



Sam Synnott

Buddy Bench

Buddy Bench Aware is an award winning, school-based, mental health initiative for children and young people. The initiative, which is being delivered in primary schools across the island of Ireland, is centred around the permanent visual reminder of a 'Buddy Bench', that helps children to foster friendships and recognise loneliness in the playground, and to respond with caring and empathy.

Sam Synnott recognised a gap for positive mental wellbeing programmes in the Irish and international education systems and with the help of her team, Buddy Bench Ireland was created.

Designed and delivered by a team including psychotherapists and experienced facilitators, the initiative includes interactive workshops, work books and furry animal puppets – all being age appropriate.

Buddy Bench has delivered their programmes to in excess of 37,000 children in over 230 schools. Their website has become a go-to resource for parents experiencing anxiety about their own child's welfare in school and can help them to turn the Buddy Bench programmes into tools that parents can also use in the home.

They were Social Entrepreneur Ireland awardees 2016/2017, KBC Bright Ideas awardees and funded by several philanthropic funds. The company has also completed Google's Adopt-a-Startup programme which helped further develop their online tools.

They are now developing a digital platform for their mental wellbeing programmes which will be a portal for schools to access e-learning content that meets their needs to deliver a complex SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) curriculum, as well as a point of sale for parents.

www.buddybench.ie

