



# ANNUAL REPORT 2017 / 2018

**Compiled by the Healthy Offaly Team**



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## Background to Healthy Offaly

### National context



Healthy Ireland, the government framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland over the coming generation was launched in March 2013.

Healthy Ireland sets out a wide framework of actions that will be undertaken by Government Departments, public sector organisations, businesses, communities and individuals to improve health and wellbeing and reduce the risks posed to future generations.

The vision is, *“A Healthy Ireland, where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone’s responsibility”*.

The framework describes four high-level goals and 64 actions that will work together to achieve the goals:

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1. Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life
2. Reduce health inequalities
3. Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing
4. Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland

Key themes requiring work were identified in the Healthy Ireland framework and these include: -

- i. Overweight and Obesity
- ii. Mental health
- iii. Smoking
- iv. Alcohol and Drugs
- v. Sexual health

## Healthy Ireland Fund

With the recognition of Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) and Children's and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) as key local structures, funding from the new Healthy Ireland Fund was offered to the LCDCs and CYPSCs in 2017.

The aim of the Healthy Ireland Fund was to support innovative, cross-sectoral, evidence-based projects, programmes and initiatives that implemented key national policies including: -

- Get Ireland Active, the National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland,
- A Healthy Weight for Ireland Obesity Policy and Action Plan
- National Sexual Health Strategy
- Tobacco Free Ireland



The Healthy Ireland Fund looked to support projects and programmes aimed at children, young people and their families, and communities and vulnerable groups who were at most risk of experiencing health inequalities.

In addition, the development of local strategic plans for health and wellbeing was supported to strengthen the existing approaches outlined in Local Economic and Community Plans (LECP) as well as enabling greater collaboration and planning across LCDCs and CYPSCs. Collaboration between LCDCs and CYPSCs, and integration of these plans, was encouraged to foster relationships and maximise opportunities at the local level. For many local authority areas, this strategic planning process also supported membership of the Healthy Cities and Counties Network.

In 2017, Offaly LCDC applied to the Healthy Ireland fund for €99,000 to deliver the following actions: -

- Develop a Healthy Offaly plan
- Support “grow your own” and “healthy eating” projects
- Deliver sexual health training for service providers in the youth sector
- Deliver sport and physical activity programmes for children, young people , adults and older adults
- Deliver programmes in support of “building healthier communities”
- Support parents in county Offaly

This report outlines progress in 2017 / 2018 on these actions.

## Healthy Offaly projects 2017 / 2018

Healthy Offaly Plan 2018-2020

National Government Framework to Improve Health and Wellbeing  
County Offaly- Healthy County Plan 2018-2020



### Healthy Offaly strategic plan

The Department approved €14,000 for the development of a Healthy Offaly strategic plan; and Nollaig O Sullivan was awarded the tender for the development of this plan. In developing the plan, Nollaig reviewed existing actions underway by partner agencies in the county, and identified up to five key priority areas of work under each of the key themes in the Healthy Ireland framework: -

1. Physical health
2. Mental health
3. Sexual health
4. Healthy Weight
5. Alcohol, Tobacco and Substance misuse

Focus groups, one to one interviews and a consultation day were held to inform the development of the plan.

In May 2018, the Healthy Offaly Strategic Plan was adopted by the Offaly Local Development Committee and Offaly County Council; while on the 14th June 2018, the Healthy Offaly Plan was officially launched.

To oversee the implementation of the Health Offaly Plan, a Healthy Offaly Team (HOT) has been established. HOT is an amalgam of the Building Healthy Communities group (an Offaly Local Development Company (OLDC) initiative) and the Healthy Offaly working group (established by Offaly Local and Community Development Committee (Offaly LCDC) in 2017). HOT will adopt an inter-agency model of operation using community development approaches to work directly with local communities to implement actions that address the determinants of health in their communities. The team will have the following joint operational focus areas: -

- Implementation of the Healthy Offaly strategy 2018 – 2020
- Improve and support positive mental health and suicide awareness in communities in Offaly
- Facilitate communities to develop positive responses and plans to emerging community issues; and develop their own capacity, skills and ability to respond to these issues
- Support parents in county Offaly

An annual work plan will be approved by the Offaly LCDC. On approval, HOT will coordinate applications for funding to Healthy Ireland to secure funding to implement the actions outlined in the annual work plan. Furthermore, HOT will monitor the implementation of these actions, and will make bi annual progress reports to Offaly LCDC; as well as submitting an annual report to the December meeting of the Offaly LCDC.

### Grow Your Own

The Department approved €10,000 for the delivery of the grow your own project in Edenderry.

This project aimed to increase the level of awareness across targeted groups in Edenderry regarding choosing healthier food to eat and providing a space where the people of Edenderry could learn about growing their own food and get involved in growing food locally.

The project focused on healthy eating workshops, food tasting events, food hubs, healthy menu options in local restaurants, and setting up a grow your own space and polytunnel in the community for the community to learn about growing their own food.

In December 2017, a group came together under the direction of the Acorn Project in Edenderry to develop a derelict site into a community allotment.



December 2017



March 2018

Running in conjunction with the development of the allotment, food tasting sessions and six healthy eating workshops were delivered by the Acorn Project in the local community



Food tasting session



Healthy eating workshop

## Sexual health education for the youth sector

The Department approved €10,000 for the delivery of sexual health education within the youth sector.

This project aimed to: -

1. Train service providers in “out of school settings” within the youth sector to deliver sexual health education to young people - 12 youth workers availed of this training delivered by HIV Ireland



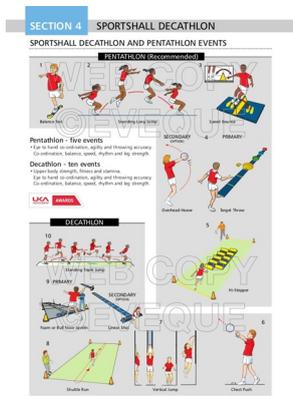
2. Promote awareness around LGBTI, sexual health and mental health - 12 youth workers availed of this training delivered by BeLongTo and Jigsaw Ireland

3. Establish a LGBTI support group for young people - the Youth Café at the Acorn Project in Edenderry is in the throes of establishing a LGBTI support group for young people. Contact Anna O'Neill on 046 97 32854 for more information

## Sport & Physical activity programmes for children, young people, adults and older adults

The Department approved €24,000 for the delivery of sport and physical activity programmes for children, young people, adults and older adults. Offaly Sports Partnership delivered these programmes in conjunction with partner agencies: -

The schools agility programme based on the SPORTSHALL Athletics decathlon and pentathlon concepts was delivered in eight primary schools and for 1,200 pupils by contracted tutors, David Mc Caffrey and Conor Mc Namee.





Local partners, Offaly Athletics and its network of clubs supported the delivery of a 10 week / 20 session couch to 5k programme across eight locations (Ballyskenach, Banagher, Birr, Clara, Edenderry, Ferbane, Naomh Mhuire in Daingean and Tullamore). 513 adults took part in the programme.

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### **Building healthier communities**

The Department approved €31,000 for delivery of the building healthier communities project. Offaly Local Development Company and local partners delivered this project on behalf of Offaly LCDC. A range of actions were delivered as part of this project including: -

- Support for eco health infrastructure, blue and green spaces - local clubs / organisations were supported to further develop blue, eco and green health spaces in Daingean, ???
- Health & Wellbeing programmes - eight health and wellbeing programmes were delivered across five communities including outdoor recreation activities, healthy eating, etc.
- Mental health supports - the HSE “little things” campaign was delivered across four communities
- Youthbank - five students received support from the youth bank in Coláiste Naomh Cormac

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### **Triple P Parenting supports**

The Department approved €8,000 for the delivery of Triple P Parenting Supports for parents of teenagers aged 11 to 15 years. Triple P Positive Programmes are evidence based multi level parenting programmes available free to parents of children and teenagers aged 2 to 15 years in the Midlands through Midland Area Parenting Partnership. This funding supported the training of practitioners and printing of questionnaires and materials needed to promote the new level of Triple P .



13 Triple P Practitioner were trained to deliver the Triple P Teen workshops which focus on the following topics of interest: -

- Coping with teen emotions
- Getting teens to cooperate
- Reducing family conflict
- Building teenagers survival skills

23 workshops were held and 175 parents attended these in the four midlands counties. Three workshops were held in Offaly for nine parents. Data is being collected by the partnership on both the outputs and the outcomes for parents and families who attend all levels of Triple P.

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### **Collaborative work**

The Department approved €2,000 to support the delivery of collaborative actions led out by partner agencies including the Laois / Offaly Children's and Young Persons Services Committee (LOCYPSC).

The LOCYPSC extended the delivery of the PAX Good Behaviour programme in primary schools by training:

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- three PAX course coordinators to oversee the delivery of PAX in the Midlands
  - 16 "in-school" mentors to support teachers delivering PAX
  - 40 teachers in the use of PAX
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### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the availability of the Healthy Ireland funding is very welcome but the short turn around times to make applications, and the tight deadlines (January to March 2018) to deliver programmes have proven problematic. Despite these problems, the commitment of partner agencies to plan and deliver the approved projects within the specified time frames and within budget is to be acknowledged.

We look forward to working with the Department into the future to further promote a Healthy Ireland for all.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 - Healthy Offaly team (HOT)

- Brendan O Loughlin, Offaly Local Development Company (Chair of HOT)
- Sarah Kennedy, Offaly Local Development Company
- Brian Pey, Offaly County Council
- Karen Heavey, Health Promotion Officer, Health Services Executive (HSE)
- Josephine Rigney, HSE Resource Officer for suicide prevention in Laois and Offaly
- Eamonn Henry, Offaly Sports Partnership
- Áine Brummell, Offaly County Childcare Committee
- Kathleen Dunne, Laois / Offaly Education & Training Board (LOETB)
- Bridie Costello Hynes, Offaly Public Participation Network
- Roisin Lennon, Offaly Local Development Company
- Dermot Egan, Offaly County Council
- Fiona Flaherty, Offaly County Council
- Anthony O Prey, HSE Health Promotion / Offaly Local Development Company
- Olivia Murphy, Offaly Sports Partnership