



## ANNUAL REPORT 2017

**Compiled by the staff of Offaly Sports Partnership**



**SPORT IRELAND**  
LOCAL SPORTS PARTNERSHIPS



**Offaly County Council**  
Comhairle Chontae Uíbh Fhailí

Offaly Sports Partnership is a multi sectoral sub committee of Offaly County Council. It is hosted by the Local Community Development Section of the Council; and receives its core funding from Sport Ireland.

## Contents

2017, a year in review	3
<b>Board, Executive, Working groups &amp; Staff of Offaly Sports Partnership</b>	<b>5</b>
Board of Offaly Sports Partnership	5
Executive of Offaly Sports Partnership	6
Staffing of Offaly Sports Partnership	7
Contracted tutors / interns / student placements / volunteers	7
<b>Strategic Plan implementation</b>	<b>9</b>
Pillar 1 - Instil fundamentals & Improve youth fitness	
Pillar 2 - Increase adult & older adult participation	9
Pillar 3 - Include the least active	11
Pillar 4 - Integrate & Celebrate	13
Pillar 5 - Improve capacity & Inform the sector	16
	18
Appendix 1 - Sports Inclusion Development Programme update for 2017	20

## 2017, A Year in Review

2017 was a busy, fruitful year for Offaly Sports Partnership.

Continuing investment possibilities through various agencies including Dormant Accounts, Department of Justice and Equality, Department of Community & Rural Development, Department of Children & Youth Affairs, Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport, the Health Services Executive and Sport Ireland resulted in Offaly Sports Partnership securing €296,338 in financial contributions and €126,923 of benefit in kind contributions.

2017 also saw a call for Sports Capital funding and €984,406 was approved for 43 clubs / organisations in Offaly as part of the Sports Capital Programme 2017. 55% of the 43 clubs (24) who secured Sports Capital funding were assisted by the Sports Partnership to varying degrees in the application process.

Dormant Accounts funding has also been earmarked to deliver a community coaching programme for jobseekers in 2018.

Significant highlights of 2017 included: -

- following the securing of €40,000 in 2016 through the Dormant Accounts Disbursement Fund, the south Offaly Community Sport and Physical Activity Hub (the Hub) was established in 2017. Operating out of Crinkle Sport and Recreation Centre, the Hub has delivered a range of outreach programmes to schools, clubs and organisations.
- the announcement of the employment of a Football Association of Ireland Soccer in the Community Development Officer (FAI officer). The announcement was attended by Martin O'Neill, Republic of Ireland Manager and John Delaney, Chief Executive Officer Football Association of Ireland. The Sports Partnership worked closely with all partners in securing the post, and Gary Seery commenced work in September 2017, rolling out FAI grassroots soccer programmes throughout the county.



*FAI announcement 2017*

General activities in 2017 included: -

- a comprehensive schools' fitness programme with 34 schools and over 5,000 pupils participating
- continued delivery of the partnership's Sports Inclusion Development Programme, led out by Aoife Byrne, the partnership's Sports Inclusion Development Officer. This programme focuses on increasing the participation of people with disabilities in sport and physical activity, and reached over 600 participants
- education and training programmes for over 200 volunteers / coaches in clubs and organisations
- the delivery of sports leader training for 200 transition year students in post primary schools across the county
- integration projects including the Integrated Academy for Athletics Performance – nine members of which won 23 All-Ireland medals
- A significant number of primary and post primary schools sport and physical activity programmes directly and indirectly supported by the Sports Partnership
- inter-generational sport and physical activity programmes such as Operation Transformation, Bike Week, Play Day and Recreation Week
- sport and physical activity programmes for low income communities, older people, and women and girls
- the delivery of additional physical activity programmes for other ethnic groups and people with disabilities following funding secured via Department of Justice & Equality, the Health Services Executive, and Athletics Ireland via Dormant Accounts

It is anticipated that continuing work in these areas will address objectives and strategic outcomes identified; however cognisance needs to be taken of how the Sports Partnership's interventions will address additional national frameworks such as Healthy Ireland for which funding was announced in 2017.

## Board, Executive / Working Groups & Staffing of Offaly Sports Partnership

### Board of Offaly Sports Partnership

In the first half of 2017 following the publication of our new strategic plan, “Active Offaly 2016 - 2020”, the governance working group established in 2016 held a series of meetings to: -

1. review representation on the Board of Offaly Sports Partnership
2. input into a review of internal policy and corporate governance

As a result of this work, the composition of the Board of Offaly Sports Partnership (*pictured overleaf*) changed significantly at our AGM in September 2017: -

- Offaly County Council (one representative as the employer; and three public representatives, one from each municipal district - Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore). Representatives include: -
  - \* Martin Daly, Head of Section , Community & Culture, Offaly County Council
  - \* Cllr John Carroll, Birr Municipal District
  - \* Cllr John Foley, Edenderry Municipal District
  - \* Cllr Danny Owens, Tullamore Municipal District
- An Garda Síochana (one representative) - Sgt David Scahill
- Health Services Executive (one representative) - Clodagh Armitage
- Laois / Offaly Education and Training Board (one representative) - Eddie Fitzpatrick
- Local Community Development Committee Liaison—Cllr Declan Harvey
- The private business sector (three representatives, up from one). Representatives include: -
  - \* Sean Campbell
  - \* Pippa Hackett
  - \* Sean Loughnane
- The sports sector (six representatives, up from four). Representatives include: -
  - \* Darren Butler, Athletics Offaly
  - \* Eamonn Brady, Combined Counties Football League, Football Association of Ireland
  - \* Robert Mc Dermott, Leinster Rugby
  - \* Miriam O Callaghan, Offaly Camogie
  - \* Jude Feehan, Offaly Community Games
  - \* Caitriona Nolan, Offaly Rowing Club
- Third level sector (one representative) - Joe Meegan, Athlone Institute of Technology
- Disability sector representative - to be nominated as currently vacant



*Board of Offaly Sports Partnership 2017 / 2018*

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing members - Monica Cleary, Offaly County Council; Cllr Frank Moran, Tullamore Municipal District; Mary Duffy, disability; Pdraig Boland, Offaly Local Development Company; and Barry Keegan, private sector - for their support over the years.

We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our newest members - Martin Daly, Offaly County Council; Declan Harvey, Offaly Local Community Development Committee; Cllr John Carroll, Birr Municipal District; Cllr John Foley, Edenderry Municipal District; Robert Mc Dermott, Leinster Rugby; Catriona Nolan, Offaly Rowing Club; Sean Campbell; Pippa Hackett; and Sean Loughnane - and wish them well in their work with the Sports Partnership

---

### **Executive and Working Groups of Offaly Sports Partnership**

Following the Sports Partnership's AGM in September, the Executive for 2017 / 2018 consisted of Miriam O Callaghan (Chair), Jude Feehan (Vice chair), Darren Butler (Financial monitor), Martin Daly (Offaly County Council representative), and Eamon Brady (Sports representative).

In addition to the Executive, there were two sub groups in 2017: -

- i. Governance working group - at the latter end of 2016 following the launch of our new strategic plan, a governance working group was established to review the structure of the Board of the partnership; and to input into a review of internal policy and corporate governance.
  - ii. Cycle forum - Board liaison, Clodagh Armitage. The cycle forum took the lead in the planning of Bike week activities
-

### Staffing in 2017

In 2017, Offaly County Council continued to facilitate the employment of two full time; and one part time staff member for the Sports Partnership.

The two core positions of Coordinator and Administrator were 100% funded by Sport Ireland; while the post of Sports Inclusion Development Officer was 50% funded by the Sport Ireland, 34% funded by the Health Services Executive and 16% funded by Offaly County Council.



Eamonn Henry, Olivia Murphy and Aoife Byrne continued in their respective roles as Coordinator, Administrator and Sports Inclusion Development Officer; however, Ms Byrne tendered her resignation as Sports Inclusion Development Officer in September 2017. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Aoife for her work as our Sports Inclusion Development Officer, and wish her well in her new job.

In addition, Offaly County Council signed a three year heads of agreement with the Football Association of Ireland to host a FAI officer. The Sports Partnership worked closely with all partners in securing the post, and Gary Seery (*pictured right*) commenced work in September 2017, rolling out FAI grassroots soccer programmes throughout the county




---

### Contracted tutors / Interns / Student placements / Volunteers

Much of the work of the Sports Partnership throughout the year is also made possible through the efforts of contracted tutors, interns, students on placement and a number of volunteers who assist us in the delivery of a range of actions and events. These included: -



*Jean Brady*  
schools' programme &  
sports leadership tutor



*Pauline Curley*  
Women in sport  
programme tutor



*Eimear Lynch*  
Athletics Ireland schools  
integration programme tutor



*Karen Walsh*  
Safeguarding  
programme tutor

In addition, the partnership facilitated work experience placements for four transition year students during the course of the year; while students from Athlone Institute of Technology continued to assist in the delivery of SPORTSHALL Athletics Festivals which are coordinated by Offaly Sports Partnership.

---

**Community Sport & Physical Activity Hub staff**

Following the securing of €40,000 in 2016 through the Dormant Accounts Disbursement Fund, the south Offaly Community Sport and Physical Activity Hub (the Hub) was established in 2017.

With an expanded staff of 12 (including four existing staff members funded by Pobal's Community Services Programme) and operating out of Crinkle Sport & Recreation Centre, the Hub has delivered a range of outreach programmes to schools, clubs and organisations; and has secured greater usage of the facilities at the Crinkle Sport & Recreation Centre by local schools, clubs and organisations (from seven to 27 in 2017)

---

The Board and staff of Offaly Sports Partnership wish to express their thanks to all those that helped in the delivery of our programmes in 2017. Go raibh míle maith agaibh!

## Strategic Plan implementation

### Pillar 1 - Instil fundamentals & Improve youth fitness

The Sports Partnership is committed to instilling fundamentals and improving fitness levels among young people. A range of actions in the areas of instilling fundamentals, monitoring youth fitness and providing complementary schools physical activity programmes were written into our operational plan for 2017 to address this pillar.



#### *Instilling fundamentals*

The Sports Partnership continued to deliver its **SPORTSHALL Athletics programme** which remains the primary programme in developing fundamentals for children.

13 primary schools and 1,300 pupils; three post primary schools and 100 students participated on the schools element of this programme.

SPORTSHALL Athletics festivals were held for both primary and post primary schools in 2017. 13 counties and over 700 students participated at these events.

#### *Monitoring youth fitness*

The Sports Partnership, with the support of the “Hub” delivered the **Fit School Monitor / Remote Fitness Challenge** as a means of continuing to monitor youth fitness. This project will be an ongoing programme of the Sports Partnership for the next five years.

34 of 70 primary schools, and just over 5,000 pupils from 1st to 6th class participated on the programme. Of the 34 schools participating in this action, eight were taking part for the first time. Fit School Monitor reports were prepared for all participating schools. Initial analysis of the data collated in 2017 indicates *i. significant improvements in the “maximum speed” tests*; and *ii. marginal improvements in “speed endurance” tests* when compared to 2014 / 2015 baselines.

Going forward, the Sports Partnership intends to use electronic means to test for “maximum speed” in an effort to reduce the margin of error that may occur when tests are manually administered.

Furthermore, while no specific interventions were delivered by the Sports Partnership in 2017 to cause the improvements in speed and endurance indicators, an interesting feature of this programme has been that participating schools have been instigating physical activity programmes as part of their school curriculum / extra curricular activities to address the area of improving youth fitness among their school populations.

### **Complementary schools physical activity programmes**

The Sports Partnership delivered a range of complementary schools physical activity programmes to improve fitness levels.

As a result of additional funding secured from Dormant Accounts which led to the establishment of the Hub, the Sports Partnership had greater capacity in 2017 to deliver fundamental movement skills programmes based around the sport of athletics to more schools in the south Offaly area. 14 schools were targeted for delivery of athletics programmes in spring and winter by the Hub; with 25 schools being reached. These 25 were in addition to the schools reached by SPORTSHALL Athletics.

The Sports Partnership also played a significant role in: -

- i. bringing national programmes such as Bike Week to the county. This year, the Sports Partnership in conjunction with Offaly County Council, the HSE and An Taisce delivered a range of cycling events for primary school pupils including school day cycles (*pictured below left*) in Lough Boora Discovery Park, and a lunchtime cycle in Birr; and supported clubs to deliver junior cycling events in Birr, Ferbane and Tullamore. 200 children and young people participated across the range of activities on offer.



- ii. encouraging clubs, national governing bodies of sport and local sporting organisations to deliver their schools' based programmes in Offaly. This year, the Sports Partnership supported "Athletics Offaly" to deliver their schools based programmes (*pictured above right, action from the Offaly Schools Cross Country Championships*) in Offaly. Approximately, 500 pupils / students participated on these programmes.

Furthermore, following the employment of the FAI Soccer in the Community Development Officer, the FAI schools programmes (e.g. primary and post primary futsal) have been rolled out in schools locally who heretofore would not have been in receipt / were in limited receipt of same

---

Additional funding, the establishment of the Hub and the employment of the FAI officer has resulted in children having greater access to varying fundamental movement skills programmes. The fact that more children are gaining access to varying fundamental movement skills programmes would suggest that going forward, it will be possible to show improvements in fundamental movement skills through the use of agility, speed and endurance testing, as well as sports specific agility testing programmes.

## **Pillar 2 - Increase adult & older adult participation**

A range of actions in the areas of increasing adult participation, increasing older adult participation and the delivery of national physical activity programmes locally were written into our operational plan for 2017 to address this pillar.

---

### ***Increasing adult participation***



Continuing our collaboration with Athletics Offaly, Learn 2 Run was delivered in Banagher in 2017. 70 people took part in the initial Learn 2 Run programme; and following its success, Banagher Athletics Club was established.

Furthermore, Athletics Offaly hosted a road race series with an average turnout of 300 people per event.

The Learn to Run programme has yielded significant results across the years. In 2006 there were only four athletics clubs in Offaly, this number now stands at nine resulting in the membership of athletics clubs in Offaly continuing to grow. Currently, membership of athletics clubs in Offaly is growing faster than any other county in the Republic of Ireland and it is felt that the Sports Partnership's / Athletics Offaly collaborations in recent years has contributed to this.

Furthermore, with the establishment of Park Run in Offaly, led out by Pippa Hackett, the local Park Run event director (and newly minted member of the partnership's committee), opportunities for more sustainable adult participation continue to increase.




---

### ***Increasing older adult participation***

Coordinated by the Sports Partnership and financially supported by Go for Life, the o50s boccia programme aims to encourage older people to become involved in recreational sport, thereby increasing their participation in physical activity.

From 20 people from four groups in 2008 to 110 people on 22 teams from 12 groups in 2017, year on year, increased participation of older people in physical activity has been a specific result of this work.

---

### ***Delivering national physical activity programmes locally***

The Sports Partnership continues to support local delivery of national programmes such as: -

- i. *Bike Week* - following receipt of Bike Week funding, the Sports Partnership supported the delivery of cycling events via its own work, and the work of local clubs. Among the events on offer were a lunch time cycle in Birr; and meet and spin programmes rolled out by local cycling clubs. 100 adults participated across the range of activities on offer.
- ii. *Get Ireland Walking* - the active community walking programme funded by Get Ireland Walking aims to maximise the number of people participating in walking for health, wellbeing and fitness throughout Ireland. In 2017, the Sports Partnership supported the delivery of a 24 week programme with a local community; and this community has since commenced the process of registering an active community walking group with Get Ireland Walking



*Bike Week lunchtime cycle in Birr*



*Offaly at the national Go for Life Games Day*

- iii. *Go for Life Games* - this national programme delivered locally aims to encourage older people to become involved in recreational sport, thereby increasing their participation in physical activity. A local blitz was organised by the Sports Partnership for 50 older people; and 12 participants went on to represent Offaly at the annual National Go for Life Games. In addition to participating in the national Go for Life Games, participants had the chance to try "walking football" and croquet in their down time between games. Following the employment of a FAI soccer in the community officer by Offaly County Council on a three year contract, it is likely that the Sports Partnership will pilot "walking football" with the support of the FAI officer in 2018 among its older persons' target group
- iv. *Operation Transformation* - linked to the Operation Transformation programme, the Sports Partnership delivered a 4k walk in Birr

---

Evidence indicates that adult and older adult participants on programmes initiated / supported by the Sports Partnership continue to remain active even after programmes conclude. In the case of recreational running, this is evident through increased membership of clubs in the county; and the establishment of the Mount Lucas Park Run in Offaly. The emergence of Healthy Ireland funding has also opened the door for greater impact in this area. Based on our experience to date of working with Athletics Offaly, the Sports Partnership anticipates that it will be in a position in 2018 to reach over 300 new participants with a Couch to 5k initiative.

In addition, with the employment of the FAI officer in September 2017, the Sports Partnership anticipates that there will be opportunities for new participation programmes, such as walking football in 2018.

### **Pillar 3 - Include the least active**

By far, the Sports Partnership's largest area of work is our commitment to delivering measures to involve, sustain and mainstream the inclusion of underrepresented groups in sport and physical activity in the county.

In 2017, interventions reached all eight underrepresented groups (*i.e. low income communities (rural and urban); Older people; People with a disability; People of an ethnic minority; the Unemployed, Travellers; Women and Girls; and Youth at risk*) as named in Active Offaly 2016 - 2020.

---

#### ***Low income communities***

Following receipt of funding from Dormant Accounts (via Sport Ireland), the Sports Partnership were in a position to establish the south Offaly Community Sport & Physical Activity Hub (the Hub) in 2017.

The establishment of the Hub has proven to be very successful in outreaching our programmes to target groups that we have not heretofore worked with on a regular basis in recent years.



Among the programmes that have been outreached are fitness programmes for low income communities, Play Day and Recreation Week.

In addition, following the employment of the FAI officer, grassroots programmes of the FAI have been outreached to clubs, communities and schools who heretofore would not have been in receipt / were in limited receipt of same.

The Sports Partnership also supported the delivery of summer camps for low income communities through partner agencies in the community sector.

---

***Older people*** (see increasing adult and older adult participation under pillar 2 heretofore)

---

### ***People with a disability***

Aoife Byrne, our Sports Inclusion Development Officer continued to deliver sport and physical activity programmes supporting the participation of people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities; as well as those experiencing mental health difficulties until her resignation in September. Highlights of 2017 included: -

- Pan disability recreational sport programmes including boccia and walking programmes
- Pan disability inter schools sports days for schools with special education needs units, hosted by local post primary transition year students
- Pan disability inter services sports days
- Pan disability Easter and summer camps
- The continuing support and establishment of integrated sports clubs / training sessions including football for all, karate and tag rugby

Across all the programmes delivered in 2017, over 500 people with disabilities have been afforded opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity programmes.

For more information on the Sports Partnership's Sports Inclusion Development Programme, see Appendix 1 (*Sports Inclusion Development Programme update for 2017*) or contact the office on 057 93 57462.

### ***People of an ethnic minority*** (see pillar 4, integration & celebration)

#### ***The unemployed***



The Sports Partnership also supported the delivery of physical activity programmes for MOJO, an evidence based mental health and well being programme for men who are motivated to make changes in their lives, delivered by Offaly Local Development Company.

Each MOJO programme takes 12 weeks to complete and the Sports Partnership supports the delivery of physical activity programmes as part of each 12 week block.

#### ***Travellers***

Following the establishment of the Hub in south Offaly, the Sports Partnership via the Hub has been in a position to outreach targeted programmes to specific underrepresented groups such as Travellers in 2017. Working with the Birr Traveller and Settled People's Group, the Hub supported the delivery of a boxing programme for this group.

### **Women & Girls**

Using the national guidelines on physical activity for Ireland (i.e. that adults should be active for at least 30 minutes a day of moderate activity on five days each week or 150 minutes of moderate activity in a week), the Sports Partnership developed and delivered the 150 minute physical activity challenge for women.



Three physical activities (aqua aerobics, jogging and Pilates) were delivered weekly and participants signed up for a 10 week programme in which they were required to commit to participating in every activity every week for the 10 weeks of the programme. 30 women participated on the programme.

---

### **Youth at risk**

Following the establishment of the Hub in south Offaly, the Sports Partnership via the Hub has been in a position to outreach targeted programmes to specific underrepresented groups such as Youth at risk in 2017.

In addition, the Sports Partnership has also worked with Youthreach to deliver physical activity programmes for young people attending their service.

---

Additional funding, the establishment of the Hub and the employment of the FAI Officer has had a significant impact on increasing participation by the least active in the Sports Partnership's 2017 work.

### Pillar 4 - Integrate & celebrate

In keeping with the Sports Partnership's inclusive vision, we seek to ensure that people of all backgrounds and abilities living in Offaly will have the opportunity to integrate into, and be visible within our county's organised sports clubs and facilities.

Furthermore, as a county which loves sport and strives towards a more vibrant sports culture, the Sports Partnership will seek to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of Offaly's sports' people.

A range of actions in the areas of integration and celebration were written into our operational plan for 2017 to address this pillar.

### *Integration*

#### 1. *People with a disability*

Integrated clubs established via the Sports Inclusion Development Programme continue to flourish; and have begun expanding their work. Following the success of the Tullamore Tigers Tag Rugby programme for people with intellectual disabilities, Tullamore Rugby Club has worked with community mental health services in establishing tag rugby for people experiencing mental health difficulties. The programme commenced in May and led into the annual tag rugby season. As a result of this programme, participants were encouraged to enter a team into the Tullamore Rugby Tag Rugby League with many gaining opportunities to play with other teams.

#### 2. *People of an ethnic minority*

Following receipt of additional funding from Dormant Accounts (via Athletics Ireland), and the Department of Justice & Equality, the Sports Partnership has been able to offer a wider range of opportunities for participation among socially excluded / low participation groups, specifically people of an ethnic minority background. Two programmes were delivered in support of this target group: -

- i. *Integrated Academy for Athletics Performance (IAAP)* - the long term goal of the academy is the visible participation of persons of a migrant background at all levels in mainstream athletics in numbers, which at a minimum, is reflective of the new make-up of Irish society. The academy in Portarlinton continued to flourish with over 30 children participating on the programme. Two groups were established, one focusing on general participation in athletics and a second group focusing on preparing athletes for provincial, national and international competition. The following was noted regarding current and past members of the IAAP: -



- one former member of Vietnamese extraction (male, 18 years) who was referred to a specialized jumps coach achieved the qualification standard for Europeans in junior triple jump
- among the existing members of the IAAP, a total of nine members (six Nigerian, one east European and three Irish) claimed 23 national medals (12 gold and four bronze) in club, school and community games events; and one member set a new Leinster record in the 60m sprint

- ii. *Communities integration programme* - following receipt of funding from the Department of Justice & Equality, the Sports Partnership coordinated the delivery of a communities integration programme using the sport of athletics as the medium of integration in primary and post primary schools with above average enrolment of children of ethnic communities across the midlands' counties. In Offaly, 1,500 children availed of the programme.
- 

### ***Celebration***

The Sports Partnership continues to acknowledge the sporting successes of Offaly's local sports people at local, national, European and international level.

---

The establishment of more long term avenues such as new / expanded clubs for continuing participation has resulted in a number of the Sports Partnership's programmes outlined heretofore under pillars one to three (i. Instilling Fundamentals & Improving Youth Fitness; ii. Increasing Adult & Older Adult Participation; and iii. Including the Least Active) becoming more sustainable which in turn is supporting the achievement of the twin aims of integration and celebration.

## Pillar 5 - Improve capacity & Inform the sector

In keeping with the primary functions of sports partnerships as identified by Sport Ireland, this pillar is concerned with improving the capacity of the wider sports and physical activity sector by providing education and training programmes; and acting as an information hub for the sector.

### *Education & training*

In 2017, the delivery of education and training programmes was our second largest area of work. This was primarily due to the availability of Dormant Accounts funding which ensured our support of community coaching programmes for the unemployed; sports leadership training programmes for students; and our standard education and training programmes which are available to the wider sports and physical activity sector. Education and training programmes delivered included: -

#### *Child protection training*

11 Safeguarding 1 programmes, two Safeguarding 2 programmes and one Safeguarding 3 programme were delivered to over 200 sports volunteers.



#### *Community coaching for the unemployed*

2017 saw the conclusion of the level 3 community coaching programme for the unemployed delivered in conjunction with Laois Sports Partnership and Portarlinton Leisure Centre.

Nine people who were unemployed completed the course; and of these nine, seven have since secured employment in the sport and leisure industry.

#### *Disability awareness training*

Three disability awareness training programmes were delivered to 150 participants from students to teachers and young people to service providers.

#### *Go for Life physical activity leader training*

The Sports Partnership delivered the remaining four workshops in Go for Life's physical activity leader training programme for 25 older people from 10 active retirement groups.

A number of these leaders have since begun to deliver physical activity sessions with their peers.



#### *Sports leadership for young people*



13 level 1 sports leadership programmes were delivered for 200 students from four post primary schools. Of the 200 students that participated on these programmes, 195 students were certified by Sports Leaders UK as having reached the qualification standard.

### *Sports specific coaching*

Four sports specific courses were delivered to 75 participants including students and sports volunteers.

Following the employment of a FAI officer, education and training programmes of the FAI have been outreached to clubs, communities and schools who heretofore would not have been in receipt / were in limited receipt of same.

---

In addition to the education and training supports provided, inter agency cooperation has assisted the Sports Partnership in promoting sport and physical activity opportunities in Offaly for people of all ages and abilities. Key successes in the area of inter agency cooperation in 2017 include: -

1. The continuing partnership between Offaly Sports Partnership and Athletics Ireland saw the securing of funding by Athletics Ireland from the Dormant Accounts Disbursement Fund to support the delivery of a communities integration programme through the medium of athletics across the midlands. Additional funding secured by Offaly Sports Partnership from the Department of Justice & Equality will allow the Sports Partnership to coordinate the hosting of the inaugural diversity games in the Athlone International Indoor Arena in 2018
2. Continuing partnerships within the wider sports partnership network saw the securing of funding from the Department of Justice & Equality to support the delivery of disability awareness programmes in mainstream sports clubs, schools and facilities across the midlands
3. The employment of the FAI officer as a result of the signing of a three year heads of agreement between Offaly County Council and the FAI has resulted in the roll out of a number of grassroots programmes for schools, clubs and other local groups who heretofore would not have been in receipt / were in limited receipt of same

Funding has also been secured to continue to develop local sports and physical activity infrastructure; as well as developing and delivering participatory sports and physical activity opportunities in the county. Key funding successes in 2017 include: -

1. The securing of €40,000 in 2016 through the Dormant Accounts Disbursement Fund resulted in the establishment of the south Offaly Community Sport and Physical Activity Hub (the Hub) in 2017. Operating out of Crinkle Sport and Recreation Centre, the Hub has delivered a range of outreach programmes to schools, clubs and organisations.
2. The securing of Sports Capital and Department of Community & Rural Development funding has enabled the Sports Partnership to support the continuing development of sport and physical activity infrastructure in the county; while the securing of capital funding for the development of play and recreation facilities has resulted in continuing improvements in play infrastructure for children and young people

With the announcement of Heathy Ireland funding for Offaly, the Sports Partnership is in a position to continue to roll out innovative physical activity programmes across the lifespan in 2018 in an effort to ensure that the population of the county is in the first instance reaching the appropriate levels of health enhancing physical activity; and in the second, exceeding these levels in the future.

## Appendix 1

### Sports Inclusion Development Programme update for 2017

*(submitted to the Health Services Executive as a condition of their contribution (34%) towards the salary costs of the Partnership's Sports Inclusion Development Officer)*

#### Fáilte / Welcome

With support from Sport Ireland and the Health Services Executive, Offaly Sports Partnership continues to employ a Sports Inclusion Development Officer (SIDO), Aoife Byrne on a part time (three day) contract.

The SIDO's role is to: -

1. Support the delivery of physical activity and sport programmes with the aim of increasing the number of people with disabilities (including those experiencing mental health difficulties participating in sport and physical activity); and
2. Create opportunities for improved quality of life for other target groups (e.g. disadvantaged communities, low income communities, migrants, older people, the unemployed, travellers, women and girls, and youth at risk) of Offaly Sports Partnership

In an effort to address these objectives, the SIDO has delivered a range of physical activity and sport programmes for people with disabilities until her resignation in October 2017. The following pages will give an overview of the SIDO's work in 2017.

#### Transition Year Boccia Training



On Monday 9th January I delivered training to Colaiste Choilm TY students on how to play and officiate boccia as well as how to organise a tournament.

This programme is very beneficial in terms of disability awareness, integration and inclusion as well as developing the leadership skills of the students; and it was great to see the students and members from the Irish Wheelchair Association Sport (IWA Sport) interact and learn new skills from each other.

Well done to IWA Sport 1 who have retained their title once again this year and thank you to all involved in the programme.

#### Floorball

On Wednesday 11th January and for four weeks thereafter, pupils from St Joseph's Special Olympics and transition year students from Tullamore College travelled to Portarlinton Community Centre to take part in floorball games using the official rink in advance of their first Floorball blitz which took place in Newry on Saturday, 11th February.





Congratulations to the team who travelled to Newry to participate in their first Floorball blitz on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> February. The team got a chance to play against teams from Special Olympics Ulster; and the blitz served as a great opportunity for the athletes to put their skills into practice in game situations. They were a credit to their class, their school, their families and to Special Olympics! Special thanks, also, to Helen and the parents who travelled to ensure their children could take part.

On Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February St Joseph's Special Olympics reviewed their participation in the Floorball project. Representatives from Special Olympics Leinster, Tullamore College, St Joseph's National Sschool, families and friends of the athletes were in attendance; and the day was a celebration of the success of the programme and the progress the athletes have made.



On the day, many of the students from Tullamore College also registered as volunteers with Special Olympics and will be helping out at the next athletics event in May in Kilkenny.



This was a hugely beneficial programme for everyone involved, and we wish St Joseph's Special Olympics every success in the future. Well done to Áthas teacher Helen for organising this event, and all her hard work with Special Olympics.

### Mojo Health and Fitness

On Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February Offaly Sports Partnership began a new health and fitness initiative with Mojo.



Mojo is an evidence based mental health and well being programme for men who are motivated to make changes in their lives and is delivered by Offaly Local Development Company. The programme is run over 12 weeks and Ofaly Sports Partnership delivered the fitness element of this course every week

### NCBI Gym Programme

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February NCBI began their gym programme in Aura, Tullamore.



10 people attended this programme on a weekly basis where they participated in spinning classes, body-weight exercises, mobilisers and light weight training



WHERE PEOPLE FEEL BETTER

### Couch to 5K

On Tuesday 14th February I began a couch to 5k programme in partnership with the Community Mental Health Service.

16 participants attended this session which was delivered on a weekly basis with the overall aim of being able to walk / jog 5k by the end of the programme



### Inter schools programme

#### (including disability awareness training)

On Wednesday 1st March, Disability Awareness Training was delivered to Transition Year students in Oaklands Community College.

This was a practical workshop which increased their understanding of a range of disabilities and how physical activities can be adapted to suit the needs of participants with disabilities.



The students were then split into four groups and spent four weeks delivering activities in local schools before hosting inter-school events for all schools involved in this programme.

The first of two Edenderry inter-schools programmes took place on Wednesday 8th March with students delivering activities in Scoil Bhríde, Gaelscoil Eadan Doire and The Oak Centre. This was a great opportunity for the students to gain experience working with children with disabilities while also developing their leadership skills. The programme is very successful in creating an inclusive culture and developing partnerships between schools. This is also very effective in aiding transitions for pupils moving into secondary school.



On Wednesday 29th March our second inter-schools event was held in the Edenderry area. This event was delivered by students from Oaklands Community College who showed great organisation and enthusiasm on the day. A great day was had by all pupils, trying out a range of activities and making new friends. We hope to link this programme to the Special Olympics club we are currently establishing in Edenderry. Well done to all involved!



On Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April, Colaiste Choilm hosted an inter-schools event with pupils from Offaly School of Special Education, Ballinamere National School, St Joseph's National School and Daingean National School in attendance. Nuala O'Donovan from Special Olympics Leinster and local athlete Alex Felico were also in attendance on the day. Alex gave a great speech to the athletes and presented them with their certificates.



It was great to see the athletes display their skills across a range of activities and interact with other schools. Well done to the TY students who were excellent on the day.

### Midlands Boccia League

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March saw the return of the Midlands Boccia League in Moate Community Centre with 26 teams participating. The programme concluded on Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> September in Mucklagh Community Centre. A great event with a high standard of skill on display, the eventual winners were "Boccia Police" from the National Learning Network in Tullamore after a hard fought contest against Springfield.



Well done to all teams who took part in this excellent tournament and a special thank you to all the staff who officiated throughout the league. Without them it would not be possible to sustain the league.

We look forward to expanding this league in the future



### Powerchair Football

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March, Midlands United Powerchair Football team hosted a 'Come and Try' event in Colaiste Choilm Tullamore to try promote participation in their sport across the Midlands. This event was very well attended with many new players signing up on the day. Best of luck to Midlands United in their future games.

## Derry Rovers Football for All Blitz

On Sunday 26th March, Derry Rovers FFA held their second annual Sean O'Connor Tournament for Football for All teams across the country. This was an excellent day with over 150 participants taking part in the sunshine. Well done to Derry Rovers FFA who are setting an example for all clubs!



## Active Community Walking Programme

On Wednesday 5th April Offaly Sports Partnership began its inaugural Active Communities Walking Programme in partnership with RehabCare.

A workshop was held with walking leaders; and all participated in a short walk highlighting important safety concerns when walking as a group. This programme takes place every Wednesday at 1pm; and culminated with a 5k community walk on Wednesday, 27th September.

RehabCare "Walk on Wednesdays" is now a registered active community walking group with Get Ireland Walking. Walks continue every Wednesday at 1pm. Contact RehabCare for details of the weekly walk

## Teacher Training

Another successful 'Inclusive PE for All' teacher training workshop was held on Thursday 6th April. This workshop was held in St Brendan's NS, Birr to cater for schools in this area. Orla Dempsey (Irish Wheelchair Association Sport) and Aileen Ahern (National Council for the Blind in Ireland) were also in attendance to offer their knowledge and experience. It is great to see schools being proactive in promoting inclusive PE lessons and showing a willingness to learn and adapt.

## Tullamore Tigers

Tullamore Tigers resumed their training on Monday 10th April in Tullamore Rugby Club with the addition of some new members.

The Tigers went straight into action as they took part in an open training session with the Ireland and England u18 teams in Kings Hospital Dublin. The Tigers also competed in tag rugby blitzes; and took part in the mainstream tag rugby season in Tullamore Rugby Club.



On Sunday 24th September, the Tullamore Tigers hosted their first tag blitz. It was a great day with eight teams in attendance from Mullingar, Westmanston, Barnhall and DLSP. There was a great turn out with very high levels of skill on display and a fantastic attitude by all. Well done to Tullamore Rugby Club on hosting this amazing event, and looking after the players and supporters to the highest standard. Here's hoping it will become an annual event.



A huge well done to all involved in moving this programme forward.

### Midlands Multi-Sport Club

Offaly, Westmeath and Longford Sports Partnerships joined together with Irish Wheelchair Association Sport to try develop a midlands multi-sport club for children with physical disabilities and their siblings.

This involved a 6 week introductory programme where children had the opportunity to sample a range of sports while parents were briefed on the aims of the clubs and how we could sustain this club going forward.

Unfortunately there was not enough interest to develop this club further, however all children who attended the club have been linked into other Sports Inclusion Development Programmes to ensure they continue their participation in sport and physical activity

Interested in setting up a Midlands Sport Club for Children with a Physical Disability?  
PARENTS MEETING  
and a 6 weeks Multi sport session for children

**11-17 YEARS OLD**

The New Junior Multi Sports Club is currently being set up in the Midlands Area. The new club will be aimed at children with a physical disability and their siblings from the Midlands area.

We are holding a Parents Meeting and multi sports sessions for children and their siblings to establish if there is enough interest in the Midlands area to start up this Club.

1st Parents Meeting and 6 Weeks Multi Sports Sessions  
Wednesday 26th April 6-7pm  
Loreto College, Commons, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

6 weeks - 26th April / 3rd May / 10th May / 17th May / 24th May / 31st May  
There will be 100 per session and 100 children from all parishes coming in the first session to assess and determine their needs. Open registration will be offered on the day.

For more information and to register your interest please contact:  
IWA Sport - Orla Dempsey 087 2791811 orla.dempsey@iwa.ie  
Longford SIDA - Mary Dugan 043 3348402 mdugan@offaly.sport.ie  
Offaly SIDA - Aoife Byrne 0579357463 abyrne@offaly.sport.ie  
Westmeath SIDA - Mary Dugan 044 9338712 Mary.Dugan@westmeath.sport.ie

### Walking Challenge

The annual Sports Inclusion Development Programme walking challenge began on 3rd May.

This challenge encouraged participants to walk as far as they could between 3rd May and 12th July. All participants kept a record of their walks in a log book with weekly group walks taking place on Wednesdays at 1pm in Tullamore and 11am in Birr Castle led by service users and staff.



Huge numbers participated across the county, and many of the groups who participated continue to remain active in walking activities.

Well done to all who have participated and keep up the good work.



### Tag Rugby

Thanks to Tullamore CCRO, Johnny Burns and volunteers Paul and Gareth Cronin, we developed a new tag rugby programme for those involved with community mental health services in Offaly.



yourmentalhealth.ie  
#littletthings

This programme began on 8th May and ran for 6 weeks which led into the Tullamore Rugby Club Tag Rugby season. As a result of this programme, participants were encouraged to enter a team into the Tag Rugby League with many gaining opportunities to play with other teams.

It is great to see this programme feed into the rugby club structure and it is hoped this will encourage people to become members of the club. We also hope to roll out a similar model with Edenderry Rugby club later in the year

### Sports Leader Award



On Tuesday 16th May a group of 12 participants from RehabCare Tullamore began a Sports Leadership Award in St Mary's Youth Centre.

This qualification involves practical and theory sessions on effective leadership, and aims to develop a range of skills and qualities.

The course ran over 6 weeks, providing opportunities for participants to increase their knowledge and confidence in this area.

All participants thoroughly enjoyed the award and fully committed to all aspects of the programme, finishing with an assessment which involved delivering a sports session to a group of young people. They are now qualified to assist with the delivery of sports sessions in schools and their local community. Well done everyone

### Mucklagh Football for All

Well done to all at Mucklagh Schoolboys/girls for a fantastic season with the Football for All club.

Thank you to the coaches who provided weekly training sessions and entered teams into local blitzes.

The feedback from participants and parents has been excellent and we look forward to next season.

Congratulations to the club on being awarded Midlands League Club of the year 2016/17.



### NLN Sport and Recreation

Well done to all the participants on the NLN Sport and Recreation programme who completed their FAI module. This module involved a number of assessments including the ability to demonstrate their playing skills, coach a team, organise a mini blitz, referee and officiate.



The students organised a blitz for pupils from Scoil Bhride Tullamore in Leah Victoria and a great day was had by all. The students demonstrated high standards of organisation and communication, and it was great to see their confidence grow. These students will now assist on future Sports Inclusion Development Programmes.



### Scoil Bhride Leader Training / Sport for All Day

On Thursday 8th June I delivered inclusive games and leadership training to 5th and 6th class pupils in Scoil Bhride Edenderry.

This training allowed pupils to learn new games and develop their leadership skills while coaching each other.

This was very effective as these pupils then led each activity at the Sport for All Day in their school the following day. Well done to all the leaders!

As part of Active School Week, Scoil Bhride Edenderry were keen to deliver an inclusive sports day that would show case a range of Special Olympic and Paralympic sports in addition to fun games and activities that could be adapted to suit all pupils.



This event was held on Friday 9th June and was a great success with every pupil having the opportunity to try activities such as goalball, boccia, sitting volleyball, floorball, target throw, jigsaw relays, bucketball, knock the cones, standing long jump and target shoot.

As well as pupils enjoying the event, it also gave teachers an insight into different sports and activities and how these can be adapted to suit a range of needs. Well done to Scoil Bhride who are setting an excellent example in inclusion for all.

### NCBI Tandem Cycling



NCBI resumed their summer tandem cycling outings in Lough Boora with the assistance of Wolfrap Cycling Club and Tullamore CTC. Thanks to all the volunteers who assisted with the programme; and well done to all who took part

---



### Summer Camps

On Tuesday 11th July I delivered a fun summer camp for DeafHear in Tullamore Town Park. This was a great day with a variety of activities on offer and a fantastic opportunity to develop my knowledge of different forms of communication.



On Monday 17th July Riverside Therapy held their annual summer camp week. Offaly Sports Partnership provided the staff with equipment and gave some training on inclusive games and activities to equip them to deliver their own camp. Well done to all the staff and participants at Riverside.

---



### Sports Day

On Tuesday 18th July we held our annual inclusive sports day in Colaiste Choilm, Tullamore.

This was a great event with over 100 participants in attendance from across the county; and a variety of sports and activities on offer thanks to the Bridge House Leisure Centre, Tullamore Tennis Club, Tullamore Basketball Club, IWA Sport, Braveheart Shotokan Karate Club, Tullamore Rugby Club, Offaly GAA, Tullamore FC, Helen Coyne Tug of War, and Tullamore Harriers.



A huge thank you also to Eoin Carroll (Offaly Senior Footballer) for presenting medals to our participants.

We would also like to thank the Order of Malta and the many members of Tullamore Gardaí who attended our event and participated in the many activities.

---

### Boccia Referee Training

On Tuesday 29th August Boccia Referee training was delivered to more staff members from RehabCare. It is great to see more referees engaging with the Midlands Boccia League and ensuring sustainable participation with their services. Well done to all!