

How does the Independent Representation Scheme benefit young people?

Independent Representatives (IRs) are trained volunteers who visit the Centre every week along with the professional IR project worker.

The benefits of this Scheme include:

- volunteers bring added value to complement and support the work of the project worker;
- the team develop a genuine rapport with the young people by engaging in conversation and activities;
- volunteers offer a fresh, community-based perspective which young people respond to well; and
- volunteer IRs commit to the Scheme for a minimum of one year, providing consistency and continuous support to young people.

Contact Us

For more information about the project, please contact:

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Independent
Representation
Scheme

Information for professionals

What is the Independent Representation Scheme?

- The Independent Representation (IR) Scheme, a project based within NIACRO, aims to ensure that the views, opinions and concerns of young people in Lakewood Secure Care Centre are heard, receive serious consideration and are responded to in a considered way.
- The IR Scheme complements and enhances the ethos of The Sanctuary Model which is adopted at the Centre. The Scheme is a reflection of the Centre's confidence and commitment to ensuring that the views, opinions and concerns of young people are heard and taken seriously.



How does the Scheme work?

- Weekly visits are conducted by the IR team, which consists of a project worker and a volunteer Independent Representative, who visit each unit within Lakewood on alternate weeks.
- Visits to the Centre last between one and two hours, during which young people have the option to speak to the team individually or in groups. Visits can also be held in private for more sensitive issues.
- The team listens and records any issues or requests for information that the young people may have. The team then raises these concerns with designated Lakewood staff.

- Issues are responded to as promptly as possible. Where appropriate, the team will encourage and support young people to raise their issues directly with Centre staff. If issues remain unresolved and require further action, the project worker will follow up with management and seek a response.
- Young people can also telephone the IR project worker during office hours outside of planned visits.
- At the request of the young person, the project worker can attend any review or meeting in relation to that young person. The team will also contact external agencies on behalf of the young person, where appropriate.
- Lakewood staff inform the team of new admissions to the Centre so that introductions to the Scheme can be made during the next visit.