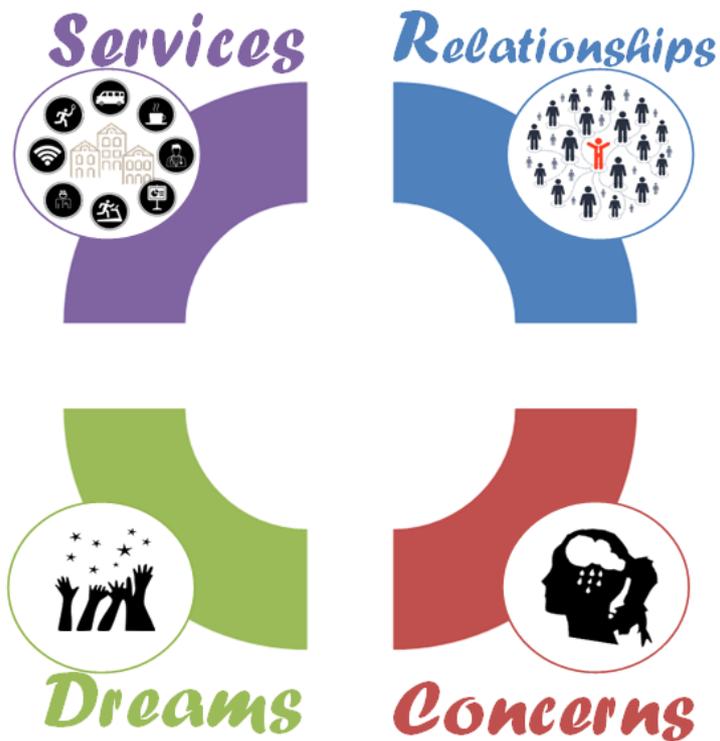


# Youth-led Research Initiative in County Galway



## Findings from Tuam, Clifden and Ballybane: Composite Report

June 2018

**TÚSLA**  
An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

Athenry  
  
Child and Family  
Support Network

  
**CYPSC**  
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEES  
Galway

## **Acknowledgements**

The questionnaire used to collect the data presented in this report was designed, developed, piloted and administered by a team of Transition Year students attending the three second level schools in Athenry, County Galway. Brian Ó Maoilchiaráin (Coláiste an Éachreidh), Cathal Moore and Joe Kelly (Presentation College) and Ciaran Folan and Joe Monaghan (Clarin College) in Athenry facilitated young people to participate in this project, provided meeting rooms, communicated with parents and students and uploaded links to the schools' websites. Additional support to the development of the research tool was provided by Caitríona Newell (Tusla, Athenry), Paul McCavera (Educational Welfare Services, Tusla) and Gerry Prior (Foróige) through the Athenry Child and Family Support Network.

Administration of the research questionnaire in Clifden was directed by Marie Feeney (Adolescent Support Programme, FORUM Connemara). Megan Depinna (Foróige) facilitated administration of the research questionnaire in Ballybane, Galway City. Éamonn Mullins (Prevention, Partnership and Family Support, Tusla) invited young people in Tuam to participate in the research project.

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## Table of Contents

Introduction	p. 4
Methodology	p. 4
Profile of Respondents	p. 5
Research Findings	p. 7
<i>Services and Facilities</i>	<i>p. 7</i>
<i>Relationships</i>	<i>p. 9</i>
<i>Concerns</i>	<i>p.11</i>
<i>Dreams and Ambitions</i>	<i>p.14</i>
For the Consideration of Service Providers	p.16
Appendix 1: Copy of Survey Questionnaire	p.17

## **Introduction**

During the 2017 / 2018 academic year, Transition Year students from three second level schools in Athenry, County Galway, designed and administered a research study into the perceived service needs of young people in the area.

In May 2018, Galway Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) coordinated the roll-out of the research in three other research sites across the County:

- North Galway Family Services, Tuam
- Adolescent Support Programme, Clifden
- Eastside Youth Development Project, Ballybane

This project comprises a key element of the consultation process that will inform the Galway Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2021. Findings presented in this report will inform the future work of Galway Children and Young People's Services Committee.

## **Methodology**

The research team that designed the survey questionnaire consisted of 33 young researchers from the Transition Year programme in the three second level schools in Athenry. This team was supported and facilitated by 2 Galway Children and Young People's Services Committee staff. In May 2018, following its application in Athenry, the research tool was administered in three further locations across the county: Tuam, Clifden and Ballybane.

The survey was distributed and introduced to young people attending local services by service staff. The questionnaire was administered in hard copy. Respondents were given 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The voluntary nature of participation was stressed in each research site. Service staff remained available to the respondents as they completed the questionnaire.

Parental consent worked on an 'opt out' basis. Parents were provided with a written description of the project by the youth service staff in each area and afforded the opportunity to have their children exempted from the project. No parents objected to their child's participation in the study.

In total, 33 completed questionnaires were returned.

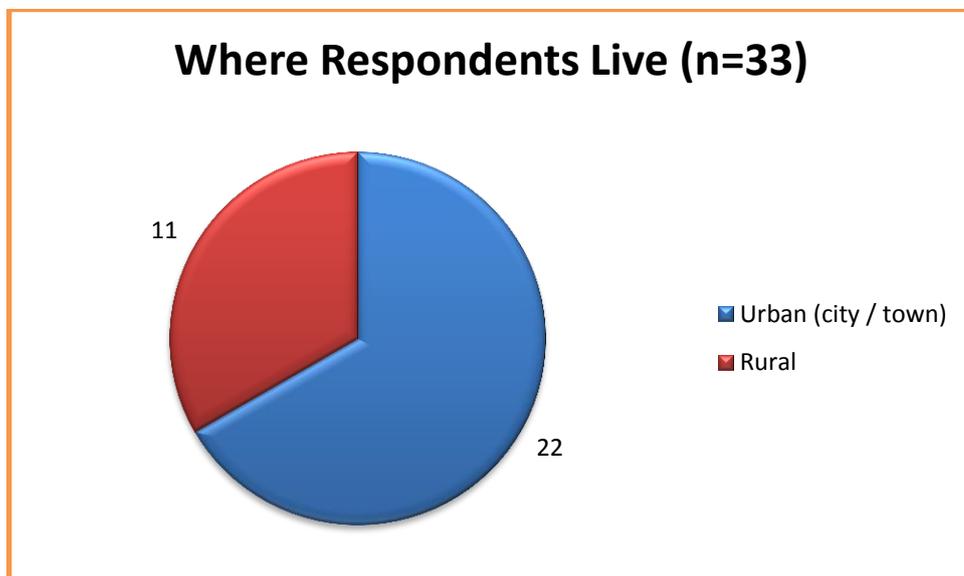
Completed responses were entered into Survey-Monkey to facilitate analysis.

## Profile of Respondents

In total, 33 young people completed the survey questionnaire:

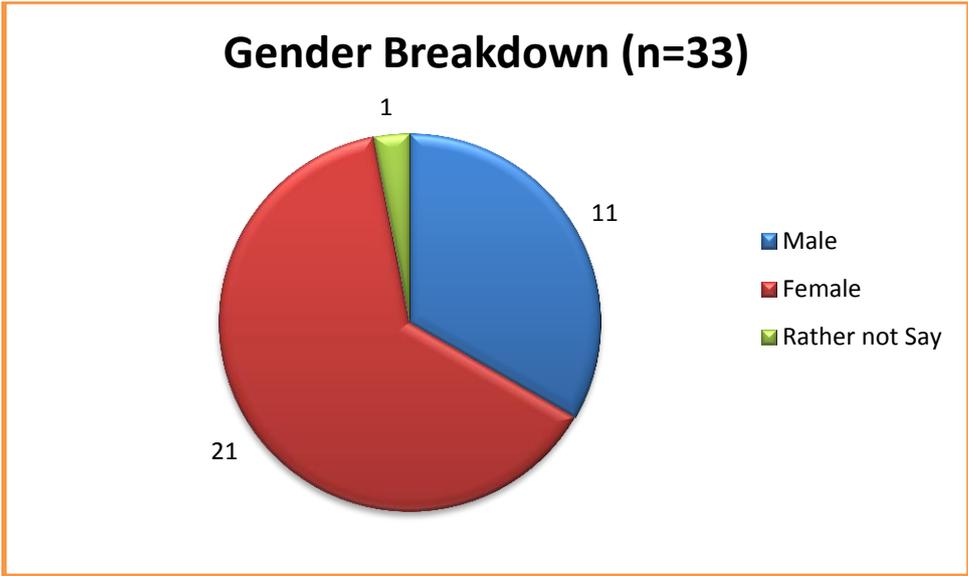
- Zero (0) completed questionnaires were returned from North Galway Family Support Services, Tuam.
- Twenty (20) completed questionnaires were returned from Eastside Youth Development Project, Ballybane.
- Thirteen (13) completed questionnaires were returned from the Adolescent Support Programme, Clifden.

Nearly two thirds of respondents, 20, were attending the Eastside Youth Development Project in the Ballybane area of Galway city. The remaining 13 respondents were participants on the Adolescent Support Programme in Clifden. No completed returns were returned by young people attending North Galway Family Services in Tuam.

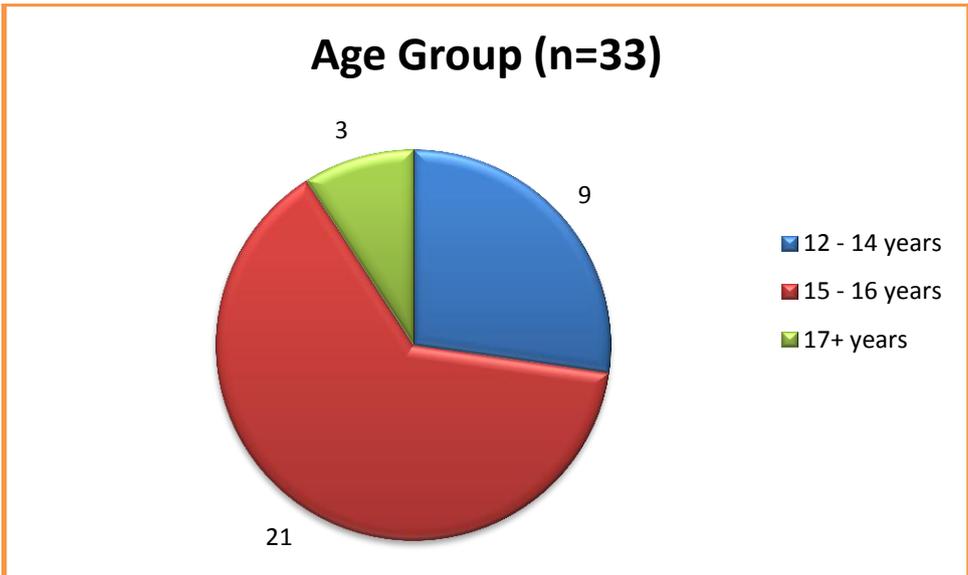


All respondents from the Ballybane area indicated that they lived in an urban area. Two of those attending the Adolescent Support Group in Clifden indicated that they lived in an urban (city or town), while 11 indicated that they lived in a rural area.

Just under two thirds of respondents, 21, were female. Eleven respondents were male. One responded indicated that they would rather not identify a gender.



Only 3 respondents were aged 17 years or older. Just under two thirds of respondents, 21, were aged 15 – 16 years old. Nine respondents were aged 12 – 14 years old.



## Research Findings

### Services and Facilities

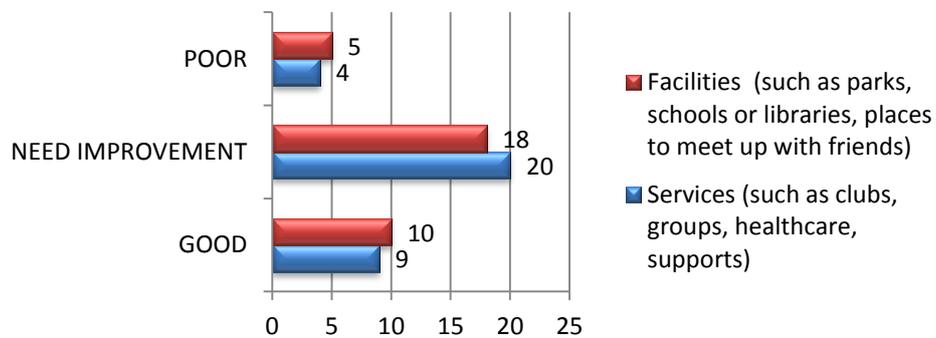
Young people saw little difference in the standard of facilities (such as parks, schools, libraries and places to meet with friends) and the standard of services (such as clubs, groups and supports) that are available within their locality.

While 10 respondents felt that the standard of facilities available to them was good, 18 felt facilities need improvement and 5 felt they were poor.

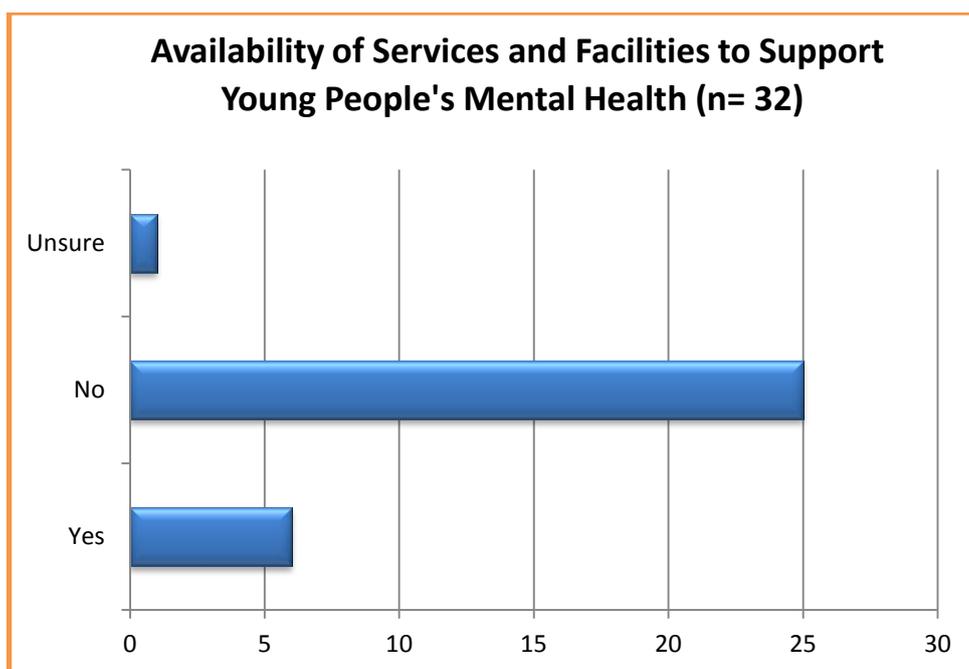
Nine respondents indicated that the standard of services available to them was good, 20 felt that services need to be improved and 4 felt they were poor.



### Perception of services and social facilities for young people in local area (n=33)



Fewer than 1 in 5 respondents felt that there were enough mental health supports available in their area.



Of the 25 respondents who felt that there were not enough mental health supports available locally, 17 referred to informal, preventative, services such as youth clubs, youth cafes and places for young people to hang-out. Eight of these comments specifically mentioned the need for a purpose built building for young people. One respondent referred to the need for more services for people with disabilities and one called for a life-coaching service.

Of the 6 respondents who felt that there were enough mental health services available locally, only 1 provided further comment. This suggested that local services need to be better advertised.

When asked what activities or hobbies young people participated in, all but one responded that they 'meet with friends' (32). The next two most activities most frequently cited activities involve screen time: 'social media', 29, and 'watch TV / Play video games', 25.

Activity	Number	Percentage	Bar
Meet with Friends	32	97%	
Social Media	29	88%	
Watch TV / Play video games	25	76%	
Go to Youth Clubs (e.g. Foróige)	21	64%	
Music (learning / playing)	21	64%	
Visit Parks / Green Spaces	19	58%	
Library / reading	13	39%	
Go to discos for young people	12	36%	
Individual Sports	11	33%	
Go to coffee shops / cafes that welcome young people	11	33%	
Volunteering	9	27%	
Team Sports	8	24%	
Indoor Sports	7	21%	
Coding / Computers	7	21%	
Drama (learning / acting)	5	15%	

When considering what might encourage young people to take part in more activities, a lack of time, or the need for more time, was mentioned by 15 respondents. A further 7 respondents suggested that making activities less expensive would encourage greater participation.

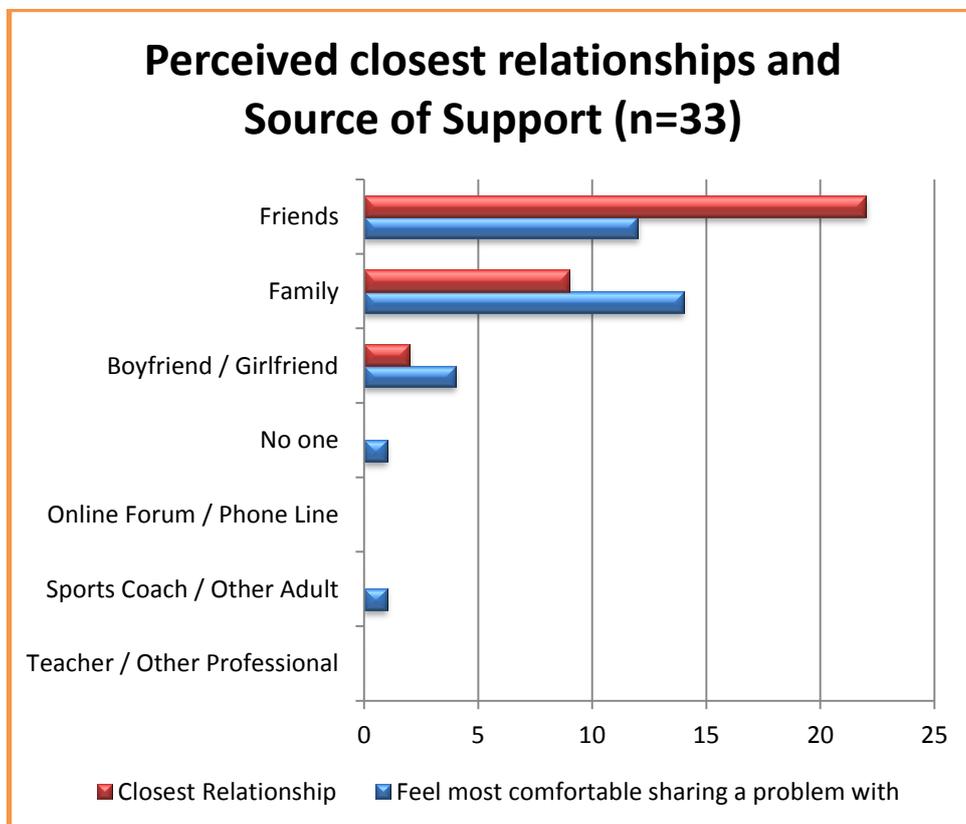
Of the 11 respondents living in rural areas, 5 suggested that improved transport would encourage them to participate in more activities. Three respondents living in urban areas also cited transport as a potential enabling factor.

### Relationships

When asked about the strength of their relationships two thirds of respondents, 22, indicated that their strongest relationships are with their friends.

A further 2 respondents identified their strongest relationship as being with their boyfriend / girlfriend and just under one third, 9, with their family.

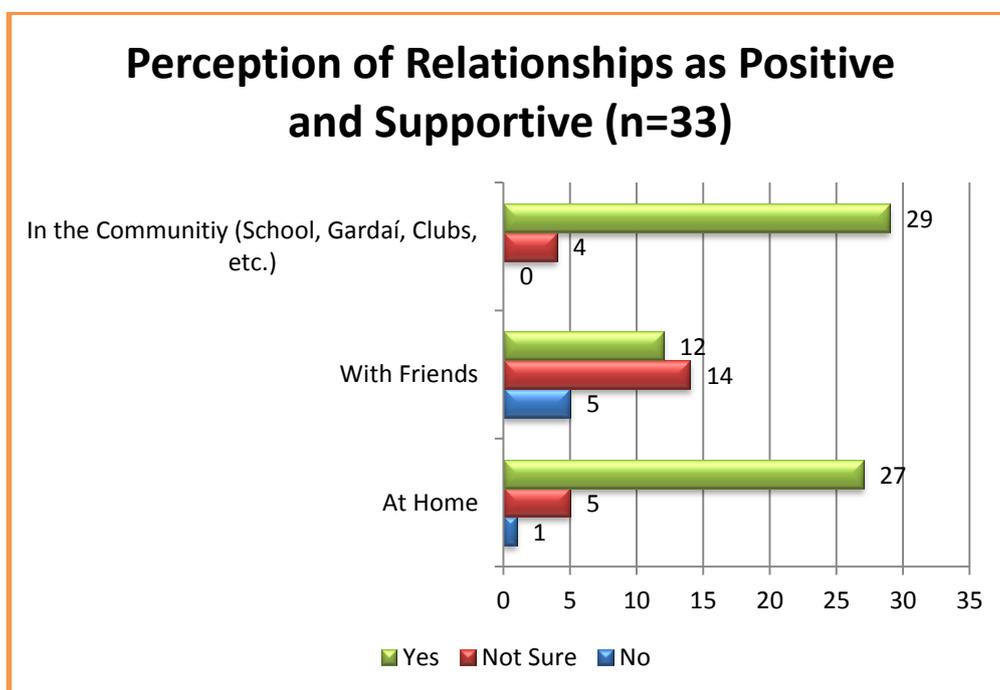
However, when asked who they would feel most comfortable talking to if they had a problem or needed support, 14 respondents indicated they would talk to their families and only 12 respondents indicated they would turn to their friends.



While parents and friends are the two groups that young people are most likely to turn to when they need advice or if they have a problem, only one respondent indicated that they would turn to a sports coach. One young person stated that they do not really like to talk to anyone about their problems. No respondents felt they would turn to a teacher / other professional or to an online / phone line based support.

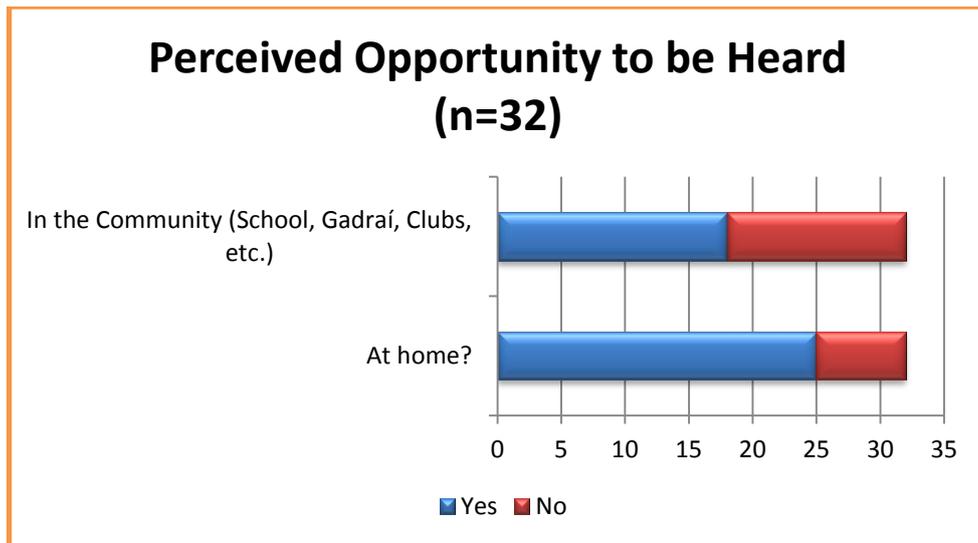
In response to being asked if they felt that most of their relationships were positive and respectful, 29 respondents indicated that their relationships within the broader community were positive and supportive. While 4 respondents were unsure, none felt that their relationships within the broader community were not positive and supportive.

Young people also consider their relationships at home to be positive and supportive. While 1 respondent felt that his/her relationships at home were not positive and a further 5 were unsure, the vast majority, 27, considered relationships at home to be positive.



Notwithstanding the reported closeness of the relationships that respondents have with their friends, these relationships are far less likely to be perceived as positive and supportive. Significantly less than half of all respondents, 12, perceived these relationships to be positive. A greater number of respondents, 14, were unsure about the nature of these relationships while 5 did not consider them to be positive.

When asked if they are provided with opportunities to have their voice heard, a marked difference was evident between how respondents perceive the opportunities available to them at home, 25, and in the community, 18.



Respondents felt that adults need training and support to help them to listen more effectively to young people.

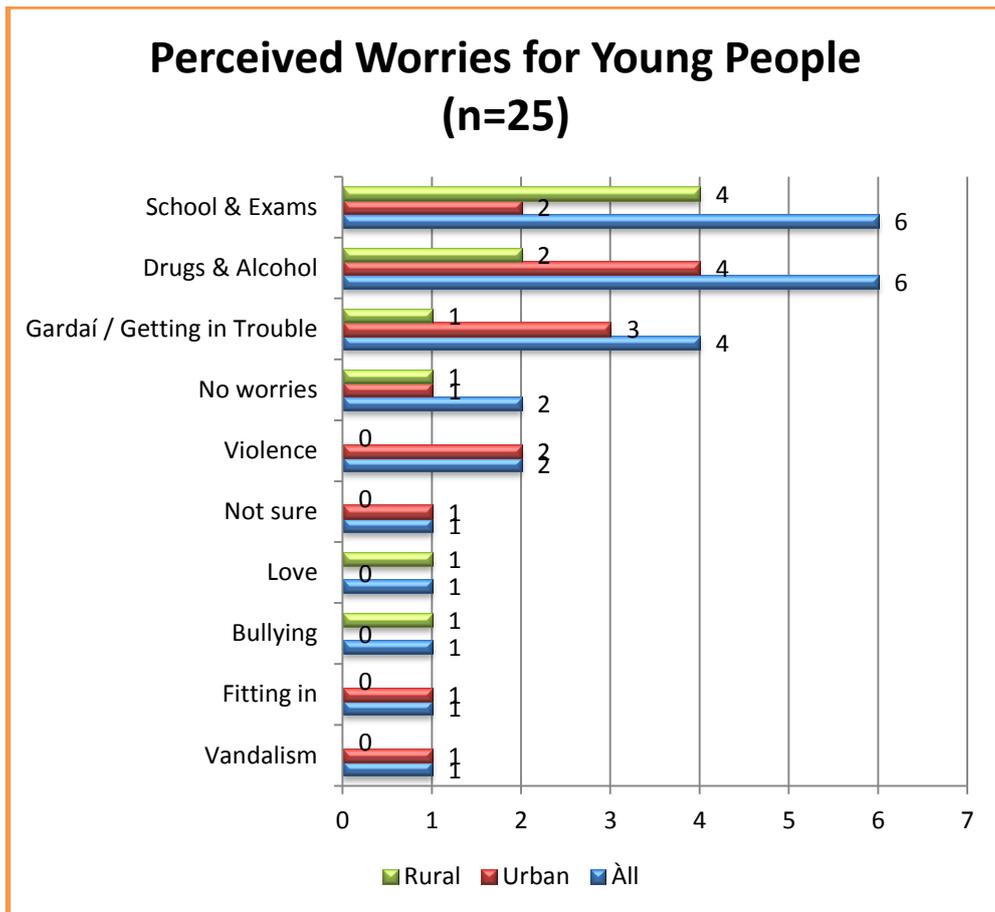
### Concerns

The two most frequently cited worries for young people related to 'school and examinations', 6, and 'drugs and alcohol', 6.

School and examinations were identified as the principal cause of worry for young people by 4 of the 10 respondents living in rural areas. Drugs and alcohol were identified as the principal cause of worry for 4 of the 19 urban respondents.

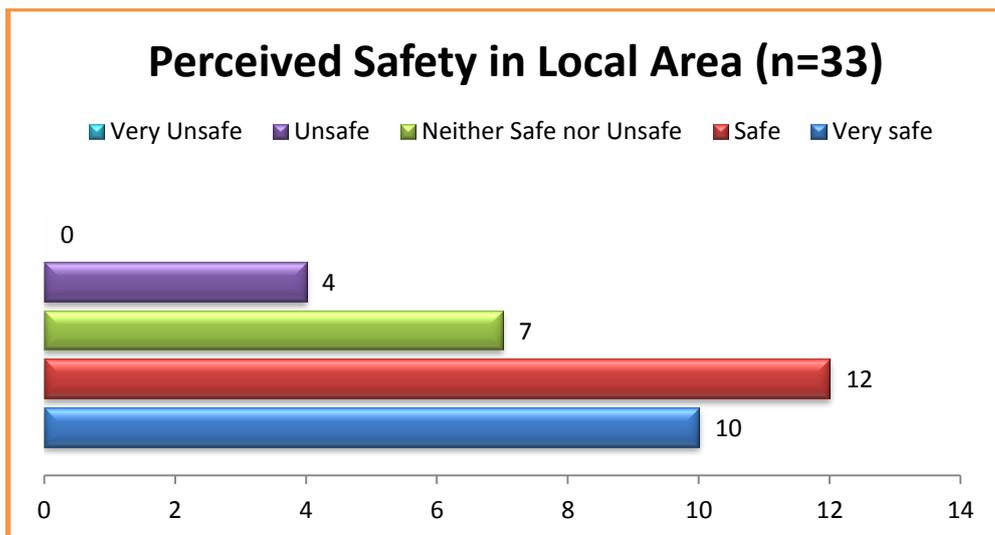
Getting into trouble, specifically trouble with the gardaí, was mentioned by both urban, 3, and rural respondents, 1.





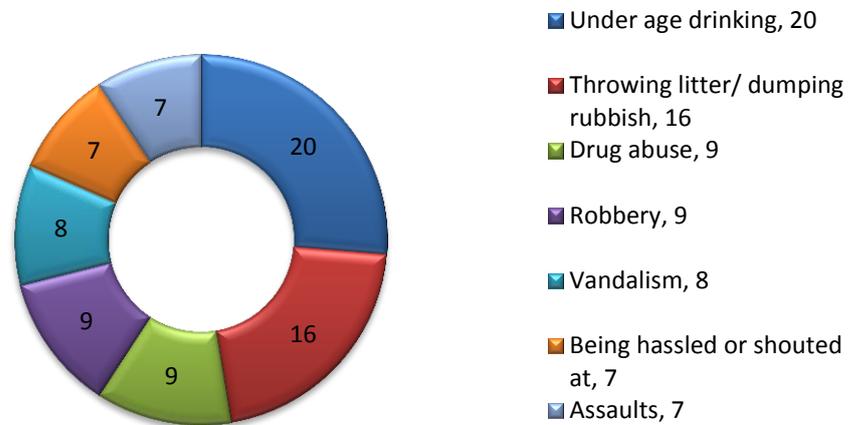
When asked how safe they felt when out and about in their locality, a sizable majority, 22, felt they were either 'very safe' or 'safe'. No respondents felt 'very unsafe' while 4 respondents felt 'unsafe'.

All 4 respondents who indicated that they felt 'unsafe' when out and about in their areas were living in an urban setting.



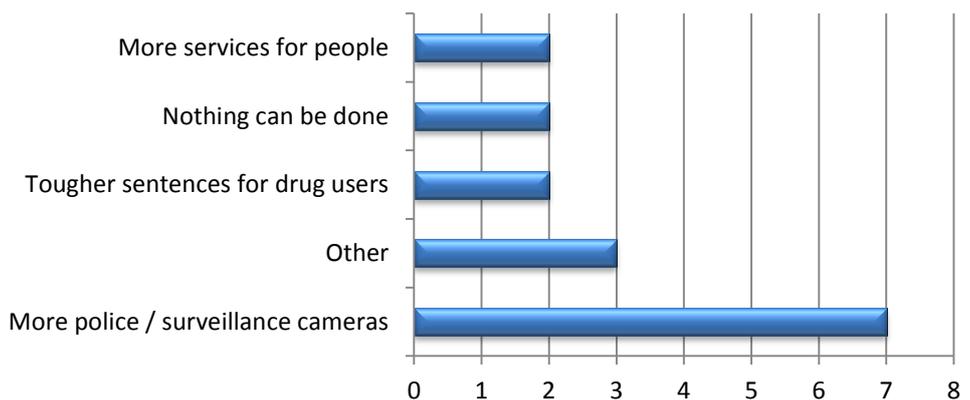
When asked to consider whether or not they are aware of criminal or anti-social behaviour taking place locally, 20 respondents indicated an awareness of under-age drinking. More than 20% of respondents, 7, reported 'being hassled or shouted at' and 'assaults'.

## Young Peoples' Awareness of Different Crimes (n=33)



When considering what could be done to help young people feel safer in the areas where they live, the most common suggestions related to having a stronger garda presence or a greater number of surveillance cameras. However, it is also worth noting that, on the whole, commentary relating to the performance of the gardaí was not favourable. One respondent suggested that 'less gardaí' would make him/her feel safer while other comments suggested: 'gardaí need to pull up their socks', 'gardaí need to start doing their jobs' and 'the feds need to step up a gear'.

## How to Make Young People Feel Safer in their Areas (n=16)



Two respondents suggested providing more services for young people as a means of diverting them from criminal / anti-social behaviour.

## Dreams and Ambitions

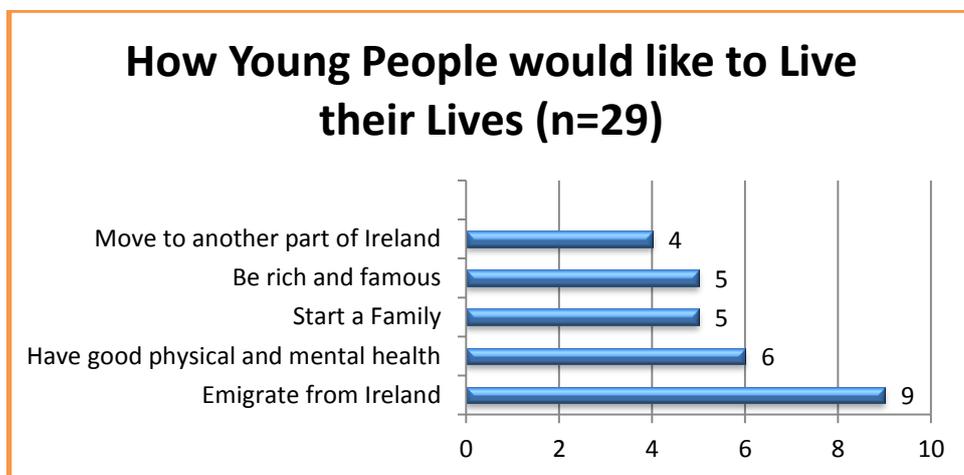
In total, 24 respondents indicated that they have a good idea of what they would like to do after they leave school. On the other hand, 7 respondents stated that they did not have a good idea of what they wanted to do after completing school.

Of the 19 respondents who completed this question and identified as female, 17 indicated that they have a good idea of what they wanted to do after completing school. However, a markedly lower proportion of 7 of the 11 male respondents indicated that they knew what they wanted to do when they left school.



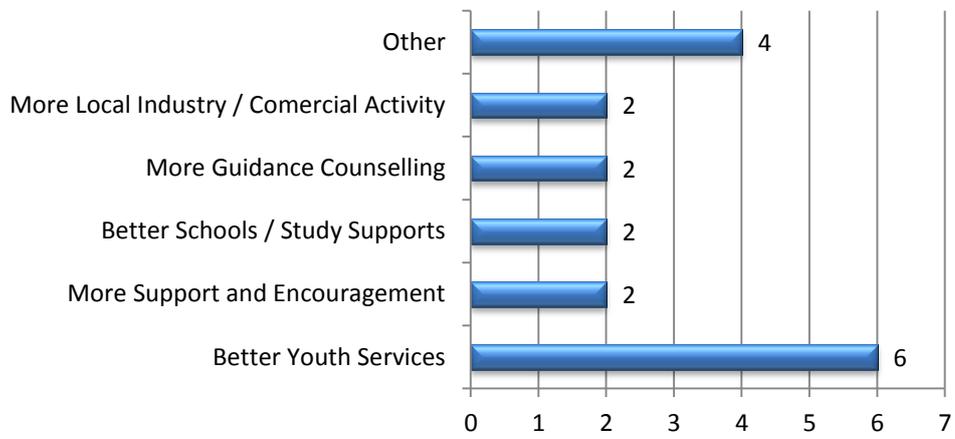
When asked what they would like to do after graduating from school, 3 respondents indicated that they planned to turn a hobby into a career. A large majority of respondents who indicated a defined ambition, 21, referred to attending college and university courses.

When considering their more general plans, fully 9 out of 29 respondents indicated that they would like to emigrate when they complete their education / training. A further 4 respondents indicated that they would like to move to another part of Ireland.



When asked to identify actions that could be taken to support young people to achieve their dreams and ambitions, the most common response, 6, provided by young people called for the delivery of more youth services. Better supports to achieve academically (2), a greater range of opportunities for local employment (2) and more general support and encouragement from adults (2) were also cited.

## What can be done to support Young People's dreams and ambitions (n=18)



### **For the Consideration of Service Providers**

1. For the most part, young people feel that the standard of services available to them needs to be improved.
2. Young people feel that more mental health services and supports, in particular, are required.
3. Young people feel that the provision of a wider range of informal services and activities (such as youth clubs and youth cafes) would support positive mental health and act to prevent the occurrence of mental ill-health.
4. Participation of young people in activities could be increased by reducing costs. Better transport services would also help young people to participate. Transport is an issue in urban areas as well as rural areas.
5. A significant majority of young people feel that the standard of facilities available to them needs to be improved.
6. The type of facility that young people most frequently called for is a youth space where they can spend time and hang out.
7. Young people feel that their closest relationships are with their friends. However, young people are more likely to turn to family if they are experiencing a problem.
8. Although young people identified their friendships as their closest relationships, they are much more likely to feel that their relationships with family members, and their relationships within the broader community, are more positive and supportive.
9. Young people feel adults need to be helped to learn how to listen to them.
10. The two issues that concern young people most are 'school and exams' and 'alcohol and drugs'.
11. Most young people feel 'very safe' or 'safe' within their communities. However, a significant minority, over 1 in 5, are familiar with 'being hassled or shouted at' and 'assaults'.
12. While many young people are critical of the gardaí, the most frequently suggested response to criminal and anti-social behaviour was the provision of more gardaí.
13. Three quarters of young people have a good idea of what they want to do after they leave school. Girls are more likely to have a good idea of what they want to do than are boys.
14. Of those young people who have an idea of what they would like to do after leaving school, most would like to progress onto further education or training. Over a third of young people see themselves emigrating.
15. A greater proportion of young people believe that providing better youth services and facilities is more likely to help them achieve their dreams and ambitions than providing more academic supports, employment opportunities or general encouragement.

## Appendix 1: Copy of Questionnaire

### Survey of Needs, Issues and Priorities for Young People in Galway

This survey was compiled by Transition Year students in 3 schools in Athenry. Supported by Galway Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC), these students wanted to find out what matters most to young people in their own area. Galway CYPSC is now asking young people in other areas of Galway City and County for their opinions. Findings from this survey will be used to inform the Galway Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2021. Information collected through the survey may be shared with member organisations of Galway Children and Young People's Services Committee (see [www.cypsc.ie](http://www.cypsc.ie) > Galway).

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#### Section 1: About you

The survey is anonymous which means you do not need to say your name but we do want to find out some other things:

I live in an area that is:

Urban (City / Town)

Rural (Countryside)

I am:

Male

Female

I'd rather not say

I am aged:

12- 14

15-16

17+

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#### Section 2: Services and Facilities

What do you think of the services and social facilities for young people in the area where you live? (Please tick the box you agree with most)

	Good	Needs Improvement	Poor
<b>Facilities</b> (places/buildings/areas that are designed for a reason such as parks, schools or libraries)			
<b>Services</b> (these are set up meet a need such as the doctor, Gardaí, youth club).			

Are there enough services and facilities in the area where you live to help young people to feel good about themselves and to support their physical and mental health?

Yes, there are enough

No, there are not enough

Please tell us how services and facilities could be improved for young people in the area where you live?

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What activities/hobbies do you take part in outside of school/in your spare time?

(Tick all that you do now or did in the past year)

Activity	Yes I do this	No I don't do this
Team sports (GAA, soccer, rugby etc)		
Indoor sports (badminton etc)		
Individual sports (tennis, swimming, gym)		
Visit parks/ Green spaces		
Meet with friends		
Go to coffee shops/ cafes that welcome young people		
Go to Discos for young people		
Go to youth group (eg Foróige)		
Social media		
Watch TV/ Play video games		
Coding/ computers		
Music (learning/playing)		
Drama (learning/acting)		
Volunteering		
Library/ reading		

What might encourage you to take part in more activities?

Less expensive?  Better transport?  More time?  Other ?

If 'other' please explain \_\_\_\_\_

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### Section 3: Relationships

Who is your strongest relationship with right now? (tick one box)

Family

Friends

Boyfriend/ girlfriend

Who would you feel most comfortable talking to if you had a problem or needed support?  
(tick one)

Family

Sports coach or other adult

Friends

Online forum or phone line support

Boyfriend/girlfriend

I don't really like to talk about my problems

Teacher or other professional

Other

If 'other' please explain

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Do you consider that the majority of your relationships positive and respectful?

At home?

Yes

No

Not sure

With friends?

Yes

No

Not sure

In your community (school, Gardaí, clubs etc) Yes

No

Not sure

Do you have enough opportunities for your voice to be heard?

At home?

Yes

No

In the community (school, Gardaí, clubs etc) Yes

No

What could be done to improve relationships in your community?

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**Section 4: Concerns**

**What do you think are the biggest worries for young people where you live?**

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**How safe do you feel when you are out and about where you live?**

Very safe       Safe       Neither Safe nor Unsafe       Not Safe       Very Unsafe

**What are the most common crimes or types of anti-social behaviour that you are aware of where you live?**

Robbery	<input type="checkbox"/>	Being hassled or catcalled	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vandalism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Under-age drinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assaults	<input type="checkbox"/>
Throwing litter/ dumping rubbish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>

If other, please give examples

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**What could be done to help young people feel safer in the area where you live?**

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**Section 5: Dreams**

**Do you know what you would like to do after you leave school?**

Yes, I have a good idea

No, I have no idea yet

**If you ticked 'yes' please tell us what your ambitions are for your future? (tick one)**

College/university

Training/Apprenticeship

Go straight into a job

Turn a hobby into a career

Live off social welfare

**How you would like to live your life when you finish your education/training? (tick one)**

Emigrate from Ireland

Move to another area in Ireland

Be in a healthy and happy relationship

Start a family

Have good physical and mental health

Be rich and famous

Other

If 'other' please explain \_\_\_\_\_

**What can be done in your local area to support you to achieve your dreams and ambitions?**

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**Thank you for taking our survey.**