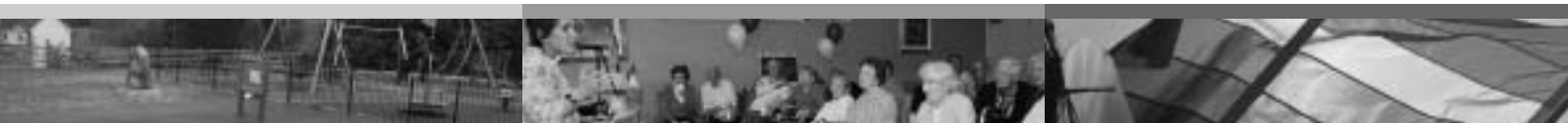


Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to members of the Cavan Social Inclusion Measures Group who guided the development of this plan, and to the many people who took part in the survey, consultation sessions and written submissions. Many groups and individuals took the time to write or attend meetings to contribute their knowledge and views towards this document. Those who contributed individual interviews or took part in discussion groups are listed in the appendices.



Foreword

This is the first anti-poverty and social inclusion strategy for County Cavan. It is a milestone in how we identify social exclusion issues in the county, and more importantly, how we try to work together to address them.

Poverty and social exclusion impact on many people living in Cavan today. Through a lack of money and resources, people are not able to participate fully in all aspects of society. As a result, they are excluded from having a good standard of living, from decision-making, and from making a contribution to their communities.

Social exclusion is what happens when people are unable to participate fully in society because of poverty, discrimination or unequal opportunities. Social inclusion means that everyone can take part in their community and in society. For this to happen, we must work together to challenge discrimination, take positive steps to achieve equality of access to goods and services, and encourage everyone to contribute to social, economic and cultural life.

One of the aims of 2010, the EU Year Against Poverty and Social Exclusion, was to generate commitment from all sectors of society to ensuring that everyone feels included, and not left on the margins.

The aim of this strategy is to address key problems identified in the consultation process, and ultimately to bring about changes in Cavan that will help to level the playing field for everyone living in the county.

This local plan reflects the lifecycle framework of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016. It is structured around the key stages of the lifecycle, which are: young people, people of working age, older people, people with disabilities and communities. It recognises that disadvantage can occur for anyone at different stages of the lifecycle.

The plan is endorsed by Cavan County Development Board. It has been developed through the Cavan Social Inclusion Measures Group. All of the participating agencies and organisations have given their support to its full implementation.

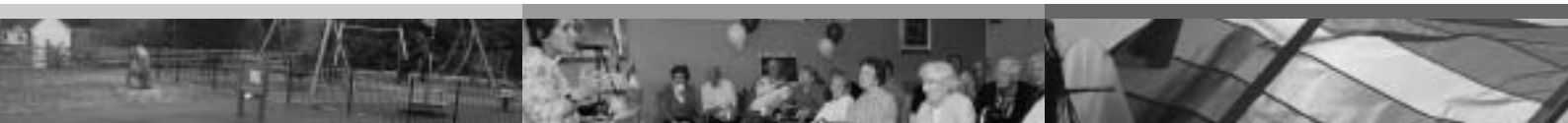
Mr Ger Finn
Director of Service

Mr Richard Phelan
Chair of the Social Inclusion Measures Group



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Introduction and Context

Background to Developing the Strategy

Cavan County Development Board [CDB] has developed this interagency strategy to address poverty and promote social inclusion in County Cavan over the next five year period. Social exclusion happens when people feel left out, unable to participate, marginalised, and unvalued. Social inclusion, on the other hand, is what happens when people feel they are included and able to participate in different aspects of life and the community.

The plan was developed in 2010 through the Cavan Social Inclusion Measures [SIM] Group, a subgroup of the CDB. A literature review of recent local studies, national data and policy documents helped to inform the development of the actions. Consultation was carried out through discussions with:

- elected members,
- service providers,
- local communities, and
- specific interest groups.

We also had a written consultation process and an online and paper survey.

The publication of an anti-poverty strategy for Cavan is very timely given the current economic recession, and the recent upward trend in poverty indicators. The 2009 Survey of Income and Living Conditions shows an increase in the rate of consistent poverty in the country, which rose from 4.2% in 2008 to 5.5% in 2009. The national unemployment rate has increased from a low of 4.4% in December 2005 to 13.4% in December 2010. This worrying trend means that addressing poverty and social exclusion is now more urgent than ever. The implementation of a co-ordinated strategy will assist agencies to jointly address the identified problems.



“There is a new type of poverty existing in Cavan. People who may never have experienced money problems before are now struggling in repaying their mortgages, credit card bills etc. So many people have lost their jobs now and there are very few opportunities for employment. There is a growing problem around people being cut off by ESB and then they are charged a service charge of €70 to be re-connected.”



Prior to developing this plan, a full poverty profile of County Cavan was carried out by the Social Inclusion Unit in collaboration with Cavan Community Forum. Published in 2008, this document gathered baseline data from Census statistics and other sources to gauge the extent of disadvantage and the type of exclusion issues experienced in the county.

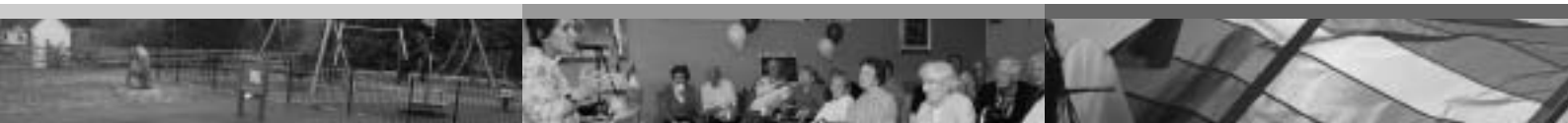
All of the organisations that are members of the Cavan SIM group have an important role in the field of social inclusion. Social inclusion features as a major area of work in their programmes. This anti-poverty strategy aims to provide an overarching framework for all social inclusion activity in the county. It acknowledges where services are already targeting social exclusion, as well as identifying new projects and initiatives that are required to ensure that excluded people in Cavan can participate in all aspects of normal, everyday life.

The strategy is structured around the Lifecycle Framework, which is the theoretical framework underpinning current national responses to social exclusion, such as that contained in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion [NAPs Inclusion]. The Lifecycle Framework explains how disadvantage can occur at key stages of the lifecycle, namely that experienced by children and young people, people of working age, older people, people with disabilities and communities.

What is a LAPSIS?

In order to effectively tackle poverty and disadvantage, a local authority should develop an integrated, targeted strategy, called a Local Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy [LAPSIS]. This should be developed through the County/City Development Board [CDB] structure. The importance of such local strategies is recognised at both national and EU level.

A LAPSIS strategy actively contributes to the success of the national anti-poverty targets of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion. Such strategies are part of a wider drive across the EU to make a decisive impact on eradicating poverty and social exclusion. The ultimate aim is to improve the lives of the worst off people in society.



The Context for Social Inclusion

Policy Context

This section outlines the anti-poverty policy context that shaped the development of the Cavan LAPSIS.

The first National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS), 'Sharing in Progress', was drawn up in 1997 after widespread consultation. It was subsequently endorsed in a social partnership agreement, the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. NAPS was the first plan at a national, strategic level aimed at reducing poverty in Ireland. It was based on the principles of prioritising poverty and its elimination and involving those directly affected by poverty in that elimination. The plan emphasised the need to tackle not just the symptoms of poverty, but also its underlying causes. It indicated that all government departments would have a role in its implementation.

A commitment was made to extend the scope of the NAPS and revise key aspects. Following a further extensive consultative process, the revised NAPS, 'Building an Inclusive Society', was rolled out in 2002. The revised strategy recommended that local authorities develop social inclusion strategies at local level, which would influence in particular the operation of strategic development objectives agreed by the CDBs.

National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 builds on the work that was undertaken through the previous plans. The overall goal for the plan is:

“To reduce the number of those experiencing consistent poverty to between 2% and 4% by 2012, with the aim of eliminating consistent poverty by 2016.”

The plan takes a lifecycle approach, focusing on key stages of people's lives where they can be particularly vulnerable to poverty. The lifecycle approach places the individual at the centre of policy development and delivery by assessing the risks facing him or her and the supports available at key stages of the lifecycle. By adopting a lifecycle approach, the plan is designed to mobilise resources to address long-standing and serious social deficits. The plan is linked very closely with Towards 2016 – the National Social Partnership Agreement - and the current National Development Plan, 2007-2013.



Transforming Ireland: National Development Plan 2007-2013

Since the launch of the original National Anti-Poverty Strategy, responses to poverty and exclusion have increasingly been mainstreamed. This is apparent in the latest National Development Plan [NDP] which includes Social Inclusion as one of its five main priority objectives. The Social Inclusion priority of the plan comprises programmes focusing on the following themes:

- Children
- People of Working Age
- Older People
- Local & Community Development
- People with Disabilities
- Integration & Equality

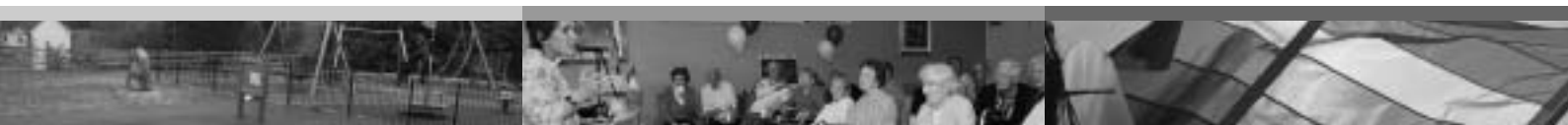
Investment in social priorities is central to the National Development Plan as reflected in the major investment committed of €49.6 billion in related programmes and policies over the seven years.



Cavan Area Rural Transport [CART] provides services for local rural communities



The 'Outcomes for Children' strand under the CAWT (Co-operation and Working Together) initiative of the Health Service Executive aims to address social disadvantage among children and young people in Cavan



National Programmes to Address Exclusion

State responses to poverty and social exclusion are evident in the many national funding programmes that aim to address particular problems within communities. Some of these include the Rural Transport Programme, the Rural Development Programme, the Traveller Interagency Programme, and the Local and Community Development Programme

Certain communities are known to face particular difficulties with regard to their full participation in society. Various initiatives have been put in place to address specific target groups, including activation measures to support lone parents into employment, an interagency programme to support Travellers, and a National Action Plan Against Racism, among others.

National research initiatives attempt to develop a clearer picture of poverty and its associated problems in Ireland. For example, the All Ireland Traveller Health Study, published in 2010, was carried out because of an awareness that the Traveller community has a significant health disadvantage compared to the rest of the population.

Mainstream public sector bodies such as FÁS, the Vocational Education Committees, Health Service Executive, An Garda Síochána, the Department of Social Protection and local authorities, all play major roles in supporting people who are at risk of poverty or otherwise disadvantaged. While at both national and county level, there is an abundance of local development, community and voluntary organisations that are striving to improve the quality of life of people in difficult circumstances.

Poverty Indicators

National indicators show that the levels of poverty in Ireland have been reducing. Both the 'at risk' measure of poverty, which is a purely income-based measurement, and the consistent poverty measure, which also captures information on access to resources, have decreased in recent years. The 'at risk' measurement captures the percentage of persons below 60% of median income (median income is the mid-point on the scale of incomes). The 'consistent poverty' indicator combines the median income measure with the inability to afford certain items from a list of 11 items considered essential for a basic standard of living.



Indicator	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
At risk of poverty	18.5	17.0	16.5	14.4	14.1
Consistent poverty	7.0%	6.9%	5.1%	4.2%	5.5%

Table 1 National 'At risk' and 'Consistent' Poverty rates, 2005-2009

While there has been a gradual decline in poverty rates, poverty may be on the increase again. Since the start of the recession, the rate of consistent poverty in the country has actually increased, from 4.2% in 2008 to 5.5% in 2009.

These national indicators are not published at county level, so there is no quantitative county-level system for measuring the change in poverty levels. Such a system would help to assess the effectiveness of local policies and initiatives to address poverty. However, there are many local recording and evaluation systems, and qualitative data, to indicate what measures are effective.

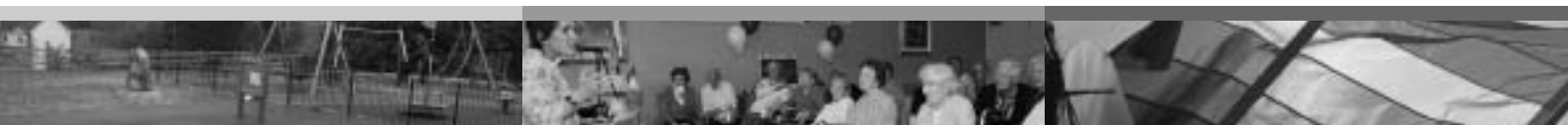
Poverty affects some people more than others, in that certain communities of interest have a higher 'at risk of poverty' rate, as illustrated in Table 2 below. It is apparent here that lone parents have the highest rate of poverty in both the 'at risk' and 'consistent poverty' measurements.

	At risk of poverty	Consistent poverty
Total population	14.4%	4.2%
Lone parents	36.4%	17.8%
Unemployed	23%	9.7%
Ill or disabled	15.5%	13.2%
Children	18%	6.3%
Older people 65-74	12.1%	1.7%
Older people 75+	9.9%	1%

Table 2 Poverty rates of specific groups

Source: 2008 Survey on Income and Living Conditions

Nationally the standardised unemployment rate in July 2010 was 13.7%. This compares with 12.9% in the first quarter of 2010. The seasonally adjusted Live Register total increased from 444,000 in June to 452,500 in July, an increase of 8,500 (CSO). During the economic boom, Ireland was considered at full employment (with a rate of 4.4% in December 2005) so this has been a massive change for the country as a whole.



Poverty and Exclusion in Cavan

Cavan is situated in the most disadvantaged region of Ireland, the border region. It is the second most disadvantaged county in the region, after Donegal (Haase Index). Disadvantage in Cavan has tended to relate to its rural nature, its border status, and depopulation, in particular, problems with retaining young people in rural communities. Cavan experienced a decrease in population at every intercensal period from 1871 to 1979, although population expansion has been recorded in more recent years, particularly so between 2002 and 2006.

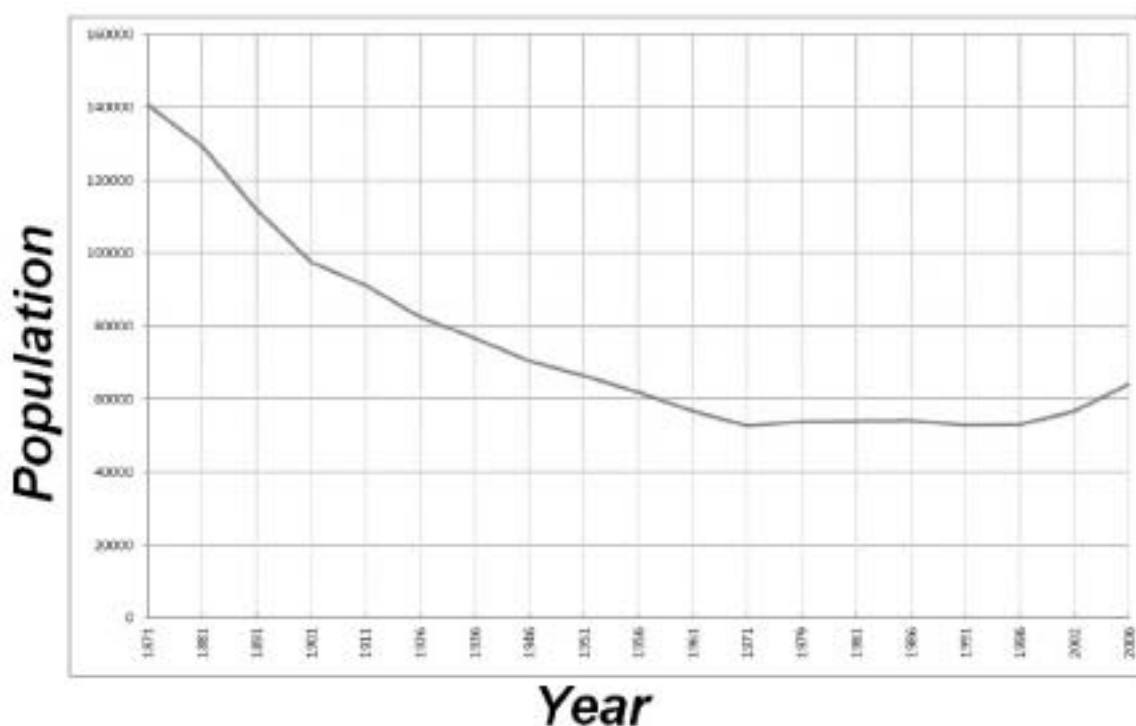


Figure 1 Population change in County Cavan, 1871 to 2006

In County Cavan, three quarters of the population live in rural areas. As a mainly rural county, there are problems with accessing services in dispersed population areas. Many communities have had to contend with issues such as the closure of post offices, banks, marts and creameries. Rural areas have a considerably higher risk of experiencing poverty and social exclusion. For example, there is 16.5% risk of poverty in the Border area compared to 9.3% risk in Dublin.



The border itself and the Northern Ireland conflict had a major impact on County Cavan, resulting in road closures, lack of investment in the area, and tension between communities, the legacy of which is still being addressed today through successive Peace programmes.

Like elsewhere in the country, there have been extreme increases in live register figures in Cavan since the economic recession. In June 2010, there were 7,605 people on the live register in the county, which was a fourfold increase in the figures for the year 2000.

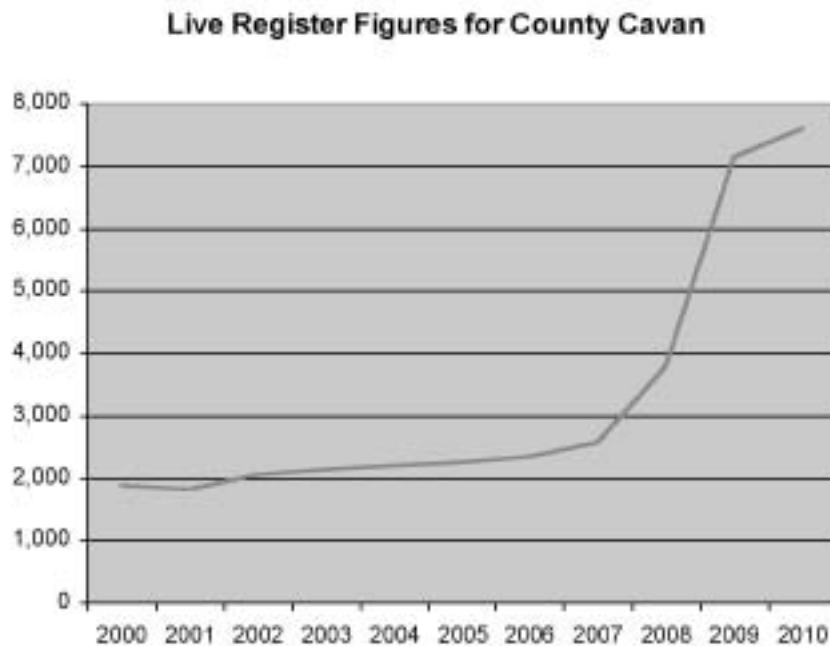
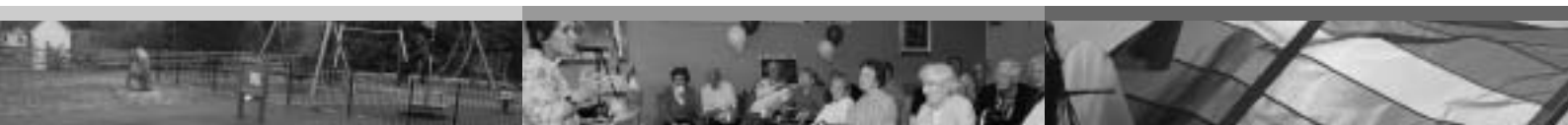


Figure 2 Live Register Figures for County Cavan, 2000 to 2010

Cavan traditionally had a reliance on agriculture, a sector which has been in decline. Census statistics show the extent of the downturn in farming. In Cavan in the 1970s, over half of people at work in the county were engaged in farming, fishing and forestry. That figure had dropped to 9% by 2006 (see table 3 on next page).



County Cavan	Total in farming, fishing and forestry	Total in labour force	% in farming, fishing and forestry
2006	2,756	30,840	8.94
2002	3,307	24,348	13.58
1996	4,797	21,016	22.83
1991	5,604	19,755	28.37
1986	6,169	19,604	31.47
1981	7,216	20,061	35.97
1971	10,583	20,771	50.95

Table 3 Employment in agriculture, 1971-2006

Many small farmers are now struggling with low income levels. In 2009, about 48% of all farms in Ireland had an income from farming of less than €6,500. On most farms (79%), the farmer and/or spouse had some source of off-farm income from employment, pension or social assistance to supplement their farming activity (Connelly et al., 2009).

Cavan has comparatively lower education levels than some other parts of the country. The rate of adults in County Cavan with primary education only is the second highest rate for any county. In some Electoral Divisions, over 40% of the adult population have primary education only.

The Haase 'Key Profile for County Cavan' (2008) states that:

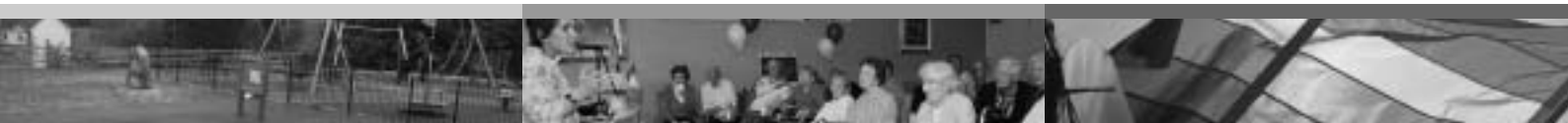
- The relative disadvantage of Cavan has become slightly more pronounced over a fifteen year period, from a score of -1.7 in 1991 to -3.2 in 2006.
- The more rural parts of the county tend to be slightly more disadvantaged, notably some electoral divisions in the north/west.
- Certain urban areas have lone parent rates that are two to three times higher than the more rural parts of the county.



Overall, Census statistics from 2006 indicate the following profile for the county's population:¹

- In County Cavan, 22,259 people were age dependent (34.7% of the population). 'Age dependent' is defined as people aged under 15 years and those aged 65 years and over. This is the proportion of the population that the working age population supports;
- There are 5,684 foreign nationals in Cavan (about 9% of the population). Of these 810 are Polish and 776 are Lithuanian;
- There are 212 Irish Travellers living in Cavan;
- There are 6,357 religious minorities in County Cavan, including 4,991 Protestants;
- There are 2,000 households in the county with no central heating;
- There are 5,435 people with disability in the county (8% of the population). Of these:
 - 1,068 are blind, deaf or have severe vision or hearing impairment;
 - 2,691 have a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities;
 - 1,608 have difficulty learning, remembering or concentrating;
 - 2,024 have difficulty working or attending school;
 - 911 people with learning or intellectual disability;
 - 733 with psychological or emotional condition; and
 - Almost 2,000 who have difficulty participating in other activities.
- There are 128 households with no water supply;
- There are 2,553 carers in County Cavan. These are people who provide unpaid personal help to friends or family on a regular basis;
- 16% of households in the county have no car.
- In 2006, Census data showed that only 9% of households in Cavan had access to broadband, and about half did not have access to a computer.

¹ More detailed statistical analysis is available in Cavan's Poverty Profile called 'Putting Us All on an Equal Footing' produced by Cavan Community Forum and the County Council's Social Inclusion Unit in 2008.



Against this background, Cavan has experienced improvements in recent years, notably with:

- Increasing educational attainment at all levels. The proportion of Cavan's population with third level education has grown from 13% in 1996 to 22% in 2006.
- A growing population (13.2% between the last two census periods). The population of County Cavan currently stands at 64,003.
- A decline in the age dependency rate from 42.7% in 1991 to 34.8% in 2006.
- An active community and voluntary sector with over 400 groups registered with Cavan Community Forum.
- The rate of broadband access in the county is likely to have increased, especially since the introduction of the National Broadband Scheme. A Central Statistics Office report indicated that 27% of households in the Border, Midlands and Western region had a broadband connection in the first quarter of 2008 (2009: 6).
- A continuing strong tradition of volunteerism. In 2006, 21% of the population aged 15 and over in Cavan were engaged in one or more voluntary activities.
- A thriving youth sector, with 126 voluntary youth groups in the county. Cavan has the fourth highest number of voluntary youth groups in the country (of 33 VEC areas surveyed for an audit).
- Developments in the childcare sector in facilities, training, standards and funding.



Cavan County Museum 'outreach day' in Esker Lodge Nursing Home, July 2010



Findings from the Survey and Consultation Process

This section presents the findings from the consultation process used to develop the Cavan LAPSIS.

Survey Findings

A survey was developed in 2010 to identify current issues relating to poverty and social exclusion in County Cavan and to seek ideas about appropriate responses.

There were 83 responses to the survey. Of these, roughly three quarters were from individuals and one quarter were responding on behalf of an organisation. About half of the responses were from rural areas and half from urban areas.

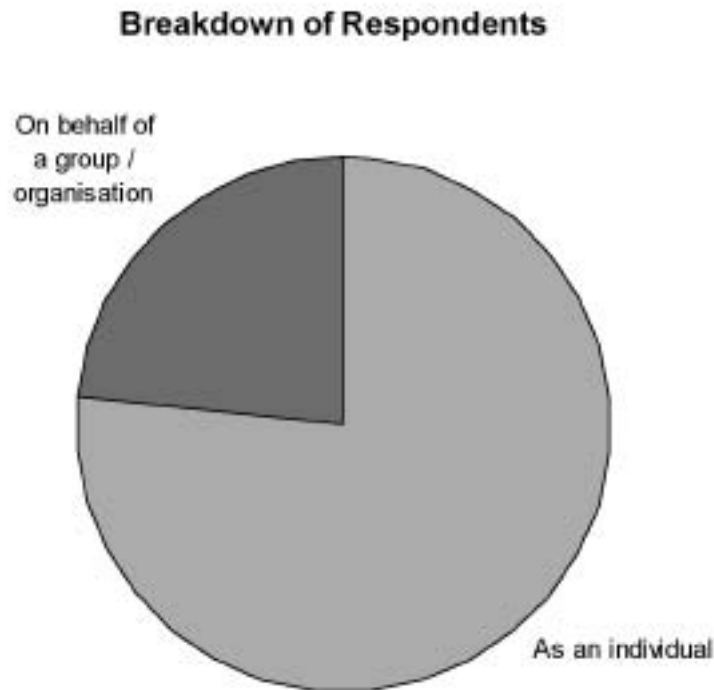
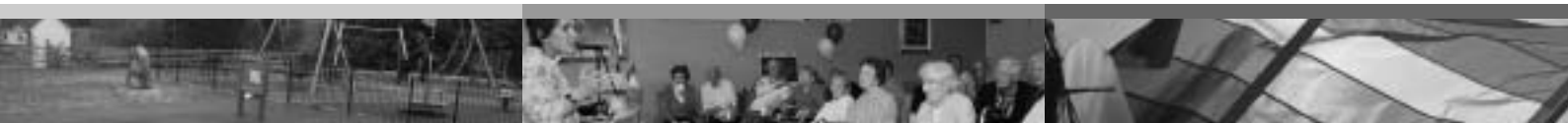


Figure 3 Breakdown of survey respondents by individual or group responses

While it is important to point out that this survey is not a representative sample of the population of Cavan, nevertheless the survey respondents highlighted issues that they feel are significant in contributing to exclusion and poverty in their communities.





Stephen Shannon, Chair of Cavan Community Forum, at the Countywide Produce Show, Drumlane, 2009. Cavan Community Forum provides support to over 400 community and voluntary groups in the county.

“I really think people need a lot of guidance in relation to spending whatever income they get each week. A household management course would be very useful and for both partners...To me, there is a lot of waste, its just normal stuff, for example, buying bottled water, rather than filling your bottle from tap before you leave home.”

Survey respondents were asked to identify the main issues relating to poverty and social exclusion in the county, or in their area of the county. There were 68 detailed answers to this question. The responses could broadly be categorised into the themes described below.

Main Poverty and Social Exclusion Issues

The biggest problems in Cavan, identified by survey respondents, related to unemployment, low income and costs of living. Thirty-four people who responded to this question highlighted these issues. Specifically, respondents referred to unemployment in rural areas, people with debt problems, fuel poverty, financial stress, costs to parents to educate children, and the ‘new poor’ who have excessive borrowings.



Lack of transport, facilities and amenities was the next most commonly identified issue, followed by isolation and exclusion of particular groups. Older people were mentioned frequently as a group that experiences isolation, but other groups such as ex-prisoners, Travellers and people with disability were also mentioned as excluded groups.

Educational issues including access to education and training, early school leaving, illiteracy and intergenerational educational disadvantage were commonly identified. Nine responses related to lack of information, resources or services for particular needs; for example, childcare, community amenities or lack of knowledge about available supports.

Six people referred to problems with prejudice and stigmatisation, including racism and homophobia, and stereotyping of people based on where they live. Five responses to this question referred to the lack of support for the Irish language in Cavan, and how this contributed to a feeling of exclusion among Irish speakers. Five responses referred to alcohol and drug issues. Three people referred to housing issues, such as the perceived poor allocation of housing,² rent increases, and issues with repairs.

Other issues cited included physical access to buildings, independent living, the breakdown of community relationships, anti-social behaviour, fear, poor parenting, lack of accountability, broken families and disaffected youth.

It was evident from the survey that a wide range of poverty and exclusion issues are affecting people in the county. It was also apparent that respondents generally had a good understanding of social exclusion and the impact it has on individuals and communities.

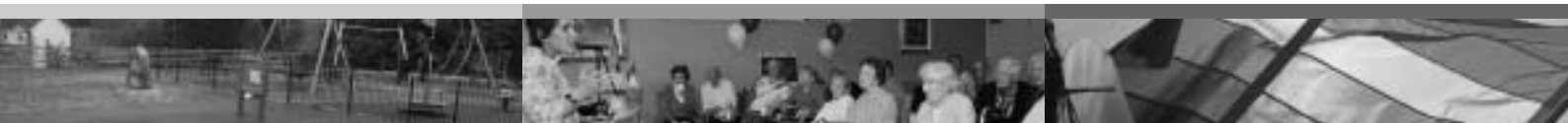
Groups in Need of Support

The survey asked respondents to identify which groups in Cavan need supports that are not already in place. This question was designed to capture information on gaps in services.

The three groups identified as being most in need of supports were low income families (55.3%), unemployed people (53.6%) and young people at risk (48.7%).

Figure 4 illustrates the proportion of respondents indicating that particular groups were in need of support. To differing degrees, all of the groups listed on the survey were seen to need a higher level of support than currently exists for them.

2 For example, an anecdotal suggestion that three-bedroom housing was offered to a single person.



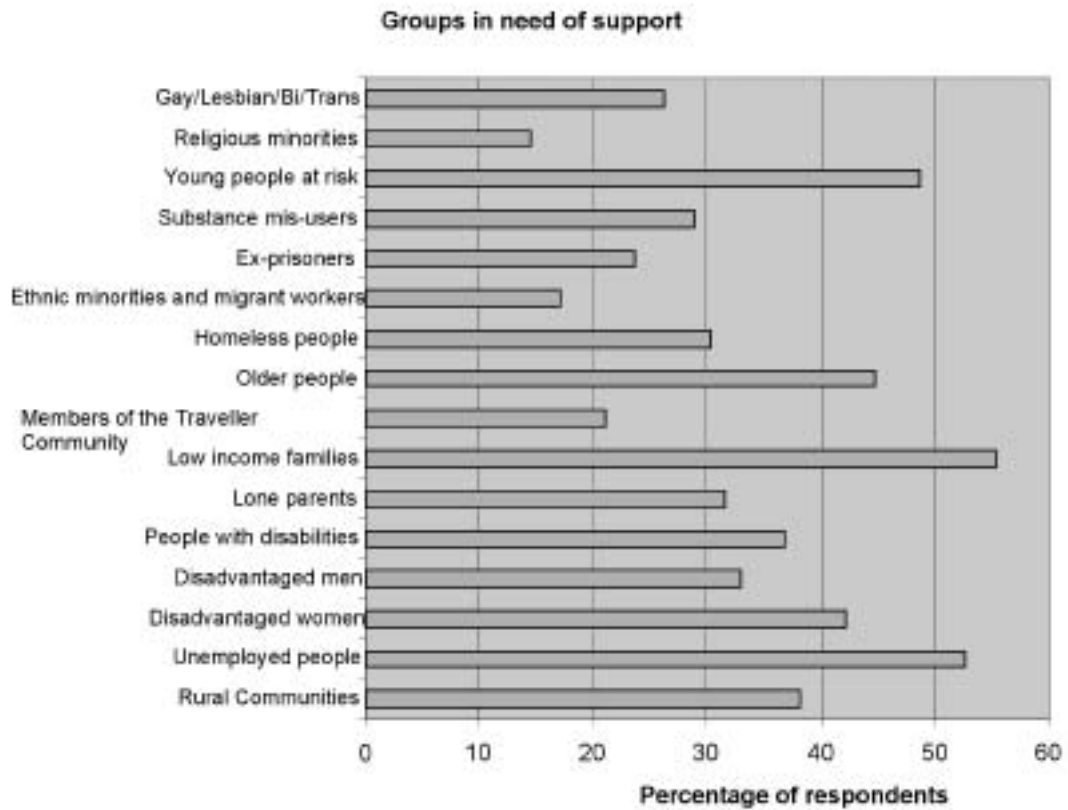


Figure 4 Survey-identified groups in need of support

Other groups identified as being in need of assistance included Gaelgeoirí (Irish speakers), carers, people with mental health problems, adults who were early school leavers, emigrants from Cavan, people with low self-esteem or who are lonely, people affected by domestic violence, older people living alone and younger people who cannot find employment.



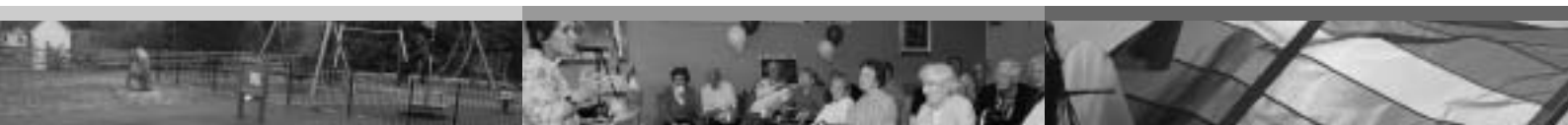
Types of Support Needed

The types of supports that these groups need were cited as:

- An employment strategy, particularly for rural areas;
- More courses and schemes for unemployed and disadvantaged people;
- More facilities and pursuits for young people;
- Greater accessibility for people with disabilities, including Personal Assistant services and accessible social housing;
- Support for the Irish language including an Irish language strategy;
- More information on where people can seek help locally and what is available to them;
- Supports and help for particular groups like people on low income and substance mis-users;
- Interagency work and integrated service planning;
- More outreach of services to rural areas;
- One-to-one counselling support for families and individuals;
- Greater awareness of poverty and exclusion;
- Opportunities for unemployed people to keep them involved and enable them to contribute to their communities;
- Greater education for young people to break cycles of poverty and initiatives to support retention in education;
- Active citizenship, the recognition of community work and the activities of volunteers;
- Training for community organisations;
- Improved service user involvement in decision processes;
- Increased home help support for older people; and
- Gender-specific health services (for example, a Well Woman Clinic).



Accessible car parking at Bawnboy playground provided by Cavan Local Authorities



Issues for Cavan Local Authorities

Survey respondents were asked specifically about actions that the County Council could take to help people who are socially excluded or in poverty. The issues that were raised most often were for actions in the areas of housing, community facilities, Irish language, active citizenship, work with specific target groups, social inclusion, and communication. They may be summarised as follows:

Housing

- Examine the housing repairs system
- Review how rents are calculated
- Address boarded up housing
- Put more affordable housing in place
- Improve housing for older people
- Look at the issue of unoccupied houses
- Enforce building regulations thoroughly

Community Facilities

- Make facilities available to the community / provide unused premises
- Encourage development of community facilities to act as drop-in centres

Active Citizenship

- Try to get people to volunteer for different activities with younger people
- Support and assist local groups to work with their communities
- Try to get the community involved in visiting and helping elderly alone people

Specific Target Groups

- Take the lead on interagency support for ex-prisoners
- Employ people from the Traveller Community
- More support for older people and lone parents
- Undertake a rural development strategy



“There is a stigma attached to living in the area. It is difficult to maintain a good image for the estate if there are houses boarded up and broken windows.”



Irish language

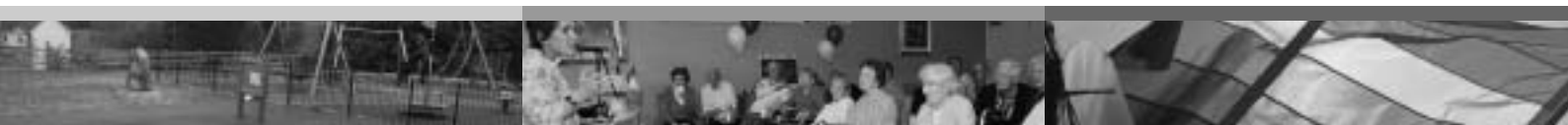
- Apply the Official Languages Act and promote Irish culture

Social Inclusion Awareness and Policy

- Ensure a range of impact assessments are carried out to inform all planning and development decisions
- Poverty proof policies, work across different sections, improve communication internally
- Provide training to staff on racism, poverty and exclusion
- Speak to those in poverty and social exclusion as to how best to help them
- Champion the Anti-poverty Plan and assist in providing a strategic overview for the agencies in the county through its implementation
- Make research available that highlights agencies' shortcomings in social inclusion
- Ensure that agencies' policies and services address needs of those in poverty/socially excluded
- Make more people aware of exclusion in society



The smallholder support service provided by Breffni Integrated Limited at the Cavan Town Farmers Market during Social Inclusion Week 2010



Communication

- Run aggressive campaigns aimed at attracting businesses into the county
- Advertisement and education to let people know what services and supports are available from the Council
- Take more time to listen to customers and become more involved at grassroots level
- Liaise more closely with representative groups and seek out individuals who may not be involved with any groups

It was apparent from the responses that some people believe the Council to have responsibility outside of its actual remit (recommendations, for example, that the Council gives more support for drug treatment, farm support, and setting up training for the unemployed). This in itself may indicate that the local authority needs to improve how it communicates with different audiences about its remit and the scope of services it provides.

There were other suggestions including: being more accountable, supporting networks, improving transport, fund-raising to address problem issues, developing employment opportunities, providing counselling, and tackling remaining problems with inaccessible buildings.

Issues for Other Agencies

Fifty-three people responded to the question about actions other agencies could take to address poverty and exclusion. Actions recommended for all agencies were to:

- Encourage people with disabilities to participate on committees and other structures
- Look at ways of minimising administration costs and pool resources in order to provide frontline services
- Promote the Irish language
- Actions to remove the taboo of poverty
- Greater accessibility of buildings and support for independent living
- Establish groups to address social exclusion problems
- Greater level of supports in the form of courses, opportunities, events, groups, training and awareness
- More programmes and activities for vulnerable young people, and
- Education and advice for people to help them manage their resources



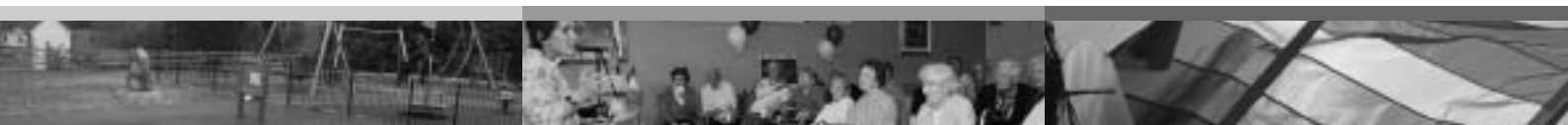
Actions suggested for particular agencies included the following:

Breffni Integrated Ltd	Support programmes
Cavan Community Forum	Could be supported more to bring the voice of communities to the table
Cavan Institute	Establish an Irish department
County Cavan VEC	More courses and opportunities; supports for younger people to engage in activities; County Irish Language Plan
County Development Board	Full engagement at CDB structure to focus on poverty and social inclusion
Dept of Education	School Completion Programme in rural areas
Drugs Task Force	Targeted actions to support drug users
Fáilte Ireland	Grow the tourism sector in the county
FÁS	Provide more local training opportunities
Health Service Executive	Address the closure/threatened closure of day services for older people. Counselling and family support; more support for health issues
Probation / Linkage	Training, education and employment for ex-prisoners
Social Protection	Waiting area for people queuing at dole office; better access to social welfare services / waiting times / clarity on entitlements; encourage more engagement by unemployed people without impacting on their payments

Respondents felt there was a need for more help from organisations like **St Vincent de Paul, MABS and the Credit Union** (for example, holding clinics in local communities).



“Certain families have higher levels of educational disadvantage and it can be hard to break patterns of poor education. There is a reluctance to progress to further education among some students. For those who drop out of the Youthreach service, there are few opportunities for them. In the past, they might have been able to access jobs but the market has become extremely competitive and the opportunities just aren’t there now.”



Consultation Feedback

Various discussion groups and individual interviews were held to gather information for this strategy (details in Appendix I). From the group discussions and interview process, it was evident that the most pressing problems facing Cavan, as elsewhere in Ireland, are the high unemployment levels and housing problems including debt and mortgage interest increases. In Cavan, there has been a depletion of small income sources that previously supported people (such as handiwork and alternative jobbing), problems with anti-social behaviour in urban areas and transport issues affecting more rural communities.



Photo by Adrian Donohoe

Multicultural Week in St Clare's National School, Cavan town, October 2010, was supported by the RAPID Programme and Breffni Integrated



Young People

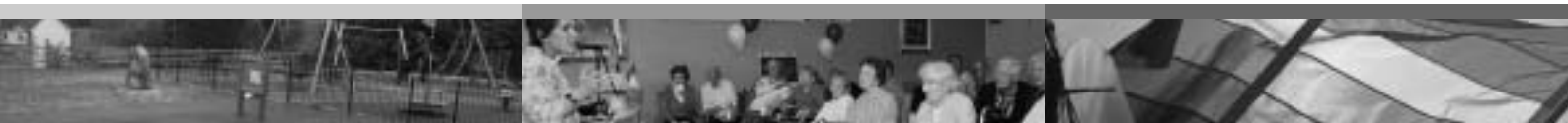
a. Children

According to a representative of the St Vincent de Paul Society [SVP], child poverty is a growing issue in Cavan. Household bills and food shortages are the two most common areas where people are seeking assistance from SVP at the moment. Parents can also have difficulty meeting the cost of books for children returning to school.

One of the issues affecting children from low income communities is the affordability of childcare. Ireland ranks as one of the most expensive European countries for childcare, with families paying on average 30% of their disposable income on childcare (OECD, 2006: 351).

However, while childcare costs are high in Ireland, supports for children from low income communities have been improving in recent years. Many of the programmes delivered through Cavan County Childcare Committee impact on children who are at risk of poverty and exclusion, for example, the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme [CCSS] and the Free Pre-school Year.³ The CCSS will provide subsidised childcare in participating community childcare services for people on certain social welfare payments (Band A) or who have Medical or GP Visit cards (Band B). A new scheme called the Childcare Education and Training Scheme (CETS) will provide childcare in community-based or private facilities for parents who are attending FÁS or VEC courses. Some of these schemes apply to community childcare services only, so for areas without community-based crèches, such as Virginia and Cavan Town, access to subsidised childcare may be problematic. Car ownership and public transport are obviously two further factors in access to childcare. For example, the community playgroup in Swanlinbar recently closed, with the nearest available community service at a distance of several miles.

3 The Community Childcare Subvention Scheme is designed to support parents who are on low income to access community-based childcare services. Parents who are in receipt of a social welfare payment or have a GP Visit or Medical Card can access different levels of subsidies for childcare. The Free Pre-school in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme provides a free year of early childhood care and education for children of pre-school age. In general, children are eligible for the ECCE scheme if they are aged between 3 years 2 months and 4 years 7 months on 1 September of the year that they will be starting.



In terms of afterschool care provision in Cavan, there are gaps in service and disparity in how different services are provided (for example, whether they collect children from school). According to the County Childcare Committee, there is also a gap in generic supports for parents in Cavan, including family support type activities, and specific work on breastfeeding, play development, and parent and toddler groups. Interagency work would be beneficial on initiatives like family fun days or work with specific communities such as the Traveller community. A 'Strengthening Families' Programme is planned for the latter half of 2011, through Breffni Integrated with support from other agencies including the Drugs Task Force, Barnardos, the Health Service Executive, Youth Advocate Programme and Probation and Welfare. This is an internationally recognised 15 week family support programme for children and parents.

One of the factors in the quality of childcare that is available is the standard of education and qualification levels of childcare workers. Accreditation for childcare workers is available in Cavan to FETAC Level 6, but there is currently no degree course available in the county. On a positive note, the County Childcare Committee reports that parents are beginning to understand the benefits of pre-school and early education to their children.

Parents consulted for this strategy cited a particular desire for low cost amenities and facilities for young families. Cavan has a good playground infrastructure, but there are still areas lacking in facilities or recreational space for young people and their families. An elected member who is involved in youth work said that it can be 'hard to find a home' for youth activities. The timing of the temporary library closure in Virginia during the summer was considered less than ideal, because it coincided with school holidays, a period when library services are very much in demand. From a Council perspective, temporary closure of part-time library services is likely to continue, being related to a lack of resources for staff cover for these services.

“

“The Cootehill Foroige Group is very active and the volunteers are doing great work with young people in the town.”

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b. Teenagers

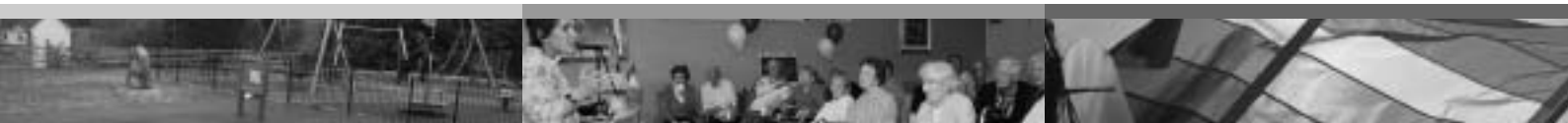
Issues for the formal education system include excess demand for college places and gaps in particular types of educational supports within the school system. Access to further and higher educational opportunities is crucially important to support young people's progression to employment. In the academic year starting September 2010, Cavan Institute was reported to have received 5,000 applications for 1,500 places;⁴ such a high level of demand means that many young people will not be able to access a further education place locally this year.

Outside of the formal education system, there is a strong youth sector in the county, with organisations such as Foroige, scouts, the Pioneer Association, Macra na Feirme, and Comhairle na nÓg (Junior Council) playing an active role in supporting young people. County Cavan VEC, the co-ordinating body for youth services in County Cavan, notes that there are gaps in services however, including:

- Youth Work Ireland has no presence in the county;
- Cavan is the only county without a staff-led funded project from the Minister for Children's office;⁵
- There is currently no Youth Café in County Cavan, although there is a dedicated youth facility in Cavan town (Community Youth Projects) which is used by different groups. Also there is a dedicated youth floor in the Bridge Street Resource Centre and it is hoped to develop this further.
- According to County Cavan VEC, the proportion of funding for youth services in Cavan is unbalanced compared to its population size and amounts available to other counties.

4 The Anglo Celt, 8 Sept 2010.

5 County Cavan VEC stated that they had applied for funding from the Office of the Minister for Children several years in a row, but were not successful and the funding programme is closed.



The VEC and youth services in the county are finding problems with non-engagement by certain young people in youth services. Volunteer-led youth services report that they tend to lose members at around 14 and 15 years of age. Some of these young people may drop out of youth services because they lose self confidence, perhaps feeling excluded in the school system because of weaker academic abilities or poor literacy skills. For those who are not interested in sports, there is often little else available that engages them. Educational disadvantage can appear as an intergenerational pattern in families, making it a very difficult cycle to break. Existing youth services are generally full to capacity and often do not have the time or resources to consult young people who are outside the service. In order to engage more with young people who are at risk of social exclusion, outreach work is needed by project workers on the ground in different communities. Not all young people enjoy structured clubs so there is a need for a variety of activities to suit all interests.

Drug and alcohol misuse is an issue for some young people in the county. According to the Garda Youth Diversion Programme, some young people in the town area have problems with alcohol use, most evident in the 16-18 age bracket. Younger teens, those aged 10-14, can manifest problems with aggressive behaviour due to family backgrounds. Alcohol use can also affect this group, although to a lesser extent than the older teens. Cavan Drug Awareness currently takes referrals from Child Protection Services and Hospital Psychiatric Services. Gender issues play a role in drug use, with a perception among some young girls that smoking aids weight loss, and a reported use of diet pills to manage body image. There is no co-ordinated drug awareness programme in schools in County Cavan, although some schools have introduced awareness sessions on an ad hoc basis. Cavan Comhairle na nÓg has also undertaken some awareness-raising work with its members on these issues.

Similarly with sexuality and sexual health education, there are inconsistencies in how this is being rolled out to young people in the county. Some schools are not open to certain programmes being delivered, while teachers can choose to deliver only particular elements of the Social, Personal and Health Education [SPHE] Programme. For example, it is reported that few teachers delivering this programme will cover the topic of sexually transmitted diseases. According to the Garda Youth Diversion Programme, many young people are sexually active and may be at risk of sexually transmitted diseases and/or teenage pregnancy.

Young people who are gay or lesbian also need support to understand and be comfortable with their sexuality. To address this issue, County Cavan VEC has recently started a support group for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in Cavan, with support from Dundalk Outcomers.



Addressing all of these issues will require programmes such as targeted smoking and drug prevention work, personal development for young people, and drop-in youth services. In addition, there is a need for consistency in work with young people; projects that are pilots or delivered on a once-off basis are of more limited value than sustained services.

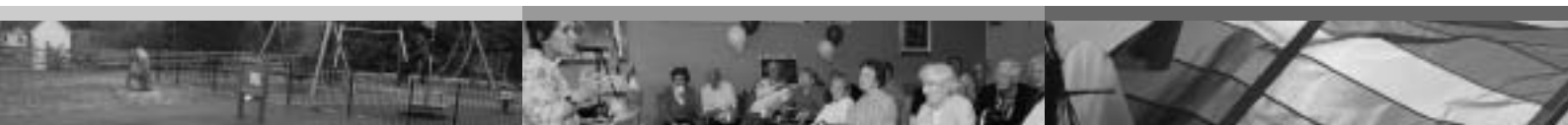
Other agencies can support the further development of services and facilities for young people in County Cavan. For example, vacant publicly owned buildings could possibly be made available for youth services. Interagency work to support funding applications or help to mainstream youth projects would be beneficial. Pooling of resources from different agencies could lead to more co-ordinated and more comprehensive education programmes in specific need areas.

The Garda Youth Diversion Programme works with young people aged 10 to 18 years of age. The service is based in the Tullacmongan Resource Centre and serves all of Cavan town. The young people are referred from Social Workers, the Health Service Executive, teachers, Juveniles Liaison Officers (JLOs), School Completion Officers and parents. A number of programmes have been put in place through the programme including: the Copping on Programme; Putting the Pieces Together; Cook It Programme; and Teenage Health Initiative.

The Youth Diversion Programme believes there is a need to work with children even younger than ten years of age. There is also a need for follow-on supports for young people at risk, as there are currently no specific services available for those aged 18 and over once they leave the Youth Diversion Programme. Parents of children who are considered 'at risk' also need a support group structure. This type of group would have the added benefits of supporting the Youth Diversion workers in their role and in strengthening communities to tackle anti-social behaviour and break the cycle which exists in many disadvantaged communities.



“The subsidies for childcare are brilliant for families on low income. However communication about available supports might be an issue. In some cases families don't know what they are entitled to. Perhaps some of the agencies could hold sessions to explain to them about the reductions they can get.”



People of Working Age

The lack of employment opportunities is one of the most serious problems facing the county at the moment, with 7,605 people on the live register in Cavan in June 2010. Of these, 65% were males, and 78% were aged 25 and over.⁶ Unemployed people who took part in consultation sessions stated that there are few jobs in the newspapers for which to apply, and no new investment in jobs in the county. This can be very disheartening for jobseekers. Volunteers with the Society of St Vincent de Paul [SVP] are finding that requests from support are coming from all parts of society, including people who were previously financially secure. These are known as ‘the new poor’. SVP commented that it is often the case that people find it hard to adjust their spending after a drop in income. Many are suffering as a result of being caught up in the credit trap.

The Department of Social Protection is changing internal systems to be able to respond better to the extremely high level of demand for its services. Demands on the Department’s services have been particularly high in recent years, firstly with a higher level of demand created by migrants for PPS numbers, which are only issued by the Department, and more lately with increasing numbers on the live register and higher levels of welfare claims. Locally, there have been significant infrastructural improvements in the Department’s services with the opening of the new Social Welfare office on the Dublin Road, which has a much improved waiting area for customers.

Nationally, changes are taking place in early 2011 which will mean that the Department will have responsibility for FÁS employment services and Community Welfare Officer services.



“Emigration is a mass exodus of highly intelligent young people. This is going to leave our area, and every area, poverty stricken. The cream of the crop will be gone. There needs to be some way of keeping them here, like giving them work within their communities.”



⁶ Towards the end of 2010, there was a slight drop in the numbers on the live register nationally, which may be an indication of a stabilising economy but may also be linked to increasing levels of emigration.



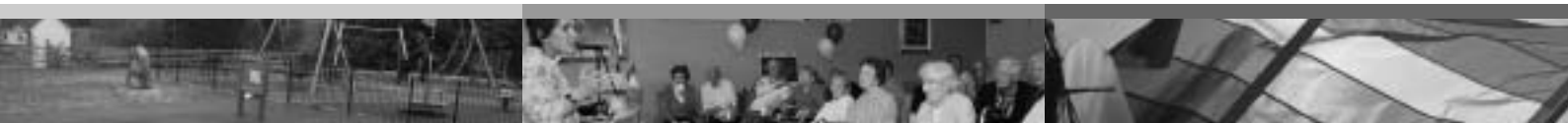
The Department is introducing major changes to improve service delivery to clients and streamline work practices. These include:

- The introduction of a new system for electronic signing of claims. This will reduce queuing time.
- There will also be signing on by mobile phone for selected clients.
- A public service card is being piloted.
- Online claims for Jobseekers Benefit are being piloted.
- Claims processing has also been accelerated because the local office can now decide straightforward claims, whereas previously all claims had to be sent to an inspector.
- Benefit claims are now turning around more quickly.
- The Department of Social Protection has imported staff from other parts of the civil service to help with the backlog of work.
- A new system of profiling different client types will help the Department to assess the likelihood of a claimant becoming long-term unemployed. People with a higher risk of long-term unemployment will receive a higher level of support.

Other changes that impact on the social inclusion of working-age people include the Department's policy to increasingly promote their services through the internet. This is problematic given the large numbers of people in Cavan who do not have access to a computer or who are not computer literate. In some areas the Department no longer prints information leaflets, which along with the introduction of online claiming, may serve to disadvantage people in how they access welfare supports.

Some migrant workers have noted to Departmental staff that their English language skills have deteriorated since leaving employment. However, some migrants are reported to be reluctant to attend English language classes, even though they acknowledge that their lack of English language skills is a barrier to gaining employment.

For people who have recently lost their jobs, a lack of awareness of available supports and services further impacts on their exclusion. Newly unemployed people who took part in a discussion group for this plan highlighted the importance of agencies communicating information on their services, in 'one to one' or small group settings. As one person observed: "There is a variety of help available in the county but unless you know the system you would not be aware of it all". People who have recently lost their jobs need confidence-building support to assist them back into the competitive jobs market.



One working-age group identified as being in need of supports in Cavan are ex-prisoners. The needs of this group were previously identified by Breffni Integrated and other organisations, and more recently highlighted in a consultation process for the Cavan Integration Framework. Numbers of ex-prisoners in Cavan are said to be small but growing. There was a 152% growth in numbers over the period 2002-2006, according to the Prison Service. The growth in numbers is linked to increasing levels of alcohol and drug addiction in the county. They are primarily men aged 18-25 serving short terms (3-12 months), mainly for petty crime. While there is no dedicated ex-prisoner support organisation in Cavan, there have been some initiatives to support ex-prisoners, such as a peer mentoring programme that was run by Breffni Integrated. Ex-prisoners in Cavan need very basic level supports in the areas of community welfare, housing, and referrals to drug treatment programmes, and re-integration into the workforce.

As a rural county, Cavan had a strong reliance on farming, a sector that has been decimated over recent decades. Nationally, farm incomes declined significantly in 2009, on dairy farms in particular (Connolly et al., 2010). EU schemes such as farm retirement and the installation aid which are currently suspended may restrict young farmers from inheriting farms, diminishing future prospects for Irish farming. Many small farmers are struggling with low income, problems accessing credit, and waiting times for accessing social welfare supports. Isolation among some older farmers is a problem, especially ones for whom the pub provided a social contact point prior to the tightening of 'drink driving' regulations. Farmers in difficult situations need training, support and encouragement to get involved in the schemes that are available. Low income farmers in very poor housing conditions may need assistance with housing repairs. Ongoing support is also required for lane improvements to keep rural areas accessible.

“St. Vincent de Paul does great work in acting as a negotiator for individuals who are struggling to meet repayments with providers such as the ESB.”

“In terms of poverty, there are a lot of young men in their early 20s who are unemployed. There is very little available for them locally. Many had done apprenticeships but now there is no work. There is a danger that they could get depressed. Emigration is starting to show in the community.”

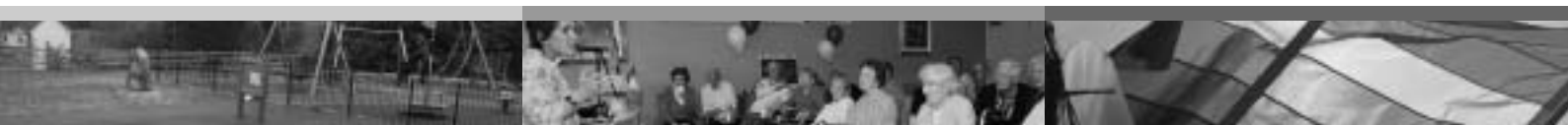


Other men of working age who are living in isolated areas may similarly experience disadvantage. Men involved in a West Cavan Garden Project spoke about problems they experience with poor employment opportunities in the West Cavan area, limited social opportunities, and transport and financial issues. Previous research carried out by the North Leitrim Men's Group highlighted educational disadvantage, isolation, and health issues for isolated men living in rural areas. There are particular gaps in services for older and disabled people in West Cavan, notably in the area of transport.



County Cavan VEC Adult Education Services Awards night in the Hotel Kilmore. Included in the photograph are staff and tutors from the Adult Learning Centre with participants in the 'Skills for Work Programmes' delivered throughout the county for employees of TESCO, Compton Greaves, Cavan General Hospital, Boxmore Plastics, Glanbia and Wellman International.

Another group that was mentioned in consultations for this plan was the expatriate population and returning Irish emigrants. The 'habitual residency' condition in social welfare regulations means that people returning from abroad are not necessarily entitled to welfare supports based on their Irish nationality. Lone parents are a further group which were described as 'struggling', although there was also evidence of lone parents progressing to education.



Social Policy Issues Identified by Cavan Citizens Information Service

- Constraints on how self employed income is assessed for welfare supports
- Delays in processing means-tested payments and PRSI payments
- Complexity / enlargement of Habitual Residency Condition
- Self-employed people and voluntary PRSI contributions
- Pension entitlements
- Delays with Warmer Home Scheme
- Lack of resources in Community Welfare Offices
- Lack of available places in the education system
- Delays in Back to School Scheme
- Child Benefit delays (in the most part related to the Habitual Residency Condition)
- Reports of discourteous treatment
- Difficulty in getting redundancy payments
- Confusion about location of Social Welfare Offices in Cavan
- Inaccessibility of Government Departments
- Rent allowance thresholds
- Abuse of employee terms and conditions of employment
- Vulnerability of workers

Older People

Social services groups that provide supports for older people discussed the isolation experienced by many older people, who are not necessarily in financial poverty but may feel socially excluded. Some older people, particularly those who live alone, may have no one to advocate for them or support them if they need a particular service. Older people consulted for this strategy felt that there should be more communication with older people, especially those who are living alone.

There are many supports locally such as active age and social services groups and the Good Morning service.⁷ However there are few initiatives that arrange for someone to visit an older person living on their own. One example is the befriending scheme run by South West Cavan Community Development Project.

⁷ The Good Morning Project is a service where volunteers telephone individual older people during the week to check that the person is well, while also providing a social point of contact for someone who may otherwise be isolated.



There are gender issues in how older people access social services, with groups reporting a greater difficulty in getting the involvement of men, either as volunteers or participants. In one group, out of nearly 40 service users, only 8 are men.

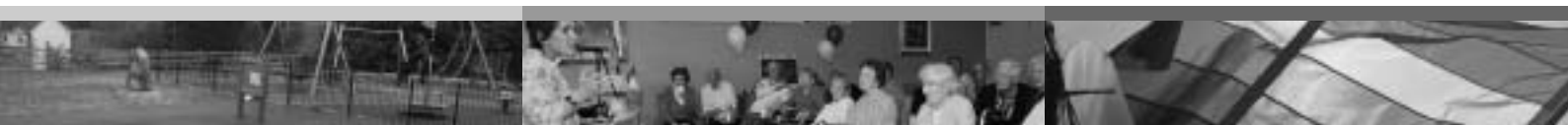
Older people reported a fear of anti-social behaviour at night. Some have witnessed young people throwing snowballs at houses, burning hedges and other types of vandalism. Groups of young people who gather around the town can intimidate older people. Recent assaults in the town, which were reported in the media, can result in older people being reluctant to go into the town centre. They also reported much frustration around national policy decisions and cutbacks, for example, in supports for carers and home help services. Home help is available to some older people now for less than an hour at a time, which is of limited value.

Members of An Gardai Síochána make particular efforts to keep an eye on older isolated people, keeping a register of older people in each community. They have good links with other community-based services such as the Good Morning Project. Recently they were able to provide transport so that a community service could bring groceries to an older person who was isolated due to the extreme weather conditions.

More supports are needed for carers, a group that can be vulnerable to isolation and low income due to their caring commitments. It was reported that there is insufficient respite/relief care available in the county, and a lack of peer support for the younger group of carers (those aged in their 30s). Some experience other issues such as a difficulty in trying to register as a carer. Carers need specific supports such as advice on funeral planning and related costs. A carers group based in West Cavan also believed that there is a stigma attached to caring work.



“At lot of exclusion among older people is not related to financial poverty, but to loneliness. Public Health Nurses don’t call to people who are not sick. The Good Morning phone service is a good example, but it’s just a phone call. People need someone to call into them. They should know that someone will call by if they have a difficulty.”



Older people are impacted by transport issues, particularly in rural areas. Large areas of County Cavan have either no public transport or very limited services, with transport provided only on certain days of the week. Older people often have to rely on family support and home support services for things like grocery shopping. People living in areas at a distance from major supermarkets tend to have to pay more for the convenience of shopping locally. With women's increasing involvement in the workforce, often there is simply 'no one at home' during the day who can support older members of the community with transport or errands.

In certain cases, older people are living in homes that are in need of major repair work. However this is a sensitive issue as homeowners do not always invite help from agencies. Even when alternative housing is available, some older people are not willing to leave their own residence, regardless of its condition.

Literacy can affect people of all ages, but older people might be particularly at risk, due to a higher rate of early school leaving among older people. A public health nurse commented that some of her clients would not be able to read medication instructions or know the different colours of tablets if they are prescribed medication. Services should be sensitive to low literacy levels in the population. The National Adult Literacy Agency [NALA] contends that one in four people in Ireland have difficulty with everyday reading and writing tasks.

In 2008, the Cavan Over 50s Network consulted with over 200 older people in the county. The research documented a range of challenges facing older people. Transport was identified as perhaps the single most critical issue for older people in the county, and feelings of loneliness and isolation were found to affect a significant minority. Other issues identified were the need for home help and home support, anxiety about personal health, security and safety concerns, lack of information on available services, and financial poverty affecting some older people.



“Older people and people who are isolated need supports. There are a lot of widows and widowers in the community, but there are few supports for them like bereavement counselling. Older people who have lost a partner are often not used to socialising on their own. Older men may need support with managing household issues if they have not been used to doing this. If there were more interventions for younger men, it would be easier to keep them involved as they get older.”



People with Disability

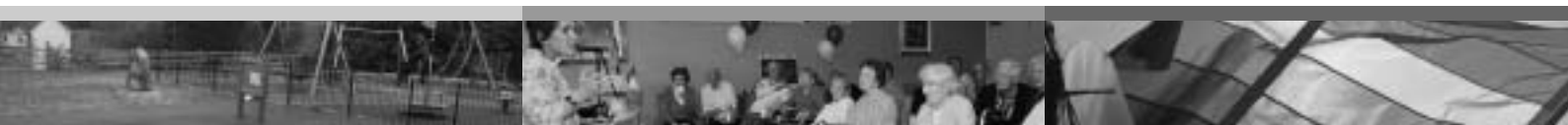
People with disabilities and organisations that support them in County Cavan documented various issues concerning their social inclusion. The National Learning Network [NLN] drew attention to the fact that greater restrictions have been introduced on access to supported training places. A person can only become eligible for a FÁS training allowance to attend a training course in NLN if they are certified as having a need for additional supports (disability/medical condition) and are in receipt of a recognised Social Welfare payment (Illness benefit/Disability allowance/Jobseekers allowance/Invalidity pension etc). Some people cannot access a social welfare payment because these means-tested payments take account of the income of other members of the household. So for example, a spouse may be rendered ineligible for payment because of the income/means of the other partner. NLN provides particular supports for people with disability attending training that may not be available in other training services.

In the present climate, people with disability are experiencing delays in the administration of applications for Social Welfare designation for medical/disability related illnesses. Those on Illness Benefit or Invalidity Benefit must apply for an exemption to allow them to access a training place, a process which the National Learning Network states can take several months. Also there is a reluctance to make this application due to the fear that they risk forfeiting this payment while being medically assessed.

Moving to and from training to employment can be a difficult step for a person with a disability, because of the risks involved in leaving the security of the social welfare system. A person who is on Illness Benefit may acquire an exemption to take up a job, but if this is not granted, the individual must choose whether to forfeit this entitlement to Social Welfare in order to accept the job. There is no 'settling in' period, which can be risky if the position does not work out.⁸

Parents of children with disabilities need support. There is currently no respite centre in Cavan town. Existing respite services in the county require children to stay overnight, so there is no respite available for short periods of a few hours. Some childminding services are not suitable for children with disabilities (for example, they may lack necessary equipment), meaning that parents of children with disabilities must rely on family members for childcare support.

⁸ The Department of Social Protection notes that people with disability are allowed to undertake light work for no payment, or charity/voluntary work that pays up to €50 per week as part of treatment, without their welfare allowance being affected.



While the County Council was acknowledged as having made positive inroads in the area of accessibility, it could do further work in influencing private businesses to make their premises accessible. It could provide clearer information on what grants are available from the Council for people with disabilities. People with disabilities also referred to the need for all agencies to use Plain English on websites, advertisements and correspondence.

People with disabilities should be encouraged to take part in sporting activities, and activities for young people with disabilities should take place outside of school hours.

Young people with autism in Cavan can access a support group in Kingscourt called Bright Stars. According to the Bright Stars group, there are few supports for children with autism at national level, citing issues such as delays in assessment, limited services, and unsuitable educational options. Applied Behavioural Analysis [ABA] education is not provided by the Department of Education, although many families of children with autism find it beneficial.

Consultation with people with disabilities on the draft County Council disability strategy highlighted a number of issues in relation to access issues in the county. Firstly, communication with people with disabilities continues to be an issue; in particular letting them know about the developments and ways of getting involved. There is a problem with some new buildings being inaccessible. Dialogue is needed between developers, architects and business people to promote access across all sectors. Training for these professionals would improve their understanding of the needs of people with disabilities. Consultation with people with disability is needed at design stage of buildings to make sure that access is built in from the start. People with disabilities still have to contend with the misuse of accessible parking bays.⁹



“Cavan Leader Forum is a group of young people with disabilities, trying to promote different ways of independent living. Through the support of Cavan Partnership they are pioneering the direct payment system of employing personal assistants. Their goal would be to make it simple for people to be able to avail of it.”



⁹ In December 2010, Cavan County Council took part in a national campaign to highlight the misuse of accessible parking bays, which coincided with the International Day for People with Disabilities.



Communities

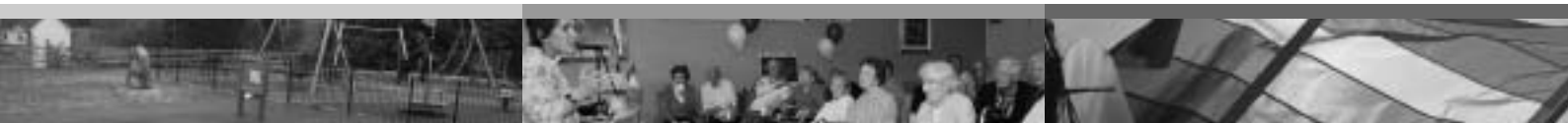
There were many positive examples of where communities felt supported by statutory agencies. Named examples included VEC adult education classes in rural areas, the installation of pedestrian crossings by the Council, work with the Arts Office on local festivals, transport provided by the Health Service Executive for social services groups and other HSE supports such as for the Golden Oldies group in Tullacmongan. In some communities, it was evident that residents had good relationships with the Gardai, in particular where Community Gardai were active and visible. Feedback from consultations with various groups and individuals showed a strong value placed on the library service, and a desire for it to be expanded or for a mobile library service to be established.

The Gardai are involved with community initiatives to address isolation such as Community Alert and Neighbourhood Watch. Each area has a Garda assigned, and they hold quarterly meetings with the committees. There are four Community Gardai based in Cavan town. Rural areas also have a Garda assigned. There is one Ethnic Liaison Officer in the county. Ethnic minorities who have a problem or need support can contact this person or any member of the Gardai.

Low income communities may struggle with debt, and problems with moneylenders are reported in some urban communities. Licenced money-lending is legal in Ireland, but it is an unregulated sector, and lenders can charge exorbitant interest rates (often as high as 100%).

Anti-social behaviour is a problem affecting certain communities, more prevalent in urban areas. According to the Gardai, these incidents are not necessarily attributable to local people. While there has been a reported problem with youths involved in gangs, it is the view of the Gardai that this is being dealt with effectively by the judicial system. The Gardai have patrols in areas where there are known to be public order issues. There have been some assaults but these tend to be isolated incidents and of a level in common with every major town. Physical infrastructure, such as CCTV, has been put in place to address these issues, but according to the RAPID Programme, longer term 'soft' supports are also needed.

Issues identified for communities through the consultation process mainly fell into the categories of transport, drug and alcohol use, housing, health and communication, while specific 'communities of interest' (for example, Travellers) were identified as being in need of support.



A) Transport

As a rural county, insufficiencies in public transport have long been identified as a problem for communities in Cavan. Towns along the N3 primary route have access to a regular public bus service, but public transport in peripheral areas of the county can be very weak. For example, in Killeshandra there is no public bus service, neither is the village currently served by a Rural Transport route. Nor is there a public bus service between Bailieboro and Cavan Town or Drogheda. In West Cavan, there is a rural transport bus from Swanlinbar to Cavan town operating two days a week, and the Bus Éireann service also comes through the town. However, transport remains a problem for people who live in remote rural areas.

B) Drug and alcohol use

Drug and alcohol use are problem issues for the county, and are said to affect people from all parts of the community. In 2009, Cavan Drug Awareness [CDA] recorded 180 referrals for treatment, of which over half entered treatment successfully. The following table illustrates treatment data from Cavan Drug Awareness for 2009:

	Cavan	Bailieboro	Co Cavan
Heroin	17	6	23
Alcohol	43	13	56
Cocaine	3	1	4
Benzos	6	-	6
Cannabis	9	4	13
Methadone	3	-	3
Ketamine	1	-	1
Aerosols	1	-	1
Ecstasy	1	-	1
	-	-	108

Table 4 Cavan Drug Awareness, Treatment Figures – 2009



“The taboo of poverty has to be removed so people aren't ashamed.”



The bulk of referrals to CDA came from the Probation Service, the Department of Justice, the Health Service Executive, Social Services and Community GPs. They also received a significant number of self referrals. Alcohol treatment referrals were four times higher than heroin referrals. Head Shops, which had been operating in the county, effectively introduced people to legal drugs that have now become illegal. However the demand for drugs remains even though they are no longer legally available. There is no needle exchange clinic in the North East region, and no residential treatment programme in Cavan. There is a problem with the illegal use of Benzodiazepines (sleeping tablets). CDA was aware of four drug-related deaths in Cavan in 2009; in three cases it was the result of a combination of alcohol and benzodiazepie.

Data from the National Drug Treatment Reporting Scheme show an increasing number of drug treatment records for the Cavan/Monaghan area between 2004 and 2008. Nationally, an opiate (mainly heroin) was the most common main problem drug reported by all cases entering treatment (HRB, 2010). However, local Addiction Services in St Davnet's Hospital maintain the most of their drug treatment cases from County Cavan present with alcohol problems.

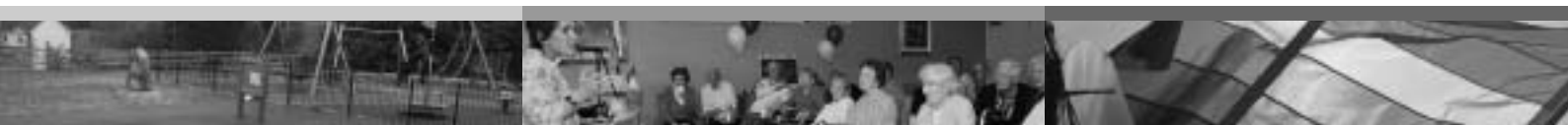
Indicator	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Cavan/Monaghan	36	47	74	104	107

Table 5 Number of problem drug use cases entering treatment in the Cavan Monaghan area, 2004–2008.

Source: HRB 2010

The average annual incidence of treated problem drug use among 15–64 year-olds in County Cavan was 74.8 per 100,000 of the population (Health Research Board, 2010).

Data from the Central Statistics Office on recorded crime in the Cavan/Monaghan Policing Division show that there were 334 incidents recorded of controlled drug offences in 2008, giving a rate of 264.7 per 100,000 population. This compares with a rate of 529.3 per 100,000 population nationally (CSO, 2010: 97). Cavan/Monaghan had the sixth lowest rate in Garda Divisions of recorded incidents of controlled drug offence in 2008.



	Recorded	Per 100k population
Mayo	242	189.9
Meath	389	225.9
Roscommon/Longford	206	229.0
Louth	300	249.6
Galway	609	256.1
Cavan/Monaghan	334	264.7
State	23405	529.3

Table 5A Incidents recorded of Controlled Drug Offences, 2008 (6 lowest rates)

Source: CSO, 2010

In terms of illegal drug use, a Garda representative noted that there are a number of heroin users in the county and some use of 'softer' drugs such as cannabis and ecstasy, the latter more prevalent among younger people. The Gardai have a Drug Unit to specifically tackle these issues. There are also other services operating locally, such as Angels Family Support Group, that provide support for family members of people with drug and alcohol addiction problems.

C) Housing

Local authority tenants consulted for this plan spoke about issues regarding housing repairs, rent increases, their perceived lack of clarity about how rents are calculated, and unused or under-used public buildings. The increase in local authority rents at around the same time that social welfare payments were cut was particularly difficult for some tenants.¹⁰ Tenants reported that housing repairs are not always carried out by the Council in a timely manner. Tenants can be unclear about how rents are calculated, for example, being unsure why neighbours who appear to be in similar circumstances to them are charged less. In one estate, a crèche building is currently unused. Tenants previously had access to the building to run summer programmes for children but this no longer happens, although the community would be willing to deliver programmes on a volunteer basis.

¹⁰ Local authority rents are based on income, so a decrease in a welfare payment should entitle a tenant to an assessment for a decrease in rent.



Homelessness in Cavan is not described as a major issue for the county. The SVP Night Shelter has four beds available for men who are experiencing homelessness. The service has reported an increase in numbers seeking accommodation, which it relates partly to resource cuts in other housing associations. The shelter drew attention to the fact that there are no 'out of hours' services available from other agencies in the town.

A Homelessness Strategy is being prepared at the moment on a regional basis, led by Louth County Council and covering Counties Louth, Meath and Cavan.

There are issues for private housing, such as problems with unfinished or poorly finished estates. Research from the National Institute of Regional and Spatial Analysis identified 21 'ghost estates' in County Cavan, which are described as unfinished or under-occupied estates (Kitchin, 2010: 32).

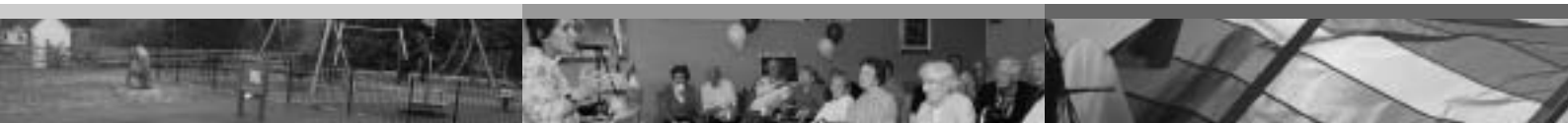
Outside of estates, some individual private housing is reported to be in very poor condition, including households with no running water. Census figures for 2006 showed that there were 128 permanent households with no piped water supply, although this figure had decreased significantly from 201 households that had no water supply in 2002.

D) Health inequalities

Mental health issues are recognised as a growing problem, linked in many cases to poverty and financial stress. A report from the National Suicide Research Foundation indicates the growth in deliberate self harm in the Cavan area:

“Between 2008 and 2009, there were a number of significant changes in the rate of hospital treated deliberate self harm at city/county level...There were a greater number of significant changes in the male deliberate self harm rate and all these changes were increases...The male rate increased by about 30% in the three North-Eastern counties of Cavan (+34%), Louth (+30%) and Monaghan (+30%)...” (National Suicide Research Foundation, 2009)

In Cavan General Hospital, there were 224 hospital-treated episodes of deliberate self harm in 2009.



	Male	Female
<15yrs	<5	<5
15-19yrs	13	21
20-24yrs	15	15
25-34yrs	23	23
35-44yrs	24	31
45-54yrs	21	14
55-64yrs	11	7
65yrs	<5	0
Total	111	113

Table 6 Hospital-treated episodes of deliberate self harm in Cavan General Hospital, 2009

Source: NSRF, 2009

During consultation sessions, both the County Council and the Social Inclusion Measures Group recognised the need for more awareness of mental health issues, initiatives to tackle the stigma of mental health and support people who are experiencing problems. The Health and Social Care Forum that was established by Cavan Community Forum had previously carried out some work on this issue, including running a Mental Health Awareness Week and a Mental Health Seminar. South West Cavan CDP has supported a local suicide awareness group that has now become the county-wide organisation 'Living Links'. There is also a need for training for staff in how to identify mental health issues and knowledge of the referral routes to access appropriate supports.

"Mental health problems are a growing issue in the county and a major part of the poverty trap. The National Office of Suicide Prevention has stated that the economic downturn is having an impact on suicide. Cavan especially has had a large increase in the number of suicides over the last years." (Consultation with Cavan County Council)

The Health Service Executive provides mental health services throughout Cavan, including psychiatric support and training such as ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training).



Physical health supports were also cited as a need, with the County Childcare Committee and a Family Resource Centre drawing attention to the need for supports for families, including work on breastfeeding clinics, diabetes and smoking cessation clinics and screening programmes.

The Health Promotion Services of the Health Service Executive provide many supports in addressing health inequalities, including programmes such as:

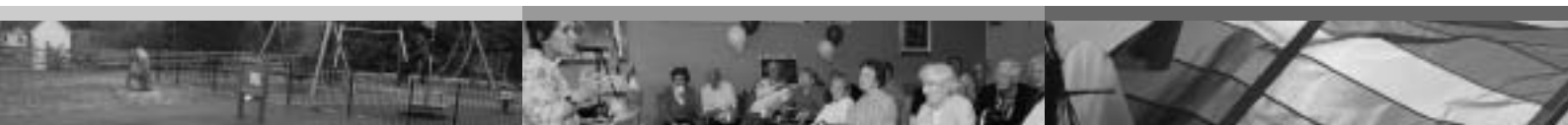
- sexual health training for people working with young people
- a Childhood Safety Awareness Programme
- a postnatal support group and breastfeeding support
- nutrition workshops
- smoking prevention and cessation services, and
- a range of physical activity programmes including Smart Start in pre-schools and Girls in Action aimed at teenage girls.



Cavan Primary Health Care Team for Travellers was supported by the Health Service Executive and the Department of Social Protection. The project provided a range of accredited and soft skills training for Traveller women to equip them to work within their own communities



An Garda Síochána provided a crime prevention awareness talk during Social Inclusion Week 2010



E) Communication

Communication problems in relation to local services and events were highlighted during consultation sessions, both by service providers and by local residents seeking to access supports. Community-based organisations reported having difficulty in getting their message into the mainstream media, relying instead on local newsletters and other means of distributing information. For some, providing regular, up-to-date communication with their entire catchment area about local developments and events is an ongoing challenge. One suggestion to improve communications was for community organisations to jointly approach local media to make the case for greater coverage of local events. Local groups felt that some agencies could improve how they communicate about new developments (for example, the local authority could improve communication on imminent road and streetscape improvements).

Individuals who require supports often do not know what is available locally, or where to access particular services. Many people called for a 'one stop shop' in different areas of the county, that would operate as a central point for information on housing, social welfare and other local supports. County Cavan Citizens Information Service currently provides this type of service, with an outreach service to Virginia, Bailieborough, Kingscourt and Arva, as well as a full-time service in Cavan Town. This service may need to be more widely promoted, or extended to additional areas.

Cavan Community Radio may help to address this communication problem. Although it is currently available one afternoon a week and only in the Cavan town area, funding has been sought to expand the operating hours.

In seeking to improve communication generally, service providers should bear in mind the fact that one in four people in Ireland have problems with reading and writing. In order to be accessible to everyone, information should be provided in plain English and in a variety of formats.



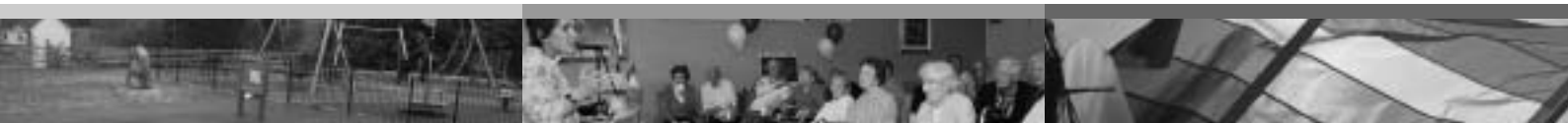
F) Minority faith and ethnic groups

Integration of migrants is an ongoing issue, with language issues presenting a barrier for some ethnic minorities, and some evidence of racist bullying in the school system. According to Cavan Community Forum, in some communities there are pockets of foreign nationals living together in an isolated way, who are not integrated with the rest of the community.

In addition to consultation for the anti-poverty strategy, the Cavan Integration Framework and the Peace III Plan have drawn on wide consultation with minority communities and Peace III target groups. Research for the Cavan Integration Framework found that 32% of minorities who took part in a survey had experienced racism, most on more than one occasion. Key findings from the Integration Framework include:

- A strong belief among minority faith groups that sectarianism exists in County Cavan, although there is a general reluctance to talk about it.
- A view that the majority community were often not aware of the culture and practice of their Protestant neighbours.
- A perceived reluctance to address political sectarianism because of an inherent fear of a return to violence.
- A belief among the majority of people consulted for the Integration Framework that racism exists in County Cavan.
- The language barrier, isolation, and a difficulty engaging with majority communities affect ethnic minority communities.
- A concern among the Orange Order that their halls are under threat, either through vandalism or the dilution of their control over the halls.
- The need for supports for former armed servicemen, of whom there is a very significant number in the county.

Many actions are planned to address the above issues such as support for service provider organisations to engage with minorities and improve equality policies; promotion of diversity through events, site visits, festivals, programmes to explore different religious beliefs, a 'culture café' forum and an annual Good Relations Week; capacity building supports for minorities, networking opportunities and targeted support for key communities.



There are five main strands of Peace III work in County Cavan, focusing on good relations, active citizenship, networking, heritage, and development work in West Cavan. An example of work under the Good Relations strand is the ex-servicemen's project, which engaged with former members of the armed security forces. Members produced a book to bring their personal stories to the wider community, as a way of building understanding and good relations. The book, which includes stories, poetry, recollections and photographs, was a first of its kind and very well received in the county.

Under the Active Citizenship Strand, one youth project that stands out is Cavan Youth Action (CYA). CYA is a capacity building programme for young people from minority religious and ethnic minority groups. Over 300 young people have participated in a series of intercultural programmes that use music, dance, drama and art as a way of exploring each other's backgrounds and beliefs. The Networking strand aims to link groups and communities together within County Cavan and across the border in order to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society. A Women's Network, called Breffni Belles, is one of the new countywide networks which has been created and supported under the project.

In the West Cavan area, the Peace III Programme supports the development of a men's network, including cross-border and capacity-building work. While the heritage strand of Peace focuses on building good relations by establishing partnerships between schools, adult groups and museums on a cross-border basis.

“

“If a Traveller did a good deed, you would never hear about it in the news.”

“

“A lot of lone parents have gone back to education, thanks to the VEC and Cavan Institute. Some are doing FETAC Level 5 Childcare on a modular basis, which is more manageable for them.”

”

”



G) Traveller Community

Members of the Traveller Community consulted for this plan identified various issues impacting on their social exclusion in the county. In general costs of living such as rent and refuse charges are high for people on low income. The costs of sending children to school are a particular strain on families (items such as uniforms, entrance fees, books, lunches).

They identified a need for:

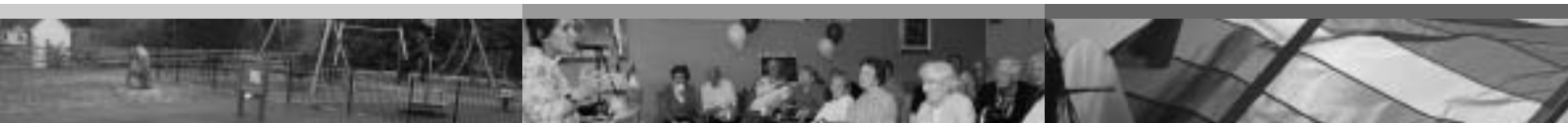
- a 'help and advice centre' for Travellers in Cavan
- initiatives to support Traveller children to stay in school
- adult training programmes, and
- a support worker for Travellers in Cavan¹¹

Employment of Travellers is key to their integration and well-being. Agencies should make more efforts to engage with Travellers, provide information and facilities and have designated workers where possible. A new Traveller Interagency Strategy has been prepared for County Cavan, running from 2011 to 2012. This is a plan of action to be delivered collaboratively by the main agencies in the county to the betterment of Travellers' lives in the county. Actions include media skills training for young Travellers, a leadership development programme, area-based information initiatives, targets for Traveller participation in summer camps and afterschools projects, intercultural events, a review of the accommodation strategy, and traffic calming initiatives in Cavan town, among others.

H) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Communities

The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender [LGBT] community in Cavan described particular issues impacting on their social inclusion in the county. Many people in the LGBT community in Cavan lead sheltered, hidden lives. There are few resources for this community in Cavan, and an assumption that rural communities do not have an LGBT population. For LGBT people in Cavan, there are very few images with which they can identify in the services they are using locally. For example, it is unlikely that leaflets in a GP's surgery would contain images of LGBT people. This may not be intentional, but they described the absence of visual representation as a type of homophobia. The social inclusion of the LGBT community in Cavan would be greatly assisted if services chose to include images of LGBT people in leaflets about their services. This material should be available in prominent locations. All services should reflect diverse family types in their promotional literature, and particularly so for services such as health and housing, where there could be greater sensitivities for LGBT communities in accessing services.

¹¹ Cavan County Council and the Health Service Executive have provided funding for the position of a Traveller Support Worker in Cavan through Irish Traveller Movement. This position was filled in late November 2010



Being an ‘out’ member of the LGBT community in Cavan makes a difference in how a person accesses services/how services are provided. Until recently in Cavan, there was no support group for the LGBT community. A new group called ‘LGBT inC’ (which stands for LGBT in Cavan) was established in 2010. County Cavan VEC and Dundalk Outcomers have also set up a youth service for young LGBT people (November 2010). Staff in service provider organisations require training in inclusive language and diversity, so that when an LGBT person wants to access a service, they are given an appropriate response. Homophobic attitudes, manifested verbally or in more subtle ways, are prevalent in different types of workplace (factory floor, services). Initiatives should be put in place to tackle homophobia in the workplace. At present there is no dedicated resource space in Cavan for the LGBT community. In the long-term it would be beneficial for this community to have a safe, accessible space from which to provide information, hold meetings and arrange other supports.



“There are particular issues for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in Cavan. There is nothing positive available to this community on a local basis, whether politically, or in the areas of health or arts. It is very difficult for people who want to live their lives being true to themselves. Many people in the LGBT community in Cavan lead sheltered, hidden lives. This is particularly because of the feeling that you are ‘more noticed’ in a rural community than in an urban area.”



I) Isolated Men

The issue of isolated, rural men has been put forward by many groups, who recognise that there is a cohort of men who are disadvantaged in a number of ways. The North Leitrim Men’s Group led a research study into this issue in 2006. The research identified a group of men who had similar characteristics of low education, redundant work skills, weak links in their communities, poor social skills and health problems. This research was followed up by regional work through the Irish Central Border Area Network, including a policy paper and cross border conference in 2008. Cavan’s Peace III Programme contains an emphasis on supporting excluded men, with a development worker for West Cavan particularly concentrating on this target group. Community Development Projects also provide supports for isolated men, including the Men’s Gardening Group supported by Community Connections in Blacklion, and a men’s group run through Positive Age. The Gaelic Athletics Association is also involved in a social inclusion initiative targeting isolated men.





“Older, single farmers can be quite isolated, especially ones who used to go to the pub but now cannot do this because of stricter drink driving laws. No one really talks about it. These are a forgotten group as well. People are struggling and when additional problems arise, such as ill health, it is very difficult for them to cope.”



J) Disadvantaged Women

Various consultees spoke about the disadvantage facing women in Cavan, with references to, for example:

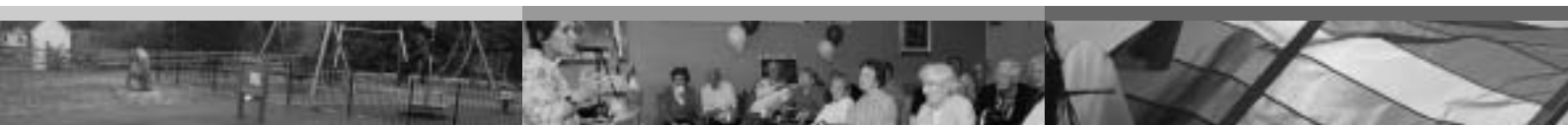
- the amount of unpaid caring work that many women undertake;
- the lack of supports in some localities for younger women or lone parents; and
- the greater reliance among women on public transport, which is a disadvantage in areas with weak transport links.

Domestic violence is an issue nationally, predominantly affecting women. The Monaghan based Tearmann Service provides a confidential outreach support in Cavan two days per week for women experiencing violence in the home. In 2010, they supported 54 women, of whom about half self-referred. The service also takes referrals Gardai, social workers, other services, friends and family. Tearmann also provides a court accompaniment service on additional days.

Women from ethnic minority communities may be doubly disadvantaged by their minority status, through a lack of family support for childcare, or being isolated in the home while their spouse or partner is at work.

Nationally it is known that women are often relatively worse off than their male counterparts. Statistics show that women earn on average less than men, are underrepresented at senior levels and in the political sphere, and are overrepresented in low paid and unpaid work including caring. The Central Statistics Office report ‘Women and Men in Ireland’ (2009) notes the following points in relation to gender differences:

- Women have a higher risk of poverty than men (16% versus 14%).
- Women are more likely to be admitted to hospital with depression than men (40% higher than the male rate of admission for depression).
- Women are underrepresented in decision making structures locally and nationally. Women represent just 14% of TDs in Dáil Éireann, compared to an average for EU national parliaments of 24%.
- Women’s income in 2008 was two thirds of men’s. Even after adjusting for men’s longer working hours, women’s hourly earnings were around 87% of men’s.



During consultation sessions for this anti-poverty strategy, many successful examples were identified of women's groups operating in the county. Community and voluntary groups reported having better engagement from women in various services including education opportunities. However, it may be the case that women who engage with such structures are from more advantaged backgrounds than women who do not engage or who are isolated in their communities.



The West Cavan Gardening Group supported by Community Connections



South West Cavan Community Development Project 'Making a Difference' Awards



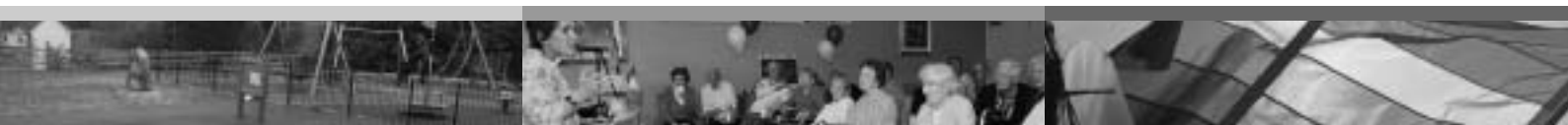
Matrix of Issues Identified

The following table presents a summary of social exclusion issues affecting particular groups, and ideas for what is needed to improve their situation.

Group / Community	Issues Identified	Needs
Lone Parents ¹²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problems with accommodation Lack of information on options and supports Household budgeting difficulties Costs of childcare and difficulty accessing care for teenage children Persistence of the social stigma of parenting alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearer information from agencies and quicker response times Networking opportunities with other lone parents Activities for teenage children Counselling and career guidance Legal advice Flexibility in education and training courses Costs for childcare and transport to be built into courses
Young people at risk ¹³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of facilities Certain facilities and spaces not open to them Transport is a problem in certain areas of the county Not enough factual information available to them about head shop products Discrimination against certain young people (including people from Dublin and England) Gaps in community childcare services and afterschool services Absence of degree level childcare education in the county More supports for parents needed in the areas of family support, breastfeeding, parent and toddler groups, child development education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive activities to engage young people Opportunities for work experience Outdoor pursuits Transport Facilities to be more open to them (for example, use of sports facilities on a casual basis) Breastfeeding support Family support Parent and toddler groups Outreach workers Drugs and sexuality/sexual health education

¹² Lone Parents and Labour Market Barriers research (2007)

¹³ Consultation with Comhairle na nÓg worker and Cavan County Childcare Committee, August 2010



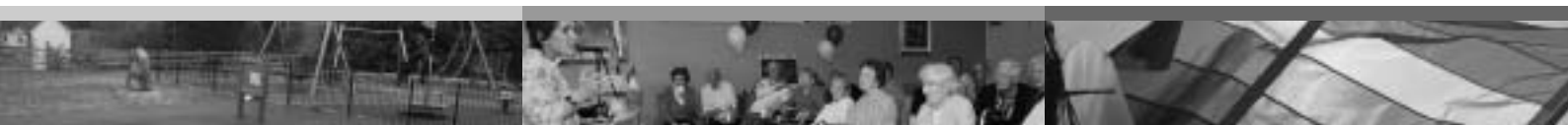
Group / Community	Issues Identified	Needs
	<p>Non engagement by young people in youth services and other supports</p> <p>Need for outreach work</p> <p>Lack of co-ordinated preventative education (for example, drugs awareness)</p>	
LGBT Communities ¹⁴	<p>Isolation</p> <p>Lack of social outlets</p> <p>Transgender people particularly subject to discrimination</p> <p>Staff in services not always trained to respond appropriately</p> <p>Lack of imagery that they can identify with</p>	<p>Staff training in diversity</p> <p>Resources for the group</p> <p>Dedicated office space</p>
Migrants and Ethnic Minorities ¹⁵	<p>Language barrier</p> <p>Racism exists in Cavan; 32% of respondents to a Cavan survey in 2010 said they had been the victim of racism.</p> <p>Difficulty of getting majority community to engage with minority community</p> <p>Lack of information on Irish culture, systems and local activities.</p>	<p>English language skills training</p> <p>Information on rights and entitlements</p> <p>More information on activities delivered by the community and voluntary sector</p> <p>Enhanced communication with minority target audiences</p>
Disadvantaged women	<p>Few support groups for adult women who are too young for senior groups</p>	<p>Groups to address isolation and improve quality of life</p>
Unemployed people	<p>Rising unemployment and competition for jobs</p> <p>Delays in processing welfare applications</p>	<p>More suitable training programmes to meet the current needs of the unemployed.</p>

14 Consultation with LGBT inC, August 2010

15 Cavan Integration Framework (2010)



Group / Community	Issues Identified	Needs
	Requirement to be on welfare for 12 months before accessing a FÁS training place	More inter-agency co-operation to ensure the unemployed are able to avail of all relevant supports available to them and appropriate referrals are made.
Disadvantaged men	<p>Older men are worse at coming forward for services</p> <p>Supports for older men available in Cavan town and CDP areas but not in most rural areas.</p> <p>Life expectancy of Irish men is among the lowest in Europe</p> <p>Lack of work, transport, finance, road network, social meeting groups and places. (Men's Gardening Project)</p>	<p>Gender specific supports</p> <p>Outreach workers</p>
People with disabilities	<p>Remaining problems with inaccessible buildings and spaces</p> <p>Stigma about mental health problems</p> <p>Transport</p> <p>Mis-use of accessible parking bays</p> <p>Access to services</p> <p>Rights for people with disabilities</p>	<p>Universal access</p> <p>Independent living</p> <p>Participation in decision-making</p> <p>Employment</p>
Members of the Traveller Community	<p>Costs of living are high (rents, school costs)</p> <p>Not enough supports in place for Travellers</p> <p>Travellers feel they are not listened to</p> <p>Discrimination against the community is common</p>	<p>Employment opportunities</p> <p>Help and advice centre</p> <p>Training opportunities</p> <p>Homework clubs</p> <p>Youth groups</p> <p>Agencies to make more effort to talk to Travellers</p> <p>Designated workers</p>



Group / Community	Issues Identified	Needs
		Information School retention initiatives Participation supports to attend meetings
Homeless people	Few out of hours services in the county Homelessness more prevalent among men	Out of hours services
Ex-prisoners ¹⁶	Prison release is a dangerous time for drug use relapse No co-ordinated supports available for ex-prisoners	Better linkages and supports for people coming out of prison
Substance mis-users	180 drug treatment referrals to Cavan Drug Awareness in 2009 Referrals for alcohol problems are four times higher than referrals for heroin Recreational drugs (cannabis and stimulant) are a problem in Cavan. People introduced to drugs through head shops Psychiatric referrals as a result of drug use Absence of a needle exchange in the North East.	Support for needle exchange Arrest referral Environmental procedures for disposal of sharps found in public areas Better linkages for treatment
Religious minorities ¹⁷	Fear of engagement with the majority community. Difficulty talking about past conflicts. Perceived lack of engagement by the majority community's church leaders in peace building;	More interagency work to address discrimination Raise awareness of and celebrate diversity Targeted support for minority faith communities

16 Cavan Drug Awareness

17 Cavan Integration Framework (2010)

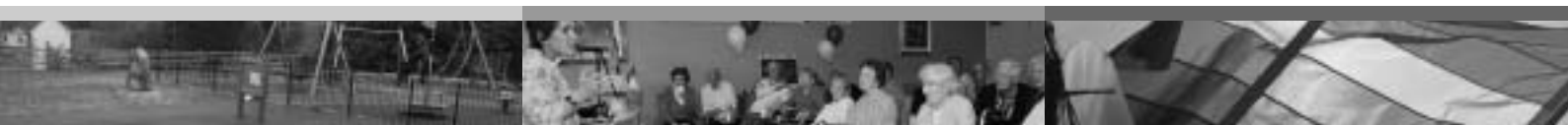


Group / Community	Issues Identified	Needs
	Some minority faith communities remain unaware of the possibilities of being involved in peace building A belief that sectarianism exists in the county.	
Rural Communities ¹⁸	Lack of transport in particular communities Closure of services / threatened closure Insufficient facilities and amenities	Improved transport Improved communication on local supports Facilities and amenities
Older People ¹⁹	Lack of transport options Loneliness and isolation Home help and home support Personal health Security and safety Financial concerns Lack of information and co-ordination	Befriending schemes Information Improved transport such as community minibus around the town and transport in rural areas
Urban communities	Drug and alcohol misuse Anti-social behaviour Unemployment	More supports/funding Activities for youth to help prevent anti-social behaviour Education/training More help from Council Garda patrols
Local authority tenants ²⁰	Housing repairs Communication Anti-social behaviour Costs of rent Boarded up housing	Review of housing systems Improvements in repairs Address anti-social behaviour

18 Various consultation sessions for the Cavan Anti-poverty Strategy identified these issues for rural communities.

19 Exploring Older People's Issues in County Cavan (2008)

20 Various consultations for the Anti-poverty Strategy



Group / Community	Issues Identified	Needs
Farmers and farm families ²¹	<p>Decline in farm income</p> <p>Increase in borrowing to invest in farm business</p> <p>Farm debt</p> <p>Restrictions on EU schemes such as farm retirement</p> <p>Waiting times for social welfare payments</p> <p>Isolation among some older farmers</p>	<p>Increase in places on Rural Social Scheme</p> <p>Training and supports</p> <p>Council to support older farmers in poor housing conditions</p> <p>More interagency work on this issue</p>
Returning expatriates	<p>Habitual residency requirement</p> <p>Not enough supports for this group</p>	<p>Information, housing, social welfare and community supports</p>
Irish speakers	<p>Perceive they are marginalised because they cannot access services in their native language</p>	<p>Information and services available through the Irish language</p>
Carers	<p>Lack of respite/relief care</p> <p>Difficulties trying to register as a carer</p> <p>Lack of finance</p> <p>Isolating nature of caring</p> <p>Stigma attached to caring role</p> <p>Carers are only allowed to engage in paid work for up to 15 hours per week</p> <p>The need to provide insurance cover for Personal Assistants</p> <p>Stress and worry about delegating caring responsibilities</p>	<p>Peer support for carers in their 30s</p> <p>Advice on funeral planning & related costs</p>

Table 7 Issues and needs identified for excluded communities

²¹ Smallholders Support Service delivered by Breffni Integrated Limited



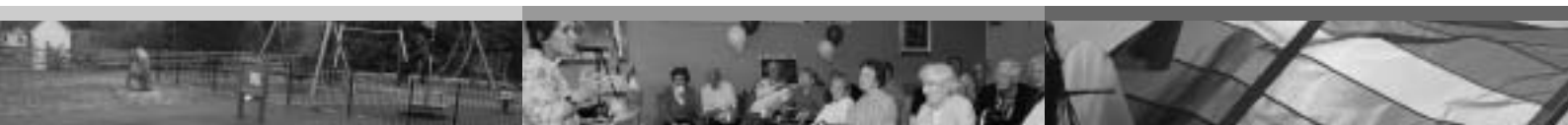
Actions to Address Poverty and Social Exclusion in Cavan

The following section presents actions along the lifecycle framework that organisations have committed to implementing to counteract issues of exclusion and marginalisation in County Cavan. Each action has a named lead organisation and support organisations. A number of these actions are subject to funding and resources being available.

Young People

The objective of supports for young people is to improve opportunities for their personal development. This will be achieved through the enhancement of existing and development of new services and facilities and development of the capacity of young people themselves.

Action	Lead and Support Organisations
<p>Increase the availability of facilities for young people, including both indoor premises and outdoor facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Youth Café in Cootehill • Expanded Foroige Services in Bridge Street 	<p>County Cavan VEC and Cavan Local Authorities (Joint Lead)</p> <p>RAPID Programme Cavan Sports Partnership</p>
<p>Continue to support the development and expansion of community-based childcare services (including development of facilities and support for quality standards in the sector through training)</p>	<p>County Childcare Committee (lead)</p> <p>Community and voluntary sector FÁS Cavan Local Authorities</p>
<p>Work experience placements and volunteering opportunities for young people</p>	<p>County Development Board (lead)</p> <p>Community and Voluntary Forum Family Resource Centres Cavan Institute Youthreach Breffni Integrated Garda Síochána</p>
<p>Support the delivery of varied 'out of school' activities for young people including sports and outdoor activities, youth groups, drop-in services, capacity building.</p>	<p>County Cavan VEC (lead)</p> <p>Cavan Local Authorities (pitches) Youth Consultative Group Voluntary youth services RAPID AIT</p>



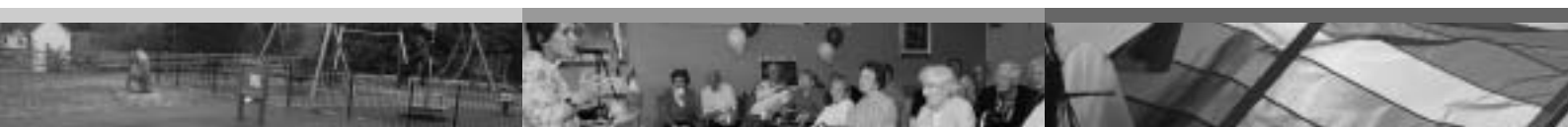
Action	Lead and Support Organisations
	Cavan Sports Partnership Sporting bodies Community organisations Breffni Integrated Limited Cavan Youth Active Citizenship Project Garda Síochána (Community Policing)
Co-ordinate the delivery of specific preventative education programmes for young people (for example drugs awareness, sexual health)	County Cavan VEC (lead) Health Service Executive (Health Promotion) Cavan Drugs Awareness Schools School Completion Programme Breffni Integrated Limited Dept of Education & Skills Comhairle na nÓg
Improve family support services and specific supports for parenting, breastfeeding etc to address health inequalities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening Families Programme • Parenting programmes for fathers 	Health Service Executive (lead) County Childcare Committee RAPID Programme Family Resource Centres CAWT Outcomes for Children Breffni Integrated Ltd Drugs Task Force Probation and Welfare Barnardos Youth Advocate Programme Angels Family Support Service
Programmes to engage 'seldom heard' or 'hard to reach' young people (including outreach work in communities)	Breffni Integrated and County Cavan VEC (Joint Lead) Voluntary youth services Youth Consultative Group Family Resource Centres Health Service Executive Gardai RAPID Programme CAWT Outcomes for Children Breffni Integrated



Action	Lead and Support Organisations
Consultation with young people	<p>County Cavan VEC (lead)</p> <p>Comhairle na nÓg Cavan County Childcare Committee Various agencies CAWT Outcomes for Children Schools School Completion Programme Youthreach Sporting Organisations Breffni Integrated</p>
Develop an Education and Training Plan to include a mapping of provision, skills audit, and development of learning opportunities.	<p>County Cavan VEC (lead)</p> <p>Cavan Information and Technology Centre FÁS Dundalk Institute of Technology Cavan County Enterprise Board Other Training Providers Breffni Integrated Limited CDB Economic Subcommittee (for the Skills Audit) Family Resource Centres</p>
Promotion and development of play opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update County Play Policy • Maintain existing infrastructure 	<p>Cavan Sports Partnership (lead)</p> <p>HSE Health Promotion Cavan Local Authorities County Childcare Committee Family Resource Centres</p>



Sports inclusion events are organised by Cavan Sports Partnership to encourage people to participate in sports



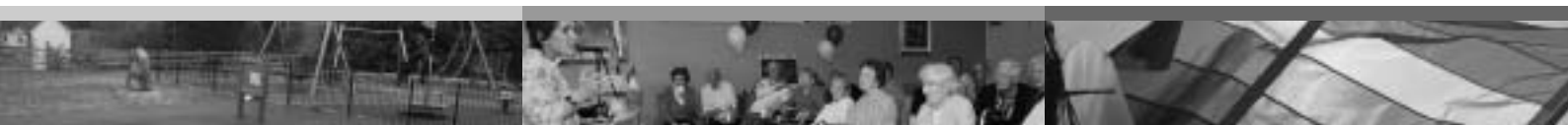
People of Working Age

The aim of supports for people of working age is to promote opportunities for labour market engagement and address key barriers to social inclusion for certain groups.

Action	Lead and Support Organisations
Provide ongoing support to people of working age who are engaged in farming	<p>Breffni Integrated Limited</p> <p>Teagasc Dept of Social Protection County Enterprise Board Irish Farmers Association / Producers Cavan Local Authorities Macra na Feirme</p>
Develop relationships with the Probation Services in the county	<p>Breffni Integrated Limited</p> <p>Cavan Local Authorities (community service placements) FÁS County Cavan VEC Prison Service / Probation & Welfare Cavan Drugs Awareness Community Development Projects County Cavan Citizens Information Service Family Resource Centres Voluntary Organisations An Garda Síochána</p>
Provide information for unemployed people including how to access financial supports and how to access opportunities to return to work	<p>Co Cavan Citizens Information Service</p> <p>FÁS Dept of Social Protection County Cavan VEC Breffni Integrated Company RAPID AIT Employment and Training Subgroup Cavan Community Forum</p>



Action	Lead and Support Organisations
	Community Development Projects Family Resource Centres County Enterprise Board
Provide support to former carers who are returning to the labour market	FÁS Breffni Integrated Ltd Dept of Social Protection Family Resource Centres Carers Associations Positive Age / Health Service Executive Social Services Voluntary Sector Cavan Local Authorities (adaption grants)
Implement Traveller Interagency Strategy. Core actions in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation provision • Capacity-building • Health • Education 	Cavan County Development Board Traveller Interagency Group C&E/RAPID Programme (convenor) Cavan Local Authorities Youthreach St Clare's National School County Cavan VEC FÁS County Childcare Committee Irish Traveller Movement Breffni Integrated Ltd Department of Social Protection Health Service Executive Garda Síochána Good Relations Officer Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
Promote the FÁS Work Placement Programme Promote the Skills Development and Internship Programme	FÁS Dept of Social Protection



Action	Lead and Support Organisations
Provision of Supported Employment for people with disabilities in County Cavan	<p>FÁS</p> <p>National Learning Network</p>
Educational initiatives to help people who are unemployed to manage their budgets	<p>Money Advice and Budgeting Service</p> <p>Department of Social Protection Family Resource Centres Cavan Local Authorities (tenancy training) County Cavan VEC RAPID Area Implementation Team Breffni Integrated Limited</p>
Supports for lone parents to integrate into the workforce	<p>County Cavan VEC (Community Education) and Breffni Integrated (Joint Lead)</p> <p>Department of Social Protection FÁS Health Service Executive (Family Support) Peace III (Networking) County Childcare Committee</p>



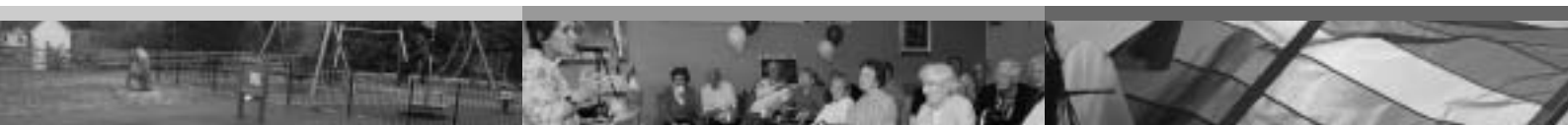
Older People

The objective of supports for older people is to develop Cavan as an age-friendly county over the next five years. The focus of this objective will be on reducing isolation, improving communication and co-ordination of services.

Action	Lead and Support Organisations
Enhanced communication and networking opportunities for older people	Cavan 050 Network Cavan Local Authorities (Peace III Networking Officer) Positive Age / Health Service Executive Active Age Groups Breffni Integrated
Home support initiatives (befriending and visiting schemes, handyman work etc)	Breffni Integrated Limited Rural Social Scheme CAMCAS Neighbourhood Watch / Community Alert An Garda Síochána (Community Policing) Family Resource Centres
Co-ordination of services for older people / Creation of an Older Person's Forum	Cavan 050 Network Positive Age Breffni Integrated Limited CDB Service Providers Cavan Community Forum



Members of Cavan Over 50s Network at the performance of their play on elder abuse during the Bealtaine Festival 2010



People with Disabilities

The objective of supports for people with disabilities is to improve their participation in the social, economic and recreational aspects of society. The focus is on creating greater awareness of the issues experienced by people disabilities and developing opportunities for their full participation.

Action	Lead and Support Organisations
Continued implementation of the Cavan Disability Strategy	Cavan Local Authorities CRAIC Advisory Group CRAIC Team
Engagement with non-public sector to encourage accessibility (INTERREG funding application)	Cavan County Council ICBAN Disability Sector Private Sector (Chamber of Commerce)
Work experience placements for people with disabilities (INTERREG funding application)	Cavan County Council ICBAN members Disability Sector Private Sector Voluntary sector
Consultation with people with disability on the delivery of services and accessibility issues	CRAIC Advisory Group Cavan County Council Health Service Executive
Advocacy work and awareness raising of the issues for people with disabilities among policy makers and the general community	Disability organisations Breffni Integrated Ltd Cavan Citizens Information Service FÁS and Department of Social Protection

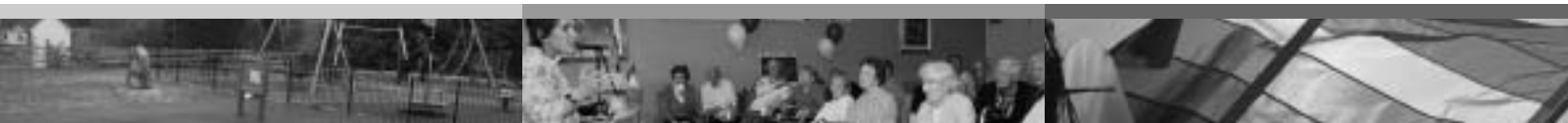


Action	Lead and Support Organisations
Supported employment opportunities for people with disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job coach - Workplace adaptation grants 	FÁS and Department of Social Protection Private and public sector employers People with disability Disability organisations

“I just listen to my own family, employed in various types of jobs. I have three on the dole, and another on a three-day week. To me it’s demoralising. Having to be six months on the dole after being made redundant to get on a training course is far too long. County Councils should be able to provide housing for families that can’t meet their mortgage repayments due to being made redundant. That is a huge issue. There are loads of empty houses in the county, surely if there was a bit of rent paid, it would be better than lying empty.”

“There is a visible level of welfare dependency in Kilnaleck at the moment. A lot of young men with families have to claim welfare because they have lost their jobs, and you can feel their sense of embarrassment about it. The building industry is all over. People used to travel to Dublin and other places for work on construction sites but there is nothing around here now for them.”

“The consultation carried out on the disabled equipment for the sports centre was well done. The accessible parking bays (‘Blue Boxes’) for the disabled are great and there has been lots of good work carried out on pavings. The Access Officer is doing fantastic work. Her work needs to be publicised more. There is still a need to link in with those people who are not listened to or do not come forward for consultations. More outreach is needed to get them involved, for example, more promotion could be carried out in hospitals, doctor’s waiting rooms, and treatment centres.”



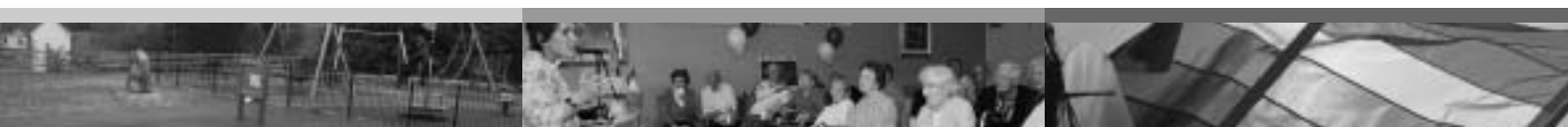
Communities

The objective of supports to communities is to improve quality of life, integration of communities and access to services throughout the county.

Action	Lead and Support Organisations
<p>Review of housing systems and supports for tenants regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repairs Rent assessment Communication Boarded up housing Anti-social behaviour strategy Tenancy training Estate enhancement Capacity building County-wide tenant profile 	<p>Cavan Local Authorities (lead)</p> <p>Residents Associations An Garda Síochána</p>
<p>Increase availability of facilities and recreational space for community use. Promote existing facilities and natural resources as low cost outlets for communities, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a public park at the Green Lough • Development of a community garden at Gallow's Hill • Development of allotments • Development of recreational sports group in Belcoo/Blacklion for middle-aged people 	<p>Cavan Local Authorities</p> <p>Cavan Community Forum RAPID Programme Community and voluntary sector Multicultural Forum Breffni Integrated Limited</p>
<p>Improve communication on developments and available services / improve channels of communication for local groups to promote their services, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual interagency information event • Print supplements 	<p>Cavan Community Forum</p> <p>All agencies Community & Voluntary groups Breffni Integrated Cavan Multicultural Forum</p>



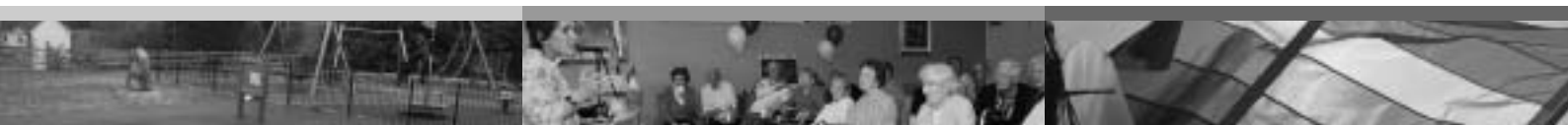
Action	Lead and Support Organisations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community noticeboards • Community radio 	
<p>Improve communication on social inclusion initiatives and issues through the development of an Anti-poverty Forum</p>	<p>Social Inclusion Unit</p> <p>SIM Group</p>
<p>Seek to improve transport options for the people of County Cavan, both urban and rural communities.</p>	<p>CART</p> <p>Breffni Integrated Limited Cavan Local Authorities Community Forum Bus Éireann</p>
<p>Supports for the integration of minority ethnic and minority faith communities in the county, including diversity work with majority communities and cultural events. Specific strands of Peace III work are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking • Good Relations • Active Citizenship • West Cavan Development • Heritage 	<p>Cavan County Council (lead) through Cavan Peace Partnership</p> <p>Breffni Integrated Limited County Cavan VEC Peace-funded projects An Garda Síochána (Ethnic Liaison Officer)</p>
<p>Supports for Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender [LGBT] communities including library resources, arts initiatives, staff training and awareness, representation on committees.</p>	<p>Breffni Integrated</p> <p>Cavan County Council County Cavan VEC (Youth Services) Dundalk Outcomers Health Service Executive All public sector agencies Cavan Tourism Marketing Initiative Sporting Organisations / Sports Partnership</p>
<p>Address health inequalities arising from social factors (such as socio-economic group, education etc)</p> <p>Including a focus on mental health issues / suicide prevention</p>	<p>Health Service Executive</p> <p>Cavan Community Forum Family Resource Centres Mental Health Ireland</p>



Action	Lead and Support Organisations
	RAPID Programme Cavan Sports Partnership Breffni Integrated Social Inclusion Unit
Continue to address alcohol and drug issues through education, treatment, and prevention work	Cavan Drug Awareness North East Regional Drugs Task Force Garda Síochána FÁS (CE places) Health Service Executive County Cavan VEC (Education and Youth Services) Breffni Integrated Limited RAPID Programme Cavan Comhairle na nÓg Joint Policing Committees Angels Family Support Service
Support for urban communities (targeted actions in environmental enhancement, community safety, family support, play and recreation)	RAPID Area Implementation Team Cavan Town Council Residents groups Garda Síochána
Continue to co-ordinate and support the work of the community and voluntary sector in County Cavan.	Cavan Community Forum and Cavan County Council (joint lead) Breffni Integrated Limited Community and voluntary groups
Continue to expand broadband infrastructure / initiatives to address the digital divide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Training • Awareness 	Cavan County Council County Cavan VEC (training) Telecommunications providers Department of Communication Irish Central Border Area Network



Action	Lead and Support Organisations
<p>Irish language development</p> <p>Actions to support the social inclusion of Irish speakers</p>	<p>Cavan County Council</p> <p>Glor na Gael</p> <p>Service Providers</p>
<p>Support the social inclusion of people in sporting and recreational activities with a particular focus on people with disabilities, women and girls, older people, and young people.</p> <p>Implement Sports Inclusion Strategy</p>	<p>Cavan Sports Partnership</p> <p>Voluntary sporting organisations</p> <p>Cavan Local Authorities</p>
<p>Complete the infrastructural development of the All Ireland Scouting Jamboree Facility at Castlesaunderson (June 2011) and maximise the use of the facilities on a cross community basis, with a particular emphasis on engaging with minority and disadvantaged young people.</p>	<p>Cavan County Council</p> <p>Scouting Ireland</p> <p>Department of Social Protection</p> <p>FÁS (work placement programme)</p>
<p>Specific work to include isolated men</p>	<p>GAA Social Inclusion Initiative</p> <p>Cavan Local Authorities</p> <p>Cavan 050 Network</p> <p>Peace III (West Cavan Officer)</p> <p>Breffni Integrated</p> <p>Cavan Sports Partnership</p> <p>County Cavan VEC</p> <p>North Leitrim Men's Group</p>
<p>Integration work with returning emigrants: information, housing, counselling</p>	<p>Cavan Citizens Information Service</p> <p>Community Sector</p> <p>Department of Social Protection</p> <p>Breffni Integrated</p> <p>Voluntary housing organisations</p> <p>Cavan Local Authorities (housing)</p>



Monitoring the Strategy

In early 2011, the SIM subgroups were restructured to reflect the five stages of the lifecycle. Each subgroup will have responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the actions over the lifetime of this plan.

The SIM group will produce an annual work plan based on this Anti-poverty Strategy. This work plan will contain a greater level of detail on each action, including planned outcomes for each year and performance indicators. The annual SIM work plan will be based on the following template:

Action	Lead Agency	Support Agencies	Output	Performance Indicator

“

“People are at risk of slipping under the radar as we become more computer-based.”

”

“

“Community development is getting stronger because people see the dividends at the end of it.”

”

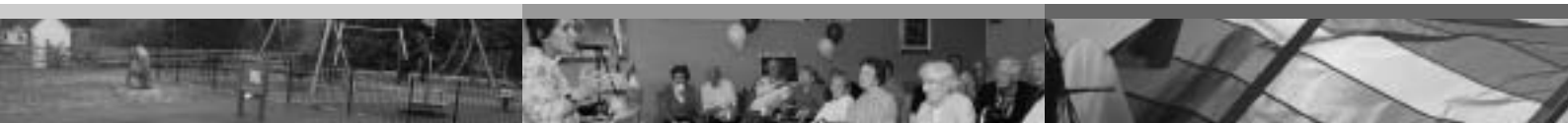


Conclusion

This is the first Anti-poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for County Cavan. Through a detailed research and consultation process, it has documented issues relating to poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion affecting the different geographic areas, different age groups and diverse communities of County Cavan. It has also captured information on the many examples of projects that are striving to address these issues (Appendix II). The strategy captures information on the high level of volunteerism in Cavan and the commitment of communities to supporting people who are excluded.

Throughout the consultation process, there was an evident recognition of the injustice of poverty and the unacceptable nature of exclusion. Community, voluntary and statutory organisations have given commitments in this strategy to collectively address the problems identified with specific actions that are measurable.

This plan will build on the good work which has already been undertaken in County Cavan to further strengthen our commitment in this area.



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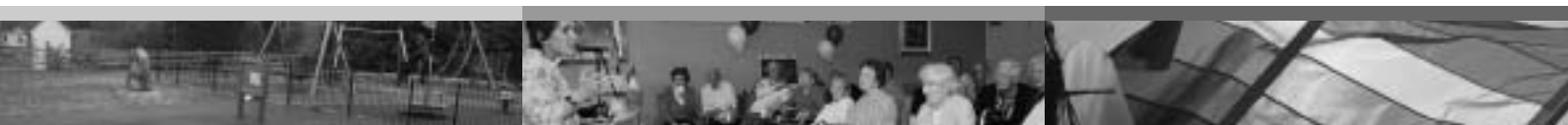
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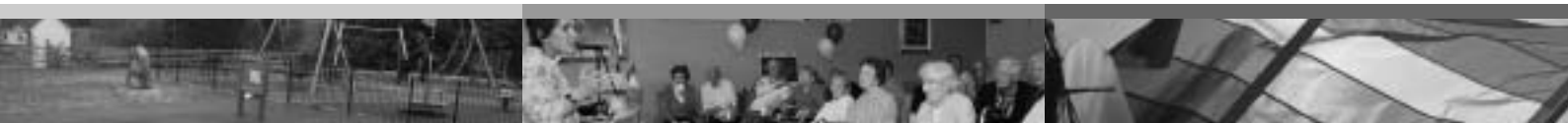
Appendix I Research Method and Details of Consultation Meetings

The process used to develop this strategy was:

- Presentation to the County Development Board by Social Inclusion Division of the Department of Social Protection
- Briefing paper prepared for the County Development Board
- Literature review of local studies
- Presentation to the Social Inclusion Measures group on the process of developing anti-poverty plans in other counties
- SIM group established a subgroup to lead the development of Anti-poverty Strategy
- Web page developed
- Online and paper survey developed and administered
- Written consultation process
- Discussion group themes/questions developed
- Discussion groups held around the county
- Individual interviews held with organisations
- Consultation with County Council and Town Councils
- Presentation of draft strategy to Social Inclusion Measures Group
- Presentation on draft strategy at launch of Social Inclusion Week
- Presentation of draft strategy to County Development Board

Discussion Groups were held with the following organisations:

- Cavan Community Forum
- Cavan County Council
- Cavan Social Services
- Cavan Travellers Primary Health Care Team
- Focus Family Resource Centre
- LGBT inC (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender in Cavan)
- 'Progression from the Recession' newly unemployed group, Bailieboro
- Strategic Policy Committee (County Council)
- Town Councils: Cavan, Cootehill, Belturbet
- Tullacmongan Resource Centre
- West Cavan Carers
- West Cavan Men's Group (Gardening Project)



Individual Interviews took place with the following organisations (either by phone or face-to-face):

- Angels Family Support Group
- An Garda Síochána
- Bailieboro Resource House
- Breffni Integrated Limited
- Bright Stars Autism Group
- CART Rural Transport Initiative
- Cavan Citizens Information Service
- Cavan Comhairle na nÓg
- Cavan County Childcare Committee
- Cavan Drug Awareness
- Cavan Social Services
- Cavan Monaghan Rural Development (LEADER)
- Cootehill Community Childcare
- Cootehill Widows' Group
- County Cavan VEC (Youth Services)
- CRAIC Advisory Group
- Department of Social Protection
- Garda Youth Diversion Programme (Cavan 365 Project)
- Kilnaleck Social Services
- Kingscourt Youthreach
- Money Advice and Budgeting Service
- National Learning Network
- RAPID Programme
- Smallerholders Support Service, Breffni Integrated
- Society of St Vincent de Paul (and Night Shelter)
- South West Cavan Community Development Project
- Swanlinbar Development Association

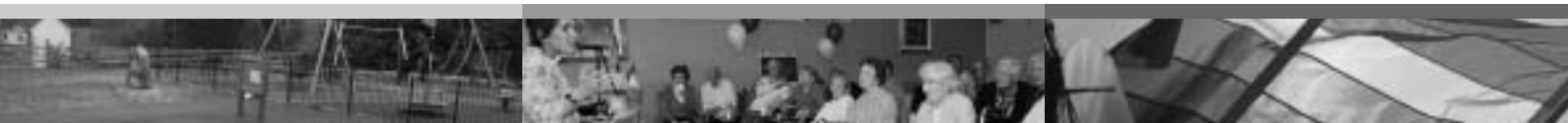
The document also draws on recent information from minority faith and minority ethnic communities who were consulted as part of Peace III Programme work in Cavan.



Appendix II Good Practice Examples

Throughout the consultation process, many projects were identified as making a positive contribution to addressing poverty and exclusion in Cavan. Various types of work were named, including services delivered by Family Resource Centres, meals on wheels, day care centres and social services groups, community based-childcare providers, and school book and uniform clubs. Local farming groups and tidy towns committees are said to be making life easier and better for local communities. The 'Progression from Recession' course for newly unemployed people organised by Breffni Integrated was praised as being a very practical and informative initiative. The local authority's work with people with disabilities and accessibility improvements in playgrounds were noted. County Cavan VEC was praised for the support it provides to clients of Cavan Drug Awareness, along with the Probation service in Cavan, and Health Service Executive addiction liaison nurses in Cavan General Hospital.

Other examples included home help services, caring work, education programmes for particular groups, after-school study time, and school dinners for children.



Specific projects were named as good practice examples such as:

Good Morning Project
Bridge Street Drop-in Centre
CAMCAS
Cavan 050 Network
Cavan Boxing Club
Cavan Citizens Information Service
Cavan Family Resource Centre
Cavan Institute
Cavan Leader Forum
Cavan Lions Club
Cavan RAPID Health and Family Support Service
Cavan Shoe Box Appeal
Cavan Town Council Estate Grant and Awards Scheme
Con Smith Park Recreational Area
Cookery course in Tullacmongan
County Cavan Access Association
Drumlane Community Garden
Dundalk Outcomers
Focus Family Resource Centre
HSE Chatterbox Project (speech and language)
Interfaith Breffni in Transition
Junior Achievement Enterprise Challenge Project
Kingscourt Youth Club
Literacy Lift Off Project (St Clare's and St Felim's Schools)
Living Links
Lone Parents Housing Booklet
Men on the Border research
Money Advice and Budgeting Service
Rainbows Counselling Service for Children
Rural Transport Scheme
South West Cavan Befriending Scheme
St. Vincent De Paul
Strengthening Families Programme
Teach Oscail Family Resource Centre
The Cavan 365 Initiative
Tullacmongan / Cavanaleck Youth Project
Winners on Wheels
Youthreach

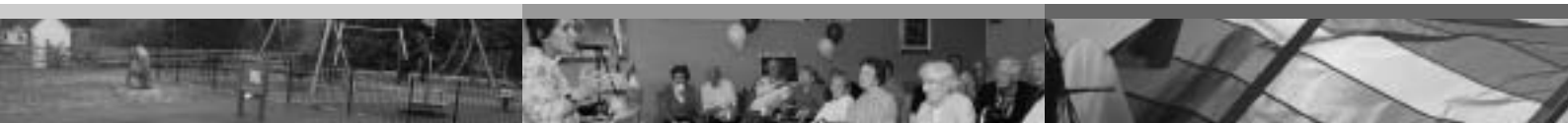


Examples from outside of Cavan were cited as the European Anti-poverty Network, Aware, Navan Travellers Training Project, Older Women's Network Ireland, Naas Housing Project, Summerhill Age Action, a Dublin Fishing Initiative that encouraged young people to take up angling as a hobby, and support for disabled drivers in the UK system. In Cork, the gay community carried out specific work with the City Council and LINC (Lesbians in Cork), ensuring their inclusion in Council plans.

Detailed descriptions of good practice

Further detail is provided below on some of the good practice examples that are striving to improve the situation of people in disadvantaged circumstances:

Established in 2009, **Focus Family Resource Centre [FRC]** provides a variety of services to the local community in Killeshandra and surrounding areas. Their work includes a focus on carers and unemployed people, older and isolated people, young people and young families. They provide a one-to-one therapeutic counselling service and a range of training classes (for example MABS, computer literacy, literacy for the local factory, classes for women's groups and older men's supports). They have been involved in suicide awareness work. And they support the 'Ladies K Club' with a Peace III networking grant. The FRC is open to all members of the community. It operates as a drop-in centre five days a week where people come in with queries on many different issues. They hope to develop a youth drop in centre as well. They plan to roll out Level 5 training in Childcare and Caring for Older People.



The Cavan **Traveller Primary Health Care Programme** set out to develop and enhance the skills of Traveller women to enable them to work within the health care sector as Primary Health Care Workers and more specifically within their own community. The training started in November 2009 and was completed in December 2010. The modules include Living in a Diverse Society, Communications, Maths, Literacy, Numeracy, Food and Nutrition, Child Development and Play and Parenting Skills. Other training delivered included Walking for Health, Breast Check, Cancer Screening and Drug Awareness. The group also completed a certificate in Occupational First Aid at FETAC Level 5 as well as Manual Handling. The programme was co-ordinated by Extern in association with the Health Service Executive and Co Cavan VEC. Other support included the Department of Social Protection and Cavan County Council. Additional funding has been secured for 2011 to role out a 10 week Observational Work Experience Programme for the women. The placements offered include childcare settings, care settings and classroom settings. It is hoped to provide a first experience of work in the open labour market for the women and to ease the transition from the training programme to the workplace by providing job-seeking skills and knowledge.

Breffni Integrated works with various **local farming groups** and gives them the capacity to support themselves. They have supported the establishment of three purchasing groups with up to 45 farmers in each one. Collectively, the farmers are able to negotiate deals with banks, or buy oil/fertiliser/feed in bulk. There is some sharing of farm equipment. Farmers are getting organised through these groups and it is helpful for them on many levels.

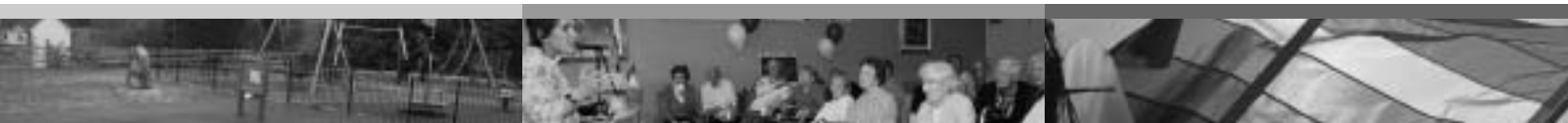


The **Golden Oldies** group in Tullacmongan provides a social evening for older people in the area every Monday night. The group has been in existence for many years, and is supported by two volunteers. Members undertake many activities, such as making cards and Christmas crackers, and meeting older people from other groups. They enjoy going on outings together and have been to places like the Omagh Folk Park and Dublin Zoo. Many of the group's members had not previously visited the zoo so this was a novel occasion for them. They go on holidays together for a few days every year, which they save for every week and really look forward to. They are also involved in a New Age Kurling League with support from Cavan Sports Partnership.

The Cavan **Money Advice and Budgeting Service [MABS]** provides a free, confidential support service for people who have debt or money management problems. They try to help people manage their income without resorting to credit, and they help people who are already in debt. They have particular supports in place such as a loan guarantee fund and an arrangement with the Credit Union to help people pay bills. MABS aims to work at four levels to:

1. Help people regain control of their finances
2. Educate clients in essential practical budgeting skills and money management so that they can meet day-to-day expenses and repay debt
3. Open up alternative credit options by working with the Credit Union
4. Raise awareness of debt issues in the local community by means of talks, both in schools and to community groups

The **Progression from the Recession** course is an eight morning training programme for people who have recently lost their jobs. It is co-ordinated by Breffni Integrated Ltd. The programme provides information for the newly unemployed and gives supports in the areas of CV preparation and job skills. Representatives from key services provider agencies are brought in to the course to meet the participants and explain what services are available locally. Course participants described the tutor as a 'fantastic information provider' who could put them in the right direction to get the answers they needed.



Cavan Social Services operates from the Day Centre beside the John Sullivan Home. It is run by a volunteer committee of 14 people. The day centre has been in existence for almost 40 years. The group runs different activities, for example, bingo, dance, exercises, relaxation techniques, cards and various crafts such as knitting and crochet. Some of the older people make shawls that are sent to babies in a particular village in Africa, and matinee coats for premature babies. About 50 people a week use the service. Most people make their own way to the activities and some use a minibus provided by the service one day a week. They also run day trips and holidays; this is a useful support for older people who would not holiday on their own. Word of mouth is helpful in getting groups together and supporting access to services. Many of the older people who use Cavan Social Services are living alone, so the service has helped to address isolation. Through availing of the various activities, they make friends in the centre. Because the service offers a variety of activities, there is something on offer for everyone.

In the **Swanlinbar area**, there is a good level of community involvement in delivering supports to support social inclusion. There is a strong GAA structure, and local involvement in festivals and events. In June 2010, nearly 200 people took part in a walk of the Cuilcagh mountains to help promote healthy living and the beauty of the area. The community also received support from Comhaltas and the County Council for different events. A youth groups meet regularly and its members are involved in the Gaisce awards. Other sporting opportunities are available locally, such as basketball and athletics, and scouting is available in the Kinawley Parish area. The Day Centre provides services for older people such as hot meals and activities like music, arts and crafts. This day centre service is part-funded by the Health Service Executive and run by volunteers. It also has a garden and polytunnel that members can use for growing fruit and vegetables.

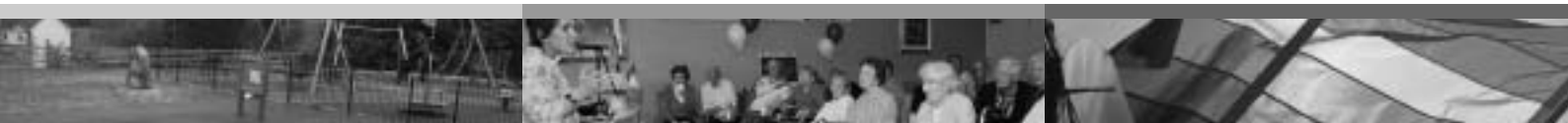
Bailieboro Resource House runs a community childcare service that mainly serves two local authority estates, which are within walking distance of the service. It is a new, purpose-built childcare building that is equipped to a high standard. Childcare subventions are available for people on low income, so the places are accessible to everyone in the community. The centre is run by a volunteer board of management, and the service is delivered with support from volunteer workers. They also take people on work experience placement. The level of volunteerism has remained stable. Bailieboro itself was described as being 'well served' with forest walks, a swimming pool, GAA pitch, a school of music, a social services group for older people, a new Foroige group, a playground, and a very good library service.



Bright Stars is a support group for children with autism and their families. Based in Kingscourt, the group was established in May 2008 and operates from a room in the local community centre. The group's main objective is to provide support, information and advocacy for young people with autism. Bright Stars is involved in fund-raising and awareness-raising work to highlight the needs of children with this condition. They are campaigning for the establishment of an ABA classroom in Kingscourt. ABA stands for Applied Behavioural Analysis and it is a specific type of one-to-one education that many parents find beneficial for children with autism. Children using the service can receive some ABA tuition hours in the community centre, thanks to the group's fundraising efforts and wider support from the community in Kingscourt and its hinterland.

The **Garda Youth Diversion Programme** funds the Cavan 365 Project which is based in the Tullacmongan area of Cavan town. This programme works directly with 10-18 year old young people, in particular young people who are considered at risk. Referrals come from a variety of sources including social workers, teachers, Juvenile Liaison Officers, School Completion Officers and parents. The Project runs a number of specific courses, which young people attend on a voluntary basis. These include:

- Copping on Programme
- Putting the Pieces Together
- Cook It Programme
- Teenage Health Initiative



The **Kilnaleck Social Services** group provides meals and other activities to older people who live within a 10 mile radius of Kilnaleck. The service has been running for 22 years. In addition to meals, the volunteers provide activities such as bingo, quizzes, music and trips. They have recently introduced a 'Meals on Wheels' service. They run an annual outing, several one day trips including visits to other groups, and a Christmas party every year. The volunteer committee meets once a month and the older people attend the service once a fortnight. The volunteers work very hard but feel they are appreciated for it. The service operates with a grant from the Health Service Executive and local fundraising.

Cootehill Community Childcare operates from a new, purpose-built premises that was funded under the Pobal capital childcare programme. The site was provided by the County Council. The service is open to all members of the community. Staff are mostly trained to Level 5 and some have higher level qualifications. Childcare subsidies are available to enable lower income families to access the service.



Service users of RehabCare took part in sports events during Social Inclusion Week 2010



Angels Family Support Group provides a safe, confidential and non-judgmental place for the family members of drug and alcohol users to come together to discuss common issues. The group is dedicated to outreaching and organising respite care, counselling, education, support and guidance to people affected by addiction, whether directly or indirectly. It is dedicated to the holistic development of the person, the family and the community, achieved through therapeutic intervention and peer support. Angels Family Support is one of seven groups operating in the north east region, all linked to the North East Region Family Support Network. The group holds weekly meetings where members share their experiences and have the opportunity to listen to guest speakers.

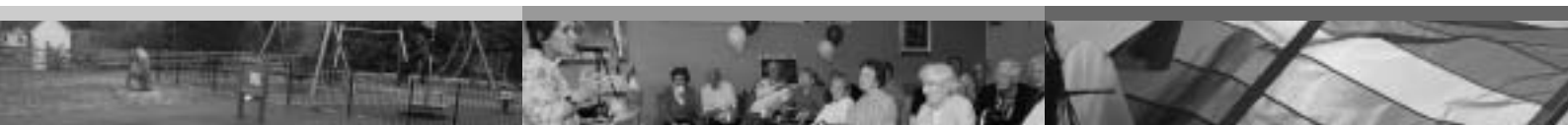


Photo by Adrian Donohoe

Participants at the World Day of Prayer event held in Castlesaunderson Church in March 2011



“In Cootehill there is an excellent library service and a lot of people avail of it. They have computers and people can go online. The staff there are second to none. It is a very good service for people. From time to time the community holds coffee mornings there and people exchange stories. The library is of great value to the area.”



Appendix III Cavan Social Inclusion Group Members, 2010

Organisation	Representative
Breffni Integrated Limited	Mr Brendan Reilly
CART Rural Transport	Mr Damien O'Neill
Cavan 050 Network	Mr Bob Gilbert
Cavan Community Forum	Ms Madeline Uí Mhéalóid
Cavan County Childcare Committee	Ms Treasa Quigley
Cavan Local Authorities (Housing)	Mr Michael Geelan
Cavan Town Council	Mr Brian Hora
County Cavan VEC	Ms Siobhan McEntee
Community Connections CDP	Mr Sandy Holland
Department of Social Protection	Ms Gay Fannon
Elected Representative	Cllr Madeline Argue
FÁS	Mr Ronnie Rice
Garda Síochána	Inspector Seamus Boyle
Health Service Executive	Mr Richard Phelan (Chair)
RAPID Programme	Mr Conor Craven
Social Inclusion Unit	Dr Emer Coveney
Social Inclusion Unit	Ms Grainne Boyle
South West Cavan CDP	Ms Hazel Leahy

