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MSc Occupational Therapy (Professional Qualification)

## **OT6054 Project 4**

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## **Title**

Beyond the Care System: Exploring Occupational Choices of Young Care Leavers in Ireland

## **Abstract**

*Introduction:* Occupational justice has increasingly become a focus of attention in occupational science. Embedded within occupational justice is the expression of occupational choice. Choice from this perspective is particularly relevant to a marginalised group in Irish society, young care leavers. Although there is limited research regarding outcomes of Irish care leavers there is no data offering an occupational perspective on their transition to independent living which is formally known as aftercare. The literature reviewed demonstrates the potential for research regarding the influence of context on the occupational choices of this cohort. This qualitative study, underpinned by an occupational justice perspective aimed to explore the influence of social context on the occupational choices of young care leavers during this transition.

*Method:* Five young care leavers; aged 18-21 were interviewed using the participatory data collection method of photo-elicitation in conjunction with a semi-structured interview guide. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and subsequent data was thematically analysed.

*Findings:* The social contexts in which young care leavers live inform occupational choice serving as both an enabler and barrier to choice. This is evidenced by four themes; the past present and future, the reality of adulthood, the people around us and the meaning of doing.

*Conclusion:* Findings suggest that the social context of formal aftercare support promotes choice however there is potential for a greater impact. Occupational therapists can play a lead role in providing equitable opportunity for young care leavers to engage in meaningful occupations. Thus, promoting their health and well-being and creating a context within which they can express occupational choice as is their human right.

## **Introduction**

Young people leaving state care are more likely than their peers to have poor educational outcomes, experience homelessness and have higher levels of unemployment, offending behaviour and mental health problems (Horrocks 2002; Daly 2012). The term ‘young care leaver’ (YCL) refers to young people aged 18-21 who are actively negotiating the transition from state care to independent living (SSI 2003). ‘Aftercare’ is understood as the process of preparation for this transition by way of formal support or services (EPIC 2011). An effective aftercare service is a key feature in achieving positive outcomes for YCL’s (Kelleher et al 2000; Paul-Ward 2014). In Ireland 500 young-people leave state care per-annum (ICLN

2015) and 1,000-1,500 YCL's aged 18-25 years receive aftercare services (Darmody et al 2014).

## **Literature Review**

Paul-Ward (2009; 2014) examined the societal factors within the US that impact on young people's transition from foster-care to independent living. The link between poor mental health, lack of readiness for transition and the negative outcomes experienced by this cohort is demonstrated (ibid). The importance of obtaining the perspectives of young people to redesign and improve aftercare services is emphasised (ibid).

Galvaan (2015) examined the occupational choices of young adolescents in a community in post-apartheid South-Africa in terms of habits, capital and social field. The findings suggest contextual influences impact the construction and selection of occupations of adolescents. Furthermore, the process of making an occupational choice may be restricted by the opportunities available in the context (ibid). By this extent, context may equally be employed to promote occupational choice by providing opportunity for engagement in meaningful occupations.

Occupational choice has been scantily explored in occupational science (Gallagher et al 2015). The research findings of this study will increase our understanding of occupational choice and how it is influenced by the social contexts of YCL's. The research question guiding the present study is how does the social context influence the occupational choices of YCL's during their transition from care?

The aims of the study are:

1. To identify the occupations of YCL's.
2. To identify how the social context, including formal aftercare support, influence the occupational choices of YCL's.
3. To demonstrate the potential role of occupational therapy in supporting a successful transition from care for YCL.

## **Methodology**

### ***Design***

A qualitative approach is used to explore the complexity of occupational choice from the perspective of YCL's (Hammell 2001). It has been argued quantitative research approaches "render client voices silent" (ibid p. 228) and as such this approach was disregarded. The study undertakes an occupational justice perspective which is concerned with promoting the

right to engage in occupations that enable individuals to “flourish, fulfil their potential and experience satisfaction” (Hammel and Iwama 2012, p.385).

### **Recruitment of Participants**

Purposive sampling resulted in the recruitment of five YCL’s from two urban regions of Ireland. Challenges arose during the recruitment process, specifically eliciting interest and commitment from this cohort to attend interview. As such the anticipated number of eight participants was not achieved. Participants met the inclusion criteria of being aged 18-21 years and currently in receipt of an aftercare service. Two gate-keepers, both involved in the respective aftercare services, distributed a recruitment poster and a letter of information regarding the study. Interested participants liaised with the respective gate-keeper to express their interest to participate. A consent form was discussed and signed pre-interview.

Please see table 1 for demographics of research participants.

**Table 1. Demographics of Participants**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Housing Supports</b>	<b>Vocational/Employment Roles</b>
John	21	Living independently with aftercare support	Student and Volunteer
Dave	19	Living with extended family – awaiting own accommodation allocated through aftercare service	Student and Volunteer
Sharon	20	Semi-independent living accommodation provided by aftercare service	Presently out of Education/Employment
Sarah	21	Living independently with aftercare support	Stay at home mother (part-time student)
Rory	20	Semi-independent living accommodation provided by aftercare service	Employed

(\*pseudonyms are used to protect participant’s identities)

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations related to this study include informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, as well as ensuring their wellbeing was not adversely affected by their participation. In terms of safeguarding participants the researcher was Garda vetted

and trained in Children's First Guidelines and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Limerick Research Ethics Committee.

The support needs and individual requirements of participants were discussed pre-interview with the service gate-keeper. A support worker attached to the service was available post interview in the event that participants required support. Participants were clearly informed of the limitations of the research so as to ensure a realistic understanding of the scope of the study. Participants were also advised of their right to withdraw from the study at any time of their choice. To ensure confidentiality the audio recordings of interview data were kept in a locked cabinet. Names of participants were omitted from the transcripts of interviews and the transcripts were stored on a password protected laptop.

### ***Data Collection***

A single face to face interview was conducted and audio-taped with all participants; four of which were held in a meeting room in the office of the respective aftercare service and two at venues selected for the convenience of the participants. The participatory data collection method of photo-elicitation was used in conjunction with a semi-structured interview guide. The use of photo- elicitation interviews promotes a collaborative relationship between researcher and participant and helps to address any perceived power imbalances at play (Harper 2002). This method encourages discussion while simultaneously fostering a relaxed atmosphere (Epstein et al 2006). Photographs were chosen from previous research undertaken by research supervisor Gallagher (2015). Please see appendix 1 for photographs used. Open ended semi-structured questions were used flexibly relative to each individual context. The interview guide covered subject areas of; a typical day, why/why not participant might chose to engage in an activity, similarities/differences of individual engagement in activities and frequency of engagement. A fieldwork diary was utilised and entries made following all interviews (Jenkins et al 2003).

### ***Data Analysis***

Thematic analysis was employed to identify and report patterns and themes within the data set (Braun & Clarke 2006). Research interviews were listened to in totality, transcribed verbatim and subsequently read several times to ensure familiarity of data (ibid). Transcripts were then coded using the qualitative data analysis tool NVivo. This process was repeated to develop new observations and insights. Six provisional themes were manually developed. Provisional themes were re-checked against the codes and transcripts which culminated in their synthesis into four final themes.

## ***Trustworthiness***

The trustworthiness of the qualitative findings was addressed using the criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility was enhanced by providing a description of research participants for easy comparability to other populations (Curtain & Fossey 2007).

Transferability was achieved by a comprehensive description of the research process such that this research may be replicated (ibid). Dependability was achieved through reflexivity (Darawsheh 2014). Throughout the data collection and analysis process reflexive notes were documented as well as any biases that may have influenced the interpretation of data (ibid). During the analysis process the codes and themes were 'tested' to ensure findings remained true to the data (Braun & Clarke 2006). Conformability was achieved by the use of thematic maps to document the logic underscoring the conceptualisation of themes (ibid). Regular supervision was also undertaken throughout the course of the study (Jenkins et al 2008).

## **Findings**

For the purpose of this study Pierce's (2001) understanding of occupation and activity is employed when describing occupational engagement. Please see table two for a list of occupations most frequently mentioned by participants and the proposed activity category.

The purpose of this study was to explore how the occupational choices of YCL's are influenced by the social context in which they live. The findings are illustrated by four key themes; the past present and future, the reality of adulthood, the people around us and the meaning of doing.

### ***The Past, Present and Future***

Past experiences of participant's lives influence their present choices which similarly influences their future occupational engagement. Discussion generated from the photographs involved reflection on past occupations the participants engaged in as children. Three participants with an interest in soccer were involved in sport from a young age, "*I've always loved sport*" (Rory). However, many occupations engaged in as a child were not sustained into young adulthood. Reasons for this relate to changing interests as well as available opportunities in their social environment. For example, moving from a rural to an urban aftercare setting.

**Table 2.**

<b>Occupational Doing</b>	<b>Activity Category</b>
Sleeping	Personal Needs
Personal Care	
Attending healthcare appointments	
College	Education and Study
Doing assignments	
Studying at home	
Cooking	House-work and Household Tasks
House-work	
Money Management (paying bills)	
Clothes Shopping	
Grocery Shopping	
Holidays with friends and family	Travel
Getting the bus to work	
Getting the bus to visit family	
Voluntary Work	Voluntary Activity
Child-rearing	Child-rearing Activities
Arts and crafts with the children	
Playing with the children	
Caring for others	
Work	Paid Work
Communicating with colleagues in work	
Dealing with customers in work	
Cycling	Sports and Exercise
Going to the gym	
Horse-riding	
Swimming	
Playing Soccer	
Art	Leisure and Free-time Activities
Facebook	
Going to see a soccer match	
Going to watch a match in the pub	
Hanging out with friends	
Listening to music	
Playing Bingo	
Playing Computer Games	
Playing Pool	
Socialising with Friends	
Sunday Lunch with the Family	
Taking Drugs	
Talking with friends and family on the phone	
Texting friends on the phone	
Watching a soccer match on TV	
Watching a movie	
Watching Rugby	

It is clear past experiences influences present choices; Dave described his motivation for engaging in a volunteer role training children in soccer as being;

*“it’s just the background I’m from like, it’s just I don’t want people going down that same road, with social workers and stuff like that, if they needed a hand they’d know that they could come to me”.*

Dave intends to obtain a social care degree to work with at-risk children in a professional capacity. As such his present choices are influencing his future context. Those participants who are productive and engage in meaningful occupations such as vocational and educational roles seem to have a clear sense of what they want to achieve and actively plan for their future. Participants with less structured routines, spending more time engaged in passive occupations, seem to have a broad sense of what they would like to do, however do not have clear goals on how this might be achieved. For example, Sharon spoke about her desire to *“live a proper life”*. She relayed what this meant to her; *“havin’ a course, havin’ food on the table, havin’ family around yea”*. Sharon was unable to describe how this might be achieved or indeed if this life is attainable to her, stating *“havin’ the family no, food on the table, maybe”*.

### ***The Reality of Adulthood***

The reality of growing-up and the increased responsibility this entails influences the occupational choices of participants. Practicalities such as paying bills and budgeting are a feature of their daily lives.

*“I’ve bills to pay from Eircom and the electricity...and the water charges have come in...money a big thing for me at the moment.”* (John)

Four participants relayed they would like to be able to drive as this would promote opportunities for engagement in other occupations; bridging the gap between the choices available in rural and urban living. This included increased choices for education, facilitating IADL’s such as shopping, day trips with the family, and *“you wouldn’t be stuck in the house”* (Sharon). Sarah stated the practical implications of same; *“it would be nice to have a big flashy car but only if you could pay the insurance and the tax”*. In this instance money is a perceived barrier to choice.

John describes his experience of becoming an adult:

*“like when you’re a teenager you set your mind to do so many things but when you become an adult you realise these things that you want to do are possible but you need money for*



*them, so really you need to put your mind to it, it doesn't happen out of the blue like...you have to be determined."*

### **The People around Us**

Friends influence occupational choice by informing the way participant's engage in occupation and if they would engage in an activity at all:

*"I don't play pool, ah it depends...like if there's a few of us going down to (pub) that's alright like...but other than that like I wouldn't just get up and play it like."* (Sharon)

Maintaining contact with friends presents different forms of activity which for some appears to be a meaningful occupation; *"I'd ring my friend about forty times a day"* (Sarah). However, John highlights a negative aspect to maintaining contact with friends:

*"You'd be on Facebook looking at other people and they'd be going out or they'd be on holidays and you're just stuck at home like."*

Friends provide a significant level of support; *"they're friends that you can trust like if you have problems you can talk to them"* (Rory). The importance of this type of friendship is evidenced by Rory's statement *"like a little family now they are"*. Perhaps friends are the family they choose for themselves; *"we've been through everything together so, she's like my sister really"* (Sarah).

Family influences choice in terms of developing interest in a given activity, *"it's my own father that got me into rugby"* (John). Dave's uncle also played an active role in his involvement with the children's soccer club as a volunteer. It is evident this has since become a very meaningful role for Dave which he prioritises above other commitments. Family also influence opportunity for choice. In planning his move abroad Rory relayed *"my uncle said he's help us, yea have to have someone that could sponsor yea"*. Family also influence choice by promoting a family culture:

*"on a Sunday we all go to Nana's house, she feeds us on Sundays, so she does this massive roast dinner...there's 12 of us like altogether...she'd have the 5 grandkids hangin' out of her, and she's feedin' all of em'."* (Sarah)

The formal support networks of aftercare services also influences choices. Aftercare supports provide participants practical support and advice in relation to housing and also participation in other meaningful occupations such as learning how to drive. Rory describes his move to an aftercare service:

*“I’ve only been here like a couple of weeks but the couple of weeks that I’ve been here, brilliant, they’re very good working here.”*

Aftercare services discussed by participants also included advice and support in relation to accessing financial incomes and opportunities for education.

### ***The Meaning of Doing***

The meaning attributed to an occupation influences choice. Most participants spoke about the occupations which were meaningful to them. This influenced their choices whether to engage in an activity or not and how they incorporated it into their daily lives. When considering their options it appears participants consider the practicality of their choices first. It is only afterwards and with prompting do they consider the meaning of these occupations and why they choose to engage in it. Sarah commented *“I’ve actually never sat down and thought about what I do every day, I just do it”*. A lack of meaningful activity also was expressed and this had consequences for their health and well-being as well as their subsequent choices.

Different occupations hold different meanings for each individual participant. Dave described cooking as a means of sustenance; healthy eating is meaningful to him in terms of maintaining his health and enhancing his performance in sports and exercise. John described cooking as therapeutic; *“it kind of de-stresses you”*. Engagement in sport is of significant meaning for John and Dave; *“I love doing sports, do you know, I genuinely love it”* (John). Dave also spoke about the impact of sport on his well-being, *“you feel a lot better in yourself”*, and when he doesn’t engage in sports; *“crap, everything is just lodged in your throat”*. Physical activity as a means of coping was mentioned by two participants. Dave highlighted that *“if you’ve a temper you can take it out on a tackle, not to hurt people but in a way you release it as well as them.”* Sharon also describes the therapeutic benefits of horse-riding; *“like that was occupying me mind”*.

Rory’s work role provides him with the opportunity to develop communication and interpersonal skills when dealing with customers. He actively seeks opportunities for development and is soon to be trained on the till; *“I want to move on to somethin’ else and get a bigger challenge.”* Associated with this is the concept of creating a better life John reports that he is going to college in order to get a job, *“cos you can’t get a job anywhere without it...you’ll be sitting on the dole doin’ nothin’.”*

An absence of meaning was also suggested. The idea of being *“stuck in the house”* was discussed by both Sharon and John; this was presented as a negative occurrence whereby being in the house signified boredom and a lack of choice of activity. *“It gets boring*

*like...staying at home...nothing to do*" (John). Sharon attributes her drug use in part to boredom. She recognised her drug use as having "a shit impact" on her life. As John states; *"it can be very depressing at times"*. To alleviate boredom John became involved as a volunteer in a local charity shop:

*"I enjoy it, it gets me out of the house and keeps me occupied...I get to interact with other people"* (John).

## **Discussion**

It is evident from the findings the social contexts of family and friends influence occupational choice both in the way occupations are carried out and the opportunities available. Formal supports of aftercare are cited as promoting choice in terms of meeting basic needs of housing, finances and for some participant's as a support to engage in education and other meaningful occupations. The meaning attributed to different occupations relates to how an activity provides balance, structure, routine, purpose, enjoyment and means for social interaction with several participants recognising the subsequent impact on health and well-being. In essence the findings support the view that occupational choices are informed by and limited by the different contexts in which an individual lives (Gallagher et al 2015; Galvaan 2015). However, the social context for some YCL's also serve to enhance their occupational choices. This will now be discussed further.

### ***The Inequality of Social Support Systems***

Stein's (2006) review of international empirical research on YCL's highlighted this cohort are at a high risk of social exclusion. The primary aim of aftercare support is to enable YCL's to make a successful and normative transition to independent living whereby they have the opportunity to progress and fulfil their potential in life in a similar manner to that of their peers (SSI 2003; Paul Ward 2009). Conversely, their peers are increasingly making a slower transition to independence and have the option of returning to the family home in times of difficulty (Stein 2006; Stone et al 2013). YCL's' transition to adulthood is "accelerated and compressed" (Stein 2006 p. 273). This reflects the experience of the participants of the present study. Additionally, within the context of young YCL's there are those who receive services and those who do not. Many YCL's do not receive aftercare support (EPIC 2011; ICLN 2014). This may further marginalize a number of care leavers (Kelleher et al 2000). In an occupationally just environment, individuals have equitable access to adequate supports and resources to participate in occupations that are necessary and meaningful to them (Townsend and Wilcock 2004).

## ***The Transition to Independence***

Children enter the care system to ensure their protection and welfare. Paradoxically, the care experience can contribute to the adversity experienced in their lives and has long lasting implications for the successful transition to adulthood (Gilligan 1999). Horrocks' (2002) UK based biographical research found that young people's outcomes are "interconnected with past experiences, present circumstances and personal factors" (ibid p. 333). This corroborates the experiences of the participants of the present study. Understanding the implications of these inter-relating factors is significant from an occupational justice perspective in terms of creating a successful pathway from care to adulthood.

Life transitions require adjustment and adaptation in terms of roles, balance of occupations and occupational performance (Blair 2000)." The risk factors associated with transitional change include occupational deprivation, imbalance and alienation (Wilcock 2006). Occupational deprivation is a consequence of societal conditions which prevent individuals from engaging in meaningful occupations (Wilcock 1998). This can include situations such as lack of finances and lack of opportunity (ibid).

Doing can serve as a coping mechanism through the transition process (Blair 2000; Unruh et al 2004). Engagement in occupation "facilitates change, personal development, and well-being, which makes the transition easier" (Ikiugu 2006). Further to this is the development of an occupational identity and sense of self-worth (Kielhofner 2002). Several of the participants are enacting this philosophy through their engagement in sports and their social relationships. It is through their choice of occupation that people can demonstrate what they are or what they hope to be (Wilcock 1998). This is evidenced in this study by the care leaver's active endeavors to create a better life for themselves through engagement in educational and vocational occupations. Equally however, passive activities are "destructive, non-challenging, and do not encourage community participation, personal development, or overall health and well-being" (Ikiugu 2006 p. 60). Passive activities include watching television, playing computer games and interacting with friends in unstructured contexts (ibid).

Fine (1990) argues that successful adaptation to life events is dependent on a combination of inherent and acquired skills, the material and interpersonal resources within the environment and the psycho-social capability to deal with life's stresses. Some of the participants are demonstrating better coping skills than others; for example, John's pro-activeness addressing his occupational imbalance by engaging in a volunteer role. Such ability or indeed inability may relate to an individual's conversion skills which is a key

concept of the capabilities approach (Bailliard 2016). The capabilities approach understands a person's capability to be the combination of internal capacities and the external contexts that may limit or enable the expression of these capacities (ibid). Bailliard (2016) highlights that conversion skills vary between individuals and in order to address occupational injustices interventions must focus on creating favorable environmental conditions to develop these capabilities. As stated by Yerxa (1998) people can positively influence the condition of their own health provided they are given the opportunity to develop the skills to do so.

### ***Independence; a damaging concept?***

Mendes and Moslehuddin (2006) highlight leaving care is a major life event inherent to which is the transition from dependence to "so called self-sufficiency" (p. 111). Horrocks (2002) found the very concept of independence and associated expectations of autonomy and self-reliance create a situation whereby young people feel they 'should be independent' and were reluctant to seek the help of aftercare services even when in need. This contextual 'invisibility' has significant consequences in relation to the effectiveness of service provision (ibid). Increasingly discourse in occupational science is challenging the view of the supremacy of the individual and in association the concept of independence (Elelwani 2015). Kirby (2015) argues idealizing independence undermines the "connected nature of life" (p 17). Findings from the present study suggest meaningful living is enhanced by the relationships and social contexts in which YCL's live. Best practice guidelines for YCL's stipulate that a secure and long-lasting relationship with an adult can improve outcomes for care leavers; it is the quality as opposed to the quantity of relationships that proves positively influential (Dewar & Goodman 2014). It is also observed that formal services cannot take the place of meaningful relationships (ibid).

### ***Meaningful Living***

Wilcock's (1993) theory of human need for occupation proposes "occupation fulfils basic human needs...to flourish as individuals" (p. 17). It is evident from the findings the occupations of YCL's are meeting different levels of individual need. Engagement in occupation allows for self-development and growth through occupational achievement (Wilcock 1998). This may be evidenced by Dave's engagement in sports; collectively his team won team of the year which he spoke about as a source of pride. Additionally, Wilcock (2006) proposes that 'becoming' is both a means of self-creation as well as a product of socialising influences. It is apparent that occupations provide YCL's in this present study with structure and routine, enjoyment, identity, opportunity for skill and personal development, for social interaction and social contribution. This may align with the concepts of doing, being, becoming and belonging (Wilcock 1999). Wilcock (1993) suggests that the most basic need

of all is the need for meaning. When individuals are not engaged in meaningful occupation they may engage in negative behaviours to counteract this deficiency (Wright 2004). YCL's are at risk of developing drug problems during their transition from state care to live independently (Ward et al 2003). This study suggests YCL's are at risk of such negative pleasure seeking behavior such as drug use if they are not supported to engage in meaningful occupations.

### ***Practice Implications***

An occupational therapist must understand the complexity of contextual influences in order to effectively enable occupations (Whiteford 2000). Occupational therapy can play a lead role in improving outcomes of YCL's. The features of a successful transition as evidenced in the findings of this study are:

- ❖ A place to call home; not just a house or an institution to stay in; a place where young care leavers can express occupational choice, organise their lives in material and symbolic terms (Saraceno 1999) and feel a sense of belonging (Wilcock 1998).
- ❖ Extending opportunities for vocational engagement; previous research shows that such endeavours ought to include supply of employment opportunity (Dewar and Goodman 2014).
- ❖ To develop self-efficacy and identity through promoting engagement in meaningful occupations (Kielhofner 2002); to include opportunity for new occupational experiences.
- ❖ Opportunity to create natural support networks; to be able to establish and maintain positive relationships with family, friends and within their wider community. If social support is poor, networking must be supported (Mendes 2011).
- ❖ Life-skills training and assistance to develop effective coping skills; to include risk assessment and identification of potential crisis points (Blair 2000).

### ***Implications for Future Research***

This study builds on the current understanding of occupational choice and has given insight into the daily lives of participants. Other strategies such as a self-report method may simultaneously explore time-use patterns as well as the different personal and societal meaning attributed to an occupation. As Farnworth (2003) asserts individual time-use can be considered a measurement of one's health.

A deeper understanding of the social and political influences at play is needed to address the occupational justice concerns in relation to young Irish care leavers. As occupational therapists we have been called upon to widen our scope and to develop a political focus on

practice (Pollard et al 2008); in doing so we may promote occupational choice as a human right.

### ***Limitations***

A limitation of this study is the small number of participants which diminishes the generalisability of its findings. Equally, the five care leavers interviewed are presently engaged in aftercare services; their experiences may not represent those young people who are not in receipt of aftercare support. The predetermined photographs for photo-elicitation may also have influenced participant's discussions (Hartman et al 2011). The researcher's own understanding of this cohort prior to data collection; having spent numerous years working with YCL's may influence interpretation of results This was counterbalanced by strategies to enhance trustworthiness as previously outlined. Yet, "total detachment is an unrealistic aspiration that can limit qualitative findings" (Jootun et al 2009).

### **Conclusion**

Health and well-being appear to be enhanced by the social relationships and opportunities for engagement in meaningful occupations for each individual participant. The findings suggest that aftercare services support occupational choice however there is potential for a greater impact. YCL's need support for equitable access to opportunities within their social environment. The study supports the assertion that occupational therapy is ideally placed to work with YCL's to achieve full participation in life (Paul-Ward 2009).

Literature concerning occupational justice has largely centred on populations of developing countries, for example Kronenberg et al (2005). However, these social forces are present in all societies (Hasselkus 2006). Viewing some rights as more important than other's "serves to diminish the significance of everyday occupational problems" (Galvin et al 201 p. 381). Hasselkus (2006) advocates the relevance of everyday occupations to our quality of life asserting "everyday life is like an anchor in our lives" (p. 628). Given the all too often disrupted and unstable nature of the care experience (Ward 2009) this may never be more accurate than in the context of YCL's in Ireland.

**Appendix 1**





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