

Jigsaw

National youth mental health service - Ireland

Aims and Objectives

Jigsaw is a mental health charity that aims to improve mental health for young people aged 12-25 through therapeutic services, youth mental health promotion, and community mobilisation. It provides free therapy and support to young people living in the Republic of Ireland.

Implementation highlights

- **Easy access and reach:** 14 physical locations/hubs (and further spokes) across Ireland, plus an online platform for remote support.
- **Timely, flexible support:** Young people are seen within a few weeks of first contact. Even a single therapeutic session can be sufficient, though many return for multiple sessions.
- **Seamless pathways:** Where Jigsaw is not the right fit, it actively connects individuals with other appropriate services.
- **Youth involvement:** The programme includes a Youth Advocate programme and young people on governing committees.

At a glance



Sub-clinical care
Targeted prevention
Univ. Prevention
Promotion



Target audience

- Young people 12-25 years
- Parents
- Professionals working with young people



Delivery settings

- 14 locations across Ireland and online via a digital support platform
- community groups
- schools and sports organisations



Objectives

- Delivering therapeutic services
- Promoting youth mental health,
- Mobilising community and societal change



Costs

No costs for end users
Total annual expenditure in 2025 was €17,256,954, with €16,714,540 directly spent on providing services and support, and only €544,414 on the cost of fundraising.



Leading organization:

Jigsaw - National Centre for Youth Mental Health



Countries

Ireland

How can this practice be implemented?

- **Start with the community:** Mobilise existing resources; early implementation can be enabled through philanthropic or innovation funding.
- **Pilot and build evidence:** Demonstration sites establish feasibility and support transition to statutory funding.
- **Scale with infrastructure:** A National Office and robust data system are critical for implementation, evaluation, and scale-up.

Get started

- Visit the charity webpage <https://jigsaw.ie/>
- Read about Jigsaw's [implementation strategies](#) (4)
- Read about [Jigsaw's evolution](#) (6)



Key takeaways



- ▶ 14 locations across Ireland
- ▶ > 11,000 young people involved per year
- ▶ Targets mild to moderate mental health difficulties ▶ National school-based mental health promotion programme

Supporting policies



- *Sharing the Vision* – National Mental Health Policy;
- HSE Child and Youth Mental Health Office – Action Plan 2024–2027;
- Young Ireland – National Policy Framework 2023–2028;
- Connecting for Life – National Suicide and Self-harm Reduction Strategy 2026–2035
- Pathways to Wellbeing – Ireland's National Mental Health Promotion Strategy 2024–2030
- [Ireland's National Mental Health Research Strategy](#).
- Digital for Care (Ireland's Digital Health Policy).

What makes this a good practice?

key features

► ~ 67% of youth population currently have access

► Improvements in mental health 57%-66% of users (1)

Impact: does it work?

Effectiveness

A large study on youth mental health service outcomes in Ireland (1) found that 57% to 66% of young people showed reliable improvements in their mental health. Young people experiencing the highest distress levels achieved the greatest improvements, highlighting the essential role Jigsaw plays in supporting those facing significant mental health challenges.

Efficiency

A 2013 cost-benefit analysis modelled potential savings to government from full national implementation, including reductions in hospitalisation, GP demand, psychiatric medication, and CAMHS waiting lists, estimating total potential cost offsets of over €12.2 million per year and reducing the true net cost of nationwide implementation to approximately €440,000 per site (7).

Evidence base

Jigsaw continuously assesses the safety, accessibility, and efficacy of its own services through rigorous evaluation and real-world health research (1,2,3,5). Clinicians are provided with data in real time to inform care. Data about young people engaging with Jigsaw is captured through an electronic health record, including standardised outcome measures (CORE, GBO, PHQ-9, GAD-7), providing a strong evidence base.

Reach: who can benefit?

Equity and access

Jigsaw provides therapy and support entirely free of charge (in person and online), removing the financial barrier that typically limits access to private mental health services for young people and their families.

Transferability and scalability

The model combines in-person services across multiple local sites with a digital support platform, making it adaptable to both urban and rural settings, and to contexts with varying levels of physical infrastructure. Jigsaw has been scaled nationally in Ireland.

Integration: keeping it going and working across sectors

Sustainability	Jigsaw operates through a mixed funding model combining state support and fundraising. The programme has recently secured increased government funding within the Irish Budget 2026, signalling growing institutional recognition and commitment to long-term sustainability.
Intersectorality	Jigsaw integrates: 1) health services, to provide psychological support and clinical expertise; 2) education systems, to help identify young people at risk and offer a supportive environment; 3) community and social services, to ensure accessibility and outreach, especially for vulnerable groups.

Engagement and innovation: listening to young people and adapting over time

Youth participation	Young people's voices are central to Jigsaw's work, as it involves young people in shaping services and research activities.
Intergenerational / life-course approach	Jigsaw actively involves and supports multiple age groups and the adults in young people's lives (parents, caregivers, and educators) to build understanding, strengthen communication, and create supportive environment.
Gender responsiveness	Jigsaw collects data on gender at access. Access, engagement and outcomes are monitored and evaluated by gender. In 2025 approximately two thirds of users are female.
Research priorities and innovation	Through a strong focus on evidence, ethics, and transparency, Jigsaw works to enhance the quality and accessibility of care, supporting early intervention and evaluating outcomes for young people using Jigsaw services. Jigsaw has research partners with universities across Ireland.

References and additional tools to favour translation

1. Moore, J., Doyle, E., Carey, E., Blix, A., Booth, A., Rossouw, J., O'Reilly, A., O'Brien, S. and Duffy, J. (2025), Predicting Reliable Improvements in Primary Care Youth Mental Health. Early Intervention in Psychiatry, 19: e13637. <https://doi.org/10.1111/eip.13637>
2. <https://jigsaw.ie/research-and-evaluation-in-jigsaw/>
3. Moore, J., Ryan, N., & O'Brien, S. (2026). Service Use and Engagement in Youth Mental Healthcare: National Trends in Jigsaw (2017-2022). Early intervention in psychiatry, 20(5), e70171. <https://doi.org/10.1111/eip.70171>
4. Moore, J., G.O'Brien, S.Cullinan, and J.Duffy. 2026. Reporting and Specifying the Implementation Strategies Used in a National Programme of Primary Care Youth Mental Health. Early Intervention in Psychiatry 20, no. 4: e70147. <https://doi.org/10.1111/eip.70147>.
5. O'Keeffe, L, O'Reilly, A, O'Brien, G, Buckley, R, Illback, R (2015). Description and outcome evaluation of Jigsaw: an emergent Irish mental health early intervention programme for young people. Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine, 32(1), 71-77. doi: 10.1017/ipm.2014.86.
6. O'Reilly, A, O'Brien, G, Moore, J, Duffy, J, Longmore, P, Cullinan, S, Mc Grory, S (2022). Evolution of Jigsaw – a National Youth Mental Health Service. Early Intervention in Psychiatry 16, 561-567
7. Economic Justication of the Jigsaw Model of Early Intervention & Prevention, 2013, <https://jigsaw.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/EJ04-Clayton-Illback-2013-Cost-Benefit-Analysis-compressed.pdf>