



County Mayo
Children and Young People's Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan
2019 - 2022

Contents

Children and Young People's Sexual Health and Wellbeing for County Mayo 2019 – 2022

Fáilte	1
---------------	----------

Why a Children and Young People's Sexual Health and Wellbeing for County Mayo	2
--	----------

A Profile of County Mayo at a Glance	3
---	----------

The Policy framework for Children and Youth Sexual Health and Wellbeing	4
--	----------

Our Consultation and Stakeholder Collaboration	12
---	-----------

What Children and Young People Said about Sexual Health and Wellbeing	15
--	-----------

What Services Said about Sexual Health and Wellbeing	16
---	-----------

Cross Cutting Themes arising from Our Consultation	20
---	-----------

Our Vision	21
-------------------	-----------

Our Values	22
-------------------	-----------

Our Themes, Goals, Objectives and Actions	23
--	-----------

Implementation of Our Plan	29
-----------------------------------	-----------

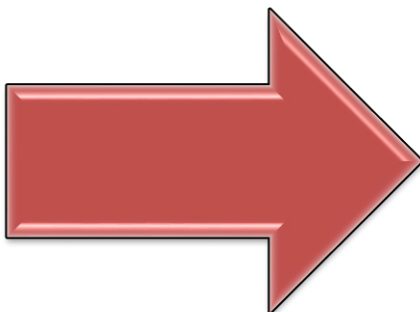
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Fáilte

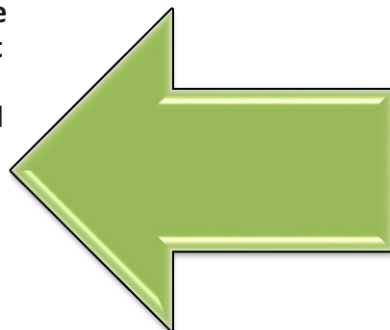
This is the first children and young people's Sexual Health and Well-being Plan for County Mayo. The plan seeks to reflect the sexual health and wellbeing concerns and issues affecting children and young people in the county. Whilst this plan is linked to the significant body of evolving government, education and health services policy and practice in respect to children and young people's sexual health and wellbeing it also includes a unique aspect – that of **children and young people's own voices, opinions, recommendations and solutions** to the issues they face as they grow and develop as individuals. The plan also reflects the leadership demonstrated by Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) and its partners in seeking **children and young people's own answers** to the challenges of ensuring that good sexual health and wellbeing of children and young people is firmly on the agenda of local, regional and national policy makers and services.

Throughout the consultation and planning process the definition of sexual health and wellbeing was constantly reiterated to remind all concerned of the broad meaning of sexual health and well-being ensuring the a vision for the County was one that interlinked with other strategies and demonstrated a cohesive and holistic approach to children and young people's sexual health and wellbeing. Those definitions originated from the World Health Organisation (WHO) cited in the National Sexual Health Strategy 2015-2020 and Healthy Ireland: A framework for Improved Health and Well-being 2013-2025.



Sexual Health is ..."state of physical, emotional, mental and social wellbeing in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual Health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence".

Wellbeing... "reflects the quality of life and the various factors which can influence it over the course of a person's life. Wellbeing also reflects the concept of positive mental health, in which a person can realise his or her own abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and be able to make a contribution to his or her community. Consideration of health and wellbeing requires a shift in focus from what can go wrong in people's lives, to focusing on what makes their lives go well".





Why a Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Children and Young People in County Mayo?

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs established the first Children and Young People's Services Committees (formerly Children's Services Committees) in 2007 with the purpose of improving outcomes for children and families at local and community level. A Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) has since been established for every county in Ireland. CYPSCs are recognised by Government as a key structure to plan and co-ordinate services for children and young people, aged 0 – 24 years. CYPSCs bring a diverse group of organisations and agencies from across the statutory, community and voluntary sectors together to engage in joint planning of services for children and young people at county level. All major organisations and agencies working locally on behalf of children and young people are represented. **Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures** the national policy framework for children and young people 2014 – 2020 underscores the necessity of interagency working and tasks Children and Young People's Services Committees with a key role in this regard.

Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs) seek **to secure better outcomes for children and young people through more effective integration of existing services and interventions at local level.** CYPSCs work towards the five national outcomes for children and young people in Ireland. These are that children and young people:

- **are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing**
- **are achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development**
- **are safe and protected from harm**
- **have economic security and opportunity**
- **are connected, respected and contributing to their world.**

County Mayo CYPSC is responsible for **improving the lives of children, young people and families at local and community level** through integrated planning, working and service delivery.

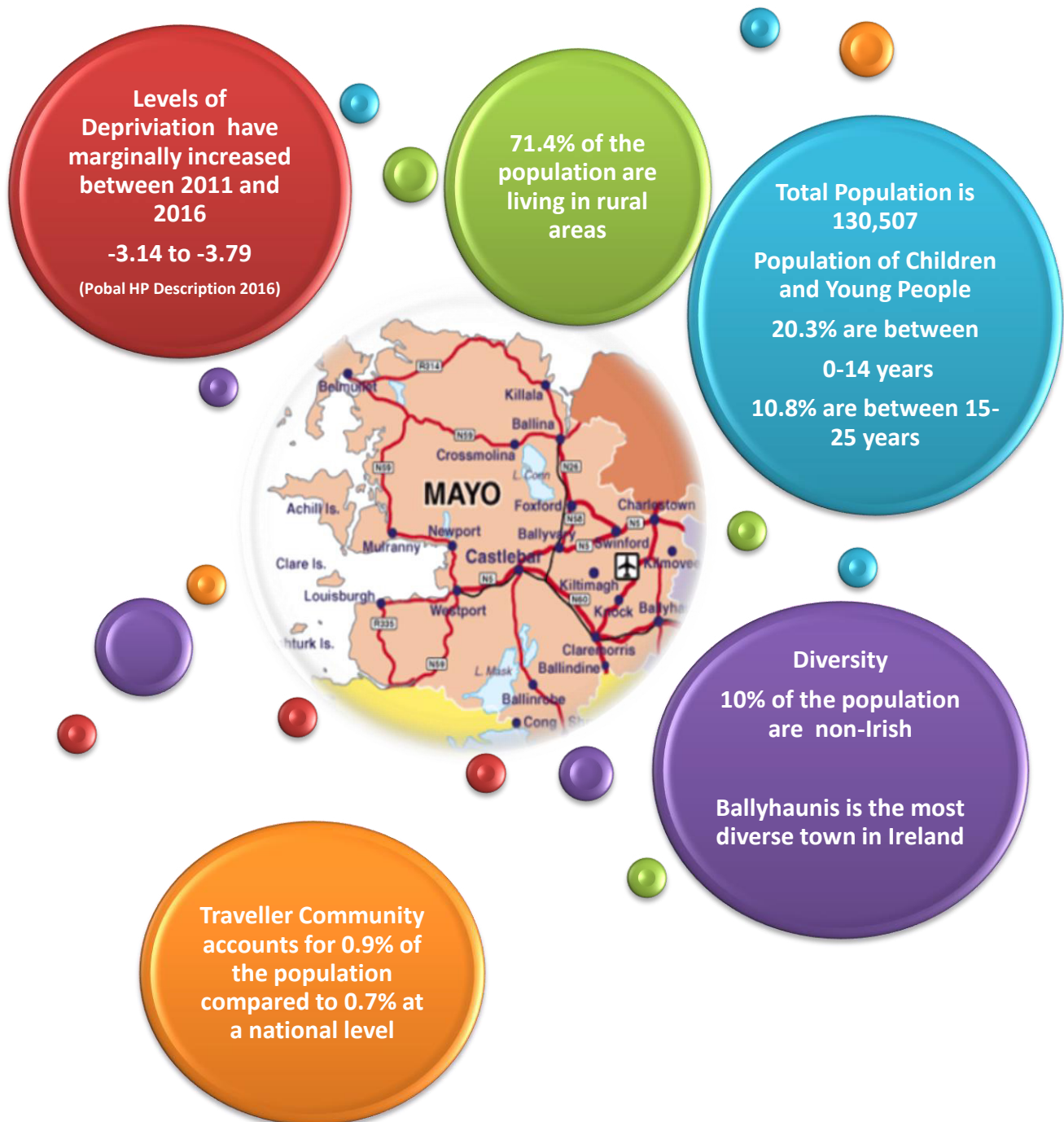
The Committee ensures that professionals and organisations work together so that children and families receive better and more accessible services.

As part of this strategy and to ensure that sexual health and well-being for children and young people is of central focus to the work of agencies in County Mayo CYPSC facilitated and developed this three year Sexual Health and Well-Being Plan in collaboration with children, young people, their key supporters such as service providers, families and support groups.



A Profile of County Mayo

The following profile draws on the 2016 Census data and HP Deprivation Index 2016 for County Mayo and provides a snapshot of County Mayo's population and some of its unique features.





Children and Young People's Sexual Health: Policy Framework

Ireland has the youngest population in Europe with one third of our young people less than 25 years of age and like that of the other sections of the population 'children and young people' are not a homogenous group. This diversity comes with different needs and challenges but also opportunities. Over the last number of years significant national sexual health and wellbeing policy (and practice) has developed in focusing on sexual health and wellbeing in particular the development of the National Sexual Health Strategy 2015 – 2020. The strategy focuses on the needs of the total population but puts children and young people central in its narrative.

In order to provide a context in which to place the first Children and Young People's Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for County Mayo the following section briefly examine the broader policy framework in respect to children and young people with specific focus on sexual health and wellbeing but also associated strategies.

The **National Sexual Health Strategy 2015–2020** is a framework for the sexual health and wellbeing of the Irish population. Its aims are to improve health and wellbeing and to reduce negative sexual health outcomes. It states that **Young people should receive comprehensive and age-appropriate sexual health education and/or information with appropriate prevention and promotion services.** It further seeks to:

- Continue to ensure and support all young people to acquire knowledge of how to access sources of trustworthy and accurate information and support on relationships and sexual health
- Support all children and young people in addressing issues that impact on sexual wellbeing such as stigma, homophobia, gender, ability/disability, mental health, alcohol and drugs
- Develop, support and promote accessible and appropriate information, resources and supports for parents to enable them to communicate effectively about relationships and sexuality
- Address the impact of early sexualisation and pornography and support parents, carers and others to address issues arising from early sexualisation
- Feed into the evaluation of state funded relationship and sexuality education programmes
- Continue to provide youth workers and those working with young people, appropriate training with the available resources to equip them to deliver relationship and sexuality education programmes
- Provide organisations working with young people both in and out of school settings with support and sexual health training to ensure they provide high quality advice, resources and services.



The **Second National Intercultural Health Strategy 2018-2023** sets out a vision for a health service that provides **high quality responsive care to all service users from diverse ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds**, that empowers service users from diverse ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds to access services, where service providers are confident in providing culturally competent services to this cohort. Young people are identified as a target group for support and linkage to the National Sexual Intercultural Health Strategy 2015–2020 is evident throughout the strategy. The strategy clearly states its intention to:

- Work with key stakeholders to develop information and guidance for service users and staff in respect of awareness and management of health-related conditions specific to members of minority ethnic groups.
- Address **health inequalities relevant to service users in relation to sexual health**, reproductive health, children and young people, LGBTI+, disability, men, mental health and palliative care.
- Work with ethnic groups, especially those from high-burden countries, to reduce risks and spread of HIV, blood borne viruses (e.g. Hepatitis C) and other serious sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Support access to culturally appropriate information on contraception and services (including referral pathways for women with unplanned pregnancies) to all women, with a particular focus on women living in accommodation centres and women in the Irish Refugee Protection Programme.
- Address medical, cost and information barriers to contraception use and provide sexual health education programmes to minority ethnic groups, refugees and asylum seekers.
- Support research carried out by TENI in respect of the unique barriers faced by transgender refugees and asylum seekers in accessing health and care services.
- Ensure the health and support needs of LGBTI+ service users of diverse ethnicities and cultures are considered in a forthcoming HSE National LGBTI+ Health Strategy.

The **National Traveller and Roma Strategy 2017 – 2021** is a cross-Departmental initiative to improve the lives of the Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland. Under the strategy, the HSE has committed to a range of actions to address the health-related issues of Traveller and Roma communities in an inclusive and culturally appropriate manner. This wide ranging strategy indicates significant actions in respect to sexual health and wellbeing of children and young people:

- TUSLA and the Department of Education and Skills will endeavour to ensure Travellers and Roma have access to appropriate sexual health and relationship education.

And, particular cohorts with the Traveller and Roma communities at risk of discrimination due to their sexual orientation, including:

- Culturally appropriate supports should be developed so that LGBTI Travellers and Roma are included, accepted and protected in their own communities and wider Irish society.
- Traveller and Roma organisations will be encouraged and supported to develop links with LGBTI organisations.



- The needs of LGBTI Travellers and Roma will be one specific focus in the development of the LGBTI Inclusion Strategy.
- The Department of Justice and Equality will support the development and delivery by Traveller and Roma organisations of initiatives aimed at challenging homophobia and transphobia within the Traveller and Roma communities including support for Traveller and Roma families who have children/partners coming out.

Healthy Ireland is the national framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Ireland. Its main focus is on prevention and keeping people healthier for longer. Healthy Ireland's goals are to:

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

The framework is committed to support and link existing partnerships, strategies and initiatives that aim to **improve the decision-making capacity of children and young people through strengthening self-esteem, resilience, responses to social and interpersonal pressure, health and media literacy including social media literacy**). It further seeks to:

- Implement evidence based prevention and early intervention initiatives aimed at children and families, initially focusing on areas of disadvantage, drawing evidence emerging from the prevention and early intervention programme.
- Combine mental health promotion programmes with interventions that address broader determinants and social problems as part of a multi-agency approach, particularly in areas with high levels of socio-economic deprivation and fragmentation.
- Support, link with and further improve existing partnerships, strategies and initiatives that aim to improve the capacity of parents, carers and families to support healthier choices for their children and themselves.
- Address and prioritise health literacy in developing future policy, educational and information interventions.
- Strengthen participation in decision making for health and wellbeing at community level.
- Ensure that community based programmes and projects are oriented to promote healthy behaviours and disease prevention to populations and communities at greatest risk.
- Promote a skilled, diverse, cross-trained prevention workforce through training and continual professional development for primary care workers, health improvement and promotion staff, public health, educationalists (including those working in the early year's sector) environmental health, health protection and staff in other sectors.
- Examine models to support the provision of evaluation support and advice, particularly for smaller-scale initiatives and community development programmes.



The **Sláintecare** report is an all-party Oireachtas committee vision for the future of health care in Ireland. The report makes recommendations on **expanding health and wellbeing**, primary care, social care, dental care and mental health care. One of its key recommendations is to expand capacity in primary care and social care, including investment in community diagnostics, primary care teams, mental health teams, services for people with disabilities, homecare services and free GP care.

The **Report of the Joint Committee on the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution** (2017) includes ancillary recommendations relating **to improvements in sex education in schools and youth clubs and to the provision of contraception**.

The Minister for Health has established a group to formulate an effective and comprehensive response to the issues raised by the committee. Work is under way to consider the nature and scope of a free contraception service and what the introduction of such a service would involve.

In 2018 the **Oireachtas Education and Skills Committee undertook a review of sexual health and relationship education and matters relating to the areas of contraception and consent** in primary and post-primary schools, colleges, youth clubs and other organisations involved in education and interactions with young people. The committee's chairperson stated: *'It is clear that this element of the current curriculum is out of date and in many areas, no longer reflective of society today'*.

The **National Council on Curriculum and Assessment** also commenced a major review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in schools in 2018. The review covers both the content of the RSE curriculum and support materials, and the delivery of the curriculum to students. The review is likely to recommend **further training and supports for RSE teachers**.

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures 2014 – 2020 (Department of Children and Youth Affairs) is the overarching national policy framework for children and young people for the period 2014–2020. Outcome one, sets out aims that all children and young people are physically healthy and able to make positive healthy choices, have good mental health and **have a positive and respectful approach to relationships and sexual health**. Additionally, this framework prioritises the key transformational goals under each outcome area. In particular, the NYHP will take account of earlier intervention and prevention and ensuring quality services. It further seeks to:

- **Tackle inequalities in health outcomes for identified vulnerable groups including Travellers, Roma, refugee and asylum-seeking children, migrants, young people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, those experiencing poverty, and children and young people who are the responsibility of the State, whether in care or detention.**



- Continue to promote accessible and affordable youth and sports activities which encourage young people's overall personal and social development including healthy behaviours, and engage young people who might be at risk of early school-leaving or engaging in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour.
- Address the high rate of premature and risky alcohol consumption, use of illicit drugs and the incidence of smoking among young people.
- Support the implementation of a Vision for Change as it relates to children and young people.
- Combine mental health promotion programmes with interventions that address broader determinants and social problems as part of a multi-agency approach, particularly in areas with high levels of socio-economic deprivation and fragmentation.
- **Support the implementation of the National Sexual Health Strategy ensuring access for young people to age appropriate information and services about relationships and sexual health.**
- Support the implementation of the National Physical Activity Plan.
- Support and enable greater access to sports, arts and culture for all children and young people.

The **National Youth Strategy 2015 - 2020** (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015) sets out a priority action as outcome one, to support young people **to enjoy a healthy lifestyle, in particular with regard to their physical, mental and sexual health and well-being**. It further seeks to:

- Progress and support actions set out in the National Physical Activity Plan as they relate to young people, including maintaining participation in sports during adolescence and young adulthood and encouraging more physical activity in young people's everyday lives.
- Identify and support ways in which arts, culture, sports and youth organisations can cooperate at a local level to enhance quality and developmental opportunities for young people.
- Support the implementation of the National Obesity Policy and Action Plan which focuses on prevention, treatment and research.
- Support the implementation of Tobacco Free Ireland through the prioritisation of the protection of children and the de-normalisation of smoking.
- Support the **implementation of actions set out in the National Sexual Health Strategy** to ensure that young people living in Ireland will receive comprehensive and age appropriate sexual health education and information.
- Promote quality-assured, online youth mental health services among young people and within youth work and education settings.
- **Promote programmes that address positive self-image and body confidence in formal and non-formal education settings.**
- Support the implementation of Connecting for Life, Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020 as it relates to young people.



- Optimise the potential of youth services in promoting suicide prevention as part of those strategies and plans which focus on young people.
- Promote and support the implementation of technology, mental health and suicide prevention in Ireland: A good practice guide to ensure the safe and responsible delivery of online support services for young people.

The **National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy 2018–2020** (Department of Children and Youth Affairs) is the first such strategy in Ireland and includes recommendations with regard to the sexual health. It sets out the goals and objectives for serving the needs of LGBTI+ people aged 10–24 years. The strategy aims **to create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people, to improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people** and develop the research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people. It further seeks to:

- Make all youth services more inclusive of LGBTI+ young people and provide accessible LGBTI+ youth services nationally.
- Ensure all youth services in receipt of public funding have a policy on the inclusion of LGBTI+ young people.
- Provide a more supportive and inclusive environment that encourages positive LGBTI+ representation and participation in culture, society and sport, and reduces LGBTI+ stigma.
- Support LGBTI+ young people to participate in sport.
- Provide **capacity building measures among service providers to improve their understanding of, and ability to engage with, LGBTI+ young people.**
- Implement evidence based LGBTI+ training, CPD initiatives and guidelines targeted at professional service providers and youth services including school completion programme, FRC's, youth services and youth helpline personnel.
- Address fragmentation in funding and support networking of organisations to work collaboratively.
- Ensure a coordinated approach to the delivery of effective LGBTI+ services and funding of services for young people through inter-agency cooperation.
- **Strengthen sexual health services and education to respond to the needs of LGBTI+ young people, including in the area of sexual consent.**
- **Ensure that the education and information made available relating to sexual consent, sexual consent and coercion, and sexual violence, includes LGBTI+ experiences and provides LGBTI+ specific education and awareness,** including but not limited to men who have sex with men.



Connecting for Life 2015-2020 identifies that young people who have mental health problems or those vulnerable to suicide, should be supported to reduce suicidal behaviour and improve their mental health which can be achieved through the provision and delivery of training and education programmes. It further seeks to:

- Improve population-wide understanding of suicidal behaviours, mental health and wellbeing, and associated risk and protective factors.
- Increase awareness of available suicide prevention and mental health services.
- Reduce stigmatising attitudes to mental health and suicidal behaviours at population level within priority groups.
- Improve and support the continuation of community level responses to suicide through planned, multi-agency approaches.
- Ensure that accurate information and guidance on effective suicide prevention are provided for community-based organisations.
- Ensure the provision and delivery of training and education programmes on suicide prevention to community-based organisations.
- Improve and support the implementation of effective approaches to reducing suicidal behaviour among priority groups.
- Support, in relation to suicide prevention, the Substance Misuse Strategy, to address the high rate of alcohol and drug misuse.
- Enhance the supports for young people with mental health problems or those vulnerable to suicide.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG'S) are a call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. It recognises that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

SDG's ensure healthy lives and promotes wellbeing at all ages. It further seeks to:

- By 2030, reduce by one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being
- By 2030, ensure **universal access to information and education on sexual health and sexual health promotion**
- Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate
- Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.



Recent Legislative Changes and Legal Reform include:

The **Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018** came into effect on 1 January 2019. This Act sets out the law governing termination of pregnancy and impacts on the way in which crisis pregnancy services are provided in Ireland.

Anyone working with children and vulnerable people needs to be clear about the associated legislation and their legal responsibilities under same. It is incumbent on organisations that provide services to these groups to keep abreast of the legal framework within which they operate. At the time of writing, the following legislation is particularly relevant for those working in the area of sexual health promotion (this list is not definitive and is subject to change):

- The Constitutional Referendum on the Rights of the Child (2012)
- National Vetting Bureau Acts 2012–2016
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012
- Children First Act 2015 [not fully commenced]
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- Children and Family Relationships Act 2015
- Criminal Justice (Female Genital Mutilation) Act 2012.



Our Consultation and Stakeholder Collaboration

A comprehensive consultation programme was undertaken with children and young people throughout the county. In addition, the programme of consultation incorporated engagement with frontline staff from community, voluntary and statutory service providers. The process sought to identify **the core sexual health and well-being issues** facing children and young people, **the barriers and proposed solutions** for better and positive sexual health and well-being outcomes for children and young people and their key supports and services in County Mayo.

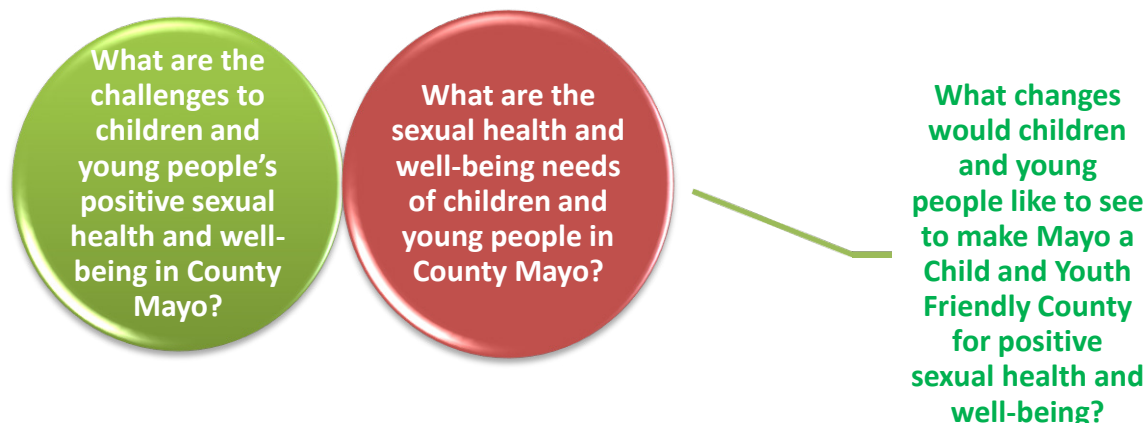
Consultations with Children and Young People

An on line questionnaire and in-depth consultation events with children and young people took place in four areas of the county – **north, east, south and central Mayo**. The consultation events comprised a sample children and young people from the majority population, LGBTI+ community, the Traveller community, the migrant community, children and young people with a disability. The majority of participants identified as female (80.3%) and 12.1% identified as male and 1.5% was questioning gender. The age profile ranged from 10 years of age (the youngest participant) to 21 years of age (the oldest participant). All children and young people under the age of 18 participated with the consent of their parents/guardians. All the consultation events were supported by various children and youth organisations. In total, **66 participants** took part in the consultation process.

Consultation with Service Providers and Supporters

An on-line questionnaire and face to face interviews with support services and supporters of children and young people took place. In total **30 participants from support services were interviewed** comprising children and youth support (10), family/parental support (5), education (5), ethnic minority support (3), health and mental health promotion (3), disability support (1), LGBTI+ support (1), support for those affected by sexual abuse/violence (1) and support for those experiencing marginalisation (1).

Consultations were structured to focus discussion on three key themes





What Children and Young People Said about Sexual Health and Wellbeing in County Mayo

The consultation process for the development of the three year Children and Young People's Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for County Mayo (2019-2022) highlighted a range of issues, barriers and solutions facing children and young people including:

Issue	Barriers	Suggested Solutions
<p>Education</p> <p>Poor experience of sexual health and wellbeing education in school.</p> <p><i>"Have to talk to teachers and educate them so they can pass it onto the students"</i></p>	<p>Poor delivery of sexual health and wellbeing – inconsistent, incomplete and some sexual health subjects are avoided.</p> <p><i>"(teacher)skips the pages that ... is too embarrassed to do"</i></p> <p><i>Narrow view of sex education</i></p> <p><i>"sex isn't just about reproduction"</i></p>	<p>Improved age appropriate sexual health education in pre-schools, primary school, second level schools and colleges including in relation to sexuality, body image, healthy relationships, contraception, consent and HIV and other forms of STIs.</p> <p>Improved sexual health and well-being training for education providers (cultural competencies such as LGBTI+, ethnic minority, disability awareness).</p> <p><i>"Its way too late by the time we get to second level to introduce sexual health information!"</i></p>
<p>Family/Parental/Guardian Support</p> <p><i>"Many parents are not always comfortable in talking about sexual health and wellbeing issues".</i></p>	<p>Many children and young people are ill prepared to deal with sexual relationships, their own sexuality and seek information/advice from peers, internet and sources that are not always reliable.</p>	<p>Specific parenting programmes should include talking to children and young people about sexual health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Discussions on sexual health and wellbeing have to become <i>"normal"</i> in the community and local radio and social media campaigns directed at parents/guardians should be developed.</p>



Issue	Barriers	Suggested Solutions
<p>Sexual Health Services and Resources</p> <p>Some children and young people are not aware of what STIs are, the consequences if left untreated, where to go for help/advice and may not always have the resources to access.</p> <p><i>“Open up more services all over Mayo....people might not have the transport to go to big towns and get support”</i></p>	<p>Lack of information on HIV/and other forms of STIs. Fear of judgement by the local service.</p> <p>Accessing services can cost money (<i>“like transport to Castlebar”</i>) that children and young people do not always have.</p> <p><i>“I didn’t know that there was an STI clinic around the corner from the college and that it is free”</i></p>	<p>Local campaign on sexual health and wellbeing supports/services.</p> <p>Increase awareness of what services are free to access.</p> <p>Improved sexual health and well-being training for health providers (cultural competencies such as LGBTI+, ethnic minority, disability awareness).</p> <p>Improved outreach to communities such as shopping centres, youth groups, sports clubs etc. where young people <i>“can go to without anyone knowing why I’m there”</i></p>
<p>Social Media /Social Events</p> <p>The <i>“normalisation”</i> and <i>“prevalence”</i> of the exchange of sexual images, sexual behaviours through peer coercion, bullying and vulnerability due poor self-image /self-confidence/self-esteem.</p> <p><i>“we think it’s the norm to do it and expected by our friends”</i></p>	<p>Lack of awareness of among children and young people of the <i>“dangers”</i> of social media.</p> <p>Poor self-esteem, self-confidence and self-image can lead to forced sexual behaviours and demands at social events that is often coercive and peer pressured.</p> <p>Parents/guardians are unfamiliar with social media <i>“that it (sexual image exchange) starts from the time a child/young person gets a smart phone”</i>.</p> <p><i>“It’s like they (parents) don’t what to know what’s going on...how destructive it can be to us”</i>.</p>	<p>Social media programmes for parents explicitly focused on sexual behaviours to increase parents awareness of the issues, how to support children and young people in dealing with social media and social events.</p> <p>Social media awareness campaign for parents on <i>“how ready is your child to have a mobile devise?”</i></p> <p>Inclusion of social media in sexual health education programmes.</p>



Issue	Barriers	Suggested Solutions
Children and Young People with physical and intellectual disabilities	Significant challenges in understanding their own sexual health and wellbeing and recognition by others of their right to sexual relationships and how relationships are perceived and supported.	Specific targeted programmes to support sexual development and relationships and to increase awareness among majority population. of the right of a person with a disability to sexual relationship
Children and Young Peoples' Right to Access Contraception <i>"The cost of contraception is a barrier in my opinion, especially for young people. It can lead to unprotected sex. I also think sex is still a taboo subject in Mayo, especially in the most rural parts"</i>	Significant gaps in their rights in accessing contraception – what is the legal age in accessing the different forms of contraception? <i>"I don't know what age I have to be to buy condoms in a shop and what do I do if they refuse to sell them to me?"</i>	A local campaign on when and what type of contraception can be accessed and at what age. Ensure that children and young people know what is freely available and is legal to access. Services including community services such as shops (retail), garages etc. should know what children and young people have a right to access.
Sexual, Physical, Mental Health and Emotional Health Sexual health is "always" separate and rarely included when discussing physical, mental and emotional health	The links between poor mental, emotional and physical health are not always included in discussing sexual health and well-being in programmes, information or supports. <i>"They are all part of a person ...why would we discuss sexual health without talking about mental health or physical health...?"</i>	Broadening of sexual health and wellbeing to be included in physical, mental and emotional health programmes for parents/guardians and children/young people. <i>"My mum went to a parents talk on mental health in the school...it was good but they didn't mention sexual health or its influence on mental health she thought that was odd!"</i>
Sexual Health and Wellbeing Information The most common source of sexual health and wellbeing information (amongst the consultation sample) is: <i>"Through the internet, social media and even pornography sites...that's not to say that children and young people won't listen to a person give the information...it's all about how they say it!"</i>	Information is unfiltered, often not local to the county, region or even country. Relevant applicable information that is communicated and understood regardless of gender, sexuality, ethnic group, linguistic ability, disability and religion.	Develop easily accessible local sexual health and wellbeing information hubs, campaigns and effective social media apps. <i>"We really like this way of learning just Q and A's and sharing our experiences, questions and fears...basically a discussion group, really that all it would take to support our sexual health better!"</i>



What Services said about Children and Young People's Sexual Health and Wellbeing in County Mayo

The consultation process for the development of the three year Children and Young People's Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for County Mayo (2019-2021) highlighted a range of issues, barriers and solutions facing young people from the perspective of services and supporters including:

Issue	Barriers	Suggested Solutions
<p>Education</p> <p>Poor experience of sexual health and wellbeing education in school settings.</p> <p><i>"There is excellent sexual health and well-being programmes available such as b4U decide etc. but these programmes are limited to young people who engage with youth services".</i></p> <p><i>"Desire from young people for sexual health programmes for specific young people from the LGBTI community"</i></p>	<p>Poor delivery of sexual health and wellbeing and while youth service are providing excellent support, education and awareness raising this happens only in areas where children and young people are engaging with services or have access to services.</p> <p>The delayed delivery of sexual health and well-being programmes to later the education cycle is impacting negatively on children and young people.</p>	<p>Improved age appropriate sexual health education in pre-schools, primary school, second level schools and colleges including in relation to sexuality, body image, healthy relationships, contraception, consent and HIV and other forms of STIs.</p> <p><i>"sexual health and wellbeing education should start at pre-school "</i></p> <p>Improved sexual health and well-being training for education providers (cultural competencies such as LGBTI+, ethnic minority, disability awareness etc.).</p> <p><i>"increasingly children and young people from ethnic minorities and minority faiths are struggling with their sexual health and wellbeing due to what wider society might consider 'old fashioned' values, traditions, patriarchy etc.... but it's a real issue for young people in these communities trying to integrate yet seen a being different from their peers".</i></p>



Issue	Barriers	Suggested Solutions
<p>Family/Parental/Guardian Support</p> <p><i>“Many parents are struggling with their own legacy issues, their parents didn’t talk openly about sex, so they have to learn as parents how to talk about it with their own children but they can get caught up in the equation that sex = something you don’t talk about. Despite greater openness in society around sexual health that attitude and taboo is alive and well”.</i></p> <p><i>“Issues arise from poor parent awareness and management of social media/internet devices”.</i></p>	<p>Many children and young people are ill prepared to deal with sexual relationships, their own sexuality and seek information/advice from peers, internet and sources that are not always reliable.</p>	<p>Specific parenting programmes should include talking to children and young people about sexual health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Discussions on sexual health and wellbeing have to become “normal” in the community and local radio and social media campaigns directed at parents/guardians should be developed.</p>
<p>Sexual Health Services and Resources</p> <p>Lack of knowledge STIs are, and routes to supports and treatments amongst children and young people.</p> <p><i>“There seems to be a lack of awareness around the need to really screen and get to know potential sexual partners. Some young people seem to enter into sexual relationships really casually”.</i></p>	<p>Lack of information on HIV/and other forms of STIs and the appropriate services available to children and young people.</p>	<p>Local campaign on sexual health and wellbeing supports.</p> <p>Increase awareness of what services are free to access.</p> <p>Improved sexual health and well-being training for health providers (cultural competencies such as LGBTI+, ethnic minority, disability awareness).</p> <p>Improved outreach to communities such as shopping centres, youth groups, sports clubs etc. where young people.</p>



Issue	Barriers	Suggested Solutions
<p>Social Media /Social Events</p> <p>The prevalence of the exchange of sexual images, sexual behaviours through peer coercion, bullying and vulnerability due poor self-image /self-confidence/self-esteem.</p> <p><i>“The prevalence of social media and its negative uses has definitely contributed to increased anxiety amongst children and young people”</i></p>	<p>Lack of awareness of among children and young people of the “dangers” of social media.</p> <p>Poor self-esteem, self-confidence and self-image can lead to forced sexual behaviours and demands at social events that is often coercive and peer pressured.</p> <p>Parents/guardians are unfamiliar with social media, exhibit poor management support of their children and young people’s use of devises.</p> <p><i>“You give a smartphone to a child for his or her confirmation and you are handing them over to a world that they may not be ready for or know how to negotiate”</i></p>	<p>Social media awareness programmes for parents that explicitly focus on sexual behaviours to increase parents awareness of the issues, how to support children and young people in dealing with social media and social events.</p> <p>Social media awareness campaign for parents on <i>“how ready is your child to have a mobile devise?”</i></p> <p>Inclusion of social media in sexual health education programmes.</p>
<p>Children and Young People with physical and intellectual disabilities</p>	<p>Significant challenges in understanding their own sexual health and wellbeing and recognition by others of their right to sexual relationships and how relationships are perceived and supported.</p>	<p>Specific targeted programmes to support sexual development and relationships and to increase awareness among majority population. of the right of a person with a disability to sexual relationship</p>
<p>Children and Young Peoples’ Right to Access contraception and sexual health services</p> <p><i>“Confusion and lack of knowledge about accessing contraception”</i></p>	<p>Significant gaps in their rights in accessing contraception – what is the legal age in accessing the different forms of contraception.</p> <p><i>“Cost of contraception for young people”</i></p>	<p>A local campaign on when and what type of contraception can be accessed and at what age. Ensure that children and young people know what is freely available and is legal to access.</p> <p>Services including community services such as shops (retail), garages etc. should know what children and young people have a right to access.</p>

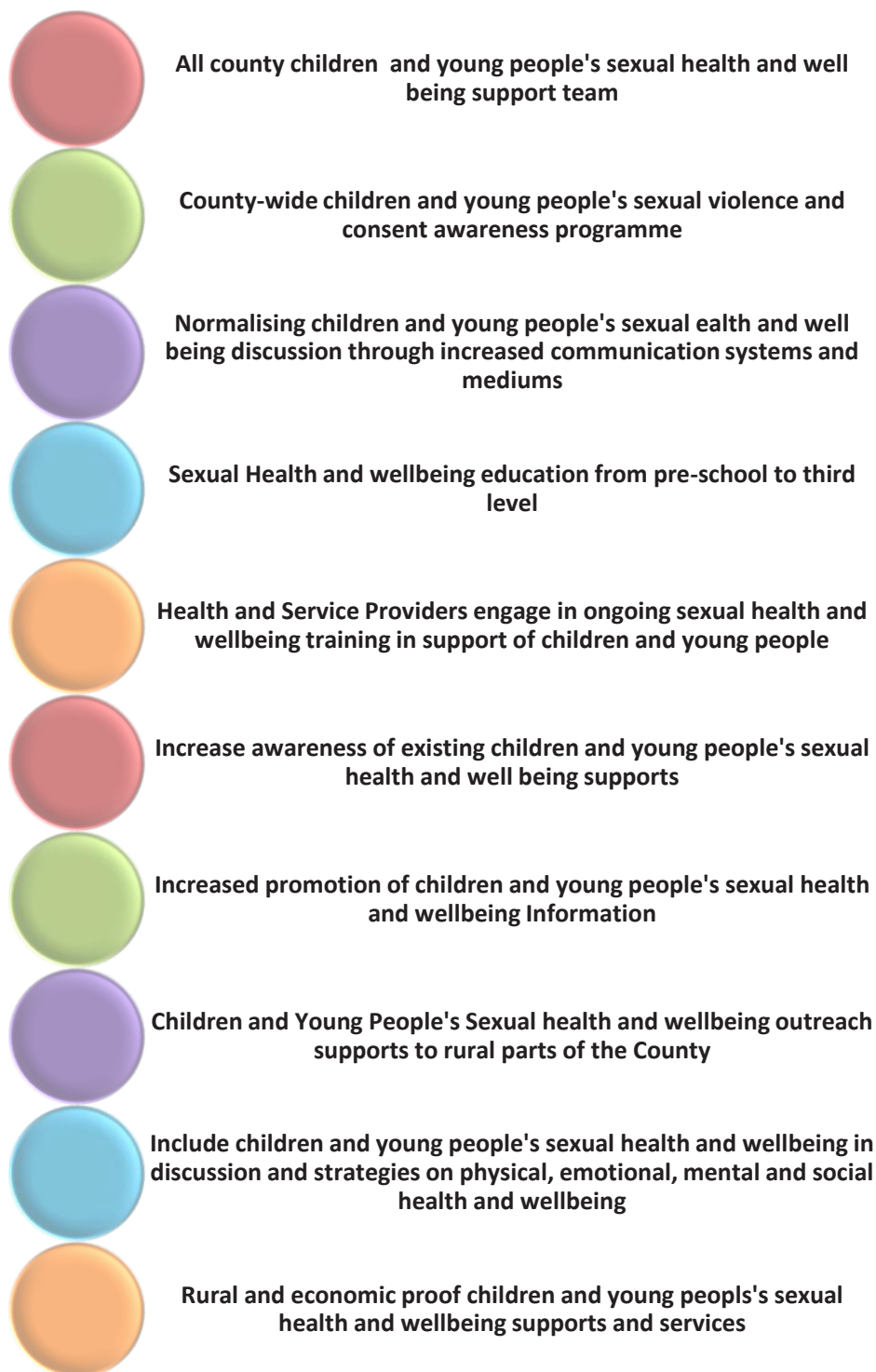


Issue	Barriers	Suggested Solutions
Sexual, Physical, Mental Health and Emotional Health <i>“Some young people availing of our service would have low self-esteem and confidence, which in turn can have an impact on their relationships and sexual health”.</i>	<p>Fragmentation of policy/practice and limited cross thematic approach to a child or young person’s needs leads to fragmented practice and lack of jointed up action.</p> <p>Confusion as to what service can support</p> <p><i>“ a young trans-person referred to CAMHs despite ‘trans’ not being a mental health issues, services just don’t know what to do with him or her”</i></p>	<p>Broadening of sexual health and wellbeing to be included in physical, mental and emotional health programmes.</p> <p>A clear mapping of sexual health and well-being services is required.</p>
Sexual Health and Wellbeing Information <i>“One to one information and group session are highly effective ways of supporting a child or young person’s sexual health and wellbeing but it has to be a tailored, plain language and relevant support approach”</i>	<p>Information is unfiltered, often not local to the county, region or even country.</p> <p>Relevant applicable information that is communicated and understood regardless of gender, sexuality, ethnic group, linguistic ability, disability and religion.</p>	<p>Develop easily accessible local sexual health and wellbeing information hubs, campaigns and effective social media apps.</p> <p><i>“This is a very rural county access to services are poor and especially for children and young people often dependent on their parents for transport and money in accessing services and the fear of someone knowing why a young are attending a sexual health service”</i></p>



Cross Crossing Themes Arising From the Consultation

Arising from the consultation process a number of common themes across what children and young people and services had to say in respect to the sexual health and wellbeing issues, barriers and solutions in addressing these issues and needs. The following summaries these cross cutting themes which in turn guided the development of our children and young people's sexual health and wellbeing plan for County Mayo.





Children and Young People's Sexual Health and Wellbeing Vision for County Mayo

This vision for this plan supports that of the National Sexual Health Strategy where children and young people can *“receive comprehensive and age-appropriate sexual health education and/or information with appropriate prevention and promotion service”*.



This vision will successfully support children and young people in achieving **safe and responsible sexual health and wellbeing and resilient children and young people.**



Values Underpinning

Our Sexual Health and Well Being Plan for Children and Young People

The following values have been developed through our consultation process with children and young people and their service supporters in the County.

Respect

Children and young people's sexual health and wellbeing needs respected and supported in a non-judgemental manner while protecting their right to access and be supported in a confidence enhancing manner.

Participation

Children and young people are included in devising, developing and delivery of sexual health and wellbeing supports and services in County Mayo that supports their capacity to make choices and be involved in decision-making

Inclusion

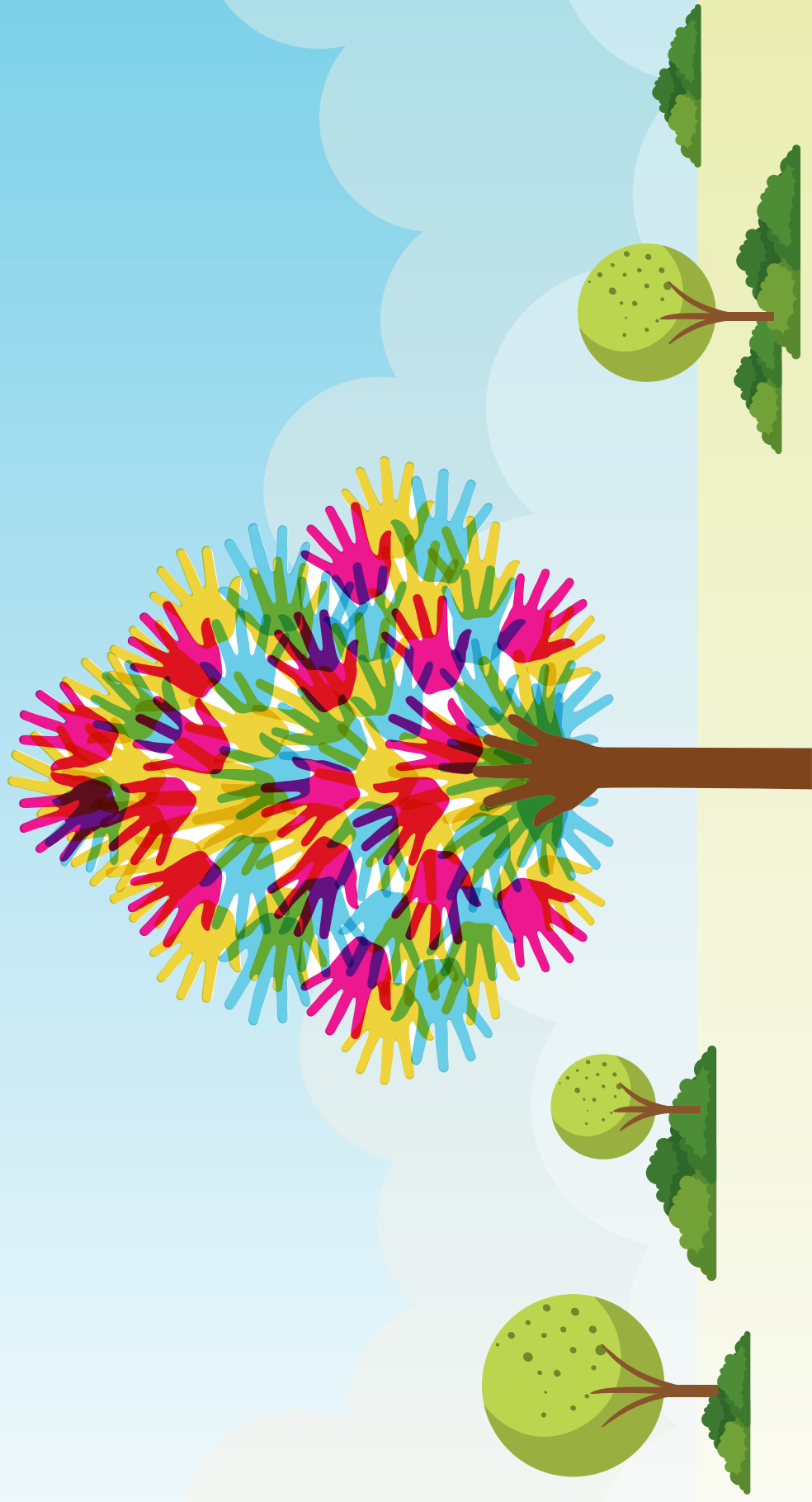
Recognising the right of all children and young people to access, participate and be supported by sexual health and wellbeing supports and services regardless of their gender, sexuality, ethnic group, ability, religion, financial or social marginalisation.

Cohesion

Children and young people's sexual health and wellbeing is supported in a cohesive manner through a planned and shared vision of support at county level.

Equality

Children and young people's sexual health and wellbeing is equally and proactively supported alongside good physical and mental health and wellbeing interventions and approaches to support them in a holistic manner.



Children and Young People's Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for County Mayo

2019 - 2022

Themes, Goals, Objectives and Actions

Theme 1: Sexual Health Promotion, Education and Prevention				
County Mayo Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Children and Young People 2019 – 2022		National Sexual Health Strategy 2015 – 2020		
Goal 1: To improve children and young people access to age appropriate sexual health information, education and services.		Goal 1: Everyone living in Ireland will receive comprehensive and age-appropriate sexual health education and/or information and will have access to appropriate prevention and promotion.		
County Mayo Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Children and Young People 2019 – 2022 Objective	County Mayo Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Children and Young People 2019 – 2022 Action	Timeframe	Lead and Partners	
Establish a working group on children and young people sexual health and well-being to include all stakeholders in the county and link with new emerging structures.	Support implementation of National Sexual Health Strategy with particular focus on children and young people's actions and other relevant national sexual health policy and practice.	2019 - 2020	Community Health Care West Healthy Ireland Plan. Linkage with the sexual health sub group to be established to support the implementation of the sexual health actions of the Healthy Ireland plan and to support the local implementation of actions from the National HSE Sexual Health Programme.	
Support and promote the HSE Foundation Programme in Sexual Health Promotion in County Mayo.	Support and promote sexual health and wellbeing education amongst service providers and community members	Once per year in 2020, 2021, 2022	Health Services Executive (Health Promotion and Improvement Health and Wellbeing Division	
Advocate for the establishment of a children and young people's sexual health and well-being resource team for County Mayo who will support a comprehensive, cohesive sexual health programme for children, young people and their supporters.	Provide a co-ordinated, planned and relevant approach to improving and delivering sexual health and wellbeing programmes, supports and campaigns to children, young people, supports and services throughout the county.	2020 - 2022	CYPSC Sexual Health and Wellbeing Working Group Community Health Care West Healthy Ireland Sexual Health Sub Group Mayo Suicide Prevention Resource Officer	



County Mayo Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Children and Young People 2019 – 2022 Objective	County Mayo Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Children and Young People 2019 – 2022 Action	Timeframe	Lead and Partners
Explore the development of age appropriate sexual health education in pre-schools, primary school, second level schools and colleges including in relation to sexuality, body image, healthy relationships, contraception, consent and HIV and other forms of STIs.	Upscale and outreach successful programmes tailored to supporting children and young people's sexual health and wellbeing including relationships, body image etc. Incorporate RSE recommendation review when published.	2020 - 2022	Mayo County Childcare Committee (Early Years Strategy First Five) CYPRSC Education Sub Group Family Resource Centres
Improve sexual health and well-being training for education providers (cultural competencies such as LGBTI+, ethnic minority and disability awareness).	Improve sexual health and well-being training for education providers (cultural competencies such as LGBTI+, ethnic minority, disability awareness). Devise, develop and deliver in consultation with children and young people and expert organisations a cultural competency training programme with a focus on marginalised groups including those with a disability, LGBTI+, ethnic and faith minorities.	2019 - 2021	CYPSC Sexual Health and Wellbeing Working Group Community Health Care West Healthy Ireland Sexual Health Sub Group Mayo Intercultural Action Western Care Mayo Traveller Support Group AMACHI! South West Mayo Development Company Galway Mayo Institute of Technology Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board
Support health and other service providers in engaging with on-line training model LGBTI+ awareness devised by LGBT Ireland and HSE.	Promote engagement in on-line 45 minute module to increase awareness of needs of LGBTI+ community.	2019	Community Health Care West Healthy Ireland Sexual Health Sub Group LGBT Ireland HSE - Health Promotion and Improvement Health and Wellbeing Division



County Mayo Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Children and Young People 2019 – 2022 Objective	County Mayo Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Children and Young People 2019 – 2022 Action	Timeframe	Lead and Partners
Work in partnership with IT organisations to develop and support the roll out of a social media and sexual health and wellbeing awareness programme for parents/guardians and children and young people.	Devise and deliver a social media awareness programmes explicitly focused on sexual behaviours for parents to increase parents awareness of the issues, how to support children and young people in dealing with social media and social events. Social media awareness campaign for parents on “how ready is your child to have a mobile device?” Inclusion of social media in sexual health education programmes.	2019 - 2020	CYPSC Sexual Health and Wellbeing Working Group CYPSC Sexual Health Regional Sub Group CYPSC National Co-ordinator Community Health Care West Healthy Ireland Sexual Health Sub Group Private IT/phone companies Foróige Galway Mayo Institute of Technology Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board
Advocate and support the development of county wide age appropriate sexual violence, consent, coercion and pornography awareness programme to children and young people.	Seek funding to engage local expertise (Mayo Rape Crisis Centre) to deliver specific programmes in combatting sexual violence, consent, coercion and pornography such as the RCC Manuela Programme.	2020 - 2022	CYPSC Sexual Health and Wellbeing Working Group CYPSC Sexual Health Regional Sub Group Mayo Rape Crisis Centre Galway Mayo Institute of Technology
Empower parents/guardians/carers and children and young people to build their own capacity in seeking and increasing their knowledge of sexual health and wellbeing.	Develop awareness campaign of books and resources available to parents/guardians/carers, children and young people on sexual health and wellbeing in local library and on-line (www.sexualhealth.ie).	2019	CYPSC Sexual Health and Wellbeing Working Group Mayo County Council Library Service HSE -Health Promotion and Improvement Health and Wellbeing



Theme 2: Sexual Health Services

County Mayo Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Children and Young People 2019 – 2022		National Sexual Health Strategy 2015 – 2020	
Goal 2: Seek to deliver specific services not available at county/regional level, and increase awareness of the sexual health services for children and young people in the county.		Goal 2: Equitable, accessible and high quality sexual health services that are targeted and tailored to the need will be available.	
County Mayo Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Children and Young People 2019 – 2022 Objective	County Mayo Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Children and Young People 2019 – 2022 Action	Timeframe	Lead and Partners
Develop and support a children and young people sexual health and wellbeing communication plan for the county to promote effective sexual health and wellbeing messaging, campaigns and resources.	Develop easily accessible local sexual health and wellbeing information hubs, radio campaigns and effective social media apps.	2021-2022	Community Health Care West Healthy Ireland Sexual Health Sub Group
Seek to address the capacity gaps in services and supports for LGBTI+ community of children and young people.	Deliver a capacity building seminar at county/regional level on the needs, supports requirements of transgender children and young people and how health service front line personnel can best meet their needs.	2021	CYPSC Sexual Health and Wellbeing Working Group Community Health Care West Healthy Ireland Sexual Health Sub Group TENI
Increase awareness of children and young people's sexual health and well-being supports and services in the County.	Map and deliver a local campaign on sexual health and wellbeing supports and services available to children and young people.	2021	Community Health Care West Healthy Ireland Sexual Health Sub Group CYPSC Sexual Health and Wellbeing Working Group
Identify and deliver outreach sexual health and wellbeing support services to children and young people.	Pilot the delivery of three sexual health and wellbeing 'pop-up' support services to children and young people in one retail centre, youth support service, and educational service.	2022	Community Health Care West Healthy Ireland Sexual Health Sub Group CYPSC Education Sub Group Family Resource Centres Mindspace Mayo



Theme 3: Sexual Health Intelligence				
County Mayo Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Children and Young People 2019 – 2022		National Sexual Health Strategy 2015 – 2020		
Goal 3: To support children and young people in their decision making for better sexual health and well-being outcomes.		Goal 3: Robust and high quality sexual health information will be generated to underpin policy, practice, service planning and strategic monitoring		
County Mayo Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Children and Young People 2019 – 2022 Objective	County Mayo Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Children and Young People 2019 – 2022 Action	Timeframe	Lead and Partners	
Include sexual health in local strategies developed for mental, physical and emotional health.	Explore options for enhancing physical, mental and emotional health strategies/actions at local level to include children and young people's sexual health and wellbeing.	2019 - 2022	Community Health Care West Healthy Ireland Sexual Health Sub Group CYPSC Education Sub Group Youth Groups Mindspace Mayo	
Examine the impact of the rurality and economic marginalisation on children and young people's access to sexual health and well-being services, initiatives and programme in County Mayo s.	Rural and economic proof all current and future children and young people's sexual health and well-being services, initiatives and programmes.	2019 - 2022	Community Health Care West Healthy Ireland Sexual Health Sub Group CYPSC Sexual Health and Wellbeing Working Group	
Review and evaluate the Children and Young People's Sexual health and Wellbeing Plan for County Mayo to inform outcomes, transfer learning and knowledge and ensure monitoring of impacts.	Deliver an annual review over the life of the plan and end of plan evaluation.	2019-2022	Community Health Care West Healthy Ireland Sexual Health Sub Group CYPSC Sexual Health and Wellbeing Working Group	



Our Implementation of the Children and Young People Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for County Mayo

This plan is informed by a consultation process involving children, young people and their services supporters in County Mayo. The policy climate suggests that this plan is in a position to implement **concise and pragmatic actions to improve children and young people's sexual health and wellbeing** in accessing services and receiving supports, and service providers in delivering relevant, non-judgmental and culturally competent services.

Actions will be prioritised across the time frame of the plan, ensuring a balance between progressing actions that lend themselves to quick achievements, and those actions that require longer term planning, additional significant resourcing, and collaboration across agencies and services. The plan is structured to allow for flexibility in instances where **new structures emerge namely the CYPSC Sexual Health and Wellbeing Working Group and the Community Health Care West Healthy Ireland Sexual Health Sub Group.**

An annual review of progress in respect of implementation of actions will be 2019 - 2022. Significant investment is required in any plan in order to address identified the need identified, build capacity of children, young people, their supporters and services and assure effective and sustainable outcomes. While a number of actions contained in this plan will demand substantial resourcing over time, many other actions will require a rebalancing of existing resources to achieve desired outcomes.

Similarly, certain **actions might be aligned to, or leveraged off existing actions or initiatives in other programmes, as mechanisms for innovative, collaborative actions.**

Evaluation of expenditure on children and young people's sexual health support actions outlined in this plan and will form a key element of the evaluation.



*The Advisory Group comprised
Jarleth Munnelly County Mayo
CYPSC Co-Ordinator*

*Thelma Birrane Health Service
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*Breda Ruane Mayo SLigo Leitrim
Education and Training Board*

*The Advisory Group
would like to thank all
the local, regional and
nationalservices for
their contributions to
this plan.*

Buíochas le Gach Duine

*They would like to
especially thank the
children and youth
services who faciliated
and supported the
consultation process.*

*Finally, they would like to
thank the children and young
people of County Mayo who
gave their views, showed such
leadership and wisdom,
shared their opinions,
experiences and
recommendations to this plan.
County Mayo's future is truely
in safe hands.*



County Mayo Children and Young People's Services Committee

In Collaboration with

*Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board, Health Services Executive
(Health Promotion and Improvement Health and Wellbeing Division) and*

Galway Mayo Institute of Technology

