



# ANNUAL REPORT 2018 / 2019

Compiled by the Healthy Offaly Team



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## Background to Healthy Offaly

### National context



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Healthy Ireland Fund

With the recognition of Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) and Children's and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) as key local structures, funding from the new Healthy Ireland Fund was offered to the LCDCs and CYPSCs in 2018.

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

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



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

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

In 2018, Offaly LCDC applied to the Healthy Ireland fund for €71,000 to deliver the following actions: -

- Sport and physical activity programmes for children, young people and older adults
- Parenting supports
- “Grow your own” and “Healthy eating” projects
- Eco spaces as places of health & wellbeing
- Building healthier communities projects
- Mental health supports
- Social prescribing

This report outlines progress in 2018 / 2019 on these actions.

## Healthy Ireland Offaly projects 2018 / 2019

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

The Department approved €20,000 for the delivery of two sport and physical activity programmes for children and young people. Offaly Sports Partnership delivered these programmes in conjunction with partner agencies: -

#### ***20 minute daily physical activity challenge for primary schools***

This challenge, based on the “Daily Mile” concept was piloted in five primary schools among 489 pupils by Offaly Sports Partnership with outcomes being measured for future expansion. Key outcomes of the pilot project included: -

- improved “fit class” scores were more prominent among 2nd to 4th class pupils
- the programme contributed to reductions in body size composition of some children who were overweight or obese. The reductions in body size composition were more prominent among boys at a 10.29% reduction; as opposed to girls at a 2.08% reduction
- 93% of teachers observed an improvement in their pupils' concentration during class
- 80% of teachers observed an improvement in some their pupils' academic performances

#### ***Couch to 3k for teens***



Supported by Offaly Athletics, a couch to 3k programme was delivered for 480 teenagers across six post primary schools - Coláiste Choilm, Tullamore (*participants pictured opposite*); Killina Secondary School; Oaklands Community College, Edenderry; Sacred Heart School, Tullamore; St Brendan’s Community School, Birr; St Mary’s Secondary School, Edenderry

Three 3k events were held while there was a significant increase in participation by the schools targeted in the South Leinster Schools Cross Country and Track & Field Championships. There was also a significant effect on participation by young people in local athletics clubs with figures in March 2019 compared to March 2018 showing an increase in youth membership in the Tullamore Harriers membership of 36% and Edenderry Athletics Club of 26%

The Department also approved €5,000 for the delivery of a range of recreational sporting activities for 440+ older adults, hosted by Offaly Sports Partnership. Among the activities delivered were: -

- an older adult in sport festival day in November 2018
- three follow on six week physical activity programmes for older adults based on chosen activities (e.g. court sports, GAA masters games, go for life games, golden oldies rugby, tag rugby, walking football, etc.) delivered as part of the sport for older adults festival day from January to May 2019



*Action from the recreational sporting activities for older adults*

TRIPLE P - FEAR LESS  
Reducing Anxiety in Children & Teenagers

**Are YOU concerned About your child/teen experiencing Anxiety?**

FREE Triple P talk for parents of children and teenagers aged 6 - 14 years

Being a parent to a child/teenager who is experiencing anxiety can be tough. It can affect day to day functioning and family life, they may be worried about what people think of them, are shy or withdrawn. They avoid social situations and activities, struggle to attend school and worry about tests/exams. They seek constant reassurance and can feel sick when worried.

The talk will cover the following:

- How does anxiety work?
- Understanding anxiety
- Parents as models
- Being an emotion coach
- Thinking flexibly & realistically
- Avoidance and exposure
- Managing children's anxious behaviour and
- Constructive coping and problem solving

FRIDAY  
9TH NOVEMBER 2018  
@ 10:30AM - TULLAMORE LIBRARY

FREE TO ATTEND

BUT PLEASE BOOK YOUR PLACE BY EMAILING  
helent.henry@ttda.ie

Ask about parenting.ie

### Parenting supports

The Department approved €6,050 for the delivery of parenting supports. Initially the programme was to be focused on the delivery of healthy lifestyle seminars and workshops. However, following the securing of additional funding from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the programme focused on the delivery of the Fearless programme to 140 parents of children experiencing anxiety. Our partner, the Midlands Area Parenting Partnership delivered the Fearless programme on Healthy Ireland Offaly's behalf.

### Grow your own & Healthy eating



The Department approved €9,150 for the delivery of Grow Your Own and Healthy Eating supports. Offaly Local Development Company delivered these supports on behalf of Healthy Ireland Offaly. The action supported: -

- two community gardens - Bracknagh in north Offaly and Moneygall (pictured opposite) in south Offaly. Check out the Moneygall community garden [here](#)
- social farming for four men experiencing mental health difficulties and intellectual disability in Birr
- expansion of "Meals on Wheels" in Offaly with a focus on training supports and the establishment of additional meals on wheels providers in south and west Offaly

### Outdoor recreation in eco spaces (e.g. blueways, greenways, walking trails, etc.)

The Department approved €6,200 to support the delivery of outdoor recreation programmes across identified eco spaces such as blueways, greenways, walking trails, etc. in Offaly. The Offaly Local Development Company delivered these programmes on behalf of Healthy Ireland Offaly. Programmes delivered included term time camps at Halloween and Easter breaks, and over the May and June bank holiday weekends for 100+ children and young people aged 6 to 14 years

### Building healthier communities

The Department approved €9,750 to support programmes to build healthier communities. Offaly Local Development Company delivered these programmes on behalf of Healthy Ireland Offaly. Programmes delivered included: -

- Ferbane community transformation - 110 people participated in the Ferbane community transformation programme which included weigh ins, nutrition talks, exercise classes, community walks, couch to 5k and much more

- health & wellbeing programmes for priority target groups of Healthy Ireland - eight health and wellbeing programmes were delivered for priority target groups of Healthy Ireland. Activities delivered as part of these health and wellbeing programmes included: -
  - ⇒ adapted physical activity programmes for older adults
  - ⇒ MOJO and mini MOJO programmes for disadvantaged men and Travellers
  - ⇒ physical activity programmes for disadvantaged men, particularly those living in isolation
  - ⇒ sport programmes for children and young people

180 people participated across the range of programmes on offer

### **Mental health supports**

The Department approved €6,400 to support the delivery of programmes that promoted and enhanced mental health and wellbeing. Offaly Local Development Company delivered these programmes on behalf of Healthy Ireland Offaly. Programmes delivered included: -



a programme designed to train people within the community to support others that may be experiencing mental health difficulties until such a time as they can seek professional help.

Mental Health First Aid teaches participants the signs and symptoms of mental health problems and what sort of help has been shown by research to be effective. The training supports participants in communicating with people experiencing mental health difficulties; provides guidance on how to offer and provide initial help; and teaches participants how to guide a person towards appropriate treatments and other supportive help. For more information on Mental Health First Aid, check out <https://www.mhfaireland.ie/>

Minding your wellbeing - a Health Services Executive one day programme designed to support people to care for their own mental wellbeing and to promote positive mental health at home, at work and in their community

100 people were reached with these programmes

### **Social prescribing**

The Department approved €8,450 to support social prescribing initiatives in Offaly. Social prescribing is a holistic and collaborative approach to health and wellbeing which supports individuals who feel isolated, stressed, anxious or depressed to access community based activities and supports such as exercise classes, social groups, creative activities, volunteering opportunities, information on employment services and educational courses. Offaly Local Development Company supported delivery of social prescribing initiatives on behalf of Healthy Ireland Offaly. Social prescribing initiatives supported included: -



- befriending service for older adults
- social groups for disadvantaged men and women experiencing isolation, and new communities

100 people were reached with these social prescribing initiatives. For more information on social prescribing, click [here](#)

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the availability of the Healthy Ireland funding is very welcome but the short turn around times to make applications, and the tight deadlines (September 2018 to June 2019) to deliver programmes have proven problematic. Despite these problems, the commitment of partner agencies to plan and deliver the approved projects within the specified time frames and within budget is to be acknowledged.

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

## Appendices

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

- Brendan O Loughlin, Offaly Local Development Company (Chair )
- Sarah Kennedy, Offaly Local Development Company (Vice Chair)
- Brian Pey, Offaly County Council
- Dermot Egan, Offaly County Council (Healthy Ireland Offaly coordinator)
- Olivia Murphy, Offaly Sports Partnership (healthy Ireland administrator)
- Siobhan Hourigan, Health Services Executive (HSE)
- Miriam Williams, Offaly Libraries
- Bridie Costello Hynes, Offaly Public Participation Network
- Josephine Rigney, HSE Resource Officer for suicide prevention in Laois and Offaly
- Anthony O Prey, HSE Health Promotion / Offaly Local Development Company
- Kathleen Dunne, Laois / Offaly Education & Training Board (LOETB)
- Áine Brummell, Offaly County Childcare Committee