

## O2 DONATES €20,000 FOR LOCAL YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROJECTS

### *Final call for submissions for project funding as deadline approaches*

**23<sup>rd</sup> September 2011:** €20,000 in grant funding is up for grabs for projects being undertaken throughout the country to help change how local communities think about young people and their mental health. The money is being made available through Think Big, a programme designed by O2 and Headstrong, the National Centre for Youth Mental Health that enables young people to do projects in their community that will make a difference to young people's mental health. In total, 4 projects will receive funding of €5000 each. Project ideas need to be submitted via [o2thinkbig.ie](http://o2thinkbig.ie) before 29 September 2011 to be in with a chance of receiving funding. A judging panel will then select the strongest 4 projects each of which will be awarded €5000.

Over and above the additional funding of €20,000, project funding up to varying amounts is available on an ongoing basis through the Think Big programme, which is open to any young person, aged between 14 and 25 in the Republic of Ireland, with an idea for a project that will make a difference to young people's mental health. Project ideas can be submitted at any time for assessment through the website: [www.o2thinkbig.ie](http://www.o2thinkbig.ie). Young people can also join the Think Big Community on the website where they can discuss and share ideas about how to promote mental health among young people. In addition to funding, each Think Big group gets support from O2 and Headstrong in the form of mentoring and training to help them to bring their proposal to life. They also receive a mobile phone (with €50 credit), and a Think Big start-up pack.

Since its launch in September 2010 Think Big has funded over 50 projects from around the country, including

- Dan Burke's Club4u Mental Health Awareness, which raises awareness of mental health issues through workshops, a film and a drama piece in Drimnagh.
- Annie O'Dowd's 'Under Pressure' project in Tralee which aims to create a 10 page comic style e-book about the pressures young people face in the school.
- 'The Positive Mental Health Week Project', in which Johnny Campion from Newcastle, in Galway aims to organise a dedicated positive mental health week in schools across his county.
- 'Eye's Open', created by Conor Millar and his friends from the BYDI group from Buncrana, Co Donegal. It is an art-based project where the group created collaborative art pieces to express messages of positive mental health for the community.
- 'Youth Directory' run by Rebecca Larkin and her friends in the Wicklow Youth Council. They are creating a directory of all youth clubs and facilities for young people in Co Wicklow as, well as national support agencies.

Sinead Smith, Corporate Responsibility Manager at O2 said: "Since it was launched a year ago, Think Big has facilitated hundreds of young people to affect change in their communities. We have been hugely impressed with the scale, scope and creativity of the various projects. By providing additional financial resources for four projects across the country, we hope to give young people the opportunity to make a wider impact in their communities."

Nuala Smith, Youth Participation Officer, Headstrong said: “Headstrong was established to change how Ireland thinks about and responds to the mental health of young people. Through our partnership with O2 and the Think Big campaign, we are encouraging young people to change how their communities think about young people and their mental health. Together we can reduce the stigma that has existed in Ireland for years, and make it acceptable to experience emotional distress and to seek help when it is needed.”

**-Ends/-**

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