

# CANDLE COMMUNITY TRUST



ANNUAL REPORT  
2024





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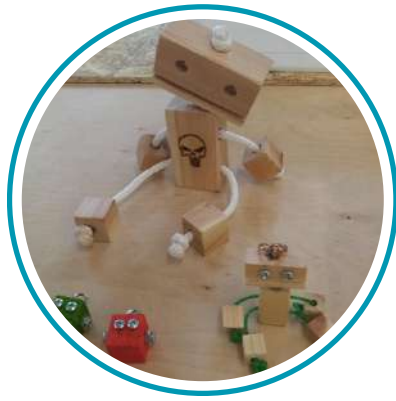
www.candletrust.ie



Candle Community Trust



@candle10



# 2024 Year in Review

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Candle Community Trust has been in existence for 47 years and has always sought to respond meaningfully to the ever-changing environment. Working in close collaboration with the Probation Service, CDETB, TUSLA and other key partners, Candle has evolved from humble beginnings into an organisation that delivers a broad range of creative and innovative educational, developmental, and therapeutic programmes to young people and families. Over 170 young people currently attend services on a weekly basis and Candle now has 32 staff members delivering these services. The redeveloped campus provides a context for this service delivery, and it greatly enhances and supports the essence of the work. The campus includes a facility, double the size of the original premises, a therapeutic garden, a new recreational pitch area and a totally restructured entrance area.

In recent years Candle has developed a model of practice, a methodology and service delivery, which seeks to meet the needs of young people. Candle uses trauma informed approaches and restorative practice methodologies in its programming, to provide a wrap-around service to young people.

At Candle:

- Young people are at the heart of everything
- Their voice and their needs have been central in shaping services.
- Every young person can reach their potential once they are provided with the right opportunities.

Candle is that opportunity:

- an opportunity to learn, to be creative, to have fun and to grow
- a safe and nurturing place where everyone is welcome
- where everyone is cherished for the gifts they bring to our community
- a space to find your inner resilience and build for the future

Candle offers a wide range of services including a full time Educational Programme, Connect Project, Youth Service, Therapeutic Space, Family Outreach, Developmental Programming, Keyworking and Outreach Mentoring Programmes. Each young person can access the services offered in Candle as part of our wraparound approach. The organisation is particularly focused on achieving meaningful outcomes for participants.

The Candle Strategic Plan 2024 - 26 incorporates the vision and direction of the organisation over the coming period and signposts the key developments envisaged.

## Statement of Philosophy

Candle Community Trust is based on the fundamental principle that all are welcome here, equally cherished for the gifts they bring to our community. Values of respect, inclusiveness, right relationship and acceptance are at the core of our beliefs and convictions. In creating a safe empathic environment which fosters personal growth and responsibility, Candle invites each person to become their best selves. Candle strives to be a trauma informed, best practice service in all its aspects, thereby being an oasis of healing and hope.



## Mission Statement

Candle Community Trust provides a context for young people to grow and develop emotionally, intellectually, physically, socially and spiritually in community.

Candle has made a fundamental option to provide services to those who are often marginalised in community.

Candle provides formal and non-formal educational, developmental and therapeutic services to young people.

We are committed to creating and delivering a comprehensive best practice service to meet the needs of young people who experience disadvantage and marginalisation.

## Young People's Outcomes



In 2024, the focus has been on continuing to deliver services that are relevant, meaningful and impactful. **Young people, and their needs, are at the heart of everything that we do at Candle.** We have the privilege of meeting young people at an important juncture in their lives, and we seek to provide them with a service that they deserve: a safe space to be welcomed, cherished and nurtured so that each can become their best selves; an opportunity to learn, to grow and to have a voice; a place of care and healing in the midst of a sometimes turbulent world.

We have further built our wrap-around approach which we believe is crucial to delivering on our promise for the young people, for the organisation and for funding agencies. In 2024 there has been a particular emphasis on increasing outreach services, particularly for those young people who are hard to reach, as, among other things, the long-term effects of COVID-19 continue to impact engagement, education, and social connections.

Alongside this, Candle has maintained a strong commitment to good governance, robust financial practices, and strong collaboration with all stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness and integrity of all our activities.

This report highlights some of the impactful work done in 2024, the significant new initiatives undertaken, and reflects the key foundations that underpin services.

### **1. Emphasis on Good Governance:**

Candle is dedicated to good governance, ensuring that all decisions and practices reflect our commitment to transparency, accountability, and ethical management. Aligned with the Charities Code of Governance, our operations are structured to guarantee that resources are used responsibly, that there is clarity in decision-making, and that we are always working toward the best interests of the young people we serve. Key governance practices include:

- **Board Oversight:** Our Board of Trustees ensures that Candle operates with integrity and accountability, providing guidance and oversight to ensure strategic alignment with our mission.
- **Risk Management:** We have established strong frameworks to identify and manage risks, safeguarding the organization and its services.
- **Financial Transparency:** Candle ensures full transparency in its financial dealings, with oversight to ensure that resources are allocated effectively to support our mission.



## 2. Robust Financial Practices:

Candle's financial practices reflect our commitment to responsible resource management. We ensure that all funds are used to advance our mission and that financial decisions align with the organisation's goals and the needs of the young people we serve.

- Financial Oversight: Our financial systems are regularly reviewed by our Board of Trustees to ensure effective and efficient use of funds.
- Funding Management: In 2024, Candle secured additional funding, thereby ensuring that core services are maintained, supported and enhanced.
- Transparency and Accountability: We maintain clear financial reporting to stakeholders, ensuring transparency and confidence in our operations.

## 3. Launch of the Strategic Plan 2024-2026:

In 2024 we were pleased to launch the Strategic Plan for the years 2024 - 26. This Plan will be the guiding principle for the organisation over the coming years and represents an ambitious and focused agenda. We believe that this Plan is innovative and creative, and articulates the key advancements required in the Candle organisation in order to meet the needs of current and future participants.

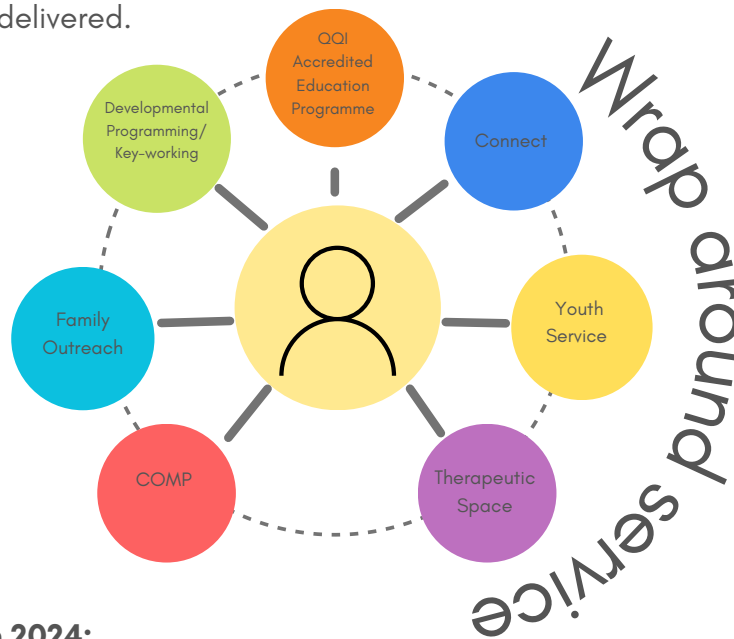
The Strategic Plan emerged from a detailed process of reflection and consultation. Over a period of 5 months key stakeholders were involved in a series of workshops aimed at reviewing our previous 3-year plan and identifying the vision, focus and direction for the years ahead. These stakeholders included the young people who access the services, families and community representatives, representatives of our funding agencies, the staff and management team, and the Board of Trustees. The final product has grown organically over the period and represents the combined wisdom and endeavour of these relevant and important parties.

The Plan is informed and guided by a number of governmental policy documents and other important publications. And, of course, the ethos, aims and objectives of Candle, with its developments to date, are central to, and underpin, each strategic goal and objective. The strategic goals for the period have emerged from a reflection on the vision for the Candle organisation under the 5 pillars of education, developmental, therapeutic, community relations and organisational. An executive summary outlines the central focus of the Plan.



#### 4. Building additional capacity within Services:

Candle is committed to delivering best practice services that are both evidence-based and tailored to meet the needs of young people. We are continuously improving our approach to ensure that services are impactful, holistic, and effective. Candle offers a wide range of educational, developmental and therapeutic services using a wrap-around approach. In 2024 Candle, in accord with the goals contained in the Strategic Plan, continued to build capacity in each service area through sourcing additional funding, recalibrating management structures in line with the direction and growth in the organisation, and recruiting additional personnel with particular skill sets. The cumulative effective of these initiatives is that greater numbers of young people were engaged (particularly Probation Service clients), more enhanced wrap around provision was provided, with significant outcomes delivered.



#### 5. Achievements in 2024:

Academic accreditation plays a crucial role for young people attending Candle Community Trust, as it offers tangible recognition of their hard work and progress. QOI accreditation is not just a certificate; it serves as a powerful stepping stone to further education, opening doors to career opportunities. For many participants, achieving this award represents a significant milestone, displaying their dedication and growth.

The importance of the QOI Level 5 Award in Candle's educational offering is immense, as it acts as a source of motivation for young people across the training programme. This qualification not only validates their academic abilities but also instils confidence in their potential to continue learning and pursue their aspirations. In recent years, this major award has been a key development, empowering young people and giving them a pathway for the future. It opens up opportunities to apprenticeships and progression through the CAO.

For those starting with QOI Level 3, this qualification often marks their first step back into formal education. For many, this is a critical foundation that paves the way toward greater academic success. The progression from Level 3 to Level 4 and eventually to Level 5 reflects their growing abilities and readiness for more advanced learning. The journey is both developmental and educational, and Candle's comprehensive approach provides essential support for young people to succeed in both areas.

2024 has been another year of impressive academic achievement, a testament to the hard work of the participants and the commitment of Candle Community Trust to provide a wraparound approach to education. This holistic support system ensures that young people not only gain qualifications but also the personal skills and resilience needed for their continued growth and success. Ultimately, academic accreditation through QQI is more than just a milestone; it is an empowering tool that opens new horizons for the young people at Candle.



## 6. Key Practice Methodologies:

Our service delivery is grounded in key methodologies:

- **Trauma-Informed Practice:** Recognising the significant trauma many young people experience, all of our services are designed to create a safe, supportive, and empathetic environment. This approach helps ensure that young people are not re-traumatised and that their experiences are validated and addressed.
- **Restorative Practice:** Central to our work is the belief that accountability, empathy, and building relationships are vital for positive change. Restorative practices help young people repair harm, understand the impact of their actions, and make amends, fostering personal growth and responsibility.
- **Empowerment:** Candle empowers young people by involving them in decision-making, encouraging them to take ownership of their lives and futures. Through programmes designed to build resilience and self-esteem, we help young people develop the skills and confidence to succeed.

These methodologies create an integrated approach that ensures our services are not only effective but also responsive to the diverse needs of the young people we serve.



## 7. Focus on 'Hard to Reach' Young People:

One of the most pressing challenges in 2024 has been engaging hard-to-reach young people—those who are disengaged from education and services. The impact of COVID-19 has exacerbated this issue, leaving many young people isolated, disconnected from their communities and at greater risk of being drawn into criminality. The loss of routine and social connections, coupled with mental health struggles, has created a growing need for targeted outreach services.

Our outreach programmes are designed to meet young people where they are- both physically and emotionally. By re-engaging these young people, particularly those at the greatest risk, we help them overcome barriers and reconnect with education, support, and social services. These outreach efforts are vital in preventing involvement in anti-social behaviour, involvement in criminal activity and help young people find alternative pathways for positive living.

The Outreach Mentoring Programme extended to Dublin Northside was a new initiative during 2024. Candle established a base in Finglas from which project workers can engage in outreach work with young people referred by Probation Officers. This initiative followed a request by Probation personnel to provide some services to their clients in north Dublin. A 3-day programme at the Margaret Aylward Centre has been launched.



## 8. Training and Knowledge Sharing:

Candle Community Trust also participated in professional development activities, including:

- On Probation Podcast: The Candle team and young people contributed to a podcast focusing on the work of Candle and our collaboration with probation personnel. The Podcast was well received.
- Training Event: Candle hosted a training event on Trauma Informed Practice for all staff and invited probation officers and social workers to join. The training focused on improving service delivery, enhancing staff skills and building a more effective collaborative approach.

## 9. Acquisition of Additional Property:

In 2024, Candle acquired additional property, which will provide much-needed space for the further development of our service. This new facility, known as **the ParkeCandle**, will support the current work undertaken at Candle and provides great possibilities for new initiatives. The ParkeCandle currently has a recreational area including a pitch and a walking/running path. We are extremely grateful to Le Cheile Schools Trust who enthusiastically provided the lease of the property to Candle.



# Candle Community Trust

## Towards 2025

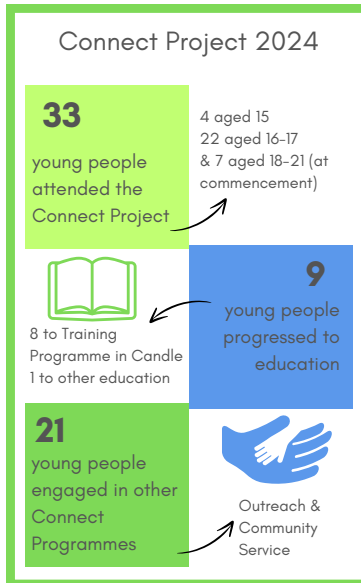
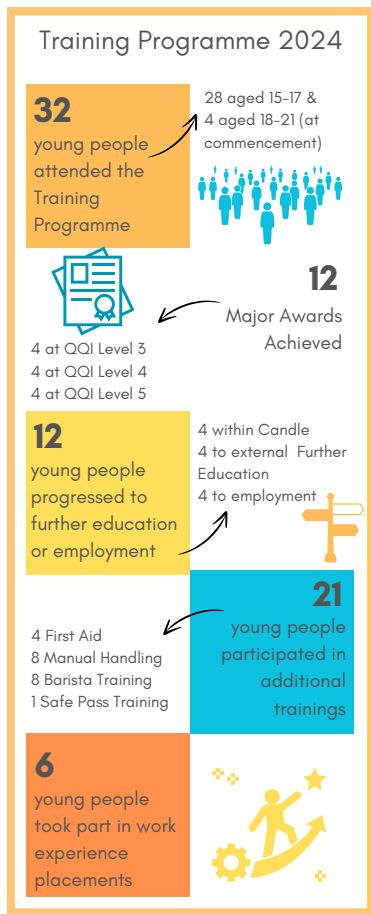


Candle Community Trust is gearing up for an exciting and impactful year in 2025! While continuing to deliver on the goals and objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan 2024 - 26, the following areas will be of particular focus:

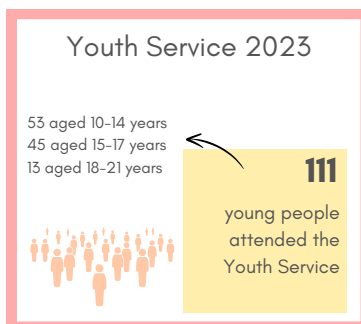
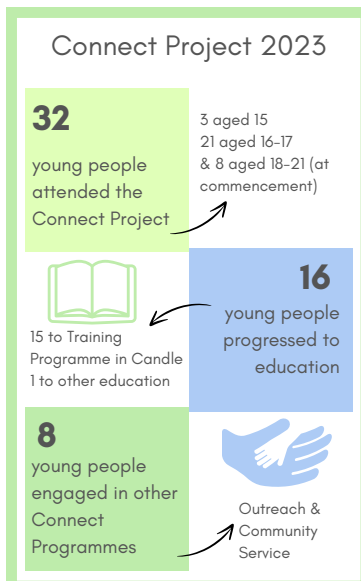
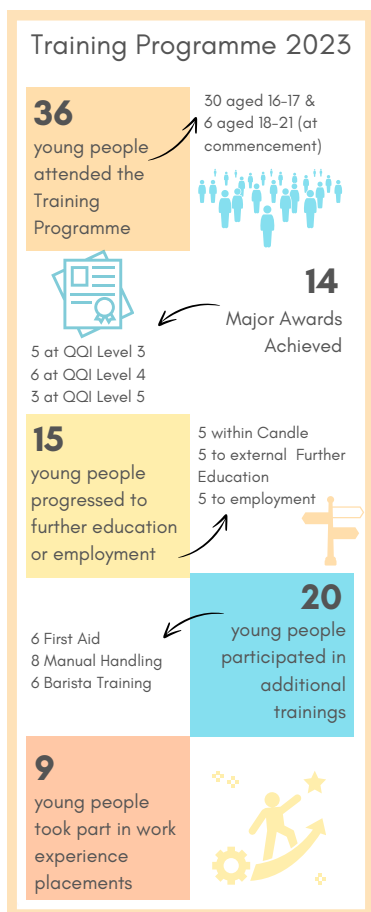
- 1. Further development of the 'Learning for Life Programme':** The programme offers valuable opportunities for young people to acquire the skills necessary to navigate daily living, which is crucial for their growth and independence.
- 2. Outreach Services:** Expanding outreach, especially with the Northside initiative, will help bring vital support to hard-to-reach youth. This is key to ensuring that young people, who often have complex needs, are not left behind.
- 3. Responsive Programming:** Candle is committed to staying adaptive, which is especially important as the needs of young people can shift over time. Being able to quickly pivot and offer new interventions is important for the organisation.
- 4. Innovative and Creative Responses:** The plan, as always, is to provide cutting-edge, trauma-informed interventions in education, personal/social development, and therapeutics as part of Candle's wrap-around model of service delivery.
- 5. ParkeCandle:** This new space promises to be a fantastic addition, giving young people opportunities to engage in outdoor activities like horticulture and recreation, which are beneficial for both emotional and physical health.
- 6. Therapeutic Services Expansion:** As demand for therapeutic services continues to rise, expanding these services will be critical in meeting the needs of young people and addressing the long waiting lists. There will be a proactive approach to ensuring that young people get the support they need in a timely manner.
- 7. Staff Well-Being:** Staff at Candle is our greatest resource. In 2024 staff well-being was enhanced through a new Employment Assistance Programme, improved terms and conditions, professional development workshops and a range of well-being initiatives. In 2025 we intend to continue prioritising staff well-being with opportunities for training and personal development.

Overall, Candle Community Trust is setting the stage for a year of growth, expansion, and meaningful impact. Young people, and their needs, are central to all that Candle stands for and it is our privilege to continue providing meaningful services and interventions.

# 2024 in numbers



# 2023 in numbers



# Strategic Plan 2024-2026

## Executive Summary

As a trauma informed organisation, committed to working with young people who may experience marginalisation, Candle will:

- **Ensure**.....the continuation and development of our innovative and creative services by securing core funding allocations.
- **Evolve**.....further as a Centre of excellence in trauma informed practices, enhancing our child centered care, pedagogy, environment, and staff well-being.
- **Engage**.....those 'hardest to reach,' often caught into cycles of criminality and destructiveness, through intensive outreach.
- **Empower**.....young people through a renewed focus on progression with the establishment of a new 'Learning for Life' education programme.
- **Enhance**.....outcomes and measure impacts for young people, families and the community.



# Developmental Services

Developmental aspects of programming within Candle seek to equip young people to navigate adolescence and make choices which will assist them to reach their full potential. Developmental processes move with the young person as they journey through Candle and include assessment, induction, key working, care planning, restorative approaches, developmental programming, progression and tracking. Underpinning all developmental processes are our key methodologies (Trauma Recovery Model, Restorative Practice and Empowerment Model) and an ongoing commitment to trauma informed practice which shapes how we plan and deliver services. In 2024 staff participated in training on the Trauma Recovery Model with Jonny Matthews, Restorative Practice Training with Joe Power and Neurodiversity Informed Support Training Workshop with Eoin Stephens.



As part of our trauma informed approach we have integrated our methodologies across our services. We have developed an assessment that through observation of the young person from first contact, and throughout their placement, which informs how we work with the individual to best meet their needs and informs the interventions that may be required. The assessment process aims to identify the educational, personal, social and developmental needs of the young person and then to create a programme to meet those needs. From a combined educational and social assessment, alongside a six-week induction programme a Trauma Recovery Model (TRM) is developed which identifies underlying needs and appropriate interventions.

The TRM identifies a specific plan for working with the young person and guides staff on how to work with each young person in an individualised manner. Assessment meetings, care team meetings and key worker presentations during the young person's time with us ensures a focus on needs and progression.

The induction programme within Candle is fundamental to how a young person understands and engages with our service. The induction programme involves providing information to young people about Candle, our key policies, the daily routine, what a young person can receive and what Candle expects from a young person. An agreement is signed based on key issues and young people are introduced to the wider Candle group and allocated a keyworker.

Within Candle we feel relationship is key to a young person's successful placement with us and significant time is invested in developing relationships and getting to know the young person. Key working is an integral part of our service, it is through this process that we engage with and build professional trusting relationships with the young people, effectively identify the complexities that exist within each young person and work with them using holistic approaches. The role of the keyworker is very important as they are often the main person who initially identifies the complexities of the individual young person. The keyworker is also equipped with the knowledge to provide appropriate interventions to support each individual. The key worker provides emotional and practical support as required and enables and empowers them to make informed pro social decisions. Key working takes place in agreement with the young person usually on a weekly or fortnightly basis. The keyworker utilises the Outcome Star as a tool to identify needs and plans sessions to target these needs. The keyworker will be involved in ensuring the young person is engaged in all aspects of their programme in Candle, alongside engaging with parents/carers and professionals to develop creative responses to individual needs. During 2024 keyworkers responded to a variety of presenting needs such as poor attendance, family illness, drug/alcohol misuse, transition to aftercare, engagement in criminality, anxiety and complex family issues.



In Candle, we seek to empower the young person by creating an environment which understands the impact of inequity, promotes the young person's abilities, learning and knowledge, sets meaningful goals alongside the young person and supports them to take control of their lives, to have a voice, to listen and be listened to. Fostering relationships which are nurturing, affirming and respectfully challenging are central to our philosophy. The approaches of Restorative Practice are weaved throughout the organisation and are key to our communication with young people, staff and professionals.

Gathering regularly to share and discuss, especially when there is conflict, to process and move forward has helped us all to be a more listening and reflective community. Choosing to be more restorative in our language and attitudes has modelled a healthy way of interacting for those who attend Candle and leads to more positive outcomes.

## Developmental Programmes



Candle runs a series of developmental programmes aimed at increasing young people's understanding of their world. These take place through key working or in a more structured format on a weekly basis in both the Connect and Training Programme. The following programmes are offered: Crime Awareness, Healthy Relationships, Drug and Alcohol Awareness, Consent, Healthy Communication, Restorative Practice, Identity, Boundaries, Voting, Managing Stress and Anxiety. Developmental Programmes are developed in response to emerging issues and challenges faced by young people. Through the delivery of these programmes alongside regular key working we have witnessed positive outcomes such as: decrease in the levels of offending behaviour, improved self-care and living skills, evidence of improved physical and mental well being, normalisation among young people to seek support, decrease in levels of anger or aggressive outbursts in the Centre and at home, signs of greater motivation and taking responsibility, building of healthy social networks/relationships, reduced levels of stress and anxiety and more care for individual mental health.



# The Training Programme

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The full-time Training Programme at Candle is an educational programme delivering QQI Levels 3, 4 and 5. The programmes are accredited by QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland). The awards are assessed at level 3, 4 or 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

The Training Programme is aimed at early school leavers, those who have disengaged with the educational system, and with our Level 5 programme, those who have completed second level education and wish to progress to further education. We aim to support young people with diverse and complex needs. The age range of the young people accessing our programmes is 15 -21 years. All three of our major awards are focused on employment and progression opportunities. Our referrals come from Young People's Probation, the Probation Service, Juvenile Liaison Officers, TUSLA, local agencies and family and self-referrals.

The programme is delivered in our vibrant centre by experienced and dedicated teachers who work to deliver a relevant and progressive programme. At Candle we offer a second chance in education responding to the needs of those young people who are marginalised and disadvantaged. We aim to prepare the young people to take on opportunities and challenges in their future.

## Accreditation

QQI qualifications are an important goal for every young person who engages in education at the centre, due to the sense of achievement and pride for the young person and the progression pathways that accredited qualifications offer. Achieving a Major Award is the principal accreditation goal of each learner.

QQI Level 3 Major Award  
Employability Skills  
3M0935

QQI Level 4 Major Award  
General Learning  
4M2010

QQI Level 5 Major Award  
Community Development  
5M3050

The Level 4 Major Award remains the heart of the education programme. Over the last few years, we have seen an increase in young people arriving to Candle without a Junior Certificate and taking part in our Level 3 programme. There is a balance of practical and theory subjects. We believe that it is very beneficial to take a supportive approach towards education supported by developmental and therapeutic programmes.

Positive relationships are developed while working in small groups, setting clear boundaries and encouraging responsibility. Young people can also obtain Safe Pass, Manual Handling and other certificates and are encouraged and supported in doing so.

### QQI Awards

There were 123 Minor Awards achieved in Candle in 2024 and 12 Major Awards. There were 4 Major Awards and 34 Minor Awards at Level 5, 53 Minor Awards and 4 Major Awards at level 4 and 36 Minor Awards and 4 Major Awards at level 3. Huge credit is due to each young person who achieved awards in 2024.

The QQI Level 3 Award in Employability Skills gives the young people the opportunity to engage with education while obtaining a qualification equivalent to the Junior Certificate. The QQI Level 4 Major Award in General Learning is the equivalent of the Leaving Cert Applied.

The Level 5 Award is an access course for third level education. Achieving this awards offers young people the opportunity to obtain the qualifications to progress on to third level education.

### Accreditation in 2024



	QQI Level 3	QQI Level 4	QQI Level 5	Total:
<b>Major Awards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Minor Awards achieved</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>123</b>

### Support

The education programme is unique in terms of the range of support offered and the emphasis on the education and developmental needs of the young person. All programmes are underpinned by Candle's three key methodologies. All young people who attend the Training Programme have access to our Therapeutic Space.

Before commencing on the programme young people take part in an educational assessment. The assessment means that the educational and developmental needs of the young person can be established to ensure early-stage interventions.

Candle's Literacy and Numeracy Programme is an integral component of the Training Programme and is offered both one-on-one and integrated into the programmes. As the curriculum is customised for each young person, problems with reading, numeracy, and confidence are addressed on an individual basis.

## Developmental Programmes

The Developmental Programmes offered to Trainees aim to create a safe space to learn about and discuss important and relevant topics. All young people attending the training programme participate in this programme with their voice and their needs being central to shaping the programme. In 2024 we facilitated several onsite personal development workshops with a focus on wellbeing including, healthy relationships, consent, healthy communication, crime awareness, voting and work experience preparedness. In addition to the topic led programmes we offer individual support and key working, and forums, where young people have their voice heard.

The weekly cookery programme teaches the young people to make healthier food choices and encourages them how to cook more sustainably. Young people also took part in driving lessons, martial arts workshops and Graffiti art workshops. We also continued to offer our weekly sports and horticulture programmes.

## Developmental Programmes 2024



## Socialisation Programme

The young people at Candle attended a range of socialisation programmes and outings throughout 2024. These trips have become an essential part of the Training Programme as they serve to strengthen relationships and to broaden the social and cultural experience of the young people. Excursions take place throughout the year.

In June the training programme went to Go Quest indoor adventure centre. They also enjoyed a local outdoor activity playing Pitch and Putt. The highlight of June was a trip to K2Alpacas in Newtownmountkennedy to meet and walk with the alpacas.

## Summer Programme 2024



The July summer programme included a trips to Howth Castle Cookery School, a Pottery Workshop and Paddleboarding in Dun Laoghaire. In August activities continued with another trip to Howth Castle Cookery School and Pitch & Putt in Howth.

The programmes continued throughout autumn and winter with excursions to Awesome Walls, Paintball at Flynn Park, Go Karting and a Halloween trip to an Escape Room. The young people also enjoyed trips to Zero Latency, the GPO Museum and Go Karting. The outings are always great fun and enjoyed by young people and staff. We finished up the year on a positive note with our Christmas dinner, quiz and pool tournament.



## Winter Programme 2024



## Gaisce Award

Gaisce, the President's Award is a youth award for young people in Ireland encouraging them to dream big and realise their potential. Gaisce is focused on, and driven by the following core values, Empowerment, Inclusion & Equality, Respect and Excellence. Gaisce or 'great achievement' is a self-development programme for young people. By taking part in Gaisce, young people take on exciting personal, physical and community challenges and develop new skills and friendships.

To achieve this award the young people, take part in several activities each week in each of the challenge areas: Personal Skill, Community Involvement and Physical Recreation. The bronze and silver award challenges are completed when the participants undertake an adventure journey. In Candle in 2024, 8 young people achieved their bronze award.

## Employability Skills

In 2024 we continued to provide young people with the opportunity to learn new skills both onsite in Candle and externally at other training locations. There were several employment skills programmes and workshops provided. They included First Aid, Safe Pass, Manual Handling, Bike Maintenance and Barista Skills.

### Employability Skills- Training Programme



young people took part in Barista Training



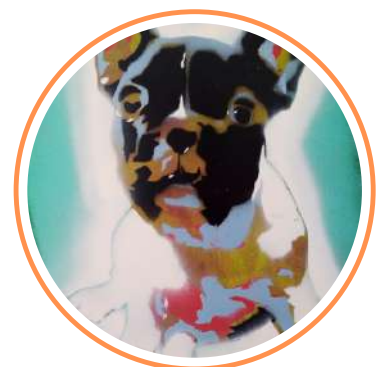
young people took part in First Aid Training



young people took part in Manual Handling Training

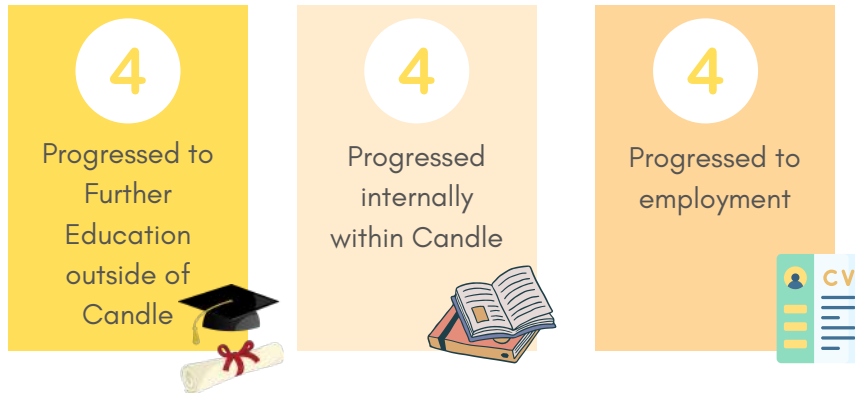


young person took part in Safe Pass Training



## Progression in 2024

In 2024 young people from the Training Programme continued to progress internally, from Level 3 to Level 4 and from Level 4 to Level 5. Young people also pursued their chosen progression routes as they moved on from Candle- moving on to Colleges of Further Education and the workplace.



## Looking Forward

Some of the developments we are planning for 2025 include, further developing our learning for life programme to prepare young people for progression to further education and the workplace and commencing delivery of the ICDL- International Certification of Digital Literacy- to support young people to develop their IT skills.



"It's a safe place for everyone. Chill atmosphere. Everyone's sound."

"Candle has helped me complete my Level 4 and has very nice staff. They have a really good work ethic to help young people to achieve their dreams."

"Candle is helping me work towards my QQI. It's an amazing place. I'm not here long but so far I really like."

"They listen to what you have to say and respect your opinion."

*Voice of the Young People*

"I like coming to Candle because it's the first place I have been comfortable working towards my education."

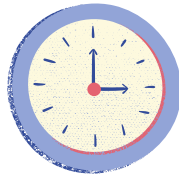
"Something I like about Candle is they help me learn new things and we go on trips and it keeps me busy."

# Learning for Life

Candle will:

**Empower.....young people through a renewed focus on progression with the establishment of a new 'Learning for Life' education programme.**

Attendance & Timekeeping  
Promotion  
(Training Programme &  
Connect)

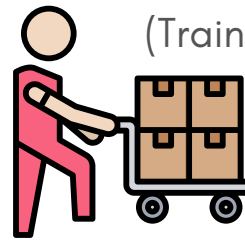


Barista Training  
(Training Programme &  
Youth Service)



Bicycle Maintenance  
(Connect, Youth Service &  
COMP)

Manual Handling Training  
(Training Programme, COMP  
& Youth Service)



Driver Education  
(Training Programme &  
COMP)

Cookery Programmes  
(Training Programme,  
Connect, Youth Service &  
COMP)



Leadership Programme  
(Youth Service)



ESOL Classes  
(Training Programme &  
Youth Service)



Learning for Life  
workshops  
(Training  
Programme)

Reading  
Programme  
(Connect)



Learning for Life Drop In  
(Youth Service)



Work Experience  
(Training Programme)



# The Connect Project

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In 2024 the Connect Project grew in response to the emerging needs of the young people being referred to the Service. The team identified a wide range of responses and interventions to meet the needs of the young people, including those presenting with more complex needs. Connect comprises of three main programme areas; the Connect Project, Community Service, and Connect Outreach. As with all programmes in Candle, our work is founded upon our three key methodologies. The Connect Project aims to meet young people where they are at in their educational, social and developmental journeys. At the core of the project is a focus on creating a safe, person-centred space for young people where they are given scope to discover their abilities, strengths and talents, and gain the confidence to achieve their full-potential.

## Connecting the Dots



The Connect Project works with young people from the ages of 15–21 years old. The majority of referrals come from Young People’s Probation, the Probation Service, Juvenile Liaison Officers and TUSLA, while we are seeing an increased stream from early school leavers and self-referrals. The programme is offered 5 days per week with 8 sessions offered within that time. Individualised one-to-one programmes can also be facilitated where specific referrals are made. The specialised programmes are tailored to suit the individuals’ needs and requirements. We have found that young people engaged with different services in the wider Candle Project, whether that is the Youth Service or the COMP Project, have continued their journey with Candle through the pathway of the Connect Project and even moving onto the Training Programme to gain accreditation. The Connect Project works with a wide-range of young people from a broad cross-section of the local community. There were a number of young people from the Travelling Community and the LGBTQ+ Community who joined the Connect programme this year. Some of the young people are in the care of the State and we work closely with Tusla Residential Homes, carers, the wider family and guardians in order to achieve best outcomes while attending our service.

Many of the young people attending the Connect Project are early school leavers and face the challenge of reintegration back into education. The young people often have chaotic lifestyles and may be engaged in criminality. The Project works to create routine and stability. Participants engage in the following programmes in order to get a sense of the work that they will be engaged in when they progress to the Training Programme. These modules include Communications, Application of Number, Health & Fitness, Computer Literacy, Career Preparation, Personal Effectiveness, Art, and Woodwork.

The Connect staff also works closely with the Family Outreach Worker particularly in the early stages to enhance support to the young person who is re-entering full-time education after a period of non-attendance. The Family Support offered to parents and guardians around re-integration, registration, and helping implement a new routine aids successful outcomes for the young person, exemplifying the benefits of the wrap-around service provided by the Candle Model.



### **Programming**

In terms of the educational element of the service, the young people work on QQI Level 3 and Level 4 modules. These are introduced based on the individual's academic ability, meeting each young person where they are at, finding their strengths and working to support them on the more challenging aspects of the course. As well as the QQI modules, Connect participants also had access to additional courses such as Manual Handling, Safe Pass and the Driver Theory Test. Due to some more challenging life circumstances, some young people have remained in Connect to complete their QQI Level 3 Major Award.

Many of the young people who started in Connect in 2024, progressed to the Training Programme and have completed or are currently working towards their Major and Minor awards at levels 3 and 4. The team noted that some of the hardest to reach young people found it particularly difficult to engage with the class-based programming and in response, the staff increased the outreach aspect of their work. More than ever, it has been necessary to meet the young people in their communities and bring a tailored programme of work to them; whether that be educational, developmental, or social intervention. By building the relationship and trust through outreach, it is hoped that the young person will at some stage move more confidently into education and/or employment.

Throughout the year, the Connect Project offered a wide range of social programming encouraging interpersonal skills, team-building opportunities and pro-social activities. The young people enjoyed trips off-site to Zero-Latency, Bowling and Paint-balling. The Connect group joined the Training Programme on trips to Howth Castle for bread-making and Pitch and Putt as well as a Go-Quest Trip where the Connect group overcame challenges to become the overall winners! During the summer, we enjoyed Kayaking in Dun Laoghaire, sea-swimming and a hugely enjoyable trip to Baysports. The young people attended the ever-popular go-karting trips, while other more green-fingered members of the group enjoyed a trip to Bloom. There were several Graffiti art workshops where the young people expressed their artistic flare and creativity. Musical talents were also discovered in the Drumming Workshops, guitar and key-board exploration and singing sessions. Some young people took an interest in arts, crafts and knitting as well as trialling out some Spanish and French for their holidays. During class time there were lots of opportunities for games and getting to use the outdoor spaces in Candle for football, basketball, and table-tennis. We had some Movie days, Play-station battles and plenty of practice around the pool table. Easter, Halloween and Christmas festivities were also enjoyed such as an Easter Egg Hunt, Candle Christmas Dinner and quiz, and the Pool Tournament.

### Connect Activities



### Developmental Programme

The Horticultural and Cookery programmes have complemented each other very well this year, giving the young people the opportunity to do more hands-on and practical learning. They have been involved in planting seeds, seeing the fruit and vegetables grow, harvesting them and using them to create meals for themselves and others in the Candle Community. We had flower-arranging classes, festival headband workshops, Halloween pumpkin carving and Christmas themed decorations using materials from the garden. Both the gardening and cookery programmes allow the young people to enjoy different spaces in Candle as well as benefit from the therapeutic and sensory inputs from these activities.

The Developmental Programme proved particularly successful this year. This was in part helped by the team's creation of the Developmental library from where staff can easily draw on resources for the Developmental needs of the young people. Some of the topics covered in the Developmental classes included; Crime Awareness, Drug and Alcohol Awareness, Relationships and Sexuality, Mental Health, Healthy Relationships and Boundaries, Consent and Healthy Communication.

#### Connect Developmental Programmes



#### Therapeutic Space

All of the Young People in the Connect Project can avail of the Acupuncture, Counselling and Reflexology services. As a team, we have noticed great engagement with the Therapeutic offering from the young people, even in the early stages of being in Connect. It is encouraging to see the openness to the services, noting the young peoples' enjoyment of the service and to hear how they benefit from the healing space.

#### Community Service

In 2024, there were 7 young people registered for the Community Service Programme. 2 of the young people who completed their Community Service hours went onto employment after their time in Candle. 2 of the young people continued to engage with the Therapeutic Space for a time following their Community Service while 3 young people have returned to or are still engaged with completing their Community Service hours.

The Programme continues to respond to the increased numbers of young people who are directed by the Courts to complete a Community Service Order (CSO). Candle's model and existing restorative approach gives the young people the opportunity to complete the practical work that is involved with the traditional model of Community Service, as well as the opportunity to engage with the trauma-informed developmental programme. The young people are challenged to reflect on the circumstances that led to their offending behaviour. We see that through these interventions, we empower the young people to make more pro-social choices which has led to a reduction in criminal behaviour.

The foundation of our Community Service Programme includes three elements that we consider fundamental to it's success; restoration, reparation, and developmental work. Restoration is the process that calls on young people to redress the harm caused to the victim while holding themselves accountable for their actions. Our aim is to facilitate restorative meetings, when deemed necessary, to address their offending behaviour in a reflective manner.

Reparation involves the young people giving back to the wider community, recognising the harmful way that crime has impacted others; they partake in work that they would not normally do. And finally, through developmental work, the young people learn key life skills to use in their everyday lives.

### Community Service



The Young people worked on different projects in the Therapeutic Garden at Candle and learned valuable and practical skills. The cooking programme was also a significant part of the project which allows young people to gain new skills while challenging them to think of others in the Community. Additionally, they helped with weekly maintenance of the space, painting projects, repair works, woodwork projects and an art piece that will hang in the Day Centre. We saw the participants develop skills such as team-work, improved communication, emotional regulation and leadership skills while working with staff and other young people. Through the Developmental Programme, we worked on areas such as Substance Misuse and Addiction, Crime Reduction, Restorative Justice, Harm Reduction, Anger, Emotional Awareness, Empathy, Relationships and Community. The young people should be commended for their courage in facing tough topics in a reflective manner and sharing experiences of detention and drug addiction and the impact that has had on their lives. The developmental topics are introduced both in a formal and informal way and aim to create awareness around the underlying issues that led to the offending behaviour. Relationship building and modelling behaviours by staff are a key component of the project. For some young people who have been groomed into crime from an early age, Community Service is an opportunity to engage in a trauma-informed programme that has positive long-term outcomes for the young person and the wider community who are impacted by criminal activity.

### Connect Outreach

While there has always been an outreach element to the Connect Project, 2024 saw a significant expansion of this aspect of the service.

As previously mentioned, some of the young people who are referred to the Connect Programme find a classroom setting difficult to attend. In some cases, the young people's needs are more suited to an outreach approach. Candle staff met the young people in the community in a more informal and familiar setting. It is hoped that this intervention will build relationships and trust so that the young people can begin to identify what it is that they need in terms of educational, developmental, and therapeutic supports.

There was a particular focus on outreach during the summer months in Connect. There were intensive efforts made to encourage both the young people and their families to partake in the outreach service in order to meet Probation requirements. Some of the harder to reach young people took longer to engage with while others were more open to activities such as indoor rock climbing trips, kayaking, Bowling, Go-Quest, and Mondello Park.

### **Connect on the Northside**

In 2024 the outreach service expanded to the Northside of Dublin. This development is in collaboration with the Probation Service in the Northside and seeks to engage those hardest to reach and link them with support. The Service commenced in June 2024 and initially worked with three young people and has now increased to six referrals at the end of 2024. The service has supported young people to engage in educational support work, CVs and applying for jobs, manual handling course training, linking with local youth services and other organisations and engagement in therapeutic space for acupuncture. The service has also facilitated a number of outings including Awesome Walls, Zero Latency, Paintballing, Bowling and driving lessons. We have observed the following outcomes for young people: an increase in confidence, willingness to engage with support, re-engagement with education, consistent engagement with the project, openness to expressing feelings and emotions. The service hopes to develop its offering on the Northside of Dublin in 2025.



In addition, Connect staff also visit the Oberstown Children's Detention Campus in order to maintain and build relationships with young people who have attended or hope to re-engage with Candle on their release. In 2024 the collaboration with Oberstown was further developed, continuing regular visits to the young people with whom we are involved, whilst planning for new referrals and embedding the referral pathway. In December 2024 it was agreed that the Connect Team would attend Oberstown once per month from January 2025 to meet identified young people from both the Northside and Southside of Dublin as part of their care and management plans for release. This is an exciting development for the organisation and will ensure Candle play an integral role in the release of young people from detention ensuring that they have appropriate supports and a clear pathway to access outreach and educational services.

# Youth Service

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The Youth Service at Candle works with young people aged 10-25. There are currently over 160 young people engaging with the service across 14 groups.

The aim of our youth service is to provide young people within the community with support, opportunities and programmes that will positively impact both their personal and social development. Young people take part in activities including cooking, music, art and sports, as well as, programmes such as martial arts, dance workshops and manual handling. These programmes aim to develop their personal and social skills, allowing them to reach their full potential. We strive to create a safe, supportive and engaging setting where young people are accepted for who they are. We work to create an environment in which young people have a sense of belonging.

During 2024 the youth service has continued to approach its work with young people based on Candle's key methodologies. Working from these methodologies has allowed the youth work team to create and maintain trusting relationships with the young people they engage with. These relationships are the foundation of the work carried out in the youth service, and allow our youth work team to use informal education to respectfully challenge young people in a productive way which aids their development.

Young people often self-refer to the youth service. The youth service also received referrals from Candle's own services such as the Therapeutic space and COMP. Referrals are also received from local primary and secondary schools.

The relationship between the organisation and the surrounding schools had a huge impact on the youth service in 2024. Due to these relationships the afterschool's programme has grown and is flourishing. This has given the youth service more opportunities to carry out early intervention work with young people aged between 10 -12 years old.



Throughout the year the youth service has provided the young people of Ballyfermot and Cherry Orchard and the wider area with exciting programmes and opportunities. These programs have supported young people by teaching them new skills, providing them a space to express themselves, along with a chance to interact with peers, members of the community and various services in a safe place. The youth service will continue to work alongside young people to tackle challenges, create opportunities and have fun doing it.

Our Monday Youth Café continue to have access to a woodwork instructor during their youth service time. They have made some fantastic pieces this year as their woodwork skills continue to progress. Young people from the Youth Service continue to access the Therapeutic Space. This year the afterschools groups have particularly enjoyed the opportunity to engage in reflexology.

In 2024 we established a Leadership Group within the youth service. Young people attended a series of workshops to train as junior leaders. They have since gone on to support the running of events within the youth service.

The main outcomes that the youth service worked towards for our three target groups were as follows:

- Target Group 1: Improve the confidence & agency of the young people and develop opportunities for young people to develop skills of creativity and imagination.
- Target Group 2: Support young people to build healthy relationships within the Youth Service with the Youth Work Team and their peers. Developing the young person's communication skills, emotional intelligence, resilience & determination. Create links within the service between the Youth Service and Therapeutic Space to provide a wrap-around model of care to young people most in need.
- Target Group 3: Engage and build relationships with young people and continuously work towards addressing barriers they face in relation to engaging in education, employment or training.

Young people who attend the Youth Service in Candle are supported to work towards the outcomes identified by the UBU scheme:



## Service Delivery to Young People 2024

### Young people aged 10-14

- 5th Class Afterschool
- 6th Class Afterschool
- 1st & 2nd year Group
- Rare Tigers (Direct Provision Group)
- Thursday Boys Group
- Friday Group

### Young people aged 15-17

- Youth Cafe
- Rare Tigers (Direct Provision Group)
- Leadership Group
- Tuesday Boys Group
- 2nd & 3rd Year Group
- Thursday Boys Group
- Wednesday Drop In

### Young people aged 18-21

- Key working
- Learning for Life Group
- Tuesday Boys Group
- Outreach



### Seasonal Programming

The youth service ran seasonal programmes at Easter, Summer, Halloween and Christmas. The activities offered included; trips to Paintballing, Go Quest, Escape Rooms, Jumpzone, Go Karting, Virtual reality experience, Squirrel Scramble adventure park, Viking Splash Tour, Aquazone, Awesome Walls, Zip It, High Ropes, Archery, Baysports and Kayaking. For Halloween we hosted a silent disco with a spooky movie room, face painting and an arcade games room.

Young people also took part in dance, martial arts, graffiti art, sports and drumming workshops. Through our Learning for Life programme young people took part in manual handling training, Barista training and a Bicycle maintenance workshop.

### Employability Skills- Youth Service

5

young people took part in Barista Training



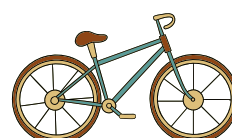
3

young people took part in Manual Handling Training



4

young people took part in a Bicycle Maintenance workshop



Candle Community Trust  
**Summer Camp**

Monday 29th July- Friday 2nd August



In July we ran a week long summer camp with woodwork workshops (make your own wooden robot), art workshops (pottery and gel printing), yoga classes, acupuncture and reflexology, an ice cream truck, a gaming bus, martial arts workshops, a barbeque and an inflatable obstacle course.

**Highlights of the Year**



**Workshops**

Young people took part in Graffiti art workshops, Drumming workshops, Dance workshops and Martial Arts.

**Woodwork Group**

Young people learned woodwork skills & chose their own projects to work on



**Therapeutic Space**

Young people through the Youth Service attended counselling & reflexology appointments



**Afterschools Programme**

Two groups for targeted young people, to support the transition from primary to secondary school



**Employability Skills**

Young people took part in Barista Training, Manual Handling Training & a Bicycle Maintenance workshop



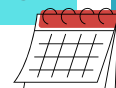
**Summer Programme**

Trips to Go Karting, High Ropes, Squirrel Scramble, Viking Splash Tour, Kayaking and Go Quest



**Summer Camp**

A week long summer camp offering pottery making, gel printing, yoga, an inflatable obstacle course, ice cream truck, gaming bus and BBQ



**Trips & Activities**

Virtual reality experience, paintballing, silent disco, swimming, escape room, mystery games, jumpzone, awesome walls, Halloween & Christmas parties



## Looking Forward to 2025

Our goal for Candle Youth Service is to deliver an effective, vibrant and trauma informed youth service, which engages a diverse group of young people from the community and supports their wellbeing and development.

We plan to:

- Expand our outreach and detached youth work programme
- Introduce keyworking to the Youth Service
- Offer residential trips and activities
- Run the Youth Service summer camp for a second time in 2025



*Voice of the Young People*

What is your highlight of the year?	What are your interests?	What would you like from Candle in 2025?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baking</li> <li>• Just Dance</li> <li>• Halloween</li> <li>• Silent disco</li> <li>• Paintballing</li> <li>• Manual Handling</li> <li>• Chilling with staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooking</li> <li>• Gaming</li> <li>• Water sports</li> <li>• Outdoor sports</li> <li>• Outdoor education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day trips</li> <li>• Quadding</li> <li>• Tayto Park</li> <li>• More cooking</li> <li>• Residential trip</li> <li>• Outdoor activities</li> </ul>

# Therapeutic Space

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The Therapeutic Space is a vital service in Candle for young people struggling with their well-being and mental health. It is central to Candle's unique approach and philosophy of creating a 'wrap around' service that delivers significantly positive outcomes for very vulnerable children, young people, and their families. All the young people that engage in our services have access to the therapies on offer. The young people on the Training Programme and Connect participants attend counselling, acupuncture, reflexology, and yoga throughout the week as part of their overall programming. While the young people who are engaged in the Youth Service or Candle's Outreach Mentoring Programme (COMP) and the young people's family can be referred to counselling, acupuncture and reflexology appointments when requested.

The therapeutic services work collaboratively with developmental programming in providing therapeutic interventions deemed necessary following the assessment and care planning process. In turn, all the staff in Candle play an important role working to support the young people in accessing their therapeutic care plan. It is this 'wrap around' support that makes a difference and ensures young people rarely miss their appointment and as a result develop resilience, positive mental health and well-being.

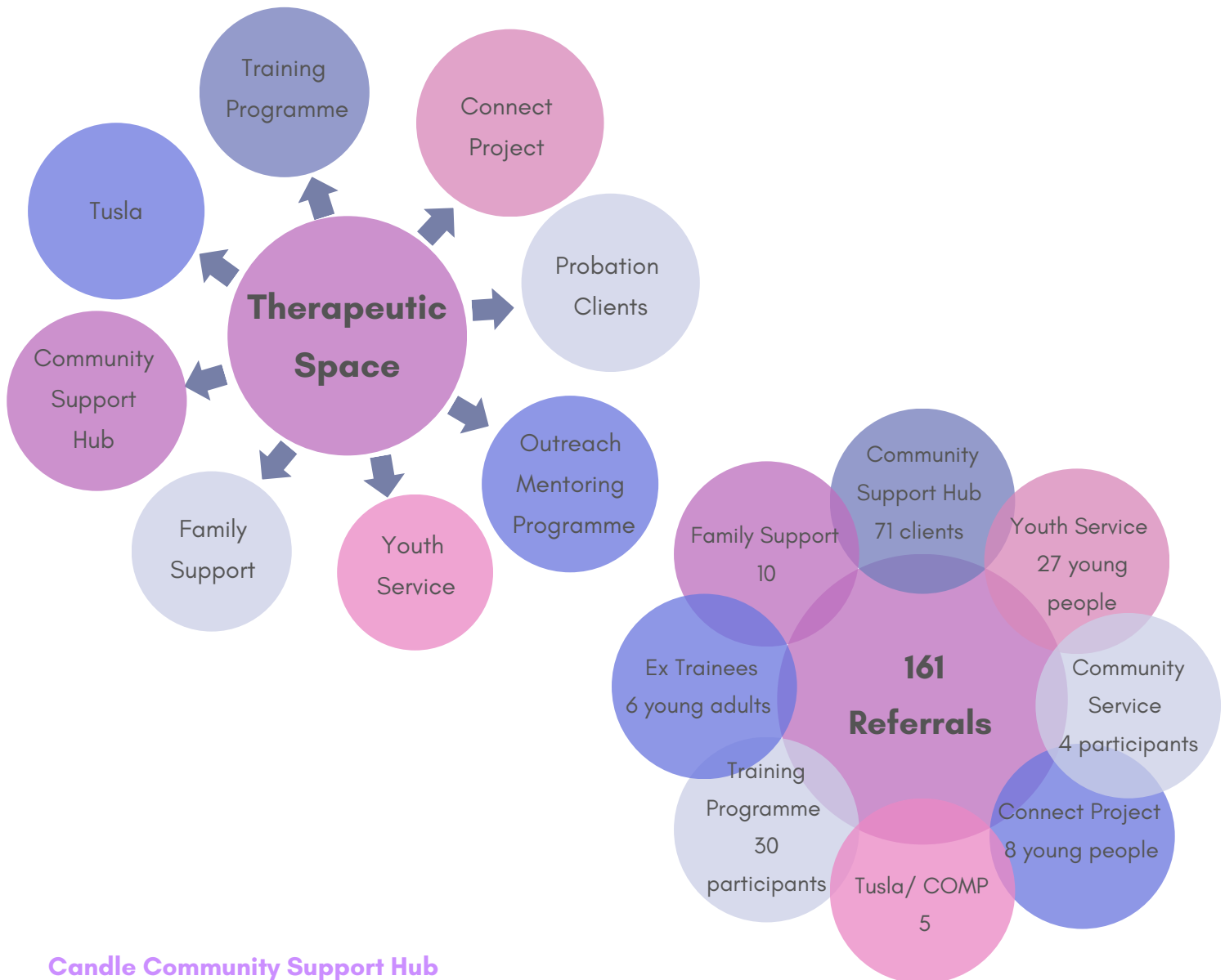
Candle's commitment to the Therapeutic Space is evident in the latest Strategic Plan 2024-26. The goal being: The Therapeutic Service, incorporating the Therapeutic Space and Community Support Hub, will continue to be central to the trauma-informed model of care at Candle, with a commitment to further enhancing therapy service provision. Already this year we have increased the number of psychotherapy sessions available to young people to 39 per week and 5 of those places are available through direct referrals from Probation Officers.

Since 2014 the Therapeutic Space service has been responding effectively to significant emotional stresses and trauma affecting our client group. In 2024 the presenting issues were wide ranging and often multiple, participants were supported to process a traumatic event or childhood adversity, address poor self-esteem, the effects of bullying, anxiety, self-harm, depression, grief, and issues relating to addiction and domestic violence.

More than ever, we are aware that if young people are to achieve their educational and developmental goals and, in some cases, move away from anti-social or offending behaviour the issue of trauma and its effects need to be continuously and rigorously addressed.

Candle engages staff and therapists in significant training to uphold our practice as a trauma informed centre. We therefore recognise the significant impact of trauma and toxic stress on a young person and how physical and psychological wellbeing and development are hugely affected by it. Our practice is informed by international research which in turn validates our work. Working in an integrated way with all our service provision and underpinned by our key methodologies, we strive to enable recovery from trauma and facilitate healthy growth and development of the young person. Now, in its tenth year the Therapeutic Space is regarded as a model of best practice by funders, stakeholders and the wider community.

### Accessing the Therapeutic Space



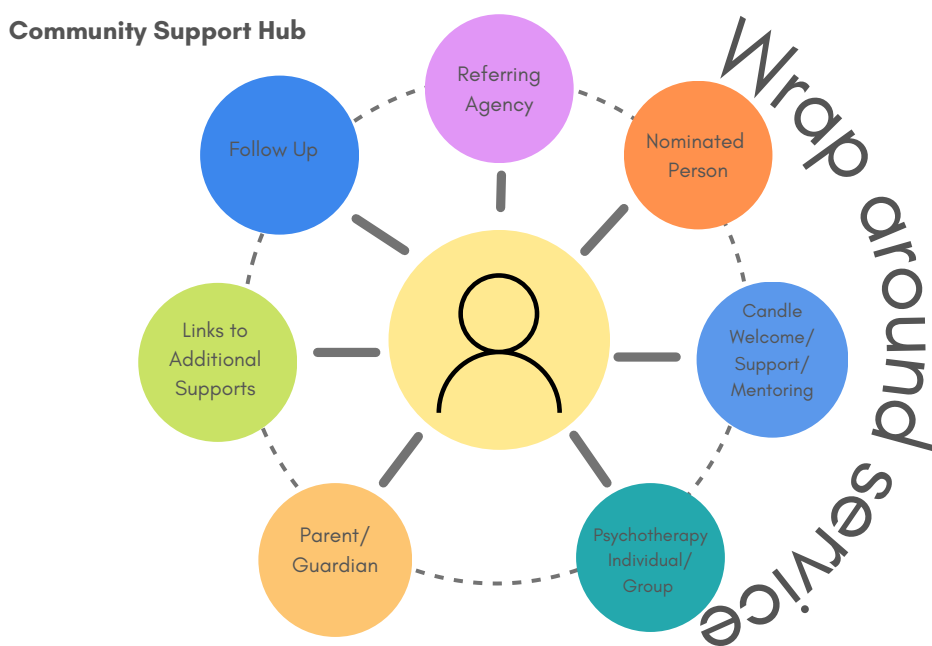
### Candle Community Support Hub

The Community Support Hub (CSH) was established in April 2021 to support young people with their mental health, who are living in the community and are not already engaged in Candles services. Since its formation the community's demand for this vital service continues to grow as young people find it difficult to access counselling/psychotherapy services to support their emotional well-being. With Candles trauma informed practice and unique 'wrap around' approach the service is held in high regard by the wider community, young people, parents, referring agencies and funders.

Referrals are open to the 2 local secondary schools, Ballyfermot Youth Service, Familibase, and Tusla. Each service can refer a young person for 12 weeks of individual psychotherapy with a continuous intake. Candle developed an innovative 'wrap around' model of practice for attending therapeutic services and adapted it for the CSH to ensure we stay true to the philosophy and practice of Candle. The referring agency has a nominated person who commits to working collaboratively with Candle in supporting the young person while they are attending counselling and to put a care plan in place if the participant requires additional support. TUSLA and HSE funding for the Therapeutic Space has been critical for its evolution and success.

The commitment to the CSH is voiced in the Strategic Plan 2024-26. One of the main objectives of the Therapeutic Services goal is to 'Ensure the continuance of the Community Support Hub and further embedding the wrap around methodology and practice in its delivery'. This year the Therapeutic Space received funding from the Community Foundation. We used the grant to employ another therapist in October 2024 to provide an additional 5 sessions of counselling sessions for St Seton's students.

The service aims to work with the most vulnerable in community and those experiencing marginalisation. We strive to engage the most difficult to reach young people and their families. Working in collaboration with the referring agencies support is given particularly to early school leavers or those struggling with attendance, to address the issues that have disrupted their education and support them in their educational attainment. The CSH is contributing to promoting positive mental health in the wider community, normalising the idea of seeking help and in turn having an impact on reducing suicide and self-harm. Through this initiative a total of 71 young people from the wider community attended 631 sessions of psychotherapy or drama therapy in Candle in 2024. Last year we introduced the practice of the 'check in', young people who have completed their 12 sessions of counselling can opt to be contacted to attend a session if their therapist has a cancellation. This on-going connection has proved to be greatly beneficial and supportive in maintaining a young person's emotional well-being or in highlighting if additional needs and concerns have arisen.

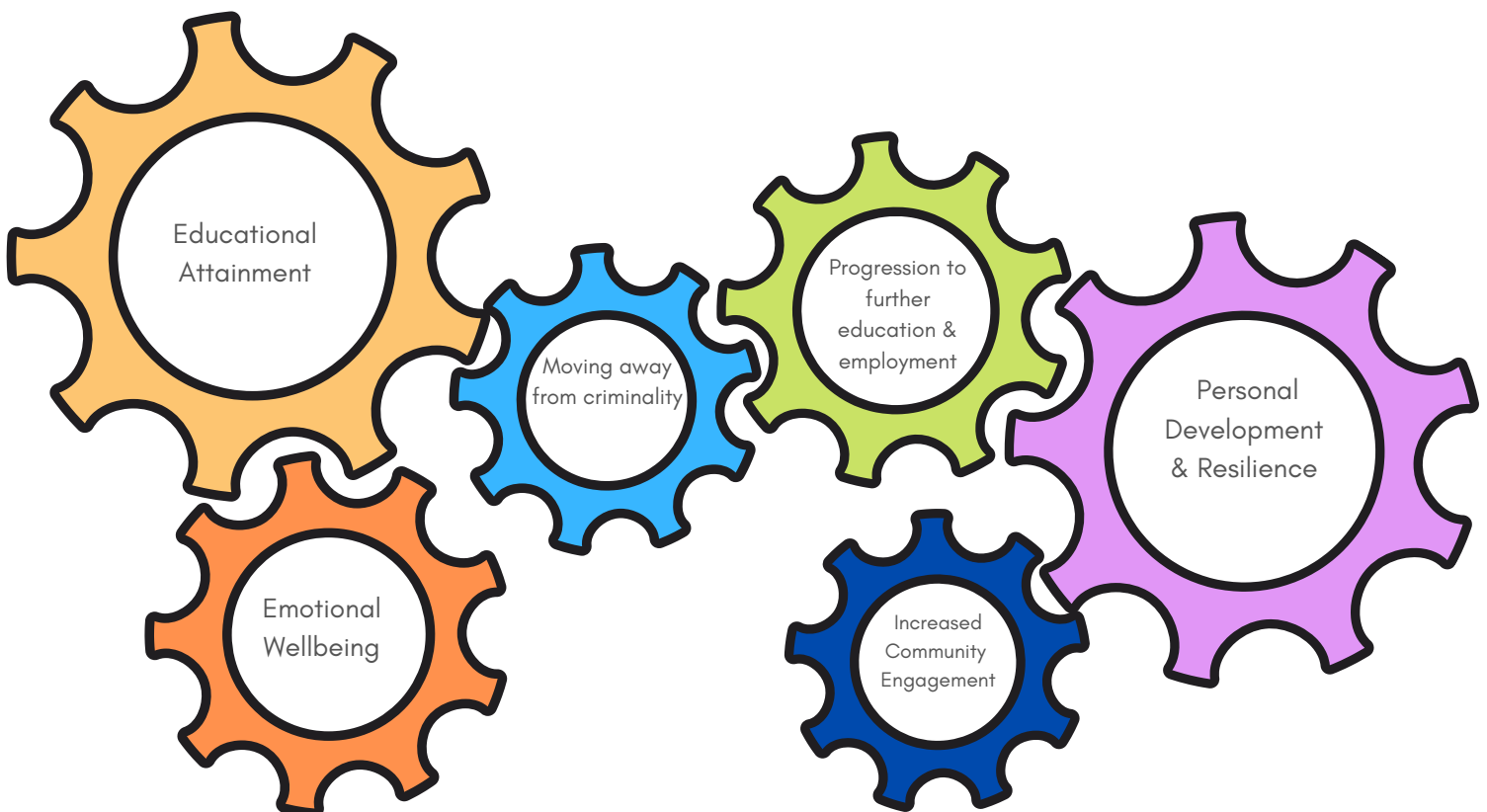


## Outcomes

Numerous positive outcomes are observed and reported by families, teachers, youth workers and project workers due to a young person's engagement in the Therapeutic Space.



## Impact



## Inter-agency Dimension

This year Candle has a representative on the Cherryorchard Implementation Committee regarding Family Well-being, Community and Mental Health and the Connecting for Life steering group.

The Therapeutic Space continues to work in collaboration with local schools and agencies to identify those most at risk and then providing personal development groups, psychotherapy, and counselling for those identified. It is of utmost importance that the philosophy and ethos of the Therapeutic Space underpins interagency involvement i.e. that young people establish a particular sense of security and belonging with the agency and Candle which enables them to take up the therapeutic services. We also unceasingly strive to create a 'wrap around' service through individual care plans for those young people referred by TUSLA, Probation and the HSE who have no prior engagement with Candle services.

# Therapeutic Space in 2024

Reflexology	Acupuncture	Yoga	Psychotherapy & Drama therapy
<p>Half day of treatments offering 4 to 5 individual sessions.</p> <p>Aims to bring about a state of relaxation and help the body's own healing process.</p> <p><b>34 young people received 173 treatments from April to December</b></p>	<p>One full day of treatments, offering 14 sessions per day. Calming the nervous system to treat stress, anxiety and insomnia</p> <p>Reduction of pain and inflammation for aches, pains and headaches</p> <p><b>37 received 105 treatments this year April to December 2024</b></p>	<p>4 classes of yoga offered every Tuesday. Developing an awareness and 'being present in the body and mind'. Building of physical strength and flexibility.</p> <p><b>19 young people attended 106 classes</b></p>	<p>5 therapists delivering 39 sessions per week . A way to process trauma and adverse experiences, helping people with a broad variety of mental illnesses and emotional difficulties</p> <p><b>123 young people engaged in 1150 individual counselling sessions in 2024</b></p>



# Family Outreach

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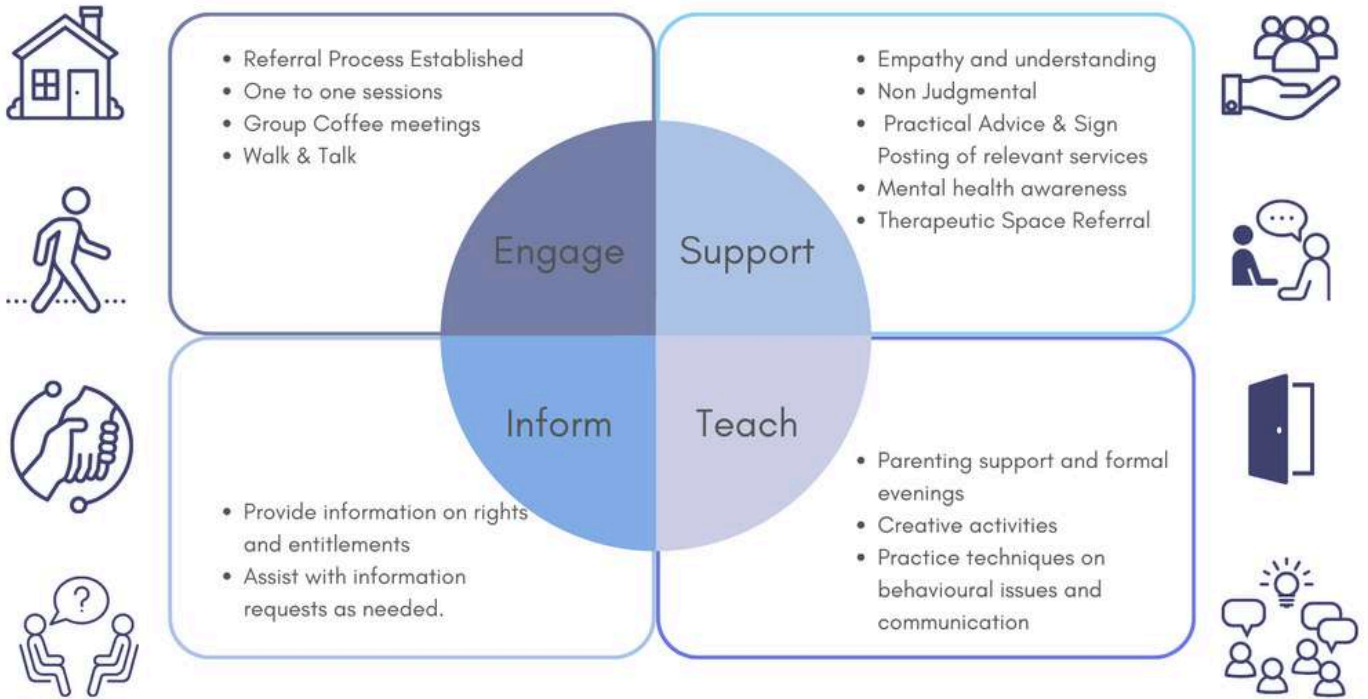
The initial aim of the Family Outreach role is to engage and build relationships with parents and carers, offer a point of contact and support and meet needs as they arise. We ran several informal and formal groups over this period, these included a Craft Workshop, Information evenings in Online Safety for Young people and we also attended an interagency Parents evening, accompanying some of our parents to this event.

There were two coffee mornings held for Parents/Carers of Trainees where parents got to see the service, classrooms and therapeutic space and some of the work that their young people had created. These activities were a chance for parents to get to know the new Family Liaison Worker and also to learn more about the centre and the work we do here. It is also an opportunity to informally assess parents needs and offer some advice and assistance.

An inhouse referral system was introduced and developed for families where it was felt needs were higher and required a more formal intervention. The Family Liaison Worker would then meet with the parent/carer on a weekly basis to offer support on a number of issues, which have included, mental health and suicide awareness, substance abuse, housing needs, behaviour supports parenting and communication, support for families of children that have been detained in Oberstown. We provided short to long term interventions for nine families in this period.

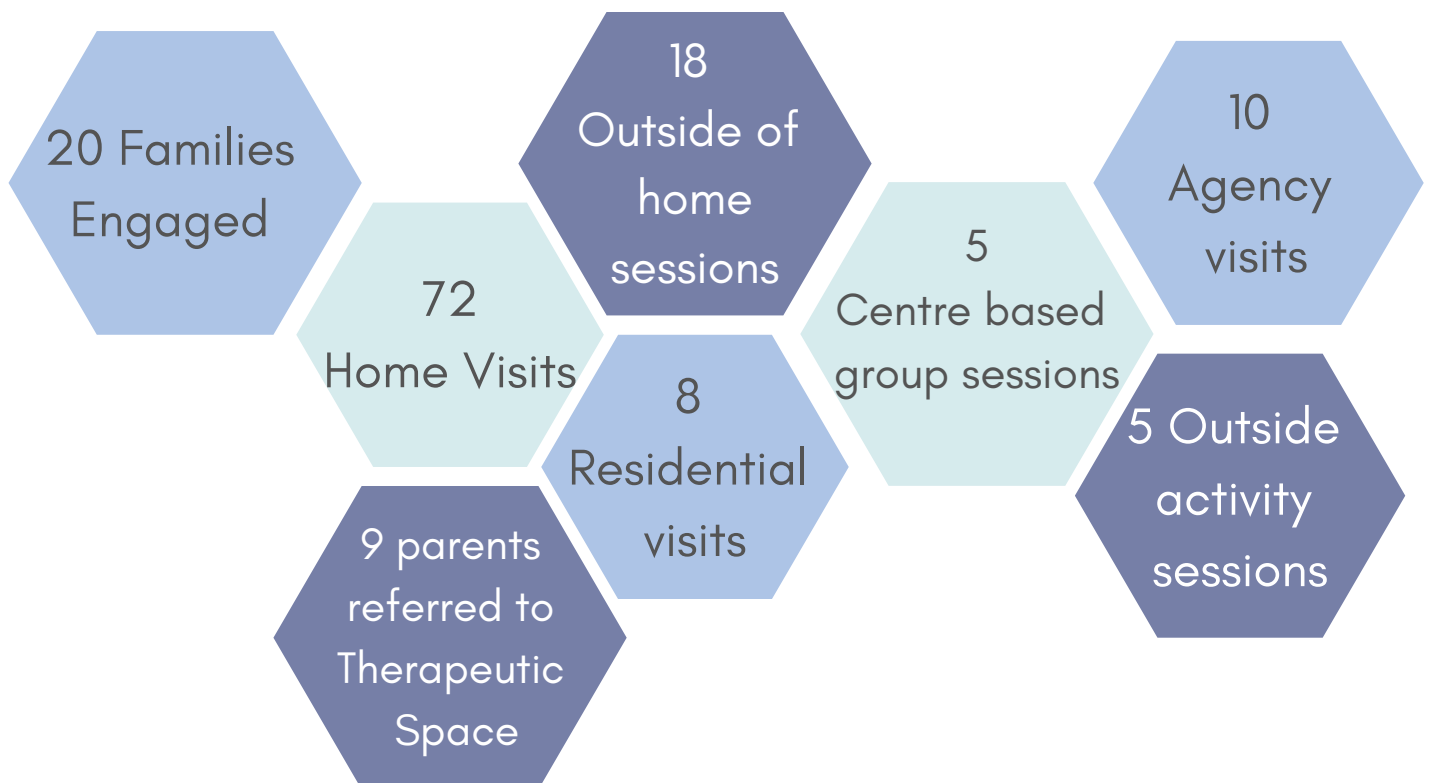
We also collaborated with the TUSLA fostering team to provide parenting sessions to grandparents who were finding managing their young person's behaviour difficult to the point the placement was temporarily ended, however with mediation and behaviour supports the placement was reinstated.





The overall aim of the family outreach was to engage with parents, to open up our service, welcoming parents and allowing them to see that they are an integral part of the holistic development of their young people. All of our activities and interventions this year have laid a solid foundation to ensure that this will continue.

### 2024 in Numbers



# Candle Outreach Mentoring Programme

The Candle Outreach Mentoring Programme (COMP) was established in April of 2021, as a collaborative venture between Candle and Tusla. The overall purpose of the service is to support young people in care, or on the cusp of care, to grow and develop in their educational, social, and developmental needs: working within trauma informed and restorative frameworks to facilitate effective engagement, collaboration, and learning.

This year there has been significant connections made with young people in the varied incarnations of care; with young people engaging from settings such as foster care, care in the community, residential care and also from special care units. These connections have been brought about by significant and necessary time dedicated to the building of lasting working relationships; taking in to account the capability and developmental levels of all of the individual young people. The COMP service has leaned heavily on its trauma informed practice training, knowledge and skills this year to put itself in the position of being led by the young people: firstly in to their complex (and at times chaotic) worlds and then to trust that the service can stick by them and support them. This has been achieved in a variety of ways, as outlined in the following table.



## Outcomes

Intensive input with each young person on a weekly basis	Ongoing emphasis on the fostering of self-worth & resilience	Life Skills Programme- Driver Theory and Cooking	
Creative and bespoke session content to meet individual capability and presentation	Socialisation programming- outings to promote positive social engagement, including family members where appropriate	Emotional regulation & self-reflection practices instilled in all contact sessions	Engagement with acupuncture & counselling within Candle's Therapeutic Space
Positive engagement, reflection & planning with foster carers, residential staff and parents	Re-engagement with education (e.g. early school leaving to Candle's Training Programme)	Ongoing support with aftercare preparation	Comprehensive youth employability programming, including CVs, job applications, short courses
Workshops and ongoing intervention around emotional awareness & communication skills	Preparatory work to link young person to services e.g. therapeutic intervention, youth group	Support from long term school leaving to Training Programme at Candle, other education or maintaining school placement	Ongoing co-regulation during times of crisis and times of calm

Outcomes for the young people varied as the interventions were targeted to the needs of the individual young people. Activities and programmes over the year focuses on the self-worth, identity and emotional resilience of the young people. Some of the outcomes achieved can be seen in the table below:

## Interventions

Young person achieved Leaving Certificate	Young person with limited social skills/ outlets facilitated chess club in local youth service	Young person engaged in Candle Connect Programme as part of transition plan from Special Care	
Young person commenced 12 week course as a bridge to longer term further education	Young person maintained in foster placement which was fragile	Young person successfully moved to aftercare placement	Young person's attendance in school improving following targeted intervention around school support
Through advocating on concerns identified- young person supported with residential care move	Strengthened relationship between foster carer & young person following educative work with foster carer	Young person engaged in counselling	Young person engaged in education placement, which they had previously refused
Positive engagement with family alongside young person to address concerns	Foster carer engaged in Therapeutic space for reflexology	Young person able to articulate how they are feeling	Young person engaging with youth service and other community activities



# Trustees 2024

## Candle Community Trust Company Trustees, 2024

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Sarah Green, Company Trustee

Beatrice Vance, Company Trustee

David Bagnall, Company Trustee



## Representatives who currently attend Candle Board of Management Meetings:

Eleanor Dwyer, Senior Probation Officer - The Probation Service

# Staff 2024

Abigail Iyobasogie  
(Youth Worker)

Alison Trimble  
(Developmental and Outreach  
Services Co-ordinator)

Aniz Duran  
(Tutor)

Arran Whelan  
(Psychotherapist)

Bianca Kennedy  
(Teacher/Youth Worker)

Bilal Heneini  
(Teacher)

Brian Johnston  
(Director)

Cara Gannon  
(Youth Worker)

Cara Farnan  
(Art Teacher)

Carmel Buckley  
(Housekeeping)

Caroline Daly  
(Tutor)

Ciara Cassoni  
(Drama Therapist)

Clare Mander  
(Education & Youth Services  
Co-ordinator)

Dave Shipsey  
(Acupuncturist)

Dervella McNee  
(Associate Director)

Elena Moreo  
(Yoga Teacher)

Emma O'Neill  
(Family Liaison Worker)

Eoin Lynch  
(Youth Worker)

Eoin Kinsella  
(Psychotherapist)

Ger Byrne  
(Psychotherapist)

Hannah Scrine  
(Youth Worker)

Kalamba Mungwande  
(Housekeeping)

Linda Hayes  
(Financial Administrator)

Louise McHale  
(Reflexologist)

Lovette Omorogbe  
(Housekeeping)

Martina Galvin  
(Teacher & QQI Co-ordinator)

Mary O'Brien  
(Teacher)

Michael Daly  
(Teacher)

Michael Ruddy  
(Candle Outreach Mentoring  
Programme Project Worker)

Noel Dempsey  
(Maintenance)

Sinead Miley  
(Young Person and Family Support  
Project Worker)

Siobhan Keighary  
(Connect Project Worker & Family  
Outreach)

Valerie Deering  
(Horticulturalist)

Veronica Bowden  
(Receptionist)

Veronica Woods  
(Kitchen/Housekeeping Supervisor)

Zoe Cole  
(Teacher)

# Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who have made significant contributions to Candle throughout 2024.

First and foremost, my deepest thanks go to the young people. They are the heart and soul of our organisation. While some may initially come to us as strangers, they quickly become an integral part of the dynamic and vibrant community that defines Candle. I appreciate their openness, generosity, and commitment to their ongoing journey of education and personal and social growth.

A special thank you to Seamus Taaffe, Chairperson of the Board, whose leadership and vision have been pivotal in steering a talented and dedicated Board of Trustees. Their voluntary contributions of time, expertise, and passion play a vital role in advancing Candle's mission.

The staff at Candle are truly our greatest asset. It is a privilege to work alongside such a dedicated and passionate team. Each member wholeheartedly contributes to our service provision and works tirelessly to impact the lives of Candle's participants each day. I am thankful for their unwavering commitment and efforts.

I would also like to acknowledge the continued support from our funding agencies. A sincere thank you to the Probation Service, the Department of Justice, CDYS, CDET, and TUSLA for their unwavering support of Candle's work. We are fortunate to have built strong relationships with personnel from each of these organisations, and we are deeply grateful for the ongoing support and assistance they provide.



# Acknowledgements

The Jobs Initiative Scheme has been invaluable in supporting our work. I would like to particularly thank Michelle McEvoy, J.I. Coordinator.

I also wish to acknowledge the meaningful collaborations with other community organisations in Ballyfermot, including youth services, schools and training centres. These partnerships are crucial in helping us serve the community more effectively.

Finally, we are grateful to our donors who have generously contributed financially to Candle in 2024. Their trust and support have allowed Candle to grow further in meeting the needs of the young people, supporting additional service provision and enhancing facilities on the Candle campus.

Brian Johnston  
Director

## Our Funders



**An tSeirbhís Phromhaidh**  
The Probation Service



**An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt**  
Department of Justice

**TÚSLA**

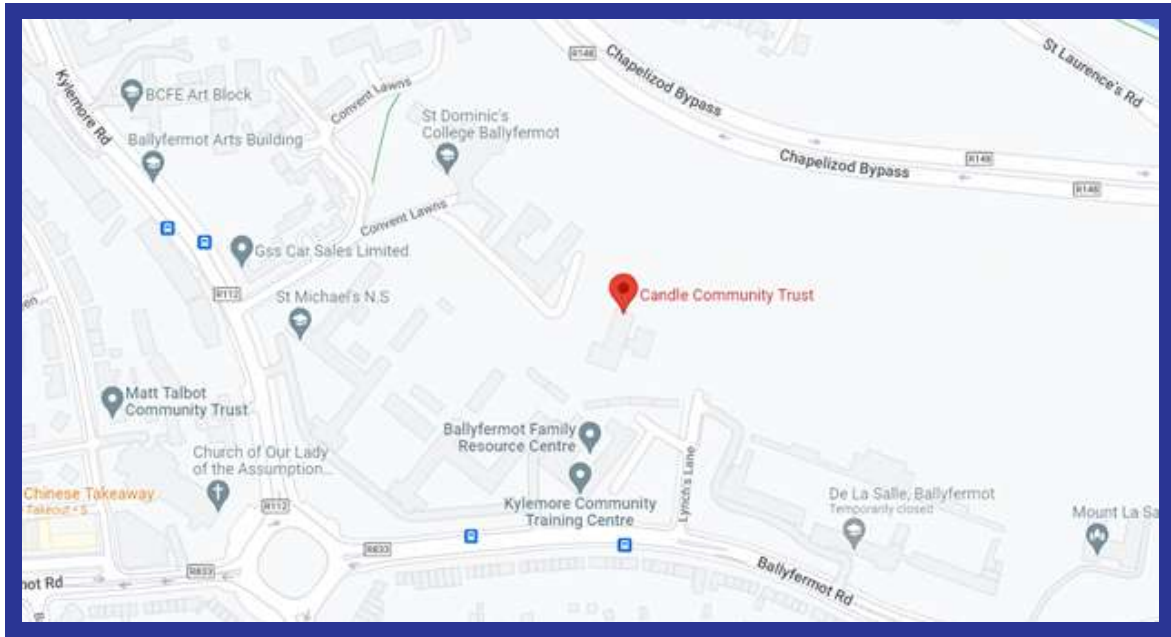
An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

**City  
of Dublin**  
Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
Education and Training Board

**City  
of Dublin**  
Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
Education and Training Board  
**Seirbhísí Óige**  
Youth Services

**HE** Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive





*"Everyone is welcome here,  
equally cherished for the gifts  
they bring to our community"*

Company Number: 71945

Charity Number: 8999

Charities Regulatory Authority Number: 20022501