



National Government Framework to  
Improve Health and Wellbeing

# Healthy Offaly Plan 2018-2020



Healthy  
Offaly

# Healthy Offaly

The Healthy Offaly Plan supports the implementation of Healthy Ireland, the national health and wellbeing framework, at the local level to improve the health and wellbeing of all in County Offaly.



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# Section A

## Commitment and Healthy Ireland Framework Background

### Foreword

Councillor John Clendennen, *Chairperson Offaly LCDC*,  
Martin Daly, *Chief Officer*

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This Healthy Offaly plan aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Offaly over the coming years. The evidence provided in recent health studies informs the need for preventative action to begin now if we are to address areas which give concern such as physical activity, mental health, healthy eating, sexual health and substance abuse and support actions to improve the health indicators across all age groups.

The National Healthy Cities and Counties of Ireland Network were established in 2016 with the aim of developing a structure to support Local Community Development Committees to implement the Healthy Ireland Framework. Offaly Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) aims to develop, co-ordinate and implement local and community development programmes such as the Healthy Offaly Plan. Working with a range of organisations and groups, the LCDC is well equipped and positioned to support Healthy Offaly in responding to local people's needs.

The Offaly Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021 was adopted by the LCDC in December 2015. Two key objectives of the plan are to identify and address services and supports for local communities, and to improve the well-being and quality of life for children, youth, families and older people.

The Healthy Offaly Plan has been prepared as a living document which is flexible enough to respond to the key challenges which lie ahead. A number of key themes, such as Physical Activity, Mental Health, Alcohol/Tobacco /Substance Misuse will be developed each year and annexed to the plan in the form of annual actions to be achieved.

The Building Healthy Communities project has already undertaken a lot of good work in Offaly using a community development approach to tackling health inequalities. This work will continue under the Healthy Offaly Plan. An Implementation Group, called the Healthy Offaly Team, will report regularly to the Offaly Local Community Development Committee. The Healthy Offaly Team, with representation from key stakeholders, will meet regularly to develop and agree actions to be implemented under each theme, and to monitor and review progress made. The Healthy Offaly Team will seek to enable the Healthy Offaly Plan to achieve the greatest impact possible on the health and wellbeing of all in Offaly in the years ahead.



Councillor John Clendennen,  
*Chairperson Offaly LCDC*



Martin Daly,  
*Chief Officer*

## Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In September 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by all 193 Member States of the United Nations. The SDGs aim to deliver a more sustainable, prosperous and peaceful future for the entire world, and sets out a framework for how to achieve this by 2030. This framework is made up of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which cover the social, economic and environmental requirements for a sustainable future. The 17 SDGs (see Diagram 1: Sustainable Development Goals) address the social, economic and environmental requirements for a sustainable future, and represent the most ambitious agreement the UN has ever reached. They also apply equally to every country, and are based on the idea that ending poverty, protecting the environment and strengthening human rights are mutually beneficial and reliant on each other for success, and cannot be achieved separately.

While the SDGs are not a legally binding agreement, Ireland is fully committed to achieving them. Importantly, the SDGs do not 'belong' to Governments, rather they belong to everyone, in every community, in every country across the world. To achieve the SDGs, governments, businesses, communities and individuals will all have to work together. Everyone can contribute to that work, from businesses adopting sustainable corporate strategies, to communities working together to improve their local environment, to the individual choices we all make as consumers. The SDGs represent a global agenda but they are equally important and relevant to our own daily lives here in Ireland. Together with ending global poverty and combating harmful climate change, the SDGs also aim to make our towns and cities cleaner and safer, to ensure people have access to decent jobs, to promote better health and education for all, and to end all forms of inequality including gender inequality and discrimination.



Diagram 1: Sustainable Development Goals



# Section B

## Vision for Healthy Offaly

Ireland has a population of over 4.7 million people<sup>1</sup>. Many people living in Ireland and their families are affected by chronic diseases and disabilities related to poor diet, smoking, alcohol misuse and physical inactivity<sup>2</sup>. The current health status of people living in Ireland and their lifestyle trends are leading us toward an unhealthy and costly future<sup>3</sup>.

### Physical Inactivity in Ireland

Globally, physical inactivity is the 4th leading risk factor for global death and has been identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as being associated with more than three million deaths annually<sup>4</sup>. Physical inactivity increases the prospect of obesity and reduces life expectancy<sup>4</sup> and such physical inactivity onset from childhood is viewed as a key risk factor in many chronic diseases in later life<sup>5</sup>.

### Obesity in Ireland

Data specific to Ireland has shown that over half of the population at 61% are considered obese or overweight<sup>3,6,7,8</sup>. As a nation, our health is suffering from incidences of heart disease, cancers, type 2 diabetes amongst other non-communicable diseases which are all on the rise amongst the Irish population<sup>2</sup>.

In relation to childhood obesity<sup>9</sup>:

- at least one in five children are overweight or obese
- more girls than boys are overweight or obese across all ages
- those attending Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) schools tend to have higher levels of overweight and obesity and the gap becomes wider as children get older
- Obese children are likely to become obese adults
- 4 out of 5 Irish children do not meet the physical activity guidelines for children (i.e. 60 minutes' activity each day)
- 21% of children reported going to school or to bed hungry

### Mental Health in Ireland

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as a "state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community."<sup>10</sup> Mental health is an area of growing concern with studies highlighting that a significant number of people will experience mental health problems during his/her lifetime.

Suicide prevention and reduction is the responsibility of everyone in society as every death by suicide is a tragedy that affects families, friends, workplaces and communities. Suicidal behaviour is complicated and usually cannot be explained by a single cause or risk factor. It is more often the end point of a complex history of risk factors and distressing events. Therefore it is important that people feel confident and competent talking about mental health, suicide prevention and suicide.

The number and rate of completed suicides in the Republic of Ireland for 2015<sup>11</sup> was 425 or 9.1 per 100,000 population with males accounting for 335 (79%) and females 90 (21%). This figure is a decrease on previous years. In 2015, the highest male suicide rate was observed among 45-54 year olds (23.3 per 100,000), whilst the rate for men aged 55- 64 years was 19.6 per 100,000. The highest rate among females was between ages 55-64 years at a rate of 8.1 per 100,000. The graph below outlines the trends in suicide rates per 100,000 population by gender for the period 2004 - 2016.

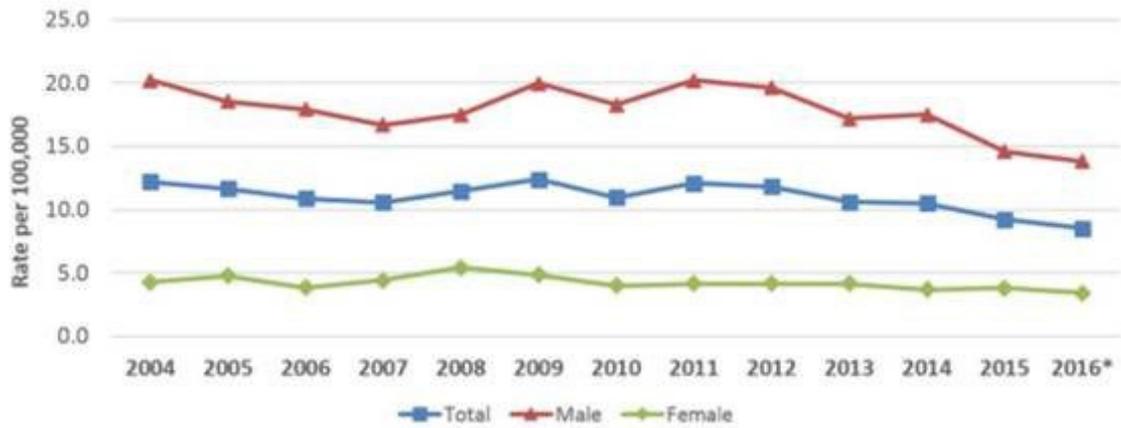
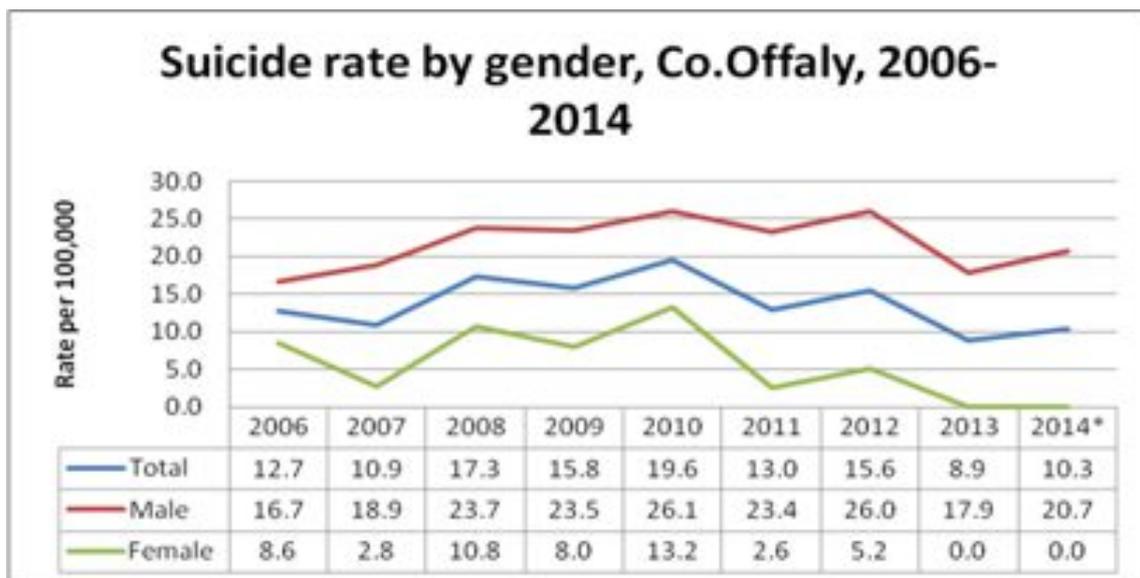


Figure 1: Suicide rate per 100,000 population by gender 2004 - 2016  
 \* Rates for 2016 are provisional and subject to change

Ireland’s overall suicide rate is lower than European rates. In 2015, the total rate of suicide for men and women of all ages in Ireland was 9.59 per 100,000 of the population, the 10th lowest rate of suicide among the 33 countries for which data was recorded by Eurostat<sup>11</sup>.

In 2015, for females and males together, aged 15-19 years, Ireland had the 7th highest rate of suicide across the 33 countries for which data was recorded<sup>11</sup>.



### Alcohol/Tobacco and Substance Misuse in Ireland

Alcohol consumption rate for Ireland is one of highest in Europe at 11.9 litres per capita in 2010<sup>13</sup> and is responsible for approximately 90 deaths every month, which include many alcohol-related cancers and heart diseases<sup>13</sup>. Around one million people in Ireland smoke tobacco products<sup>3</sup>. The annual death toll from smoking-related diseases in Ireland is at least 5,200, with many thousands more, and their families, affected through chronic illness and disability<sup>13</sup>. In 2014, In Ireland, there were 214 drug-induced deaths, the majority of those who died were male and were in their thirties<sup>15</sup>. Available data suggest that drug use has become more common among the adult general population aged 15-64 years old<sup>15</sup>.

## Sexual Health in Ireland

The Irish Study of Sexual Health & Relationships (2006),<sup>16</sup> the first national sexual health survey in Ireland states

*Sex and sexuality are core dimensions of the human experience and an important determinant of well-being. An individual's sexual behaviour and sexual health cannot be separated from their social and cultural context.*

The study identified deficits in reproductive knowledge. Of those studied, 75% of men and 56% of women aged 18 to 24 years could not correctly name the most fertile part of a woman's cycle. Awareness was also low in relation to sexually transmitted infections and inaccurate with regard to HIV/AIDS and use of emergency contraception. The average age for first sexual experience has steadily declined over time. Just 11% of men aged 55 to 64 and 2% of women of the same age had intercourse before their 17th birthday; this is now true of 31% of men and 22% of women under 25<sup>16</sup>.

With regard to sexual identity and attraction, the study revealed that twice as many men report some level of same-sex attraction as identify themselves as homosexual or bisexual. Among women the ratio is even larger; over five times as many women report some level of same-sex attraction as identify themselves as bisexual or lesbian. Men aged between 45 and 54 are the most likely to report ever having a same-sex partner; whereas the highest proportions of same-sex genital partner among women are found among women between 25 and 34.

The study also revealed a significant pattern of non-use of contraception amongst older men and women who were not post-menopausal. Almost one fifth of women 35-44 years did not use contraception 'on their last occasion', thus placing themselves at risk of crisis pregnancy. While the number of teenage births continue to decline, most recently from 1,187 in 2015 to 1,098 in 2016, notifications of sexually transmitted infections show an 8.3% increase among 15-19 year olds in 2016 (CSO 2017).

Of concern nationally, the diagnosis of HIV is on the increase in Irish people over 50 years (Tavoschi et al 2017)<sup>17</sup>. Chlamydia remains the most prevalent STI, with a slight decrease in females, but a 6% increase in the male diagnoses in 2016 from 2015. Of concern is the presence of more than one STI at time of screening<sup>17</sup>.

## Healthy Ireland Plan

Healthy Ireland is a collective response to the risks that threaten Ireland's future health and wellbeing. It is a national framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of the population of Ireland over the coming generation. Healthy Ireland is designed to harness the energy, creativity and expertise of everyone whose work promotes health and wellbeing, and also to encourage all sectors of society to get involved in making Ireland a healthier place to live, work and play. Nationally, Healthy Ireland<sup>3</sup> has highlighted the need to create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland. It is beyond the capability of any one Government Department or organisation to promote society wide health and wellbeing. This can only be done through efforts such as legislative changes at the highest level of government, to society wide involvement in and engagement with health and wellbeing promotion, from projects run by community and local groups, down to the individual choosing to make positive health and lifestyle choices<sup>3</sup>. The Healthy Ireland vision is:

*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 National Healthy Cities and Counties of Ireland Network

The aim of the National Healthy Cities and Counties of Ireland Network is to develop a structure to support local authorities to implement the Healthy Ireland Framework. It aims to promote lifelong health and wellbeing and provide a means whereby local issues can influence national policy and also to provide a voice for Ireland in the World Health Organisation Network of European National Healthy Cities Networks.

### What is a Healthy City or County?

A healthy city or county works to improve health and wellbeing by creating and continually improving its physical and social environments, and in developing community resources that help people to support each other and achieve their potential. The Healthy Cities and Counties approach to health and wellbeing recognises the need to work in collaboration across public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations. Many factors affect our health - where we live, our environment, our genetics, our income, education level and our relationship with friends and family. These factors are often outside the direct influence of health and social services. The Healthy Cities and Counties involve local people in decision-making, require political commitment, organisational and community development, and recognise the process to be as important as the outcomes.

### Local Authorities' Involvement

Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) are helping to create and sustain healthy places for people to be born, grow, live, learn, work and age in. Each local authority has set up an LCDC to develop, co-ordinate and implement local and community development programmes. Working with a range of organisations and groups, the LCDCs are ideally placed to support Healthy Ireland in response to local people's needs. LCDCs are key partners in realising a Healthy Ireland through developing the National Healthy Cities and Counties Network of Ireland.

*The Vision for Healthy Offaly:*

*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.*

Offaly Local Community Development Committee's vision as highlighted in Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) supports the overall vision for Healthy Offaly:

*Offaly will be an attractive and distinctive place with vibrant and prosperous communities, making it a destination of choice for successful business where people have access to a wealth of opportunities while enjoying a good quality of life.*



## Building Healthy Communities

The Building Healthy Communities (BHC) Project<sup>18</sup> is an inter-agency initiative which has supported the development of actions to address the determinants of health in partnership with local communities in Co Offaly. Partners included Offaly Local Development Company; HSE - Health Promotion and Improvement; Laois & Offaly ETB; Offaly County Council; Offaly County Childcare Committee and Offaly Sports Partnership. It was set up in 2003 and was granted Healthy Offaly Status in January 2017 by the Healthy Cities and Counties Network.

Community development approaches were used to work directly with local communities to design and implement actions that addressed the determinants of health in their communities. It has supported and developed Community Action Planning Projects in four targeted disadvantaged communities. This BHC group centrally co-ordinated possible inputs from all partner statutory agencies, to address the locally identified needs and explore opportunities for appropriate health promoting actions. This maximised the efficiencies of resources available through all agencies and ensured strengthening of relevant supports in areas of highest need across Offaly. The BHC also specifically supported community participation in Primary Health Care in County Offaly, and worked to keep health as a priority talking point across agencies and communities.

The Building Healthy Communities model (diagram 2) describes the ethos and work underpinning the BHC group. BHC developed a range of community based initiatives that addressed the determinants of health in various communities throughout Offaly. The project focused on:

- Broader social determinants of health, wellbeing and quality of life
- Supporting communities to look at interventions to address these determinants as part of a multi-agency approach
- Supporting existing strategies and initiatives for target populations or areas of interest
- Community ownership of their health and well-being – individually, collectively and as a community.

From April 2018 the role and membership of the Building Healthy Communities project will be merged following the creation of the Healthy Offaly Team.

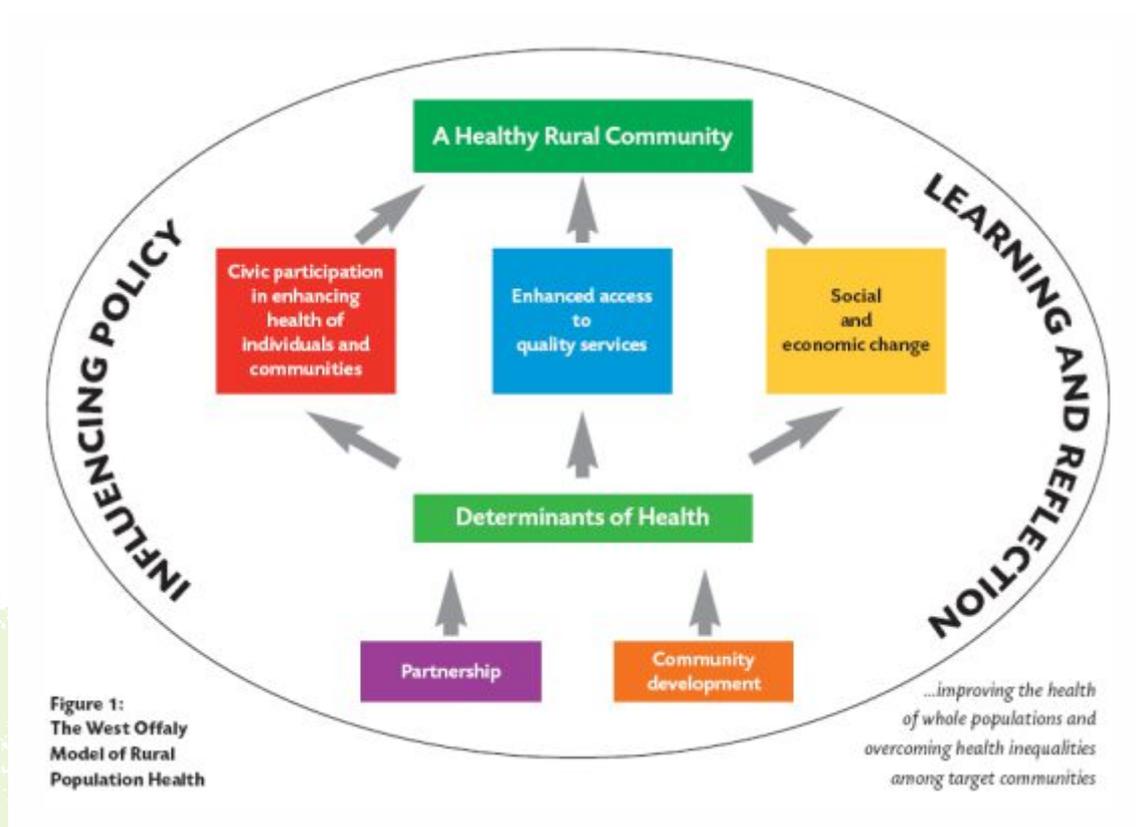


Diagram 2: Building Healthy Communities model in County Offaly.

# Section C

## Profile of County Offaly

### County Offaly Profile

County Offaly is located within the midlands of Ireland bordering the seven counties of Galway, Roscommon, Tipperary, Laois, Westmeath, Kildare and Meath. It has an area of approximately 2,000 km<sup>2</sup> (c.800 sq. miles) and 8% of the land area is formally designated as being of European importance for nature conservation - \*SPA, SAC, NHA. The peatlands comprise one fifth of the land use of the county, with the county being primarily flat with the exception of the Slieve Bloom Mountains and their attractive foothills, located to the south west of the county. Offaly has a wealth of important archaeological and historical landscapes including Clonmacnoise, Durrow and Croghan Hill (extinct volcano), internationally renowned Clara Bog (one of very few relatively intact raised bogs in Western Europe), and the winner of the Environmental Tourism Innovation Award 2015 was Lough Boora Discovery Park.

County Offaly has a population of 77,961, which sees an increase of 1.7% since the last Census in 2011 and a rise of 22.4% since the 2002 Census. The economic status revealed in 2016 that 30,287 in the County are at work with an unemployment rate of 15.9%. The 2016 Census found that 57% of people live in rural areas and 43% in the urban areas, it highlighted that geographically no child has to commute more than 12 minutes to a primary school and no more than 20 minutes to a secondary school. The car is the preferred mode of transport when commuting to work/school, with 42% of the population spending 15 minutes or less travelling to work/school. In Offaly, 16,412 dwellings had broadband access in the 2016 Census, an increase of 15.8% since 2011; 3,319 dwellings had non-broadband internet access, an increase of 4.5%, while the number of dwellings with no internet access fell by 22.0% to 6,708.

### County Health Profile

The Health Service Executive (HSE) carried out the Health profile 2015 of County Offaly. This health profile provides facts on the health in the county and can inform health professionals, local authorities and the general public and to create awareness of the health levels of people in Offaly and also enable them to improve health services and reduce health inequalities. This report found Offaly has a higher than average level of disadvantage with 86% of its population either below average level of affluence or disadvantaged. Offaly had a higher birth rate for females aged less than 20 years (13.9%) compared nationally (12.3%) in 2011.

The 2016 census reported that 11,154 people had a disability in County Offaly, of that figure 5,461 are male and 5,693 are female. Figures from the HSE Suicide Prevention Profile Offaly 2015 highlighted that the ratio of male to female deaths by suicide in Offaly from 2008-2012 was 3:1 compared to the national ratio of 4:1. In Offaly, there were 132 episodes of hospitalised self-harm seen in 2014 (61 males and 71 females) with the most common age at presentation in 2014 was 15 to 19 years. The Health County Profile 2015 showed that Offaly has an average or below national average incidence for all cancers except female breast cancer which is higher than the national average. Co. Offaly has an average or below average national death rate for all ages and for the main causes of death except for respiratory deaths for all ages which is above the national rate.

\*SPA-Special Protection Area, SAC-Special Area of Conservation, NHA-Natural Heritage Area

# Section D

## Consultation and Collaboration

### Healthy Offaly Community Consultation and Stakeholder Collaboration

The success of Healthy Ireland and Healthy Offaly is based on engagement and fostering long term innovative partnerships with the community and stakeholders. Supporting and growing these relationships is a key priority in promoting and improving the health and wellbeing of all in County Offaly.

### Community Consultation

A community consultation day was held in Tullamore on 21 February 2018. The aim of the community consultation process was threefold:

1. Promote Healthy Ireland Framework and Healthy Offaly
2. Raise awareness of the determinants of health - i.e. the preconditions for good health
3. Engage local communities on what the key priorities for County Offaly are and to identify barriers to achieving good health.

The important component of the Healthy Offaly Plan was to ensure that the people, groups and organisations within communities who have the insight, skills, knowledge and experience surrounding the health of people in our community were heard. The Community Consultation day was promoted through a number of channels to ensure attendance of any interested individuals, group or organisations within County Offaly. Social media outlets, print media, radio and emails were used to promote the event in the purpose of ensuring variety to the consultation and engage people who might not otherwise get involved. It was an important element to ensure accessibility to people of all abilities, ages and backgrounds. Being a part of this consultation day was to provide attendees with a sense of community ownership of the process and enabled participants to identify initiatives supporting their health in Offaly, issues surrounding health and provide input to help prioritise actions.

The target was to encourage local individuals, groups, organisation and communities to (a) identify initiatives that were working to improve their health in Offaly, (b) to identify what existing health supports were helping both them and their families in Offaly and (c) what they felt can be done to improve health for all in Offaly. This process was carried out across the five priority areas outlined by Healthy Ireland, physical activity, mental health, sexual health, healthy weight and alcohol/tobacco and substance misuse.

### Interviews and Focus Groups

To ensure representation of all priority groups were included, interviews and focus groups were held. The aim of the interviews and focus groups were to:

1. Promote Healthy Ireland Framework and Healthy Offaly
2. Raise awareness of the determinants of health - i.e. the preconditions for good health
3. Engage with local groups and organisations on what the key priorities for their specific area were and what barriers as a group/organisation did they face in achieving good health.

An important element of the interview and focus groups was to inform groups and organisations of the process of the Healthy County Plan, the process of identification and the connection of existing actions. Groups/organisations engaged with the themed areas and actions and provided further analysis and feedback of the significant actions relevant to the needs of County Offaly.

### Stakeholder Engagement

The aim of the stakeholder engagement was threefold:

1. Promote Healthy Ireland Framework and Healthy Offaly
2. Raise awareness of the determinants of health - i.e. the preconditions for good health
3. Identify (existing first, and if not new) actions, connections and synergies in networks to address barriers identified.

Wide level stakeholder engagement was carried out to ensure collaborations and discussions on solutions was held and also to build support for the Healthy Offaly Plan. The starting point was implementing existing actions identified in County Offaly through connecting networks, initiatives and local assets. The aim was to connect and stretch existing networks and actions, and only where there was an identified gap, that a new action was established.



# Section E

## Strategic Priorities and Connections

### The Strategic Priorities for Healthy Ireland (2013 - 2025)

Over the past few years, significant work has been undertaken in consultation with the public, in developing national policies and plans. These include, but are not limited to Tobacco Free Ireland (2013), National Sexual Health Strategy (2015), National Physical Activity Plan (2016), A Healthy Weight for Ireland Obesity Policy (2016), Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery - a health lead response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland (2017) and the National Get Ireland Walking Strategy (2017).

With a focus on the implementation of these plans, there is recognition that these policies and plans have to be integrated and implemented at local level. The Offaly Local Community Development Committee is ideally placed to understand the local needs and issues, and also the assets and networks unique to County Offaly and in promoting and improving the health and wellbeing of people living in County Offaly.

| Priority Area                                    | National Policy and Actions   |
|--|---|
| Physical Activity                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get Ireland Active - National Physical Activity Plan (2016)</li> <li>- Get Ireland Walking - Strategy and Action Plan (2020 - 2017)</li> </ul> |
| Healthy Weight                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A Healthy Weight for Ireland - Obesity and Policy Action (2016)</li> </ul>   |
| Tobacco Free                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tobacco Free Ireland (2013)</li> </ul>   |
| Sexual Health                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National Sexual Health Strategy (2015 - 2020)</li> </ul>   |
| Prevention and reduction of alcohol-related harm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery: A health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland (2017-2025)</li> </ul>                            |
| Mental Health                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Connecting for Life - National Strategy to Reduce Suicide in Ireland (2015 - 2020)</li> </ul>  |

Table 1: List of Healthy Ireland priority areas and associated national policies

### Connections of Local Strategies and Healthy Ireland's themes

An evidence based approach was taken to identify and connect existing actions from the list of Healthy Ireland priority areas with associated national and local policies. This process reviewed 27 national and local policies, and identified all existing actions from each of the priority areas outlined by Healthy Ireland. Existing actions were identified and then collated under key themed areas that arose based on overlap and/or mutually supportive actions. Analysis was carried out with the involvement of organisations/groups with expertise on the priority areas. Engagement with the themed areas and actions provided further analysis and feedback of the significant actions relevant to the needs of the County.

### Healthy Ireland Priority Area: Physical Activity

Identifying and connecting existing actions from national and local plans /policies in the priority area of physical activity revealed that there were 424 existing actions specific to promoting physical activity in County Offaly. Existing actions were identified and then collated under five key themed areas that arose based on overlap and/or are mutually supportive actions. Evaluation of the existing physical activity actions in Offaly highlighted that increasing physical activity in the natural environment had the highest number of existing actions to increase physical activity, followed by actions supporting the inclusion for all in physical activity/sport, community engagement, to increase children's physical activity levels and tourism and physical activity. Diagram 4 displays the five key themed areas for Physical Activity in Co. Offaly.



Diagram 4: Five key themed areas for Physical Activity in Co. Offaly.

### Healthy Ireland Priority Area: Mental Health

Identifying and connecting existing actions from national and local plans/policies in the priority area of mental health revealed 369 existing actions specific to promoting mental health in County Offaly. Existing actions were identified and then collated under five key themed areas that arose based on overlap and/or are mutually supportive actions. Evaluation of the existing mental health actions in Offaly highlighted that increasing education and information sharing were key actions in the area of mental health, followed by actions addressing the need for community support, improving services, youth and mental health and actions surrounding social inclusion. Diagram 5 displays the 5 key themed areas in Mental Health in Offaly.



Diagram 5: displays the five key themed areas for Mental Health in Co. Offaly.

### Healthy Ireland Priority Area: Sexual Health

Identifying and connecting existing actions from national and local plans/policies in the priority area of sexual health revealed 45 existing actions specific to promoting sexual health in County Offaly. Existing actions were identified and then collated under five key themed areas that arose based on overlap and/or are mutually supportive actions. Evaluation of the existing sexual health actions in Offaly found that information and access to services were key actions in Offaly, followed by training and education, reducing stigma/discrimination, youth support and parent and family support actions under the area of Sexual Health. Diagram 6 displays the five key themed areas for Sexual Health in Co. Offaly.



Diagram 6: The five key themed areas for Sexual Health in Co. Offaly.

### Healthy Ireland Priority Area: Healthy Weight

Identifying and connecting existing actions from national and local plans/policies in the priority area of Healthy Weight revealed 68 existing actions specific to promoting Healthy Weight in County Offaly. Existing actions were identified and then collated under four key themed areas that arose based on overlap and/or are mutually supportive actions. Evaluation of the existing Healthy weight actions in Offaly highlighted that the area of education had the highest number of existing actions under the theme of Healthy weight, followed by actions under schools, priority groups and actions surrounding promotion of local produce in Offaly. Diagram 7 displays the 4 key themed areas around Healthy Weight in Co. Offaly.

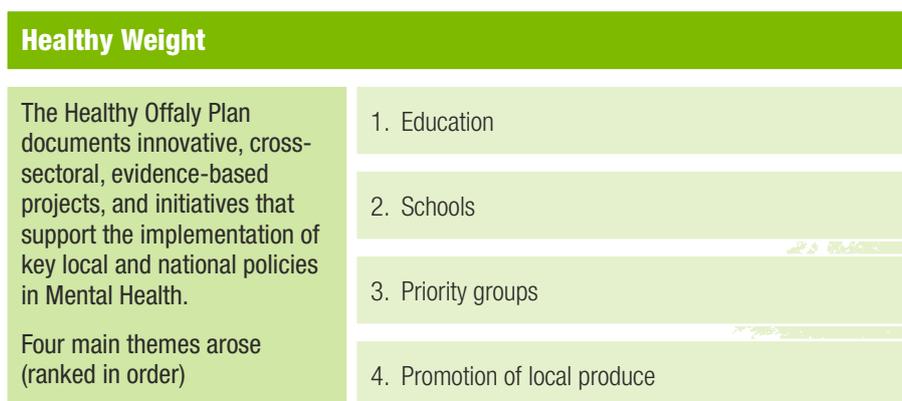


Diagram 7: The four key themed areas for Healthy Weight in Co. Offaly.

### Healthy Ireland Priority Area: Alcohol/Substance Misuse and Tobacco

Identifying and connecting existing actions from national and local plans/policies in the priority area of Alcohol/Substance Misuse and Tobacco revealed 54 existing actions specific to Alcohol/Substance Misuse and Tobacco in County Offaly. Existing actions were identified and then collated under four key themed areas that arose based on overlap and or are mutually supportive actions. Evaluation of the existing actions in Offaly highlighted that education had the highest number of existing actions to address Alcohol/Substance misuse/tobacco; followed by actions addressing at risk groups, services and aftercare. Diagram 8 displays the four key themed areas around alcohol, substance misuse and tobacco in County Offaly.

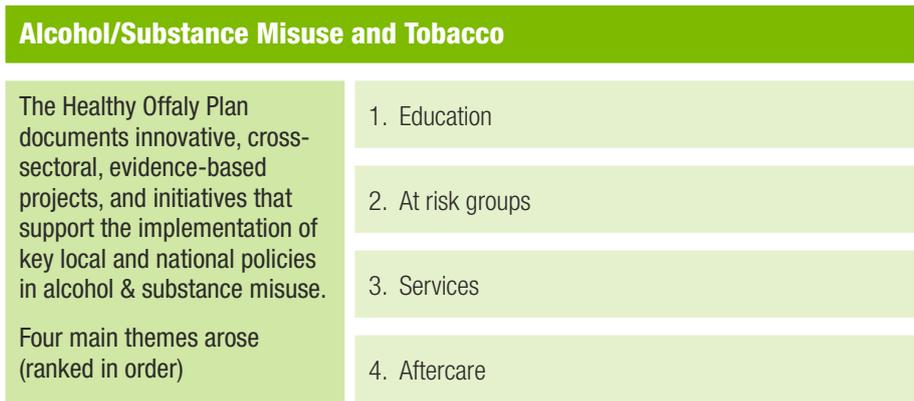


Diagram 8: The key themed areas for Alcohol/Substance Misuse and Tobacco in Co. Offaly.



# Section F

## Healthy Offaly 2018: Strategic Priorities for Healthy Offaly

### Strategic Priorities for Healthy Offaly

Using an evidence based approach in the analysis of existing actions within the priority areas outlined by Healthy Ireland in combination with findings from the County Profile/County Health Profile/focus groups and interviews; the alignment of these existing actions with the feedback from the community consultation, the strategic priority areas/actions emerged following stakeholder engagement. Through the relevant structures and services in County Offaly and through further consultations particularly with HSE Services there was additional support and emphasis from the Healthy Offaly Implementation Steering Group on these broad action areas.

Two key Priority Areas have been identified for Co. Offaly for progression in 2018: **1. Physical Activity** and **2. Mental Health**. This work will continue in 2019 and 2020 when we intend to concentrate on three additional Priority Areas: **3. Alcohol / Tobacco and Substance Misuse**; **4. Healthy Weight** and **5. Sexual Health** in addition to building on the progress made under the two 2018 priority themes. This will involve on-going engagement and consultation with key stakeholders and service providers who will support the planning and implementation of the Healthy Offaly Plan.

### Two Priority Areas

1. Physical Activity
2. Mental Health

### Physical Activity

1. To support the continued development of accessible and affordable physical activities for all ages and abilities which encourages personal and social development including healthy behaviours
2. To support the development and implementation of initiatives to achieve the targets as set out in the 'Get Ireland Active' Strategy.
3. To support the partnership work with Public and Private Stakeholders to develop a range of recreational and amenity activities.

### Mental Health

1. To support the delivery of a range of mental health promoting initiatives in community, health and education settings, with the aim of improving the mental health of the whole population and priority groups.
2. To support the implementation of the Connecting for Life Midlands, Louth, Meath, Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2018-2020.

### Alcohol/Tobacco/Substance Misuse

1. To support the rollout of substance use education across all sectors, including youth services, services for people using substances and other relevant sectors.
2. To support the availability and geographical spread of relevant quality drug and alcohol services and the range of services available, based on identified need.

### Sexual Health

1. To support the delivery of targeted campaigns to improve awareness of appropriate support services to priority groups.
2. To support the roll out of accredited training, across the county to increase comfort levels, confidence knowledge and skills in relation to sexual health promotion.

### Healthy Weight

1. To support the delivery of effective community based programmes with a focus on disadvantaged areas/groups to enhance knowledge and skills with regard to healthy eating and active living. Special emphasis should be placed on providing guidance, advice and training to parents on healthy food and healthy eating.

The key stakeholders will meet in 2018 to agree a number of achievable key priority actions to be progressed under each of the above priority areas. This consultation process will be co-ordinated by the Healthy Offaly Team who will provide progress reports to the Offaly Local Community Development Committee.



# Section G

## Healthy Offaly Team

The Healthy Offaly Team aims to build on the excellent work undertaken for many years by the Offaly Building Healthy Communities (BHC) group<sup>18</sup>. The objectives and structures of both groups are very similar and both groups will now merge under the Healthy Offaly Team structure.

The BHC group had an inter-agency model of operation, and used community development approaches to work directly with local communities to implement actions that addressed the determinants of health in their communities. This model will continue under Healthy Offaly. Following the merger of both groups the Healthy Offaly Team will have the following joint operational focus areas:

| Focus Area  | Aim  |
|---|--|
| <b>Focus Area A</b><br>Healthy Offaly Strategy                      | To support the implementation of the Healthy Offaly Strategy 2018-2020   |
| <b>Focus Area B</b><br>Positive Mental Health and Suicide Awareness | To improve and support positive mental health and suicide awareness in the communities of County Offaly  |
| <b>Focus Area C</b><br>Community Resilience                         | To 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   |
| <b>Focus Area D</b><br>Supporting Parents in County Offaly          | To support parents through the work of Offaly County Childcare Committee and the Midland Area Parenting Partnership.<br><br>To continue to deliver Triple P Parenting Programmes in Offaly to parents of 2-10 years and to parents of teenagers (11-15 years) in county Offaly with a particular focus on transition times such as transition from pre-school to school and from primary school to second level education. |

### Implementation of the Plan

- Following adoption of the Healthy Offaly Plan 2018-2020 the role and membership of the Building Healthy Communities project will be merged to create the Healthy Offaly Team.
- The Healthy Offaly Team will meet monthly to develop a detailed set of actions for each key Priority Area which will become the Annual Action Plan for the year. For 2018 the key priority areas are Physical Activity and Mental Health.
- When completed, the Annual Action Plan will become an appendix to the Healthy Offaly Plan.
- The agreed Annual Action Plan containing the detailed actions will be presented to the LCDC for its approval.
- Once LCDC approval is given the Healthy Offaly Team will co-ordinate applications for funding to implement the actions and will subsequently monitor their implementation.
- During the year it will be necessary for the Team to review and possibly to amend actions where priorities or funding opportunities have changed.
- Progress reports will be made to the Offaly Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) by the Healthy Offaly Team, and an Annual Report will be presented yearly to the December LCDC meeting.

The team engaged to lead the Healthy County Plan in Offaly to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in County Offaly are:

| <b>Representative</b>                         | <b>Body</b>  |
|---|--|
| <b>Brendan O’Loughlin (Chair)</b>             | Offaly Local Development Company                         |
| <b>Karen Heavey, Health Promotion Officer</b> | Health Services Executive (HSE)                          |
| <b>Sarah Kennedy, Healthy Offaly</b>          | Offaly Local Development Company                         |
| <b>Roisin Lennon</b>                          | Offaly Local Development Company                         |
| <b>Anthony O’Prey</b>                         | Offaly Local Development Company / HSE Health Promotion  |
| <b>Josephine Rigney</b>                       | Resource Officer Suicide Prevention, Laois & Offaly, HSE |
| <b>Kathleen Dunne</b>                         | Laois Offaly Educational Training Board                  |
| <b>Áine Brummell</b>                          | Offaly County Childcare Committee                        |
| <b>Eamonn Henry</b>                           | Offaly Sports Partnership                                |
| <b>Brian Pey</b>                              | Community & Culture Section<br>Offaly County Council     |
| <b>Bridie Costello Hynes</b>                  | Public Participation Network                             |

### **Conclusion**

The Healthy Offaly Plan 2018-2020 provides a collaborative process in addressing the needs of people at the local level to improve their health and wellbeing. Promotion of health and wellbeing is complex; the Healthy Offaly Plan focuses on these complexities by addressing the challenges of resources and barriers and by making the most of local assets and identifying synergies and connections between existing networks, resources, policies and plans.

The objective of Healthy Offaly is to foster engagement and long term innovative partnerships with stakeholders and the community. Supporting and improving the health and wellbeing of people in Offaly is a collaborative process. Aligning with the Healthy Ireland Framework, the Healthy Offaly Plan promotes society-wide involvement in and engagement with health and wellbeing promotion, from projects run by communities and local groups to encouraging individuals choosing to make positive health and lifestyle choices, the overall aim is for a healthier County Offaly.

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