this atmosphere of agency is absorbed by Blooming Minds Club members.

**"Creative Spark is sensitive to people's vulnerabilities, and we respect their confidentiality and encourage their potential through creative engagement."** (Sarah Daly, Executive Director, Creative Spark)

Sarah is inspired by YEHA (Youth Education Health Advice, <https://yehaproject.com>) in Belfast, an organisation that equips young people with the resources to look after their mental health and wellbeing, which includes accessing community resources in a project called Care Zone. Care Zone is a community-informed culture of care, which provides early intervention supports to promote psychological resilience. The project highlights the significance of youth centric environments which encourage pride of place, and the capacity to pursue healthy lifestyles. Creative Spark is a positive lifestyle destination encouraging pride, care and the promotion of health through creative life endeavours. Care Zone endorses a whole community approach to offering mental health assets to young people in collaboration with youth mental health services (YEHA & Lighthouse, 2019), which aligns with the contextual safeguarding and partnership ethos of the Blooming Minds Club.



# Audience

The proportion of children reporting being happy with their life at present declined from 88.2% in 2018 to 78.5% in 2022. This is a 11% decrease in the percentage of children reporting happiness with their life at present over this time period. Examining European data stated that life satisfaction amongst 13 year olds in Ireland declined from 2018 to 2022. These scores rank Ireland 25th out of 27 EU countries for 13 year-old's mean life satisfaction (Government of Ireland, 2025).

The World Health Organisation lists the quality of life risk factors for adolescents to be linked to bullying, insufficient physical activity, drug and alcohol use, school leaving, depression and anxiety and risks related to social media and non-consenting sexual activity and lack of sex education (World Health Organisation, 2025).

It is important to note that according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a young person's views must be considered and taken into account in all matters affecting their lives (Children's Rights Alliance, 2010).

The Practical Guide to Including Seldom-Heard Children and Young People in Decision Making (Department of Children and Youth Affairs & Barnardos, 2015) is a strategy mainstreaming the participation of children and young people in the development of policy, legislation and research. The report recommends that children and young people should be provided with relevant information and offered adequate support for self-advocacy and influence. The Blooming Minds Club is a training for youth leadership, which acts on young people's recommendations as an ethos of continuous enhancement. This recognition offered young people a sense of achievement and skills in negotiating, planning, decision-making and project management. It enabled the foundation for young people's continued civic initiatives and contributions to society as engaged citizens.

The benefits for CAMHS and Creative Spark, is the involvement of young people as consultants, organisers and visionaries offering new perspectives and ideas, resulting in increased credibility and responsiveness for both organisations.

## Potential audiences for the voices of Blooming Minds Club members

- The Blooming Minds Evaluation Launch and Exhibition at Creative Spark
- The Ombudsman for Children
- Minister for Children, Disability and Equality
- National Youth Council of Ireland
- Health Service Executive, Healthy Ireland
- Creative Ireland
- The Arts Council, Children and Young People's Arts
- The National Youth Assembly of Ireland
- Young Ireland Advisory Council
- HSE Child and Youth Mental Health Office



# Influence

Participants of the Blooming Minds Club selected both the artists and courses they wished to participate in through weekly and monthly meetings with the project manager and the art therapist. Young people felt comfortable sharing their opinions and offering suggestions, as they could meet potential artists and view their practice in the context of attending the Blooming Minds Club at Creative Spark. Each participant became an ambassador and contributed their own opinions and suggestions within weekly art making studios. This was an opportunity for young people to exert not only influence, but leadership in their roles as artists, co-producers and consultants in accordance with the Participation Framework for Children and Young People in Decision Making (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2021; Hub na nÓg, 2025). The name change of the group from Ait Eile to the Blooming Minds Club is one example of how young people have made the group their own.

As a youth-centric initiative, the Blooming Minds Club was an opportunity to support young people's rights to become thought leaders and trend setters in their role as co-designers and changemakers. As artist researchers, assisting with the evaluation of the project and project management consultation, offering guidance to the project manager, art therapist and Executive Director of Creative Spark, Blooming Minds Club participants ensured that vulnerable young people not only had a voice but an active role in programme leadership. "Although children and young people can be powerful and effective advocates for their own rights, their youth status means that they can only sustain this role when adults facilitate the process" (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2021).



# Recommendations

## Quality of Life and Active Citizenship: The Rights of Young People

The mental health commission of Ireland has developed a self-advocacy and rights-based guide for young people called The Headspace Toolkit for those young people receiving in-patient services (Mental Health Commission, 2024). The toolkit emphasises the importance of young people participating in the decisions that affect their mental health. As CAMHS referrals to the Blooming Minds Club do not include a young person's mental health history, it is important to empower young people to have a choice regarding what art activities benefit their mental health and to acknowledge their role as co-designers of the Blooming Minds Club programme in alignment with recommendations from the Mental Health Commission. Communication and transparency are essential for decision making, and therefore young people should be informed about the potential benefits of the Blooming Minds Club in terms of quality-of-life indicators (social connection, safety, meaning, purpose, civic engagement and cultural expression) and any challenges they may face attending the courses (Government of Ireland, 2025).

## Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding protects young people from harm outside of their homes, in the civic locations where they spend time (Firmin & Lloyd, 2023). Organisational safeguarding is linked to societal guardianship in relation to contributing to the emotional, social, cognitive and behavioural potentials of young people. As a neighbourhood resource for contextual safeguarding, Creative Spark is invested in developing caring and trusting relationships with young people and providing a safeguarding policy which protects them from harm.

The role of an art therapist, in partnership with an occupational therapist or mental health nurse from CAMHS, mitigates against risks associated with the reactivation of trauma informed adversities, anxiety and low-mood. Contextual safeguarding enhances a duty of care to Blooming Minds Club participants, their family members, artist facilitators and to the project manager as well. It assists with communication and information distribution, combining the printed methods of communication used by CAMHS with the email and digital platforms used by Creative Spark. Scheduling regular visits by an occupational therapist or mental health nurse to Creative Spark, will enhance communication between both organisations overall and offer additional safeguarding measures for young people and their family members.

Contextual safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and the partnership of CAMHS and Creative Spark enhances the potential life studio of a young person in terms of adding more places of becoming and making in their lives (Firmin & Lloyd, 2023). Contextual safeguarding is ecological in terms of valuing communities and civic society as creative health assets. It is rooted in an understanding of young people's lived reality. Collaboration and democratic decision making with young people ensures their lived experience expertise is valued and part of trauma informed practice, which values transparency, trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment.

Contextual safeguarding requires consistent debriefing and supervision by a representative of the CAMHS team to ensure quality assurance and an opportunity to gain insight into the mental health attributes of the Blooming Minds Club and its positive impact upon quality of life.

## A Blooming Minds Club Studio at CAMHS

A Blooming Minds Club studio and ethos could be incorporated within CAMHS through increased artist residencies and creative opportunities for art studio participation by young people on the CAMHS waiting list. One Blooming Minds Club participant suggested the incorporation of walking groups, field trips and a gardening club as possible activities to develop peer support and social connection for young people on waiting lists for CAMHS services. The idea of a walking group was linked to visiting places of local interest and nature walks, accompanied by an art therapist and a nurse or occupational therapist from CAMHS. This is a recommendation for psychosocial activities whereby a social environment influences a more positive outlook on life and the potential to thrive in one's surroundings. The Blooming Minds Club project manager could also provide additional support for the walking groups. A portable walking studio can incorporate photography and site specific artistic responses interacting with both civic and natural environments.

**"There could be more collaborations between CAMHS staff and Blooming Minds so that both teams can learn from each other to support the best interests of young people."** (Blooming Minds Club Participant)

The Department of Health's implementation plan for Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone outlines the importance of greater access to mental health supports in communities and the meaningful involvement of young people in the design and delivery of mental health services, with a particular focus on health promotion and early interventions (Department of Health, 2025). A walking studio incorporates side-by-side conversations, which can aid communication in the context of a walking route of discovery that determines where a young person feels comfortable within their life studios (the places in their lives which are life enhancing, creative and comforting). Healthy Ireland (2023) identifies green spaces, culture, built environments and streetscapes as locations of wellness. The walking studio incorporates exercise as an added health benefit. The experience of going to new places encourages pride-of-place and place attachment, which bestows a sense of belonging to one's civic homeplace.

## CAMHS Artist Residencies

Increasing artist residencies at CAMHS Louth and Meath locations with existing groups of young people and their families, will further the capacity of artists to share their knowledge and skills and support the aims of these wellness groups by members of the CAMHS team. These residencies will be part of the Blooming Minds Club repertoire of artistic experiences and could be considered entry points into Blooming Minds courses. In essence the residencies are the calling card for the Blooming Minds Club which promote confidence in art making within a group of like-minded participants.

## Blooming Minds Clubs in Drogheda and Dundalk

The Creative Spark Blooming Minds Club could be extended into a second club based in Drogheda to offer art courses and creative programming for South Louth and Meath participants. The two clubs could potentially arrange visits to meet each other on scheduled Saturdays at either Creative Spark in Dundalk or a Drogheda Venue. Highlanes Gallery and Droichead Arts Centre both support youth focussed arts, so either venue may be interested in partnering with Creative Spark and CAMHS. The Boomerang Youth Centre and Café in Drogheda could also be added to this network.

# Recommendations

## Monthly Meetings: CAMHS and Blooming Minds

To support Blooming Minds Club referrals, the promotion of courses, field trips, summer schools and continuous quality enhancement, a monthly meeting should be organised between a liaison staff member at CAMHS, the Blooming Minds Club art therapist and the project manager of the Blooming Minds Club. The liaison staff member for CAMHS could be an occupational therapist or mental health nurse. This will ensure: a) effective communication and discussions regarding the appropriateness of referrals to the club, b) written and digital communications between parents, CAMHS staff members and the team at Creative Spark, c) the identification of emerging issues and concerns and d) exchanging feedback regarding the collaboration between CAMHS, Creative Spark and the Blooming Minds Club. It is also important to consider the de-briefing of potentially challenging situations as part of future Blooming Minds Club programming. This could be achieved by meetings with the CAMHS liaison, the art therapist and the Blooming Minds Club project manager.

## The Art of Community Gardening

The community garden at Creative Spark, DIG (Dundalk Inclusive Garden), could offer participants of the Blooming Minds Club a garden area for learning about cultivating vegetables, flowers and herbs. The garden is already used as a resource for gathering flowers and plant materials for art courses at Blooming Minds and could also be utilised as an outdoor studio for young people interested in learning horticultural skills in a community gardening context. This may also lead to cooking classes and an interest in plants for health and developing young peoples' interest in participating regularly as volunteers for DIG.

Community gardens nurture mental health attributes and pride of place through skill sharing, team building and supporting a sense of accomplishment. Gardening also increases the production of serotonin and dopamine, two hormones associated with enhancing mood and reducing stress (St. Patrick's Mental Health Services, 2025). Young people are also increasingly involved in climate change activism and gardening promotes the enhancement of biodiversity and the absorption of carbon dioxide which supports environmental enhancement.

## CAMHS: Social Prescribing

Social prescribing has been identified as a beneficial way to enhance lifestyle and avail of opportunities within civic life that add-on potential and learning. The HSE Social Prescribing Framework (2021) has aligned to adult mental health services providing psychosocial supports which aid societal wellness, self-help and person to person networking.

The Blooming Minds Club is an example of a potential pilot project for social prescribing linked to CAMHS and local community assets which reduce young people's social isolation. The All Ireland Social Prescribing Network (2025) considers social prescribing for children and young people to be beneficial in addressing increasing loneliness and mental health difficulties amongst Irish youth. Arts and peer support are identified as key contributors for young people's mental health. This network highlights international examples of social prescribing for young people including the Art Hives model in Canada (open access art studios within libraries, art galleries, cultural events, leisure and youth centres).

**"There needs to be more clubs for young people, more places to go for meeting new people and learning new skills." (Blooming Minds Club, Participant)**

The National Academy for Social Prescribing in the UK is advocating for social prescribing for young people on mental health waiting lists. For example, the Wellbeing While Waiting programme is developing a care pathway for young people aged 12-18 who are on CAMHS waiting lists in North London to address "deterioration in mental health while on waiting lists" through referrals to non-medical forms of community support such "social and cultural activities" (Applied Research Collaboration, 2025).

**"Social prescribing for children and young people in Ireland offers a promising avenue for addressing the rising tide of mental health challenges. By leveraging Ireland's rich tradition of community engagement, expanding access to non-clinical supports, and learning from successful international models, Ireland can lead the way in creating an inclusive, holistic system of care for young people. Social prescribing is more than just an intervention; it is a lifeline for children and young people navigating today's complex world." (All Ireland Social Prescribing Network, 2025)**

Social prescribing could be included in young people's care plans at CAMHS as a formulation for accessing community resources as mental health assets.

## Blooming Minds Club Supporting Neurodiversity

The Blooming Minds Club is a neurodiversity positive programme whereby each participant can decide to pursue their own art making activity as part of the larger group. There is flexibility in the delivery of the art courses and a responsiveness to a young person's comfort around levels of participation. The support of the art therapist and project manager (during the provision of art courses), also ensures personalised mentoring and adaptability. In addition, there is the opportunity to take time out to walk with a young person in the community garden adjacent to Creative Spark. This flexibility in art making is an additional feature of the Blooming Minds Club, which also responds to neurodiversity referrals from CAMHS. These neurodiversity positive support structures operating as a feature of the Blooming Minds Club, could be further promoted, encouraging more young people to attend knowing their access requirements will be respected.

## Creative Spark, Youth Curators and Cultural Ambassadors

Blooming Minds Club participants who have been attending art courses for a longer period of time, may be interested in assisting the Creative Spark team with exhibitions and events as cultural ambassadors. This will offer opportunities for developing skills in art curation, public relations, marketing and project management. As an outcome, young people may subsequently consider pursuing an art, design or creative industries degree in higher education.

# Recommendations

## Higher Education Creative Industries Training: Increasing Attendance of Male Participants at the Blooming Minds Club

The attendance of young men could be increased in the Blooming Minds Club through specifically promoting creative industries and design-led courses at the FabLab at Creative Spark. The inclusion of product and digital design and creative industries technology align to higher education training and connections to the National College of Art and Design, Dundalk Institute of Technology and the Belfast School of Art, Ulster University. Educators from these training centres for creative industries could mentor Blooming Minds Club participants along with their students. A lecturer in animation, augmented reality and immersive art at the Dundalk Institute of Technology has been invited to participate in the project, helping young people to consider training for a career in creative industries.

## CAMHS Ambassadors for Youth Mental Health Programmes and Artist Residencies

Blooming Minds Club members could offer consultation and lived experience expertise to support youth mental health workshops for self-help topics in conjunction with the staff team at CAMHS. These topics could also develop into social media content, supporting coping skills for everyday situations which young people find challenging. The ambassador role could extend to supporting artists in residence at CAMHS with young people acting as lived experience advisors.

## Extending Referral Networks for the Blooming Minds Club

The referral network for the Blooming Minds Club could include partnerships with Family Resource Centres in Dundalk and Drogheda, particularly a link with the Footsteps Youth Development Programme designed by young people to encourage personal development, educational and vocational aims. In addition, Foróige: Leadership for Life, is another potential Blooming Minds Club partnership, which offers participants a pathway into active citizenship and identifying their goals and a vision for their futures. The programme also facilitates young people's place in society advocating on behalf of current affairs and pressing social concerns both nationally and internationally.

"Developed in 2009, Foróige's Leadership for Life Programme is unique in that it is accredited by both the University of Galway and Queen's University Belfast. On completion of all three modules of the Programme, young people have the opportunity to graduate with a Foundation Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action, with associated academic credits that go towards a third level qualification" (Foróige: Leadership for Life, 2025).

This widening access could be considered a form of mental health promotion which may have a preventative impact in terms of engaging young people before they are at risk of disengaging from social supports.

## Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) for Youth

An arts-based Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) could be developed in consultation with Blooming Minds Club participants for delivery in schools and youth clubs in association with CAMHS and Health Service Executive staff teams.

"WRAP offers a system that helps young people make their lives more the way they want them to be. It helps them choose and enjoy more of the things they want to do. WRAP helps them get through the difficult experiences and uncertainty that can come with making friends, navigating peer pressure, managing schoolwork, and dealing with home and family challenges. The WRAP process can also help them stay on track with the habits and relationships they love and want to keep as part of their lives. (Wellness Recovery Action Plan, 2025).

The Wellness Recovery Action Plan model has produced the book Youth WRAP as an adaptation of the model for young people (<https://www.wellnessrecoveryactionplan.com/product/youth-wrap/>).

"When you make your WRAP, you choose what you will do every day, and if difficult things come up, you plan what your responses will be to keep yourself safe and in control of your life. You choose if you want to make a WRAP and what will go in your plan. Change it when you want to. It's yours!

- Do what you want with your life
- Discover your own simple, safe wellness tools
- Develop a daily plan to help you stay as well as possible
- Identify upsetting events or circumstances and develop action plans for responding to them
- Create a strategy to gain support and stay in control of your wellness during and after a crisis."

(Wellness Recovery Action Plan, 2025)

## In Conclusion: Carrying the Vision Forward

The Blooming Minds Club is a catalyst for promoting young people's mental health in collaboration with CAMHS services. It is a game changer for young people in need of hope, reassurance and a pathway filled with ambition. The artistry of the programme sparks capacity and invigorates young people to become the makers of their lives and the worlds around them. This can-do approach is the ability to do something imaginative, brave and forthright, honouring self-integrity and ingenuity. Creative Spark makes art come alive in the reality of young people's lives. This initiative has enabled young people to manifest self-actualisation and the flourishing of their abilities within a community of supporters. Belonging to an artist community has made a difference to the lives of young people whose voices are everywhere in the artworks they have made.

The Blooming Minds Club is a call for young people to be the campaigners of their rights and the artists of their future endeavours. The participants of the Blooming Minds Club, and their allies at Creative Spark and CAMHS, understand the bigger picture of mental health starts with the right conditions for young people to be in the spotlight and at the centre of things. The support of Creative Ireland's Creative Youth Nurture Fund has offered Blooming Minds Club participants a place on centre stage.

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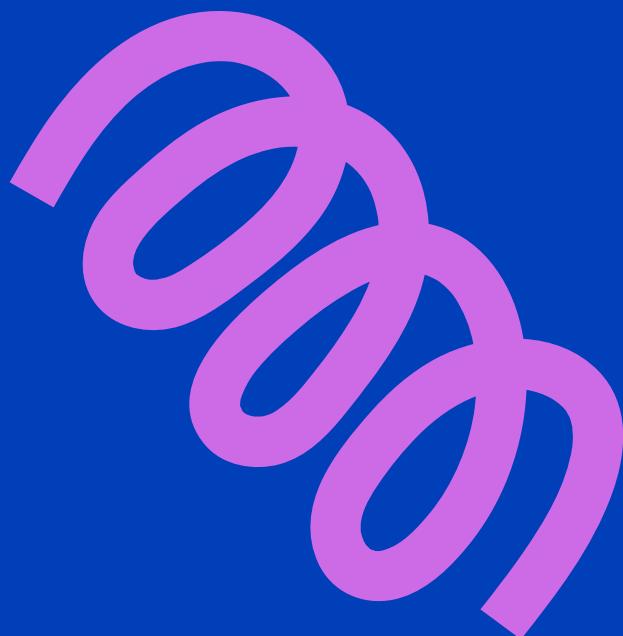
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# Thank you!

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