



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Compiled by the staff of Offaly Sports Partnership



sport ireland

Offaly Sports Partnership is a sub committee of Offaly County Council, funded by Sport Ireland and hosted by the Local Community Development Section of Offaly County Council.



Introduction

Offaly Sports Partnership is an inter agency and multi sectoral sub committee of Offaly County Council. It is hosted by the Local Community Development Section of Offaly County Council; and receives its annual operating budget from Sport Ireland.

In 2015, the Partnership concluded delivery of its second strategic plan for the period 2011 to 2015. This annual report is the last of five reports for the five years covered by this plan.

The Board of Offaly Sports Partnership

In 2015, there were three changes to the board of Offaly Sports Partnership: -

- Mary Cotter replaced Miriam O Callaghan as Laois / Offaly Education and Training Board's representative. Miriam O Callaghan continued to represent Offaly Camogie on the Board of Offaly Sports Partnership
- Mary Duffy replaced Kathleen Carroll as Offaly's Sports Ability Forum representative
- Pdraig O Meara replaced Pauric Pierce as Offaly GAA's representative

The remaining agencies reconfirmed their existing nominees to the board. Matt Connor is the Patron of Offaly Sports Partnership.

Executive and Working Groups of Offaly Sports Partnership

The Executive of Offaly Sports Partnership in 2015 consisted of Miriam O Callaghan (Chair), Jude Feehan (Vice chair), Barry Keegan (Financial monitor), Monica Cleary (Offaly County Council representative), and Darren Butler (Sports representative).

In addition to the Executive, there were three sub groups in 2015: -

1. Cycle forum - Board liaison, Clodagh Armitage. The cycle forum took the lead in the planning of Bike week activities
2. Sports Ability forum - Board liaison, Mary Duffy. The Sports Ability Forum worked with the Sports inclusion Development Officer to develop and deliver sport, physical activity and active living programmes for people with a disability
3. Strategic Planning working group. The strategic planning working group commenced preparation of a new plan and long term framework for Offaly Sports Partnership

Staffing in 2015

In 2015, Offaly County Council continued to facilitate the employment of two full time staff; and one part time staff for the Partnership. The two core positions of Coordinator and Administrator were 100% funded by Sport Ireland; while the post of Sports Inclusion Development Officer (SIDO) was 50% funded by the Sport Ireland, 35% funded by the Health Services Executive and 15% funded by Offaly County Council.

Eamonn Henry, Olivia Murphy and Aoife Byrne continued in their respective roles. Fiona Dunne also provided maternity leave cover for six months during the course of the year.

Contracted tutors / Interns / Student placements / Volunteers

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

- Jean Brady - schools' programme tutor
- Declan Cooke - community coaching programme coordinator, Birr
- Pauline Curley - meet and train programme tutor
- Buntu Mlisana - community coaching programme coordinator, Edenderry
- Kerry Molloy - gateway intern supporting the delivery of schools programmes
- Karen Walsh - safeguarding children workshop tutor

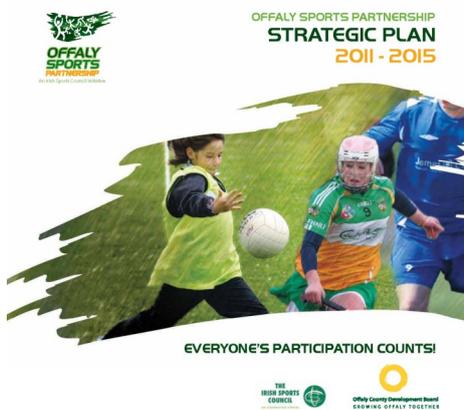
Furthermore, three club community rugby officers assisted the Partnership in the delivery of one of its schools programmes; while the Partnership also utilised a number of national governing body recommended tutors to deliver sport specific modules as part of the community coaching programme.

In addition, the Partnership facilitated work experience placements for three transition year students during the course of the year; while students from Athlone Institute of Technology assisted in the delivery of the fifth All Ireland SPORTSHALL Athletics Festival.

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 2015. Go raibh míle maith agaibh!

Strategic Plan Implementation

During 2015, the Partnership concluded the implementation of its second five year strategic plan, "Everybody's Participation Counts 2011 - 2015".



The plan set out four priority themes: -

1. Lifelong involvement in sport
2. Sustainable inclusion
3. Dialogue to increase participation
4. The marketing of sport

The following sections in this report will give an overview of the work completed in 2015 under each of the strategic goals.

Priority theme 1: Lifelong involvement in sport

Offaly Sports Partnership is committed to supporting lifelong involvement in sport and physical activity. Progress in achieving this goal is detailed in the following pages.

15 actions to address lifelong involvement in sport were written into the Partnership's operational plan for 2015, and all actions were delivered on. These included: -

- Primary schools - fit school, inter schools events and SPORTSHALL Athletics
- Post primary schools - couch to 5k, fit teen, recreation week and world marathon challenge
- Inter generational events - bike week, play day, etc
- Operation Transformation - community transformations (Moneygall and Tullamore College), and the operation transformation national walk day,
- Local sports clubs / groups - bike for life, and education and training for sports clubs volunteers

Primary school programmes

The Partnership supported the delivery of three programmes for primary schools in 2015: -

Fit School Monitor / Remote Fitness Challenge this programme was developed to establish accurate baselines of fitness indicators, and to monitor over time whether these are improving or deteriorating. The first two tests used are a 60m speed test, and a 1 minute test of sustained running. 31 schools and almost 5,000 primary school pupils took part on the programme. Based on data gathered over two years, the following baselines have been established: -

Class	No. Tested	Mean Time	Top 5%	Top 15%	Top 50%	Top 85%	Top 95%
1 st	413	13.70	11.62	12.14	13.32	15.30	16.32
2 nd	425	13.67	11.29	11.79	12.98	14.65	16.17
3 rd	415	12.30	10.46	10.99	12.04	13.65	14.63
4 th	441	11.82	10.16	10.60	11.60	13.04	14.15
5 th	473	11.62	9.98	10.49	11.37	12.81	14.23
6 th	378	11.00	9.43	9.82	10.73	12.07	13.59

Above - Boys 60m Speed Test / Below - Girls 60m Speed Test (2014 / 2015 baselines)

Class	No. Tested	Mean Time	Top 5%	Top 15%	Top 50%	Top 85%	Top 95%
1 st	386	14.21	12.19	12.78	13.99	15.44	17.08
2 nd	372	13.65	11.72	12.40	13.50	14.92	16.12
3 rd	414	12.91	11.09	11.65	12.73	14.19	15.35
4 th	393	12.34	10.74	11.15	12.13	13.45	14.59
5 th	408	11.87	10.24	10.68	11.71	13.08	14.10
6 th	374	11.43	9.81	10.34	11.36	12.64	13.31

Class	No. Tested	Mean Score	Top 5%	Top 15%	Top 50%	Top 85%	Top 95%
1 st	371	210m	250m	235m	210m	190m	175m
2 nd	427	215m	255m	245m	220m	195m	170m
3 rd	425	230m	265m	255m	230m	205m	190m
4 th	449	235m	265m	260m	240m	210m	195m
5 th	474	240m	280m	265m	245m	215m	195m
6 th	407	250m	300m	285m	255m	225m	200m

Boys 1 Minute Sustained Run Test (2014 / 2015 baselines)

Class	No. Tested	Mean Score	Top 5%	Top 15%	Top 50%	Top 85%	Top 95%
1 st	351	205m	240m	230m	205m	190m	175m
2 nd	367	210m	250m	235m	215m	195m	175m
3 rd	419	220m	255m	250m	225m	200m	190m
4 th	400	230m	260m	255m	230m	205m	200m
5 th	422	235m	275m	260m	240m	210m	200m
6 th	379	240m	280m	270m	245m	220m	200m

Girls 1 Minute Sustained Run Test (2014 / 2015 baselines)

Inter schools events the Partnership supported the delivery of a number of inter schools events in 2015: -



Swim gala with the support of Aura Tullamore and the Tullamore Swim Club, the Partnership delivered an inter school swim gala for seven schools and 125 pupils.

TULLAMORE SWIM TEAM



Athletics programmes the Partnership also supported the delivery of Athletics Offaly inter schools events in cross country; and track and field disciplines.

SPORTSHALL Athletics two primary school programmes based around the SPORTSHALL Athletics concept were delivered in 2015: -

- i. **SPORTSHALL Athletics Offaly (primary)** 16 schools and almost 2,000 primary school pupils participated in the Partnership's annual SPORTSHALL Athletics programme.
- ii. **5th All Ireland Inter County SPORTSHALL Athletics Festival** Offaly Sports Partnership coordinated the delivery of all



aspects of the fifth All Ireland Inter County SPORTSHALL Athletics Festival on behalf of the wider sports partnership network in conjunction with Athletics Ireland and the Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT). 16 counties and almost 800 pupils participated. Scoil Mhuire Tullamore and Ballinamere National School represented Offaly in the 5th / 6th class and 3rd / 4th class girls category respectively, while Scoil Mhuire Bainríon Edenderry represented Offaly in the 3rd / 4th and 5th / 6th class boys categories.



Post primary school programmes

The Partnership supported the delivery of four programmes for post primary schools in 2015: -



Couch to 5k linking into the Operation Transformation concept, Offaly Sports Partnership supported Tullamore College in delivering a “Couch to 5k” programme for junior cycle students in the college, and 5th / 6th class pupils of feeder primary schools. Over 100 pupils and students took part in the programme which culminated in an end of programme 5k run / walk for participants.

Fit Teen which is similar to the “fit school” concept, began for junior cycle in post primary schools. Initial tests were conducted in four post primary schools in the county. These will be repeated in 2016 to verify the baselines on which future programmes will be built.

Recreation Week with the support of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Partnership supported the delivery of recreation week for post primary school pupils in Offaly. With a focus on the outdoors, three schools and 100 students participated in a range of outdoor activities delivered by our local partner, BIRR Outdoor Education Centre.





World Marathon Challenge The World Marathon Challenge is the largest mass participation global event for teenagers currently held.

In Offaly, the event, incorporating the John Treacy Marathon Relay Challenge in Ireland, was hosted in one location. 50 students from two schools (i.e. Sacred Heart School and Tullamore College) in Tullamore participated.

Inter generational events

The Partnership supported the delivery of a number of inter generational events in 2015:

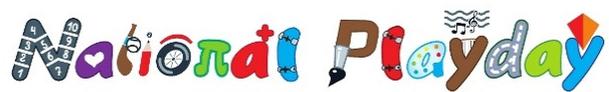


Bike week

Bike Week 2015 took place from Saturday 13th to Sunday 22nd June with cycling events all over the country, organised by local authorities, community groups, charities and cycling groups. From free bike checks, fun cycles, lunchtime city rides, heritage cycles, electric bike races, school cycling events, road races and much more, there was something for every age and ability.

Offaly Sports Partnership in conjunction with Offaly County Council, the HSE and An Taisce delivered a range of events (i.e. bike on the bog, lunchtime cycle, schools cycling, tandem cycling, etc); and supported the delivery of seven club events in Birr, Edenderry, Ferbane and Tullamore. Almost 600 people of all ages and abilities participated in Bike Week 2015 in County Offaly.

Play Day 2015 was delivered in Daingean in 2015 with the support of Daingean Community Childcare Services.



Operation Transformation

Linked to the Operation Transformation programme, the Partnership delivered a 3k family walk on Fiona's Way for almost 150 people in January.

The Partnership also supported the

delivery of community transformations in Moneygall and Tullamore College.

Local sports clubs / groups / organisations

A range of programmes were delivered to support local clubs, groups and organisations in the delivery of their activities including (but not limited to): -



Bike for Life delivered to seven participants with the support of Wolftrap Cycling Club which in turn resulted in participants taking part in the Great Dublin Bike Ride 2015

Seven safeguarding children (formerly child protection in training) workshops delivered to nearly 100 volunteers from almost 20 clubs



A range of education and training programmes delivered to service providers catering for people with disabilities and volunteers supporting people with disabilities. For more information on programmes delivered for people with disabilities, please see the Sports Inclusion Development Programme annual report for 2015

Priority theme 2: Sustainable inclusion

Offaly Sports Partnership is committed to delivering measures to involve, sustain and mainstream the inclusion of underrepresented groups in sport and physical activity in the county. The eight groups prioritised in the current five year strategic plan are *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*. Progress in achieving this goal is detailed in the following pages.

Of the eight underrepresented groups prioritised in the current five year strategic plan, 11 actions to address sustainable inclusion for six of the underrepresented groups were written into the Partnership's operational plan for 2015. Of the 11 actions outlined in the operational plan, all actions were delivered on. Actions were delivered in / on behalf of: -



Low income communities / Youth at risk the Partnership supported the delivery of summer camps for low income communities / youth at risk through partner agencies in the community sector. The majority of these summer camps were supported by way of equipment provision and personnel support.

Older people two programmes were offered to increase the participation of older people in sport and physical activity: -

- i. 60s boccia programme - over 100 people on 18 teams from nine groups participated in 2015



- ii. Go for Life Games - this programme is designed to encourage older people to become involved in recreational sport. Local leagues are organised by the Partnership and participants can go on and represent Offaly at the national Go for Life Games annually. 40 older people participated in the local league with 15 going on to represent Offaly at the national games.



People with a disability Aoife Byrne, Sports Inclusion Development Officer (SIDO) continued to deliver programmes for people with disabilities in 2015. Programmes were delivered to support the participation of people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities; as well as those experiencing mental health difficulties. Ms Byrne also delivered a number of education and training programmes; and pan disability programmes. Highlights of the year included: -



Much of the work surrounding programmes for people with physical disabilities focused on making Tullamore Town Park more accessible for people with such disabilities. Funding was secured to install an "All Ability Whirl" in the park, in keeping with previous improvements in 2014 to the park for people with physical disabilities .

A range of capacity building programmes were delivered for 65 people with sensory disabilities. As a result of this work, excellent working relationships have been established between the Partnership, service providers such as National Council for the Blind and DeafHear, national governing bodies of sport ,and local clubs / organisations. This capacity building work has resulted in people with sensory disabilities going on to join local clubs and organisations to facilitate their continued participation in physical activity and sport.



Similarly, a range of capacity building programmes were delivered for 100 people with intellectual disabilities. As a result of this work, new Special Olympics clubs have been established; existing Special Olympics Clubs have been supported to grow; and adults with intellectual disabilities have become involved with physical activity programmes through local gyms and sports clubs.

Operation Transformation and Go for Life Games programmes for people experiencing mental health difficulties. Across the two programmes, 120 adults participated. Feedback from the Operation Transformation programme has been impressive. Participant observations included: -

I breathe easier, have less breathlessness,
I'm more happy and less anxious

I'm a lot more active and
my mood is better

I feel much better in myself,
exercise gives me energy



The delivery of training and education programmes under the Sports Inclusion Development Programme (SIDP) has introduced post primary students to the area of disability and inclusive participation; has enabled teachers to adapt their physical education classes for children with disabilities; has provided personal assistants and sports clubs

volunteers with the skills they need to support their clients and new athletes in their pursuit of physical activity and sporting opportunities.

A major feature of the SIDO's work in 2015 was the delivery of pan disability programmes. Almost 550 people have been accommodated on pan disability and inclusive programmes. Among the successes of this programme are: -

- i. the establishment of a new Judo Assist club in Birr
- ii. the participation of Offaly School for Special Education in Special Olympics events; and

"18 students graced the mat full of enthusiasm and joy". Thanks to Aoife at Offaly Sports Partnership for her invaluable assistance", Judo Assist

"Good news, St Joseph's and OSSE have entered athletes in the athletics on the 9th May (Kilkenny). Delighted to see this, first time in athletics for both. The support they've got over the past 12 months has definitely helped with this", Patrick O Reilly, Special Olympics Leinster Regional Development Officer

- iii. the Midlands Boccia League, an Offaly / Westmeath Sports Partnership collaborative programme



People of an ethnic background including Travellers a range of programmes were offered to people of an ethnic background including Travellers in 2015: -



The **Integrated Academy for Athletics Performance (IAAP)** continued to run in Portarlinton in 2015. 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.

20 children participated regularly on the programme, and over 75% of these took part in local level organised events. Eight members of the IAAP group progressed through regional qualification events to participate at a national level, and four secured podium places in national events.

Meet and Train programmes in the areas of swimming and walking were offered to 20 **female Travellers** in 2015 with the support of the Offaly Traveller Movement and Birr Leisure Centre.

The unemployed with the securing of funding under the Dormant Accounts Scheme via Sport Ireland, the Partnership delivered community coaching training for the unemployed in 2015. 20 trainees commence the community coaching programme in two locations (Birr and Edenderry). Edenderry proved to be a particularly challenging location within which to deliver the programme, and experienced a high level of drop out.



Of the 20 the commenced the programme, 15 (11 from Birr and four from Edenderry) completed the programme. On the Birr course, some trainees expressed interest in joining the defence forces; however when the Partnership undertook fitness testing with the group, there was a realisation that trainees would struggle to pass the fitness test, particularly in respect of the 2.4k timed run that applicants are required to complete. A training programme to supplement the community coaching programme was therefore organised for trainees in Birr.

A further aspect of the course was a field trip to the Athlone Institute of Technology to discuss further education opportunities; with a number of trainees since expressing interest in further education in the future.

In addition, one trainee from the Birr programme has been recruited for the Defence Forces cadet programme.



Following the success of the community coaching programmes; in conjunction with Laois Sports Partnership and Portarlington Leisure Centre; and with additional support from the Dormant Accounts Scheme via Sport Ireland, an advanced cross county community coaching programme with a specific focus on employment skills for the leisure industry has been planned for 2016.

Priority themes 3 and 4: Dialogue to increase participation, and the Marketing of Sport were considered minor themes in 2015. Three actions to ensure “dialogue to increase participation” were written into the Partnership’s operational plan for 2015. Of the three actions outlined in the operational report, all actions were delivered on: -

- The Board, Executive and Working Groups of Offaly Sports Partnership were supported in their work
- Locally, Offaly Sports Partnership supported community sports facilities’ working groups
- Nationally, Offaly Sports Partnership worked with Athletics Ireland and other Sports Partnerships in the promotion of SPORTSHALL Athletics in 2015. Additionally, Eamonn Henry, Coordinator Offaly Sports Partnership also chaired the Athletics Performance Committee for Paralympics Ireland.

No specific actions were written into the operational plan for 2015 with regard to “the marketing of sport”. However, two **mass participation events** were promoted in the county, while the **logo of the Partnership was widely promoted** in all communications, public meetings, events, conferences, public awareness campaigns, on tee shirts and medallions for mass participation events. The website and social media platforms of the Partnership were continually updated with information. In addition, the Partnership also established a Twitter account, and a YouTube channel in 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](#) and [Twitter/OffalySP](#) or check out our [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#) sites.