



Summary Report

Dublin City North *Services Mapping and Community Consultation*

*Key Points from the Research
February 2017*

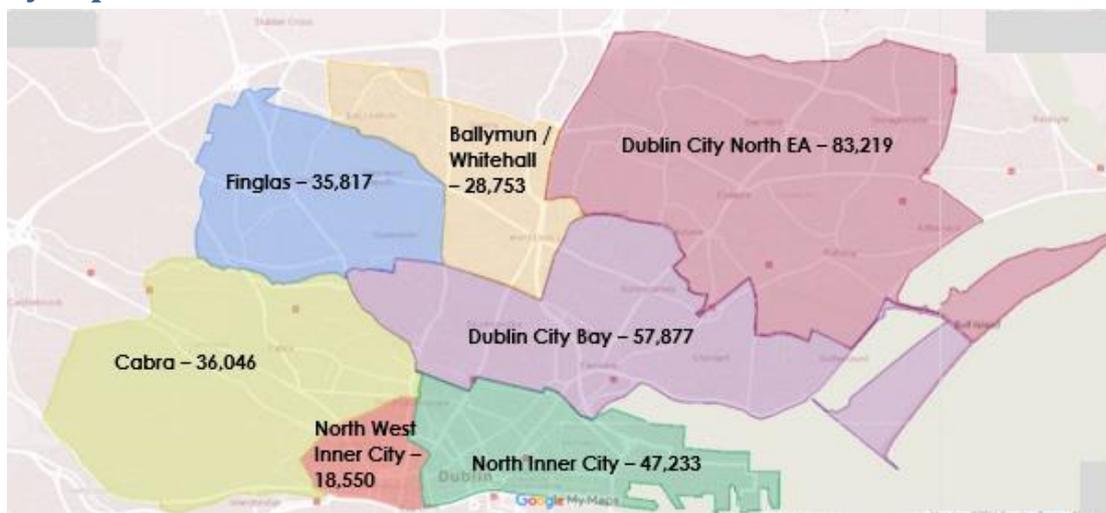
Context

Dublin City North Children and Young People's Committee is one of 26 committees across the Republic of Ireland. The committees have been established under the Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures strategic policy framework of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). Their aim is to coordinate children and young people's services (0-24 years) to improve outcomes for children and young people in their respective areas. Each committee is made up of major statutory, community and voluntary services that, as a collective, have responsibility for identifying and responding to the needs of children and young people in their area through coordinated, interagency initiatives, programmes and ways of working.

To this end, Dublin City North CYPSC, with funding from Tusla Child and Family Agency and Dublin City Council, undertook research to understand the nature and extent of services in the area, and to consult with the community (professionals, parents and young people) as to their perceptions of service provision and gaps in the area. The full report by Quality Matters is available at www.cypsc.ie, along with further information on Dublin City North CYPSC.

What follows here is a brief, high level outline of the findings of the research, as told through surveys, interviews and focus groups. The views and opinions in the qualitative research will help inform CYPSC the Children and Young People's Plan for the area. This research is considered a positive first step for CYPSC to appreciate the level of work and interagency collaboration already being undertaken in this area, and to explore how CYPSC may further support interagency cooperation to help improve outcomes for children and young people.

Synopsis of the Area Profile



Dublin City North CYPSC Map

Dublin City North is a dynamic area and is made up of 7 electoral areas including Finglas, Cabra, Ballymun/Whitehall, North east Inner City, North West Inner City, Dublin City Bay and Dublin City North Electoral Area. While the electoral areas are distinct, these boundaries are also crossed with two Tusla areas, a number of Garda divisions, two local development partnerships, and multiple local catchments within localised service provision.

Census 2011 data shows Dublin City North as home to 307,495 individuals, of which 60,127 are aged between 0-17 years. When under 25's are included in this population calculation, the figure reaches 98,444. As Census 2016 begins its preliminary data release, there are some decreases and increases evident in various areas, and when full data is available a new profile of the area can be built. Nonetheless, there are a significant number of children and young people growing up in Dublin City North.

The level of disadvantage varies greatly across the area, and it should be noted that there are small concentrated pockets of deprivation that are very high. It is ***“of particular concern for children and young people that the area contains 11 of the most 50 deprived small electoral divisions in the country”***.¹

Immigration and non-Irish populations are evident in each area, but at differing levels. The North East Inner City (44.12%) and North West Inner City (36.19%) have the highest percentage of non-Irish nationals based on 2011 Census. This is far in excess of the national average of 12% and has implications for service provision on the ground.

The Pobal deprivation index has noted the areas in Dublin City North on a spectrum of marginally disadvantaged to marginally affluent when considered for sole parenting, unemployment, educational attainment and migration figures. This, however, must be taken in the context of a complex interplay of high deprivation alongside affluent populations that can mask those smaller areas of highest deprivation.

Despite these challenges, it is also important to recognise that there are children and young people who are, for all intents and purposes, doing well, overcome adverse factors and achieve in many areas of life. CYPSC, in its design, undertakes a *“progressive universalism”* approach where all children will be supported, but those with particular needs will be supported more than others.

Service Mapping

To profile the number and level of service provision for children and young people, a service mapping exercise was undertaken to identify services under 9 service categories; characterized also by Hardiker Level response (from universal need to very high level need) and the 5 National Outcomes for Children and Young People.² The researchers identified ***1,218 services across the 7 electoral areas***³. These services were transposed onto a map under their key theme of work to highlight those areas where there may be a gap in services. The information in the below table outlines which areas have the least provision of these services. This was calculated by the number of local services per 10,000 residents, as below:

¹ Quality Matters. (2016). *Dublin City North Services Mapping and Community Consultation*. Dublin City North Children and Young People's Services Committee.

² Dept of Children and Youth Affairs. (2014). *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures. The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020*. Stationery Office.

³ While every attempt was made to ensure this directory of services was accurate at the time of completion (October 2016), these figures are considered an estimate of the number of services.

Service Category	Est. Number of Services	Area of Least provision ⁴
Physical Health and Social Services	287	Cabra / Dublin City North Electoral Area
Education	240	Dublin City North Electoral Area and Cabra
Early Childhood	212	Finglas/Cabra
Recreation and Sports	153	Finglas
Drug and Alcohol	121	Dublin City North Electoral Area
Local Authority	85	Dublin City North Electoral Area, Dublin City Bay and Finglas/Cabra
Mental Health & Wellbeing	58	Cabra ⁵
Policing and Youth Justice	42	Dublin City Bay and Dublin City North Electoral Area
Disability	19	Dublin City North Electoral Area

Table 1- Total number of services by Category and Electoral Areas of least provision

Data collection

Consultation took place with 338 individuals including young people, parents and professionals, through focus groups, stakeholder interviews and surveys, across the 7 geographical regions.

Data collection process	Number of people engaged in each process
Surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 112 young people in schools • 38 parents • 131 general professionals • 8 GPs • 5 early years services 	294
Key Stakeholder Interviews	17
Focus Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals working with Travellers:14 (12 members were parents of young Travellers) • Crinan's Youth Project service users: 4 • Focus Ireland Staff: 6 • Edenmore young people: 3 	27
Total people engaged	338

⁴ "Provision" of services refers to the proportion of services per 10,000 population.

⁵ St Patricks Hospital is outside the catchment but nonetheless a mental health service located close by.

Summary Findings:

While all 59 summary findings are available in further detail in the full report a number of themes are cited here which will inform the development of a plan for children and young people.

Interagency Communication

Across 5 of the 9 service categories, **interagency communication** was cited as an opportunity for developing better service provision. This feedback was included in physical health and social services; policing and youth justice, education, mental health, and early childhood services. This is in the context of already high rates of interagency working where more than three-quarters of professionals reported engagement with interagency working, in some format. A “fragmented” system means that some services may not or cannot communicate with each other. An example given was supporting links with traveller populations to mental health services and linking youth and education services to support integration into the system. Early childhood services were also noted needing further links with schools particularly between pre-schools and primary schools and multi-disciplinary teams that linked with policing and youth justice. Health teams or hubs were suggested, especially for schools, so that health care is freely and easily accessible.

Access to services

Access to certain services was considered to be inhibited by **long waiting lists and/ or high costs**. This was particularly highlighted in 5 service categories, including physical health/social services; mental health; recreation and sports; disability and early childhood services. In the latter, the high cost of childcare was a big barrier to accessing this service for their child. For disability, physical health and mental health services, results showed the **referral pathway** which may require GP referral, adds an unnecessary layer to accessing a service for a child or young person. The same was voiced about speech and language therapy and a reported lack of crisis pregnancy services. Young people and parents both agreed by a significant majority that a **lack of sexual health and pregnancy services in the area was an issue**.

Conversely, **non-attendance at appointments** was considered to have an adverse impact on service provision as well as adding to the waiting times. This is further impacted by the lack of “interagency agreement to share information”. Attendance at appointments is also determined by the proximity of the service to the family or young person. This was highlighted as a barrier for the Traveller population. Services which require **public transport or long distances** are a perceived barrier to attendance citing the lack of available transport. To counteract this, there were numerous suggestions to localise services through community settings to improve attendance, while also providing more outreach.

There were also suggestions by parents that access would increase if services would **open for longer hours and provide services on the weekend**.

Gap in Services

Parents, young people and professionals when asked, responded to a number of service gaps:

- Lack of sexual health and sex education services, including crisis pregnancy.
- Lack of age-appropriate drug and alcohol services, including dual diagnosis.
- Lack of age-appropriate mental health services (especially in-patient services for under-18's)
- Lack of sports and recreation services in some areas.
- Lack of supports for young carers.
- Lack of community policing.
- Lack of disability services, particular early intervention and family support.

Sexual health was viewed as primarily school driven. Young people reported that this was not an effective way to reach young people and should be involved more so with youth services. **Drug and alcohol and mental health services for under 18's is considered a serious gap in some areas.** Coupled with concern over dual diagnosis, communication and interaction of mental health and drug and alcohol services are viewed as an important development.

Drugs and alcohol continue to feature as a distinct area of concern due to the normalisation of drugs such as cannabis. There were concerns in focus groups that the **criminal justice system** did “not want to know about kids smoking hash”. **Young people (84%) and parents (94%) reported that young people with drug problems not having sufficient support was an issue in their locality.**

Likewise, the development of **school health teams**, could incorporate more wellbeing and mindfulness and preventative strategies for a health promoting school. The **visibility of Gardaí** would, according to some interviewees, help with building better relationships in communities and with young people. It was also noted that Travellers and sites in general “seem to be less rigorously policed than the settled population”. A lack of **supported integration** was voiced as a concern for a number of reasons including prejudice and the negative perception of services. Young people and parents agreed that there are **insufficient recreation services in the area.**

Mental health and wellbeing was highlighted as a significant area for attention, by parents, young people and professionals. Age-appropriate interventions/services; early intervention; building capacity through education; walk in service and developing outreach responses were all gaps identified in the area. There is an emphasis on CAMHS as a service of choice for some young people, but the thresholds do not necessarily meet the requirements. At the same time, CAMHS is not available in every locality and professionals reflected that sometimes there was a struggle to get young people the right level of care.

Young carers were identified as an area of concern. Young people (74%) and parents (77%) stated young people caring for members of their family without supports was an issue/big issue. There are little supports for young people who are impacted by a parent's mental health or drug/alcohol use, who then become carers for the parent(s) and/or for their younger siblings. This impacts multiple areas of their life including education, and social engagement. It was suggested that young carers would be identified and supports would be ready such as respite.

Family Support

Young people and parents reported a number of issues in family life. Both agree that **young people having problems with their family was an issue or big issue in the area (84% and 70%)**. For younger children, parents reported a **lack of parenting courses** for 0-2 years (72%) and 3-4 years (69%). Similar figures were apparent when asked about 5-12 years and 13-18 years. They also disagreed that there are sufficient supports for challenges to parenting. Crucially, there is **perceived lack of supports for young people affected by domestic violence**. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of young people said this was an issue in the area, with similar reflection from parents.

There are on-going, very serious concerns over homelessness and supports available for young people and/or families. *As of November 2016, figures from the Dublin Region Homeless Executive state that 1023 families with 2,110 dependents are currently in homeless accommodation, including hotels. Some progress has been made, since the writing of this report, but nonetheless, there are significant numbers of families coming to the attention of regional and local services, and who continue to need support in these circumstances.*

Young People and Education

Young people **having problems in school or wanting to leave school** was reported as an issue by 70-80% of both parents and young people. However, **only 27% of young people reported that there are not enough supports to stay in school**. For those young people who do leave school early, there is a general concern from professionals that there are **not enough education and training options (60%)**. This was reported as a particular concern for options for those under 16 (“Youthreach is not an option”); and **training and employment opportunities for 19-24 year olds**. The periods of transition between school services including crèche/pre-schools to primary schools are considered a significant gap for supports. Professionals reflected unsatisfactory waiting times for educational supports (66-75%) and the Traveller population were highlighted as significantly at risk for transitioning between secondary and third level education.

Early Years and Childhood

Evidence demonstrates the important role of positive interaction and learning environments from birth through to early childhood. There is a significant role for early years and childhood providers to provide quality, evidence based practices. This includes Montessori’s, crèches, and pre-schools and any other service that provides care to those young children. The research found that some professionals were concerned about the **potential closure of these services** and losing the investment that had been put into the early years focus. Others stated the quality of childcare and early year’s services needed more up skilling and capacity building. Some of this quality training is developed and delivered through programmes and organisations in the sector. With funding uncertain in the long-term for some services, and an evaluation process expected to be complete by mid-2018, the on-going sustainable structures that carry on effective programmes of work in the area may need to be clarified.

Recommendations from the Research:

The following recommendations are those named in the report and were developed with the Research Steering Group of CYPSC at the time (2016). While CYPSC will address these recommendations in its plan, we will look forward to working with interagency networks, parents and young people, and other partners in 2017 to help shape the best way forward for how CYPSC can support improvements for children and young people.

- 1. Explore strategies for Supporting Parents and Families to attend Appointments.**
- 2. Promote and increase positive interagency working through a shared learning approach.**
- 3. Advocate for additional resources to meet needs identified through the needs analysis.**
- 4. Engage with Drug & Alcohol Task Forces in the area to clarify communal strategic actions in relation to young people and drug use / mental health.**
- 5. Undertake research / needs analysis into Finglas West and specific small areas of Dublin North East, which are identified as having significant need / and a lack of resources and supports.**
- 6. Undertake consultation with young people (Not in Education, Employment or Training) in relation to alternative education streams and progress into work and training.**
- 7. Clarify and promote access routes/ pathways to services.**

Next Steps for Dublin City North CYPSC

1. Establish membership and responsibilities for CYPSC Members

Between March and May 2017, CYPSC members will engage with an independent facilitator to support the establishment of CYPSC in Dublin City North. This will clarify and agree roles and responsibilities for committee members based on the Blueprint for CYPSC's. This is expected to include the development and agreement of sub groups, and begin discussions on priorities for the area.

2. Develop a database of services

This research has named 1,218 statutory, community and voluntary services and resources in Dublin City North, which is a great asset to all across the area. CYPSC will undertake to shape this database into a directory of services which will be publically available and support increased knowledge and awareness of services.

3. Develop a 3 Year Children and Young People's Plan for Dublin City North (2018-2020)

As a requirement of all CYPSC's, Dublin City North will develop a 3 year plan for children and young people (0-24years). This preliminary research is a foundation for building upon and is a first step towards understanding the Dublin City North landscape. The recommendations that have been made as part of the research will be included in the plan to ensure there is follow through. Accounting for the number and layers of different services in this area, we will engage with interagency networks, community partners, young people and families to ensure the plan is reflective of needs, and communities can work together through shared learning and open communication.

CYPSC is keenly aware that there is much work being undertaken across this area; that services and interagency networks are going to great lengths to ensure that children and young people are achieving their full potential. It is our aim to work alongside these actions, to support and share learning, and continue to drive quality interventions across the spectrum of need.

4. Launch Children and Young People's Plan (2018-2020)

We will launch the plan in collaboration with the community, service providers and partners. This will aim to be implemented from 2018-2020 with a series of progress reports and evaluation/monitoring throughout in collaboration with the community.

For further information on Dublin City North CYPSC please visit www.cypsc.ie .