



# Increasing Play Infrastructure in Co. Wicklow

Deirdre Whitfield  
Wicklow County Council and  
Member of Co. Wicklow CYPSC

# Physical Health Subgroup

- ▶ TUSLA
- ▶ HSE
- ▶ Wicklow County Council
- ▶ Gardaí
- ▶ Local Development Companies
- ▶ Youth/Children Agencies
- ▶ Local Sports Partnerships



Membership

Charlesland Skatepark

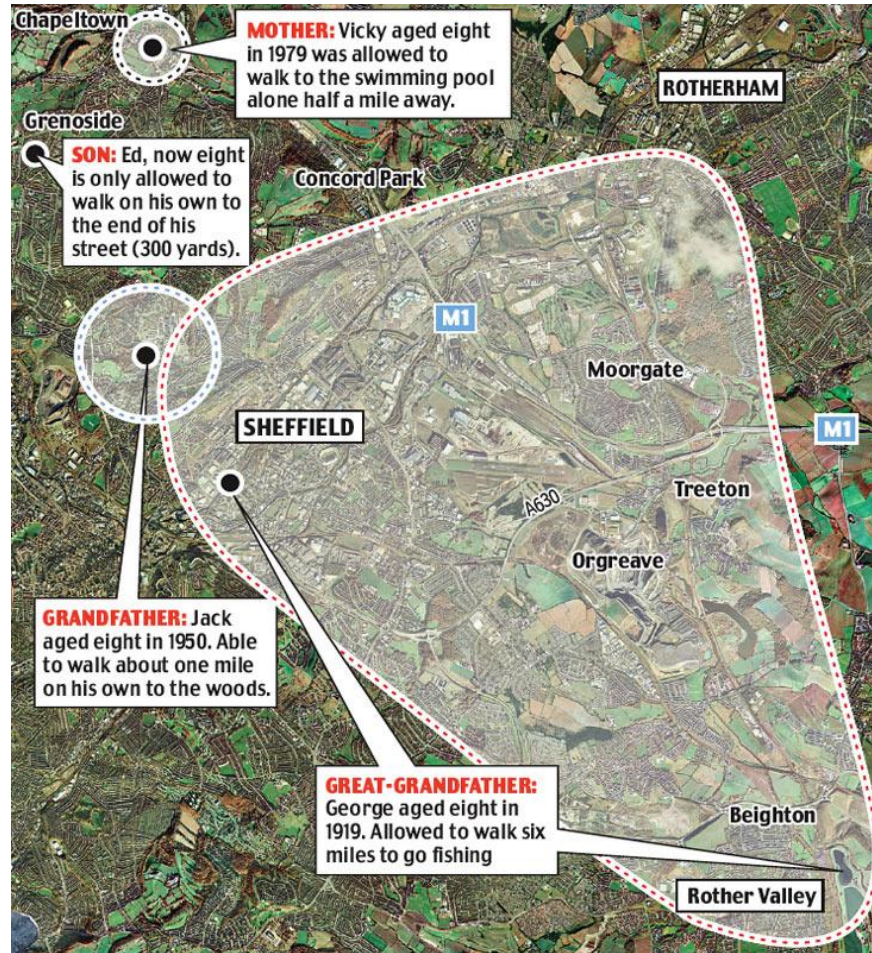
# Identified Priorities

- ▶ Work carried out in 2012 for inclusion in CYPP for Co. Wicklow 2013–2015
- ▶ Using the sociodemographic profile/audit of services, national and local information sources
- ▶ Subgroup looked specifically at Outcome Area One: Healthy both Physically and Mentally
- ▶ Focus on the area of health

# Why this priority?

- ▶ Increasing awareness of the change in patterns in the way that children play and spend their free time
- ▶ A lot of research to suggest that these changes have a detrimental effect on children's development, both physically and mentally. There are a number of measures that can be taken to promote and facilitate children's free play, involving a number of agencies.
- ▶ Inadequate supply/quality of play and recreation infrastructure in the county
- ▶ Diminishing accessible open space
- ▶ National concerns being raised through the longitudinal study 'Growing Up in Ireland' in relation to obesity
- ▶ Links to other plans: National Play and recreation strategy; Children's strategy; DCLG sustainable housing guidelines; UN Child in the City guidelines

# Children and the Outdoors



# Play and Recreation

- ▶ **Priority Area Identified:** Play and Recreation
- ▶ **Objective:** To ensure adequate play and recreation infrastructure in the county and to encourage and promote children's play and recreation
- ▶ **Indicator:** No. of playgrounds/Multi Use Games Areas(MUGA) and skate parks in the county under the LEADER programme, County Wicklow Partnership, Wicklow County Council funding and community contribution

# Transformational Goals

## Early Intervention and Prevention

- Adequate, safe, suitable supply of play/recreation spaces
- Leading to increased play and focus on health and wellbeing

## Cross-government and interagency collaboration and co-ordination

- Local Authority/Co. Wicklow Partnership/Local Communities
- Working together to achieve better outcomes for children and young people

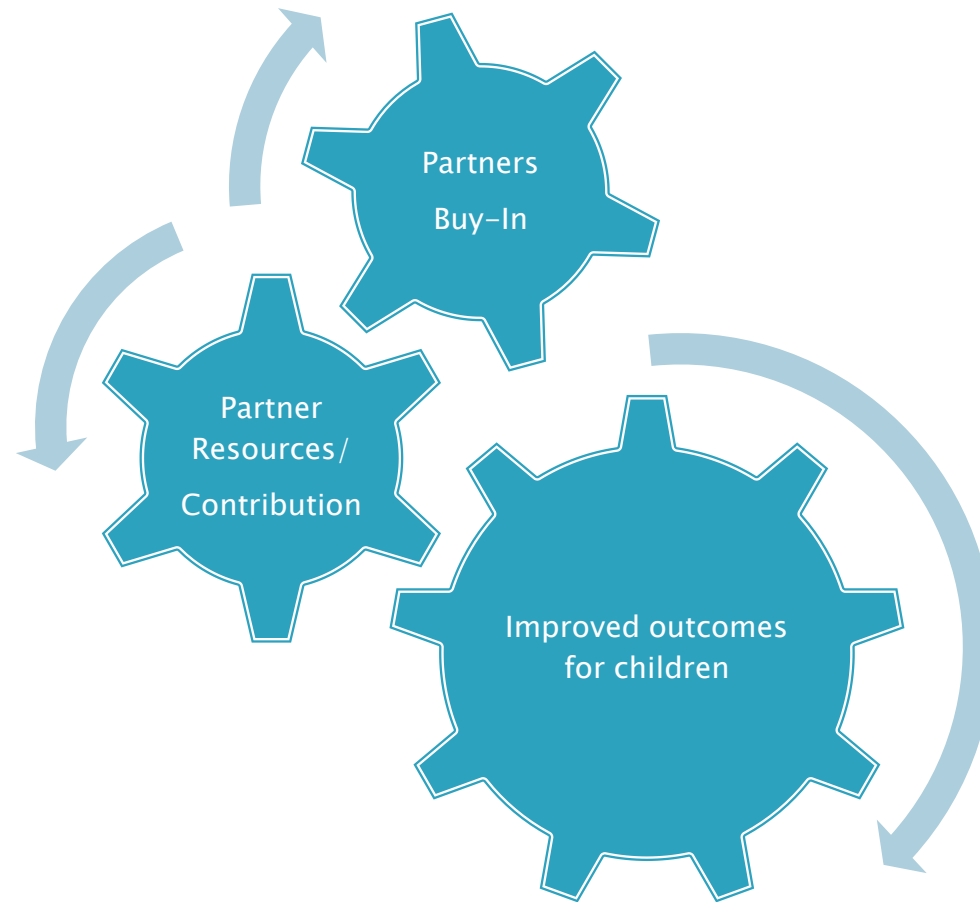
# Stakeholders

- ▶ Wicklow County Council
- ▶ Co. Wicklow Partnership
- ▶ Local Communities





# Partnership Approach



# Challenges / Learning

- ▶ Providing infrastructure in an environment of decreased resources
- ▶ Persuading organisations to prioritise the infrastructure projects
- ▶ Using a partnership approach where each partner provides what it can
- ▶ Local community providing: local knowledge, buy-in, fundraising, informal maintenance and sites for some projects

# Challenges / Learning

- ▶ Co. Wicklow Partnership provided funding from LEADER sources
- ▶ Local Authority provides sites, insurance, weekly maintenance and annual inspections
- ▶ None of the partners could provide the infrastructure alone but together they made it happen

# What was achieved?

- ▶ Wicklow Town
- ▶ Ashford
- ▶ Shillelagh
- ▶ Dunlavin
- ▶ Knockananna
- ▶ Aughrim
- ▶ Tinahely
- ▶ 7 playgrounds
- ▶ 3 outdoor gyms
- ▶ 2 skateparks
- ▶ 2 MUGAs



# Some Examples



Adult Outdoor Gym



Intergenerational Space

# Added value of CYPSC

- ▶ **(Interagency Structure)** Created structure that brought agencies together to focus on five national outcomes for children and young people. Established Physical Health Subgroup to focus on Outcome One: Physical Health of children and young people in Co. Wicklow
- ▶ **(Data Collection/Sharing/Id. Of Need)** Brought together information to assist in identifying priority area of play and recreation
- ▶ **(Buy-In)** Ensured the inclusion of this priority in a plan to which all parties agreed
- ▶ **(Review/Plan)** Monitored progress during the lifetime of the plan and will adapt learning for future planning
- ▶ ***None of the partners alone could achieve this outcome but together they made it happen!***

# Outcomes / Benefits

- ▶ Increase in play and recreation activity infrastructure in Co. Wicklow
- ▶ Recognition and prioritisation of the needs of children and young people in Co. Wicklow
- ▶ Visible benefits of organisations working in partnership to achieve objectives and national outcomes



Outcomes

Skatepark

# Evaluation

- ▶ Other studies  
UK/Europe on benefits  
of play infrastructure
- ▶ Next CYPP 2016–2018



Baltinglass Teen Area



# Conclusions

- ▶ Partnership approach hugely beneficial to the provision of infrastructure for children and young people
- ▶ Organisations increased their understanding of the needs of children/young people
- ▶ Meeting those needs becomes more mainstream in policies and practices

# Contact Details

- ▶ Presenter: Deirdre Whitfield, Wicklow County Council, [dwhitfield@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:dwhitfield@wicklowcoco.ie)
- ▶ CYPSC Co-ordinator: Fionnuala Curry, Co. Wicklow CYPSC, [fionnualacurry@kwetb.ie](mailto:fionnualacurry@kwetb.ie)
- ▶ National website link  
<http://www.cypsc.ie/your-county-cypsc/wicklow.254.html>