



Sports Inclusion Development Programme

Annual Report 2014

**Compiled by Ms Aoife Byrne,
Sports Inclusion Development Officer,
Offaly Sports Partnership**



Introduction

Offaly Sports Partnership is an inter agency and multi sectorial sub committee of Offaly County Council. It is hosted within the Local Community Development section of Offaly County Council; and receives its annual operating budget from the Irish Sports Council.

The Partnership is currently delivering its second strategic plan for the period 2011 to 2015.



In 2013, the Partnership secured funding from the Irish Sports Council and the Health Services Executive (Section 39) to recruit for the post of Sports Inclusion Development Officer (SIDO). In February 2014, Ms Aoife Byrne joined the staff of the Partnership as our new SIDO. In her year with us, she has made substantial progress in the implementation of sustainable projects for the disability sector; and in building capacity within the sector for the delivery of health enhancing physical activities for people with a disability. Disabilities are divided into three types of impairment: -

1. Intellectual
2. Physical
3. Sensory

The following pages will give an overview of Aoife's work in 2014: -

In the area of **intellectual disability**, Aoife has delivered nine projects / programmes. Highlights of the year included: -



Xcessible Youth Initiative - Special School SPORTSHALL Athletics

A combined Laois / Offaly inter schools Xcessible Special Schools SPORTSHALL Athletics jamboree was held in 2014. Approximately, 60 children with intellectual disabilities - 32 from Laois and 27 from Offaly - participated in the jamboree.



This Special School SPORTSHALL Athletics Initiative officially launched the Xcessible Youth Sport Initiative 2014 - 2016 which is a national initiative coordinated by the CARA National Adapted Physical Activity Centre and supported by the Local Sports Partnerships.

Special Schools GAA

GAA activities were delivered in four schools with special education needs units - Ballinamere National School, Dromakeenan National School, Nano Nagle Centre in Presentation Primary National School Portarlington, and St Joseph's National School Tullamore.

Three GAA coaches, all teachers and special needs assistants were trained in the delivery of inclusive GAA activities and received a resource pack to assist them in the future roll out of this programme.



Keep Fit with Aura & Swim with Aura

In conjunction with Aura Tullamore, a number of get active, keep fit and swim with Aura programmes have been developed for people with intellectual disabilities. Across the three programmes, there have been almost 100 participants; with Aura taking on board the running of these programmes after the initial introductory period.



Reduced membership fees have also been introduced for people with disabilities availing of the Sports Inclusion Development Programme to encourage sustained long term participation into the future.



Come Try Sports Day

Over 130 adults with intellectual disabilities from four services in Edenderry and Tullamore attended a come try sports day in the Tullamore Harriers. Local sports clubs delivered a range of activities on the day including: -

- Athletics with the Tullamore Harriers
- Basketball with the Tullamore Basketball Club
- Boccia with RehabCare and the National Learning Network
- Long Kic and Long Puc with Offaly GAA
- Rounders with RehabCare
- Soccer penalties and matches with Tullamore Soccer Club
- Sports day relays with Aura Tullamore
- Tag rugby and Welly throwing
- Target throw with the Muriola Foundation
- Tug of War with Boyneside Tug of War Club
- Zumba with Darinda



Special Olympics supports

Information sessions

In conjunction with Special Olympics Leinster, information sessions on Special Olympics were delivered in St Joseph's National School and the Offaly School for Special Education. Gary Mc Cabe, a local Special Olympian who has represented Ireland in basketball at the World Games presented at these sessions. Offaly Sports Partnership would like to express our gratitude for his support of the information sessions.

Following on from these sessions, a new Special Olympics Club was established in St Joseph's National School and boasts a membership of eight athletes; while great interest was expressed by parents and staff of the Offaly School for Special Education in relation to the Ireland Games held in Limerick in June 2014.



Ireland Games

26 athletes from across the county went on to represent Offaly at the Ireland Games in Limerick in June, with each and every athlete achieving a modicum of success.

One athlete from Camcor Warriors has since represented Ireland in aquatics at the European Games in Antwerp; and one additional athlete from Ballinamere Special Olympics will also be representing Ireland at the Los Angeles World Games in 2015.



Inter schools Special Olympics

In November, Special Olympics in conjunction with Offaly Sports Partnership and the Sacred Heart School Tullamore delivered an inter schools Special Olympics event among three primary schools - Ballinamere National School, Offaly School for Special Education Tullamore and St Joseph's National School Tullamore - which currently host Special Olympics clubs in support of their Special Education Needs units.



46 athletes supported by 28 transition year students from the Sacred Heart School, five students from the National Learning Network, and Special Olympics staff and volunteers took part in the event.

In the area of **physical disability**, Aoife has delivered two projects / programmes. Highlights of the year included: -



Inclusive play facilities for people with physical disabilities

Following a call for funding from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs regarding capital funding for play and recreation facilities, the partnership supported Tullamore Municipal District to make an application to install play facilities to make the town park more accessible for people with physical disabilities. After securing €10,000 from the Department, an "ability swing" was installed in the town park in December 2014. This is a welcome addition in making a great local amenity more accessible for people with disabilities.

In the area of **sensory disability**, Aoife has delivered two projects / programmes. Highlights of the year included: -

National Council for the Blind in Ireland physical activity supports

Two programmes were delivered in support of this project: -

1. *Spinning for people with visual impairments* with the support of Aura Tullamore; and





2. Tandem cycling in Lough Boora Parklands

12 participants with visual impairments participated in this event with the support of six sighted pilots from the Acquired Brain Injury Centre Mountbolus, National Council for the Blind in Ireland and Wolftrap Cycling Club Birr. Five tandem bicycles were available on the day, provided by the Acquired Brain Injury Centre Mountbolus, Grand Canal Adventures Daingean, Killucan Cycling Club, National Council for the Blind in Ireland and Wolftrap Cycling Club.



As a direct consequence of this intervention, one partially sighted participant from the day has joined Wolftrap Cycling Club and has participated in a number of their 60k and 80k spins. The new member also hopes to participate in the club's annual Malin to Mizen Head cycle in 2015.

In addition to the range of disability specific programmes delivered, a number of **pan disability programmes** and **training courses** have also been delivered. Highlights of the year included: -

Walking challenge

The pan disability walking challenge was an amalgamation of numerous walking challenges from Get Ireland Walking and the Irish Heart Foundation. 55 participants took part in the challenge from across the county which required them to complete a log book recording times and distances walked.



Midlands Boccia League

In conjunction with Westmeath Sports Partnership, a pan disability Midlands Boccia League was held. 20 teams and 100 participants from a number of disability organisations took part.

Unfortunately, Offaly did not secure the title in 2014 but ran a very tight second to IWA Athlone.



CARA Disability Inclusion Training

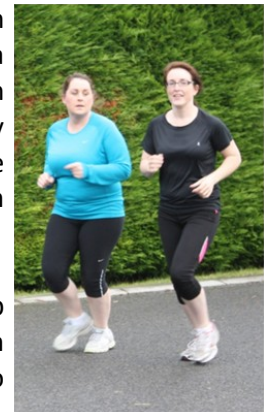
In May 2014, the partnership facilitated the delivery of its first CARA Disability Inclusion Training to 19 participants from various backgrounds.

The CARA Disability Inclusion Training is designed as an introductory level course to give participants ideas and inspiration to adapt their Sport, Physical Activity and Physical Education sessions to make them more accessible and inclusive for children and adults with disabilities

Couch to 5k

Following on from our successful mainstream meet and train jogging programmes, a pilot couch to 5k was delivered with a group from Bury Quay, Tullamore. 10+ people participated on this programme three times a week with one session led out by the partnership's meet and train tutor, Pauline Curley; one session led out by the SIDO; and one session led out by staff from the centre.

Following the successful completion of the pilot, the group organised a few races; and members of the group also went on to join the local athletic club. A second programme is due to commence in January 2015.



For further information on the work of Offaly Sports Partnership, contact the office on 057 93 57462, by email to sports@offalycoco.ie, visit www.offalysports.ie or follow us on [Facebook/OffalySportsPartnership](https://www.facebook.com/OffalySportsPartnership).