



County Kildare
LEADER PARTNERSHIP

Report to the Annual General Meeting

25th June 2019

Introduction

2018 has been a year of much achievement and change within County Kildare LEADER Partnership. Since the Annual General Meeting in June 2018 the Company has continued to implement all the programmes contracted to Government Departments and expanded its hosting arrangements with Kildare Sports Partnership and Kildare PPN. In addition, the Company has been successful in securing funding under the Ability Programme for a three-year period and has been awarded funding by the Department of Justice to implement a Rona Employment Project.

During the year there have been several new staff appointments with the expanded work being undertaken by SICAP, the Rural Development Programme and new funding streams that have been sourced to benefit individuals and groups across County Kildare. A number of staff have also left the company to take up opportunities elsewhere, some of whom had spent a significant number of years with CKLP. I would like to wish these former staff well in their new careers and to welcome all who have joined our Company.

The Board of Directors has engaged in a programme of work in relation to governance during the last twelve months and has overseen the conclusion of a number of tasks:

- A review of employment policies and procedures contained in the revised staff handbook
- A review of the Company Pay Policy and the implementation of a revised pay structure
- A new Child Safeguarding Statement
- The implementation of GDPR policies and procedures and accompanying staff training
- The development of a Risk Register for the company
- A review of budgets of all programmes managed by CKLP

The groundwork for most of these tasks has been undertaken by the Executive Committee and the HR Committee and I would like to thank the Board and its sub Committees for their support and guidance in this important work over the last twelve months.

2019 marks the tenth anniversary of the commencement of trading as County Kildare LEADER Partnership. Following discussions with staff and the Board of Directors it has been agreed that two events will be held to mark the tenth anniversary. Firstly, during Social Inclusion Week in September 2019, a conference will be held to highlight positive social inclusion work that CKLP has been involved in promoting over the last decade. Secondly in November 2019 it is planned to acknowledge the role of the community and voluntary sector over the last ten years in contributing to local and community development in County Kildare. Further details of these events will be announced in due course.

The following reports are drawn from the programmes implemented and hosted by CKLP. I would like to thank the agencies and Government Departments who contract our Company to do this valuable work and I also wish to acknowledge the individuals from a wide range of public and voluntary organisations who we engage with to undertake these activities. Finally, I would like to pay a special word of thanks to all our staff who take such an interest in their work and display an outstanding level of empathy and support to the individuals and groups that they work with throughout County Kildare.

Programmes

County Kildare LEADER Partnership is responsible for managing several programmes on behalf of Government Departments and agencies. The Company also acts as host organisation for the employment of staff and administration of a wider range of projects which have similar objectives to the Company itself.

Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

CKLP is the current Programme Implementer for SICAP in County Kildare. In this role the Company is contracted to Kildare Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and is funded by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund for the period 2018 – 2022.

Rural Development Programme

CKLP is the Implementing Partner for the Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020 and is contracted to Kildare LCDC. The themes and subthemes targeted under the programme are:

- Theme 1 – Economic Development, Enterprise Development & Job Creation: Rural Tourism, Enterprise Development and Rural Towns
- Theme 2 – Social Inclusion: Basic Services Targeted at “Hard-to-Reach” Communities and Rural Youth
- Theme 3 – Rural Environment: Protection & Sustainable Use of Water Resources; Protection and Improvement of Local Biodiversity; Development of Renewable Energy

TÚS Programme: CKLP is the Implementing Body for the Tus Programme in County Kildare on behalf of the DEASP (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection). CKLP is currently responsible for the placement of 200 unemployed individuals with a range of community and voluntary groups, groups working with disadvantaged communities and local organisations that normally would not have access to employment schemes.

Rural Social Scheme is a labour market programme funded by DEASP for individuals who are in receipt of a Farm Assist payment and who hold a herd number. The scheme currently employs 27 participants and a Supervisor, providing supports to Community Groups throughout the county.

Local Training Initiatives

CKLP is contracted to KWETB with funding provided through Solas for the delivery of a Local Training Initiative project in Athy. The project provides training for participants who are unemployed and aged 18 – 35 years. The participants are supported to achieve a QQI Level 4 Major Award in Retail Skills.

DARA Project

The DARA Project is the only drug free programme in County Kildare for adults who are in rehabilitation from drug and alcohol misuse. The project operates as a Community Employment Scheme with three staff based in Athy. The project provides a range of soft skills training and accredited education and training supported by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, KWETB and SICAP. The project has a capacity for 30 CE participants and is a collaboration with DEASP and the Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force. The McVerry Trust is also a patron of the Project.

Business Development Programme

The Business Development Programme is a CE scheme which provides a 26 week start your own business course in Jigginstown, Naas for unemployed individuals in receipt of a welfare payment. Two groups of participants are catered for each year and on successful completion participants can progress onto the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme or Short-Term Enterprise Allowance if they are eligible.

Ability Programme

The Ability Programme is a pilot programme for the period 2018 – 2021 funded by DEASP and the Dormant Accounts Fund through Pobal. The aim of the programme is to support young people with a disability aged between 16 and 29. The Kildare Ability Project is based in Naas and employs a Coordinator and Employer Engagement Worker. The focus of the project is to work on a 1:1 basis with young people who are not engaged with services and to support their progression to further education, training or employment. The project will also work with employers to consider employing young people with disabilities.

Host

CKLP acts as host organisation for the following projects:

Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force: CKLP acts as the host organisation for the South Western Regional Drug and Alcohol Taskforce for Kildare and West Wicklow. This involves responsibility for the leasing of premises, employment of staff and the financial and operational administration of the Task Force which supports a number of projects including ARAS, Halo Project and the Drug Prevention Education Initiative (DPEI) with Foroige. CKLP has seconded staff to the Task Force to support the implementation of the National Drug Rehabilitation Framework and the development of Hope Cottage as a Regional Family Support resource centre.

Heads Up (formerly MOJO Project): Since July 2017 CKLP has been the host organisation for the Heads-Up Project in County Kildare. This involves responsibility for premises, employment of staff, contracting of trainers and facilitators and the financial and operational management of the Project. The project is funded by HSE and a range of local organisations including CKLP through SICAP.

Older Voices Project: Core funded by KWETB and HSE, Older Voices has a vision of creating a Kildare where older people are included and empowered with a vibrant community. CKLP provides an office base for the project and is responsible for the employment of the Coordinator and Project Worker and supports the financial and operational management of the Project.

Kildare Sports Partnership: CKLP acts as the host organisation for the employment of a Sports Development Officer and a Sports Hub Coordinator on behalf of Kildare Sports Partnership. The Sports Development Officer and the Sports Hub Coordinator are seconded to the Sports Partnership and works closely with SICAP staff in supporting the participation of target groups in sport and recreation.

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

1) Overview of 2018



Anne Crowe (KARE) and Martin Kelly (Newbridge Access Group), MC's for the Social Inclusion Week event in Kildare County Council Chamber, September 2018

Goal 1

a.Key Achievements

- The outreach strategy targeting disadvantaged areas was very successful with the appointment of two Outreach Community Development Workers who were responsible for establishing contact in ten areas in North and South Kildare.
- Cross programme linkages with Goal Two SICAP staff led to supports for individuals in four disadvantaged areas as a result of the outreach community development work.
- A Community Development & Leadership Certificate course (Level 7) was established in Athy Library with the assistance of the staff of Kildare County Library Service with 22 participants. The 2017 /2018 course in Naas was also completed with a further group of 22 participants completing the course.

- A new Certificate in Youth Studies course (Level 7) commenced for the 2018/2019 academic year supported by a new Steering Committee which includes Foróige and Kildare Youth Services.
- The development of a Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy was a major action under SICAP Goal One and by year end the consultative process and draft action plan had been completed. This process was led by SICAP and Kildare County Council.
- The second Kildare Social Inclusion Week took place in September 2018 with a range of activities supported by Kildare Public Participation Network (PPN) and SICAP.
- Strong inter agency collaboration was evident through the support for the Strengthening Families Programme, the Active Communities Programme (Healthy Ireland Initiative) and the Social Inclusion Disability Officer (SIDO) role with Kildare Sports Partnership
- The implementation of the Kildare Integration Strategy continued led by SICAP and Kildare County Council with the active input of the Kildare Integration Network (KIN).
- The strategic networking and cooperation between SICAP and the Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force continued during 2018 with HSE funding for the position of Rehabilitation Coordinator from Jan 2019 confirmed by year end.
- The Continuous Professional Development inter agency networking sponsored by SICAP led to a collaborative engagement in the World Community Development Conference in Maynooth in June 2018.

b. Challenges and barriers

c. Key Learning

A key learning point during 2018 from Goal One of SICAP One has been the need for a coordinated

- The engagement with some hard to reach communities was envisaged as being difficult and this has proven to be the case in some localities. In most cases this will require a partnership approach with local organisations as well as state agencies and service providers.
- Most of the areas where difficulties have been experienced are affected by relationships within communities that impact on the potential for collective action. This requires conflict resolution as well as mediating with service providers to address issues that have demotivated volunteers.
- There has been some resistance to the outreach approach of SICAP among some agency staff. It has been necessary to clarify the SICAP role and to reaffirm the programme's remit to work with the most marginalized areas.
- There is an ongoing challenge in County Kildare to ensure that adequate resources are available to meet the social inclusion needs that are identified through programmes like SICAP. Examples include the need for sustainable funding for Hope Cottage Family Support Programme, the Heads Up Programme, the DARA Drug Rehabilitation Programme, the Strengthening Families Programme and the Youth Employment Programme as well as a broad range of public services.

inter agency approach to working in some of the most disadvantaged areas. Cooperation among front line staff across various organisations works very well but dependency on this goodwill alone will not address some of the most intractable issues which require a multi-agency response. SICAP is supporting the inter-agency approach in Athy and it is hoped that this initiative in 2019 will provide learning to be used in other areas for the future.

Central to any inter agency cooperation is a shared understanding of the specific role of each organisation and the development of protocols about working together. In some cases, this requires

a formal agreement and SICAP is committed to working with Kildare County Council and other organisations to achieve this outcome in early 2019.

A further key learning point in 2018 was the process adopted for the development of a Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy. SICAP and Kildare County Council have worked together to establish a multi-agency steering group, resource the employment of outreach workers to engage with the Traveller and Roma communities and a consultant to develop the strategy. This approach has required the prioritisation of SICAP resources (staff and funding) but has resulted in an active participation of the Traveller and Roma communities in the strategy preparation along with many of the organisations that provide services to these communities.

The key learning for SICAP has been the need to focus on a limited number of issues and to provide dedicated resources to tackling these issues as well as identifying partner(s) who are equally committed to providing the resources necessary to make a significant contribution to addressing the issue. For 2019, SICAP has identified the lack of transport availability and has agreed with Kildare South Dublin Local Link to fund a development worker to carry out a specific piece of work to improve transport services in the most disadvantaged areas of the county.

Goal 2

Key achievements

- The Key Performance Indicator for Goal 2 was exceeded with 826 individuals supported on the caseload.
- The Youth Employment Programme supported 152 young people with 26 sourcing employment
- A total of 162 individuals gained employment with SICAP assistance including 87 who progressed to self-employment
- Industry certified and QQI accredited courses increased to meet demand with three HACCP/ Handling Food Hygienically / Career Preparation, two Home Repair & Maintenance programmes, seven Safe Pass and ten Manual Handling courses



Finding Your Feet Programme Presentation Teach Dara Kildare 2018

- New courses were piloted in late 2018 to support the underemployed and those who are in precarious employment
- The first Finding Your Feet Programme was held in Kildare Town for individuals on a Job Seeker Transition Payment
- Thirteen Interview Skills workshops were held throughout the county.
- The C.V. Guidance Service assisted 173 individuals in 2018
- Two successful Kickstart Programmes were held with individuals gaining work placements and some retained in employment
- Almost 200 young people participated in positive mental health workshops
- 26 volunteers supported 61 children in an intensive reading support programme over a 15-week period
- CKLP contributed to a positive messages campaign for parents in Co. Kildare that reached over 20,000 parents



Better Basics End of Programme Celebration, Naas Library June 2018

b. Challenges and barriers

- While the strategy is to target disadvantaged areas, this resulted in some courses having small numbers, and having to fill the course from a wider less disadvantaged area.
- There are difficulties in getting a commitment to participate in longer programmes i.e. six / eight-week courses (childcare and transport cited as reasons)
- Perceived duplication of Personal Action Plan process by clients who are also engaging with mainstream employment supports where a similar process is also required as part of the client's engagement with Job Path, LESN etc.
- Difficulty identified in getting a commitment from some clients who are only interested in benefitting from short (one /two day) courses to access employment.
- Youth engagement and support continues to be challenging. The success of the work has come as a result of ongoing follow up as commitment is an ongoing issue.
- Providing supports to clients who present with multiple issues of disadvantage including homelessness, addiction, mental health and unemployment.
- Developing training programmes for those in vulnerable employment has been problematic given the nature of zero-hour contract work and in trying to avoid duplication with KWETB contracted training.
- The identification of parents to participate in a reading support programme was a challenge in 2018.
- Engagement from disadvantaged areas through the outreach community development work did not occur as further time to build trust and engage individuals is required.
- SICAP had planned to deliver Youth Mental Health workshops in school settings but due to advice from the Department of Education and Office for Suicide Prevention, this was not considered best practice, and so the workshops around positive mental health were taken off site of school.

- Sub-contractors not returning data about numbers on time, posed challenges for reporting purposes

c. Key Learning

- As the number of unemployed has reduced significantly the range of supports offered by SICAP needs to adapt and change to meet the client needs. More confidence and esteem building are required before engaging in industry training requirements.
- Ongoing work is required to build cooperation and collaboration with other agencies to ensure that potential SICAP clients are referred to CKLP.
- The timing of some programmes needs to take account of other factors. For example, the Kickstart Programme in the autumn needs to be run earlier for work placements to be facilitated as the Christmas season made it more difficult to place people in 2018.
- As the referral of job opportunities has increased dramatically, internal systems and protocols with DEASP and other agencies need to be put in place, to ensure that SICAP clients are considered for these jobs.
- The positive messages campaign to parents has reached in excess of 25,000. Strategic use of Facebook with pertinent messages can have a wide-ranging reach in terms of communication of messages.

Rural Social Scheme

Background Information

The Rural Social Scheme was set up in 2004 to provide income support for low income farmers in return for part time work in the community.

It is based on a 19.5-hour flexible week to ensure your participation does not affect your farming activities.

To qualify for the scheme, you must be in receipt of a means tested social welfare payment and provide proof that you are actively farming.

If you are eligible and do not wish to participate on the RSS, your dependant spouse/civil partner/cohabitant can apply in your place.

You may also permit a sibling or child to use your Herd Number to participate, once they satisfy the other criteria.

By Participating on the Rural Social Scheme, local communities benefit from your skills and talents by providing additional resources to maintain and improve local amenities and facilities.

Criteria for Eligibility

You must provide a copy of your application for the EU Basic payment for the current year, including a valid active herd number.

You must be in receipt of Farm Assist or one of the following qualifying Social Welfare/ Means Tested Payments:

- Job Seekers Allowance
- One- Parent Family Payment
- Jobseekers Transitional Payment
- Widow(er)'s Pension (Contributory or Non- Contributory)
- Adult Dependants of Non-Contributory Old Age Pensioners who themselves are under 66.

What type of Work is Carried Out:

- Maintaining and enhancing way marked ways, agreed walks and bog roads
- Energy Conservation for the elderly and less well off
- Village and Countryside enhancement projects
- Social Care and Care of the Older Person
- Community Care for pre-school and after school groups
- Environmental Maintenance work- maintenance and caretaking of community and sporting facilities
- Projects relating to not for profit cultural and heritage centres

- Community Administration or clerical Work



The Rural Social Scheme in County Kildare currently employs 27 participants and one Coordinating Supervisor and operates under the support of County Kildare LEADER Partnership. At present we are supporting twenty-eight Community Groups throughout the county, from Johnstown Bridge in the north of the county to Athy in the South. Potential participants were identified through local agencies, direct media marketing, talks at different events, farmers meetings and through community groups in the County. Most participants on the RSS scheme in Kildare are involved in environmental maintenance type work with sports clubs and local community groups.

The RSS in Kildare has been operational in the County since April 2005 and given the declining income in agriculture in recent years, farmers participating on the scheme can increase their income on an annual basis. According to the most recent Teagasc National Farm Survey *'Farmers are in serious risk of poverty and isolation and many of these are single- person households. The average farm income in 2018 dropped by 20pc to €23,483, dry stock farmers earning just €10,642. The low-income levels in beef and sheep meant that close to a third of the country's 90,000 farmers are facing severe income challenges.*

Figures from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection show that 6,277 people are in receipt of Farm Assist payments in 2019, and that in County Kildare only 18 people are in receipt of the payment. Source: Farming Independent June 4, 2019.

Based on these figures County Kildare LEADER Partnership have applied an interest to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection for 3 additional places for the Rural Social Scheme in County Kildare. If we are successful, we hope to bring our quota up to 30 as we currently are capped at 27 participants.

In the past few months the Coordinator has been actively promoting the scheme by engaging with members of the IFA, Teagasc Advisors, has put together a direct media campaign highlighting the positive impact the RSS has had to date in the County, which will increase awareness of the Scheme and its benefits.

Ability Programme

The Ability Programme is a new programme launched on a national level last July. The programme is funded by the European Social Fund and Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. Funding for this programme is for the period July 2018 - July 2021. Before this Pobal held an information session for interested parties in November 2017, CKLP attended and then assembled relevant organisations from Co. Kildare together to identify a need within the county. It was clear from this consultation that young people aged 16-19 with a disability in Co. Kildare should be the target group. This consultation group then formed the steering committee for the programme. This committee includes: LESN, DEASP, NLN, KARE, St. John of God's, KWETB, Employability Kildare, CKLP, HSE. This group meet on a quarterly basis to guide and monitor the programme.

Since the Ability Programme began in October 2018 (Coordinator took up post) a number of milestones have been achieved. The introduction of the programme has allowed CKLP to target some of the hardest to reach young people in Co. Kildare. In addition to this Ability programme aims to encourage and enable employers in the county to be more inclusive. The programme employs two staff members a Coordinator and Employer Engagement worker. The programme works with young people across the entire county aged between 16-19 with a disability. The aim is to work with young people who are not engaging with education, training, work and services in general. Each young person is given an appropriate person-centred support to assist them in achieving their goals.

To date 13 young people are officially on the programme with a number of other young people in the process of joining the programme. Each of these young people have a recognised disability and are not engaging in education, training or work. When a young person joins the programme, they work with the coordinator to formulate a plan. A number of young people have progressed back into education or training as a result of their participation in the programme. Many of the other participants are currently exploring areas of interest and opportunities for training or education in their locality.

The referrals for the programme have come from a range of agencies across the county, these include: HSE Training and Guidance, Youth Workers, Juvenile Liaison Officers, Tusla, CAMHS, CKLP, schools, Network Disability Teams, Local Employment Service and parents of young people. Each participant meets the coordinator and engages in a process to identify suitability and needs. Any young person who is not eligible or feels the programme does not meet their needs can avail of a sign posting service. Every effort is made to help the young person and their family advocate for themselves and access an appropriate support. A number of families have been supported to access other more appropriate services.

One of the main challenges the programmes faces is the limited choice in terms of education and training particularly for participants under 18. While there are a number of options within the county, if a young person has limited transport access, which a large proportion of our participants have, finding an appropriate match is very difficult. The programme encourages independent travel and the use of existing transport but for some participants this proves very challenging. Financing transport is a challenge for a number of young people particularly those who are awaiting approval for Disability payments etc. The programme is assisting with finance for transport and plan to work closely with local link to continue to support and encourage more independent travel.

Another considerable challenge is transition between children and adult services. A number of the young people on the programme struggle to access services as they are due to exit children services and feel they can not relate to the adult services or do not know how to access them. There also appears to be a gap in service provision for young people ages 16-18 with complex needs who are not in education, these young people appear to fall between children and adult services.

The Employer Engagement worker was recruited in May, this post will support employers to be more inclusive and educate employers about the various supports available to assist them in employing young people with a disability. The Employer Engagement worker is currently designing training programmes which can be delivered to businesses across the county. They will link with the chamber of commerce and support any employers in county Kildare who want to become more inclusive.

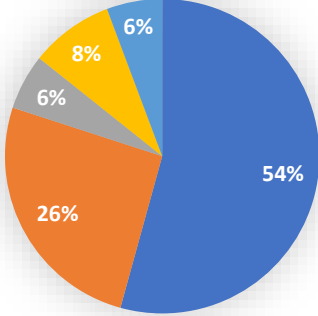
The official launch of the programme will take place on June 10th with Finian McGrath TD Minister of State for Disability Issues. The launch anticipates over 20 agencies/organisations to be in attendance in addition to the participants and their families. It is expected that this event will encourage interagency work, an opportunity to network and an opportunity for young people and their families to identify other services available within the county.

The programme aims to work with 40 young people over the lifespan of the programme. If the referrals continue at the current pace it is anticipated that the demand will outweigh the original targets. The programme is currently rolling out a new IT based person-centred planning tool to enhance the experience for each participant. It is expected at this point that the programme will reach all its targets by July 2021.

The DARA Project

Introduction

The DARA Project is a Community Employment scheme which supports local addiction services as well as being a drug-free structured day programme for those in recovery from addiction. It was first established in September 2013 under the Innovation Community Employment. This Project was identified through Service User Involvement as a need for Co. Kildare. The project first operated in Kildare town and is now in The Enterprise Centre, Athy. We are funded by the DEASP and Sponsored by County Kildare Leader Partnership. We provide a range of supports to people who have become drug free and empower them to reach their full potential. We believe that every person can recover from addiction. We seek to support, empower and equip each person to live a drug free life.

Numbers (39 Participants)	Finances
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently on Scheme Fulltime Employment / Education Treatment Centre Relapse / Other Unemployed 	<p>Materials: €9,555.73</p> <p>Training: €13,562.45</p> <p>Non DEASP Funding: €7,500.00</p> <p>To date we have spent the above amount on Materials and Training. Non DEASP funding was €2,500 from SWRDATF and €5,000 from Lotto funding which was all spent on Training.</p>

Collaboration

We recognise that the important work of recovery is not achieved by one service alone but is rather through an interagency approach of professional services coming together to reach a similar goal. Within the past 10 months we have continued to build strong working relationships with other services in the wider community including but not limited to ARAS, Hope Cottage Family Support Centre, Cuán Mhuire, Peter McVerry Trust, Probation and Merchants Quay.

Training & Education

The DARA Project continues to source, facilitate and promote training & education for the benefit of participants engaged in its community employment programme. We do this through the support of local training providers. Participants of The DARA Project have engaged, contributed and completed a wide range of training & education programmes within the current CE year. Here is a list of some of the programmes completed:

<i>Industry Standard & Personal Development</i>	<i>QQI Accredited</i>
Healthy Eating CPR Training Manual Handling Wellness Recovery Action Plan SAFE Pass AWARE Life Skills Mindfulness	Woodcraft QQI 3 Communications QQI 5 Planting & Potting by Hand QQI 3 Community Participation QQI 3 Personal Effectiveness QQI 5 Community Develop. & Leadership QQI 7 Cert in Drug & Alcohol Studies QQI 7

Recovery & Therapy

The DARA project seeks to assist those referred to become independent, socially integrated, emotionally balanced and personally productive through person-centred, rehabilitation, community employment, educational and vocational interventions. As part of our recovery & therapy programme, our project delivers regular recovery & therapeutic group sessions and one to one sessions. These include: counselling, key working, ILP one to one, check in groups, relapse prevention, recovery topic talks & weekend recovery planners.

Project Developments

During the past year we gained some new staff at The DARA Project. Alan Gavagan is the new Project Coordinator, and Imelda Hickey is our new Assistant CE Supervisor. Through our teamwork we aim to continually improve and develop our service.

Participant Photos





Annual Report 2018

Heads up Kildare is an interagency suicide prevention programme which funded through the HSE Mental Health Service and local agencies and hosted by CKLP that supports men in distress through the delivery of a wide range of programmes and initiatives. These programmes focus on four main elements

1. Wellbeing and Resilience supports men who have experienced adversity to gain an understanding of mental health recovery and wellness so that they can build their resilience and respond positively to stress and stressful situations.
2. Physical Activity: builds participants fitness levels as well as enabling participants to recognise the strong link between being physically active and feeling well.
3. Life Planning: enables men to set their own personal goals and be supported to access relevant services in pursuing these goals. The men determine new pathways for themselves and are equipped with the tools, knowledge and information to progress.
4. Social Connection: creation of a male space to enable men to be who they are and experience the support and connection within the male space. This gives participants a safe space to develop a new understanding of what it means to be a man that supports a sense of wellbeing.

During 2018 Heads Up Kildare ran a number of programmes across the county which engaged with over one hundred and seventy men. These included

1. Three 12-week programmes in Athy, Celbridge and Newbridge
2. Three 4-week mini programme in Athy, Celbridge and Newbridge
3. Three once off workshops covering Nutrition and Wellbeing and Mindfulness
4. Two Reboot programmes in Athy and Newbridge focusing on physical activity and mental health
5. Two peer spaces for past participants in Athy and Newbridge
6. Five programmes which supported young men aged 18 – 24 years
7. Peer Support training with 15 past participants including 8 from Kildare

Men who engaged on the programmes ranged in age from 18 to 82 years. Heads Up Kildare had an 82% retention rate on our programmes during 2018. This is significant as the men themselves choose to attend the programmes. They do not receive any payment for participation. 74% of participants on our 12-week programme have progressed onto further education / training or employment.

Young Men's Programmes

During 2018 Heads Up Kildare funded through the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (QCBI) with Healthy Ireland funding through Kildare Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the Kildare Children and Young Peoples Services Committee (CYPSC) implemented a Heads Up Programme specifically for young men aged 18 – 24 years. A range of national and local reports highlight the issue of youth mental health, men's mental health, the particular challenges of reaching young men in the 18-24 age groups along with the dual impact of mental health and disadvantage, including vulnerability to suicide. Research shows that mental health issues emerge generally early in

the life cycle and before 24 years of age. Almost 75% of all serious mental health difficulties first emerge between the ages of 15 and 25 (Hickie, 2004; Kessler et al., 2005; Kim-Cohen et al., 2003).

Although it was a new programme specifically for 18 – 24-year olds, it was based on the Heads Up general programme for men in all age groups, with adjustment to best support this younger target group. It was built around core well established components and modules. The programme aimed to support more marginalised young men to plan for positive futures and realise their full potential through using an inter-agency approach.

The men on the Heads Up programme was mainly in the 18-22 age group, living with their family. Whereas there were a wide range of issues in the main they identified as having low level of connectivity with others and many identified as being isolated. Some were spending substantial time on-line gaming. They had lost connection with core services, lacked motivation, had low self-esteem, had high level of anxiety (particularly social anxiety), worry, feelings of depression and many used alcohol or other substances (usually weed) very regularly. Using a recognised mental health recovery measurement tool, key outcomes for participants included:

- Significant improvements in terms of **physical health and self-care**. This included getting a sense of what works for them in terms of self-care, improved eating patterns, greater awareness of stress and how to handle it and maintaining a healthier way of life in terms of sleep, exercise and nutrition.
- Participants identified significant improvement in terms of wanting to **work**, actively exploring options, believing it was possible to get a job in the future.
- The vast majority felt more equipped to manage their own **mental health** – “*rebuilding my life*”, believing a different future was possible. One participant saw himself as more self-reliant, having a greater awareness and tools for coping with life, including setbacks in his mental health.
- Better able to recognise their **addictive behaviours** on completion of Phase 2, moving from a point of believing they did not have a problem towards accepting it as an issue for them and exploring alternative coping mechanisms.
- It showed an increase in people they could trust.
- The vast majority had an appetite for more engagement in social networks.
- A comparison between the initial low scores in Self Esteem and final scores showed significant improvements in terms of how participants felt about themselves and greater understanding of their own strengths by the end of the programme.

The external evaluation of the young men’s programme concluded that this Heads Up Programme for Young Men (18-24-year-old) has clearly demonstrated that there is a need for community based early intervention supports for this age group in Kildare (61 referrals across the Programmes). It also comprehensively demonstrates that implementing interventions and programmes for this harder to reach cohort of young people requires co-ordinated inter-agency approaches at delivery level. It demonstrates that some young men who experience a range of health, mental health and social challenges are willing to engage in well-run programmes that help them to develop skills, confidence and knowledge and to plan their progress. The Programme highlights the challenges, but also the benefits of delivering a group programme for this cohort. It shows the importance of peer-group relationships and the young men’s openness to working with trusted adults.

Peer Supporters Training – During 2018 we delivered Peer Supporters training in conjunction with Heads Up South Dublin based on the Scottish Recovery Network. Peer support is a relationship of mutual support where people with similar life experiences offer each other connection and understanding as they move through difficult or challenging experiences. Eight past participants from Kildare engaged in this training in order to develop the knowledge, skills and experience to become peer supporters on Heads Up programmes across the county

Older Voices Kildare Annual Report 2018

Older Voices Kildare is celebrating ten years of social inclusion for older people in County Kildare. Since 2009, Older Voices Kildare has offered a range of supports and services to older people, from community-based art and advocacy programmes, to one to one befriending support. In the past decade we have provided supports to the most isolated of groups within the population of older people, older Travellers, older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people, and older people with a physical or intellectual disability.

With the continued support of County Kildare LEADER Partnership, and the HSE, we have been able to identify needs that were unmet and begin to find solutions to the problem of loneliness in County Kildare for older people.

We are proud to say that, in this our 10th year, we have 41 trained and Garda vetted volunteers who provide one hour a week of their time to visit an older person in their home. Sometimes, this visitor is the only contact this person will have. Referrals come from the individual themselves, family members, social workers, public health nurses, GP Services, and hospital discharge teams.

We have also brought Social Prescribing to Kildare. An innovative model of community-based supports, proven to reduce stress, and increase feelings of wellbeing and feeling involved. This model involves the individual meeting with our Social Prescribing Co-ordinator Denise Croke to identify what community supports are most appropriate for that individual. To date, these supports have ranged from befriending, to knitting groups, to dementia specific yoga, mindfulness for carers, and when summer comes, we hope to have a range of outdoor activities for people to participate in. Referrals can come from the individual themselves, or their GP or primary care team, and further examples of outcomes are arts/ creativity on prescription, exercise on prescription, learning on prescription, and so on, according to the person's needs and interests at that time

Key Achievements

Over 40 people were trained as volunteer befrienders and carry out weekly visits to older people to more isolated and vulnerable categories of older people. Referrals come from HSE Social work teams, mental health teams, primary care teams and self or family referrals.

12 older people with dementia took part in an 8-week dementia specific yoga class which offered two hours of respite to their carers, or the opportunity to engage in a social inclusion activity which was not related to their health or their diagnosis. This initiative was recognised at the HSE Excellence Awards Nationally.

Barriers

Resources were a significant issue this year, as increased referrals meant the workload was too much for one person. To ensure the quality of the work a part time worker was taken on to manage the befriending service. You will see from the tables in the table above, referrals to both the befriending service, and the social prescription service were significant with a high percentage coming from HSE staff or HSE supported agencies. The standards applied to both services are in line with best practise and protocols and a dilution of resources would weaken these or result in a much reduced service.

Referral agent	Service Required	Number of Referrals	Reason for Referral	Action Taken	Outcome
HSE: Social Work Team Primary Care Integrated Care	Social Prescription Befriending	SP: 14 Befriending 30	Loneliness Isolation Recent Bereavement	Linked to activities where appropriate Visitors in place where available	Increased Participation More social Engagement Successful befriending matches
An Garda Síochana	Social Prescription	3	Spouse in long term care - financial issues, structural repair issues and loneliness.	Befriender requested Assisted with form filling for adaptation grant St. V deP for travel assistance to visit spouse.	A befriender Garda Vetting Quotes obtained for Local authority funding Travel supports received on a once off basis from SVP.
Mental health Services	Social Prescription	2	Loneliness and Isolation Sexuality	Linked to OVK as a potential volunteer befriender. Linked to NATIONAL LGBT supports as none currently operational in Kildare.	Will attend next volunteer training with additional supports from me. Attends weekly support/ social group in Dublin.
Self-Referrals / Family members (with consent)	Befriending / Social Prescription	5	Loneliness Isolation Grief	Befriending Referred to men's shed and local art group.	Awaiting a befriender, attends men's shed regularly.
GP / Primary Care	Befriending / Social Prescription	1	Loneliness/ Isolation/ Anxiety	Referred to weekly knitting group locally and awaiting a befriender.	Reduced feelings of loneliness and less reliance on GP – less visits.