



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION
WITH PARENTS ACROSS GALWAY
CITY AND COUNTY

2019



An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency





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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



This report would not have been possible without the commitment of hundreds of parents who took time out of their busy lives to participate in the focus groups and to complete the survey questionnaire. Their honesty and insights have provided a rich vein of information and understanding of their everyday experiences and challenges.

This project was undertaken in partnership with a cohort of practitioners who worked together to ensure an inclusive and respectful process. It was driven by the Prevention, Partnership and Family

Support Sub-Group which provided guidance and direction to the project team (see Appendix 1).

Much appreciation to the frontline staff of the agencies and organisations who facilitated the focus groups and made insightful contributions to the process (see Appendix 2).

Also, to the staff of Galway Children and Young People's Services Committee - Morgan Mee and Marie Gibbons - for their participation and advice.

Thanks to Sinead Doody, Doody Facilitation & Consulting Ltd., for collating the information and producing the completed document.

Finally, to the project team, Orla Curran, Aine Shanahan, Michelle Moran and Raymond Dervan from the Child and Family Support Network Team and to Susan Forde, PPFS Manager.

Abbreviations

BOBF	Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 - 2020	FRC	Family Resource Centre
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service	GRD	Galway Rural Development
CFSN	Child and Family Support Network	ISPCC	Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
CPD	Continuing Professional Development	NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
CYPSC	Children and Young People's Services Committee	PPFS	Partnership, Prevention and Family Support
EWO	Education Welfare Office	Tusla SW	Tusla Social Work
		WRDATF	Western Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force

INTRODUCTION



The role of parents is continuously evolving and can be complex and challenging. Tusla, The Child and Family Agency, is committed to working in close partnership with parents to ensure services are designed to meet their needs. Effective consultation and engagement with parents is pivotal to this.

In 2017/2018, Tusla led an extensive consultation process with parents across Galway City and County. This was undertaken in collaboration with a broad range of partner organisations that provide supports and services to children and

families. The aim was to give a voice to parents on issues that matter to them – to hear their opinions, experiences, suggestions, concerns and hopes. The process was part of an on-going commitment by Tusla and its partners to involve parents, young people and children in service design and decision-making.

“to hear their opinions, experiences, suggestions, concerns and hopes”

This report has been designed to communicate unedited feedback from parents, in their own words. The purpose is to facilitate agencies and organisations to interpret the needs of parents in the context of their own services and supports.

Tusla PPFS Sub-Group Members

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✓ Prevention, Partnership and Family Support, Tusla | ✓ Western Region Drugs and Alcohol Task Force |
| ✓ Teen Parenting Support Group, HSE | ✓ Health Promotion, HSE |
| ✓ Galway Rape Crisis Centre | ✓ Family Resource Centres |
| ✓ Galway Rural Development | ✓ Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, HSE |
| ✓ Brothers of Charity | ✓ Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board |
| ✓ Educational Welfare Service, Tusla | ✓ Galway Childcare Committee |
| ✓ Irish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children | ✓ Galway Children and Young People's Services Committee |
| ✓ COPE Galway | |

POLICY CONTEXT



While there are a broad range of national policies and strategies underpinning the work of Tusla and its partners, this consultation process was conducted within the context of the following documents:

- **Better Outcomes Brighter Futures (2014 -2020)**
- **Prevention Partnership and Family Support Programme**
- **Galway Children and Young People's Services Committee**

Better Outcomes Brighter Futures

Better Outcomes Brighter Futures (BOBF) provides a national policy framework for improved outcomes for children and young people. Its vision is for "Ireland to be one of the best small countries in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future".

BOBF emphasises that positive parenting and supportive home environments are central to aiding children's development and influencing their future. It recognises that parents face diverse challenges, including managing a work-life balance, protecting children and accessing information on children's needs. BOBF seeks to ensure that parents are equipped and supported to raise their families, to play their role as primary carers and to promote the best possible outcomes for their children. It commits to improving supports to all parents through universal access to good-quality parenting advice and programmes, access to affordable quality childcare and access to targeted, evidence-based supports to those parents with greatest needs.

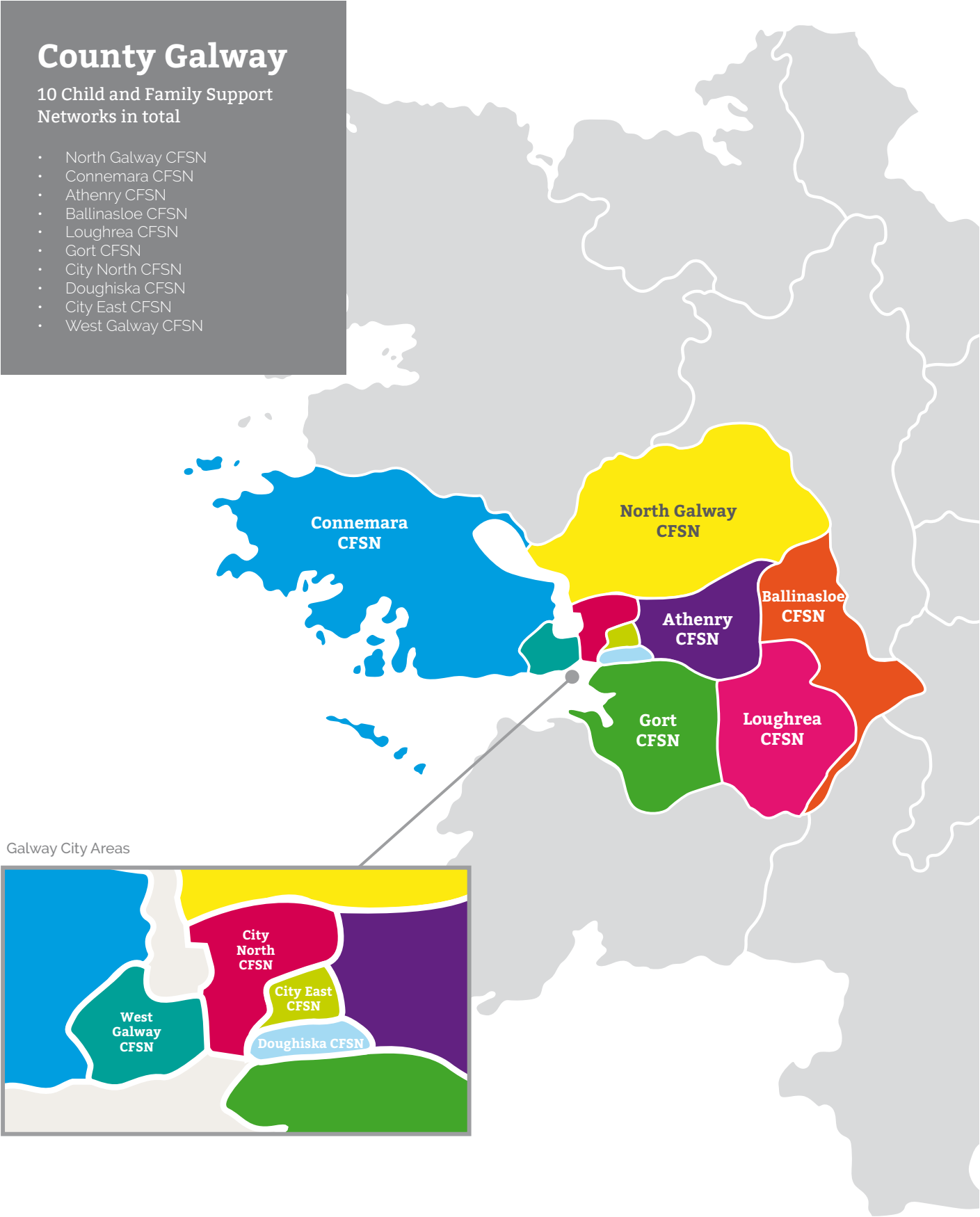
Prevention, Partnership and Family Support Programme (PPFS)

The PPFS Programme is an evidence-led approach to prevention and early intervention work which was developed by Tusla with the support of the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway. It aims to ensure that families receive preventative support and early intervention as part of a cohesive system, with agencies identifying needs early and working together to provide practical help and support.

The Programme is implemented collaboratively by Tusla and partner organisations by way of five main work streams:

1. **Participation:** Supporting the participation of young people in decisions that affect them.
2. **Parenting:** Parenting support and parental participation.
3. **Commissioning:** Adopting a new approach to commissioning services; underpinned by a Commissioning Strategy.
4. **Child and Family Support Networks and Meitheal:** Implementing an area-based approach to prevention and early intervention; Including Meitheal, a Tusla-led Early Intervention Practice Model.
5. **Public Awareness:** Implementing awareness of the PPFS Programme (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Child and Family Support Network Areas, Galway



Galway Children and Young People's Services Committee

CYPSC are county-level committees that bring together the main statutory, community and voluntary providers of services to children and young people. They provide a forum for joint planning and co-ordination to ensure that children, young people and their families receive improved and accessible services. Their role is to enhance interagency co-operation and to realise the national outcomes set out in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures.

Galway CYPSC second Children and Young People's Plan will provide a blueprint for the implementation of actions to address priority issues for children and young people in Galway City and County. The plan will be developed in line with the national outcomes contained Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures.



SUMMARY OF THE METHODOLOGY



The consultation process was undertaken in two phases:

PHASE 1, SURVEY:

- In 2017, a questionnaire was circulated to parents through schools in Galway City and County. The questionnaire was also available to parents via SurveyMonkey. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix 3.
- 723 responses were completed and returned, eleven of which were in Irish. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS statistical software. Qualitative data was reviewed and common themes identified.

PHASE 2, FOCUS GROUPS:

- In 2018, 16 focus groups were held with parents across the City and County. A broad range of parents participated in these, including: parents of children with disabilities; Traveller parents; parents from new communities; parents with experience of domestic, sexual or gender-based violence; people parenting alone; and Tuismitheoiri na Gaeltachta.
- The focus groups were co-facilitated, using structured guidelines, by staff from Tusla and partner organisations.

The consultation process was supported by a research oversight team, comprising members of the Galway PPFS Group. This team advised on issues relating to consent, care of participants and confidentiality. It also developed a set of questions for the questionnaire and a format for the focus groups.

A full methodology is presented in Appendix 3.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

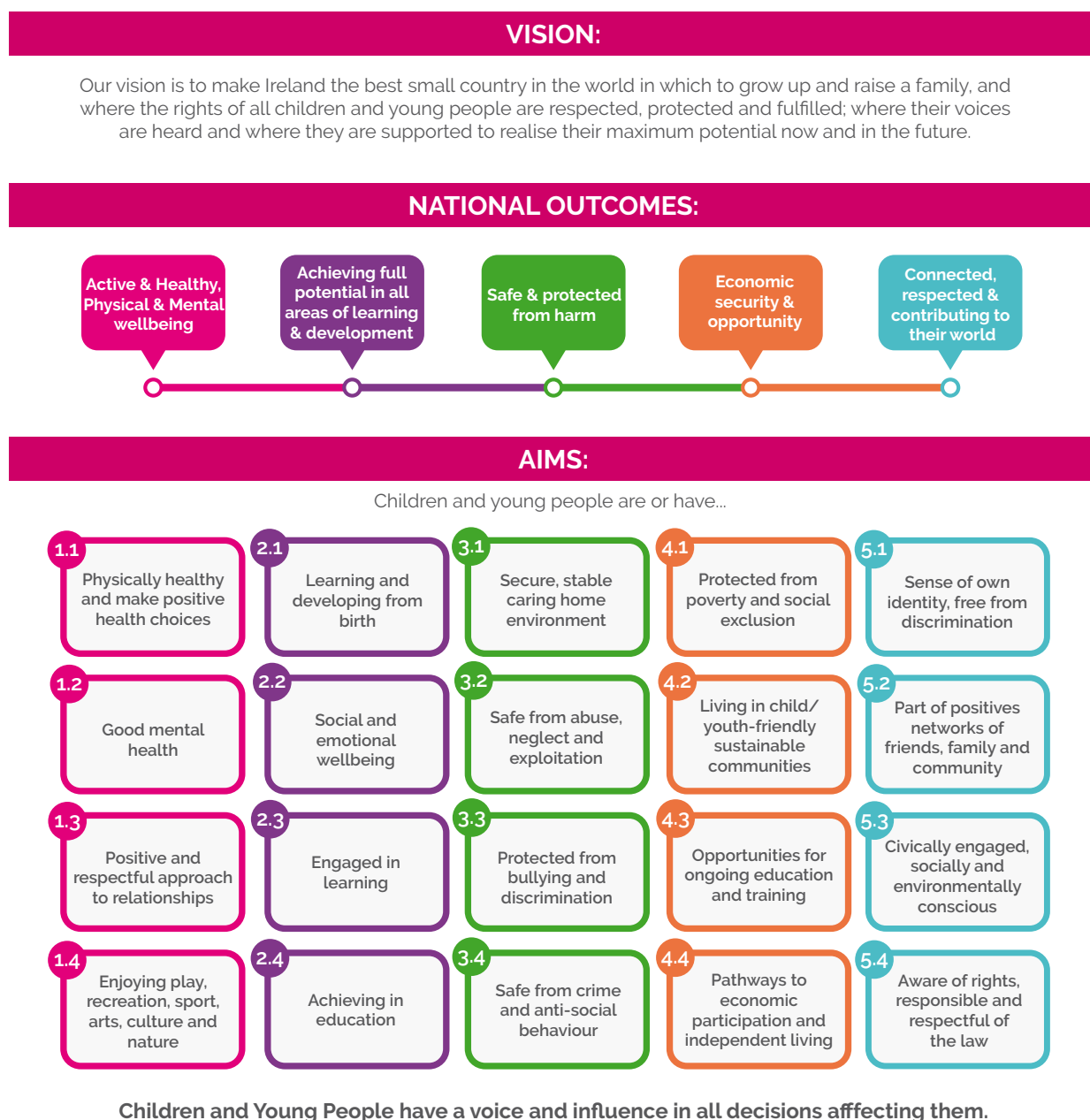


1. Main Body of Report

Parents' views as captured through the focus groups.

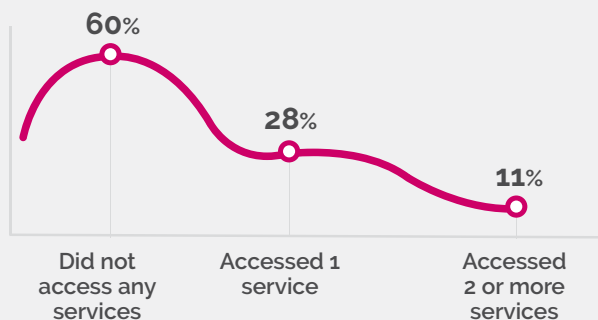
- It provides a first-hand account of parents' views, presented in "raw" format with minimal analysis or interpretation. This enables agencies and organisations to interpret parents' views in the context of their own (i.e. the agencies'/organisations') role, remit and resources.
- Parents' views are organised into five tables corresponding to each of the national outcomes outlined in Brighter Outcomes, Better Futures. The tables are further broken down into the twenty aims underpinning the national outcomes. This approach is intended to provide a broad structure for the feedback.

Figure 1.1, below, provides an outline of the outcomes and aims, set within BOBF's vision statement.

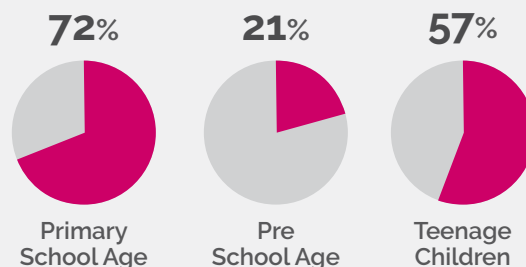


2. Summary of Findings

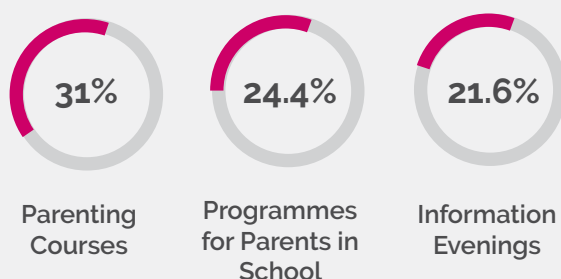
Using the survey questionnaire completed by 723 parents (found in Appendix 5)



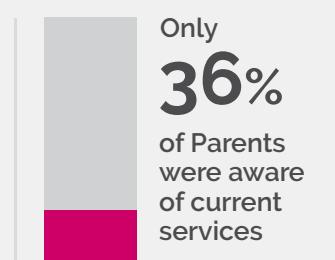
Supports and Services that were accessed by Parents.



The majority age group of children.



Supports and Services that would be helpful to Parents.



Parents overall awareness of services.

3. Informing the Development of Supports and Services

Using this document and the accompanying report, What Parents Said, What Parents Want.

This report does not derive key findings or make recommendations. Instead, it is hoped that agencies and organisations working with families across Galway will use this document and the accompanying report, What Parents Said, What Parents Want (see below) to inform the development of their supports and services.

It is suggested that agencies and organisations analyse the views contained in this document by considering the following questions -

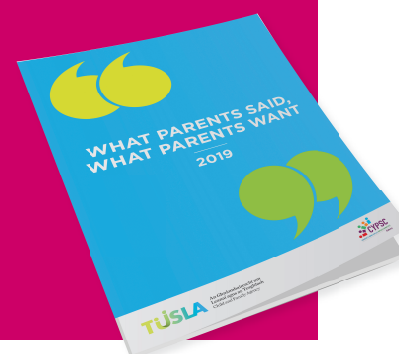
- What issues are relevant to our organisation?
- What are we currently doing to respond to the issues?
- What more can we do to respond?
- How can we work collaboratively with other organisations to respond more effectively to the issues?

What Parents Said, What Parents Want

This report is accompanied by a separate, shorter report 'What Parents Said, What Parents Want' which contains key insights from the consultation process. It gives a glimpse into parents' experiences, needs, concerns and hopes.

The insights are presented in two sections:

- What Parents Said provides direct quotes from parents and reveals the considerable challenges faced by many.
- What Parents Want outlines some of the service improvements parents feel are necessary to enhance outcomes for their children.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

This consultation process was one of the most comprehensive undertaken with parents by Tusla and its partners in Galway. It is part of Tusla's on-going commitment to involve children, young people and parents in decision-making on issues that affect their lives.

To ensure that the views of parents are heard and have an impact, Tusla is committed to promoting the two consultation reports widely, both within its own organisation and with its partner agencies. The aim is to ensure that the parents' feedback influences policy and decision-making across the City and County.

- Both reports will be widely circulated to all organisations and agencies working with vulnerable children and families in Galway
- The reports will be used by Galway Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) in the development and delivery of its new Children and Young People's Plan.
- The reports will inform the work of Tusla's Prevention, Partnership and Family Support Programme. This programme aims to ensure that families receive preventative support and early intervention as part of a cohesive system, with agencies identifying need early and working together to provide practical help and support.

"It is part of Tusla's on-going commitment to involve children, young people and parents in decision-making on issues that affect their lives."

CONSULTATION FINDINGS



Table 1: Active and Healthy

Parents were asked what would assist them in helping their child be more active and healthy.

Their responses are organised under the four aims of BOBF Outcome 1: **Active and Healthy, with Positive Physical and Mental Wellbeing**

Aim 1.1 Physically Healthy and Making Positive Health Choices

Aim 1.2 Good Mental Health

Aim 1.3 Positive and Respectful Approach to Relationships and Sexual Health

Aim 1.4 Enjoying Play, Recreation, Sport, Arts, Culture and Nature

Goal 1: Active and Healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing

Aim 1.1 Physically Healthy and making positive health choices

a.	Every parent should do a parenting course
b.	More support and advice on antenatal classes, breastfeeding and weaning (allergies)
c.	Frequent mother and baby groups and exercise classes (e.g. twice per week)
d.	More school-based health reviews to identify and monitor issues earlier (e.g. dietary issues)
e.	Some schools forbid children to run in school yards, preventing them from being healthy and active
f.	Schools need better facilities, obesity is an issue
g.	Music has been played in the school yard at break times – this encourages children to be active, dance etc
h.	No gym in local school, Dept. of Education said this isn't a problem, despite local obesity problem
i.	Need for gyms with affordable membership
j.	Schools need to do more sports
k.	One school opens the sports equipment cupboard at 8am and the children play for 15 minutes before school, another has a disco / exercise class before school

Healthy Eating

l.	Run courses in schools on healthy lunches, eating and nutrition. Start in pre-school. Teach children how to read food labels, how food is grown (community gardens / farms), how to make healthy food/smoothies
m.	Food Dudes should be more consistent in every school
n.	Run funded Halloween Camps on nutrition
o.	Have regular spot checks on lunches in schools
p.	Update the Food Pyramid
q.	Information and workshops for parents on healthy eating and living – obesity, BMI, mental health, blood pressure, sugar levels
r.	Better access to dieticians, help with children who are fussy eaters
s.	There are no healthy places to eat in Ballinasloe – lots of fast food
t.	Lack of healthy food choices can lead on to drink and drugs for young people
u.	Diet, eating the right food, not having control of our food, lack of spontaneity for food, being able to make school lunches ourselves (Direct Provision Centre)

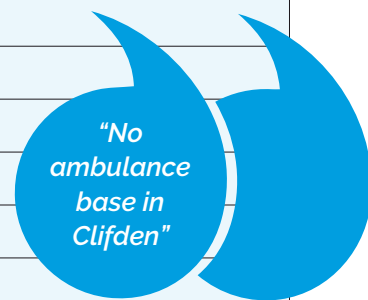
Services

v.	Need to know what services are out there
w.	Parenting app / website plus an online forum that's anonymous

"Update the Food Pyramid"

x.	There is always the problem of waiting lists and feeling that you cannot get the service that your child needs. Waiting lists need to be reduced. It's very stressful for parents – not meeting the immediate needs or best interests of the children
y.	Waiting list for child psychology need to be reduced
z.	More mental health services are needed for children
aa.	Easily accessible information in one place on supports/services available for children with special needs (e.g. a dedicated website). Information packs at different stages with options, courses, supports
bb.	Communication can be a problem. Medics don't want to talk to parents, they want to talk to the child, but they have no experience in communicating with special needs children
cc.	Hospital Appointments: because children with additional needs may find it difficult to wait in a confined area for lengthy periods, it would be helpful if the Outpatients Dept in UHG Paediatrics had a system where parents who are waiting for an appointment were given a buzzer to alert carers when the doctor/nurse is ready to see the child. Parents could then leave the waiting room and find something to occupy the child. This would limit distress. A system where parents could take a ticket and see how many children are ahead of them would also be useful. ENT in UHG have a good system
dd.	You have to go through A&E to access hospital services – a child can get agitated if they're hanging around for long time, especially if they have a disability or autism
ee.	Having to go to Dublin for procedures is very difficult (e.g. botox) – sitting for hours for a short procedure
ff.	Tusla should educate GPs on services available
gg.	There needs to be parking at GPs surgeries
hh.	A short video on how to use a defibrillator
ii.	Services for children with special needs vary according to geographical location – rural / urban
jj.	Ensure a multi-disciplinary approach to working with children with special needs
kk.	Trained drug awareness professionals must give talks to parents
ll.	More timely, in-depth, accessible information on drug and addiction
Area Specific	
mm.	No ambulance base in Clifden
nn.	Clifden raised money for X-Ray machine but now has no radiologist to operate it
oo.	No local HSE dentist in Clifden and Ballinalsoe
pp.	No local paediatric doctors, have to travel (Clifden)

Aim 1.2 Good Mental Health	
a.	Parent / newborn groups to combat isolation
b.	Support groups targeted at young parents
c.	24-hour helpline for young mothers
d.	Start talking about positive mental health at an early age, at home and in school
e.	Need to build resilience in children
f.	Early intervention services for children who struggling emotionally
g.	More accessible play therapy and art therapy, in community & schools, with fewer waiting lists
h.	Regular mindfulness in schools and at home to address children's mental health
i.	More youth groups, to combat isolation and build resilience, someone for children and young people to talk to and have fun
j.	Mentor/sponsor programme similar to Big Brother Big Sister, but a professional
k.	Some services were forced on families to suit the service not the family



l.	Social skills group: these need to be on-going throughout childhood. CAMHS do offer a number of sessions but a long-term approach would be more beneficial so children can sustain real friendships and build resilience
m.	Helplines: particularly out of hours and locally based for parents of children in need of or attending CAMHS
n.	Parent peer support groups
o.	Drop-in centres with professional mentors
p.	No mental health service for adolescents – Jigsaw is gone from Clifden
q.	Community gym – social meeting for men, as well as resource for parents and children
r.	More education on mental health, worked into curriculum
s.	I was struggling with my daughter in school, a Meitheal was arranged by Tusla Family Services and as a result my daughter is finally reaching her full potential and things are so much easier for me

*"Less
bureaucracy
for leadership"*

Aim 1.3 Positive and Respectful Approach to Relationships and Sexual Health

a.	More educational opportunities for team work
b.	Teach children from the earliest age about good relationships, children can meet people at any age that can ruin their lives
c.	Learn about relationships / domestic violence in schools
d.	Teach girls self-care, self-worth, how to respect themselves, what's ok and what's not ok
e.	Sex education should be staggered in accordance to age and information shared
f.	Talks/support on sensitive issues should be given to native Irish speaking children by native Irish speaking adults. Can lead to confusion when sensitive terms are not translated accurately. Children not always able to express deep feelings well in English.
g.	The SPHE / RSE programmes are hit and miss – external people should be providing these programmes. Who? Not Tusla, services like AIDS west, AA

Aim 1.4 Enjoying Play, Recreation, Sport, Arts, Culture and Nature

a.	A centralized information resource (e.g. directory of services) for parents to access knowledge about services supports, events, clubs, family days etc Advertise activities more, through liaison officers, church newsletters, local paper
b.	A share/review page/site where information can be shared by parents on how good/appropriate an activity or place was. Every town should have this. It should be funded and managed by a body or authority
c.	More activities for under 4-year olds: baby yoga; parent/toddler groups; playgrounds for babies; play centres for babies (with cost subsidies); sensory baby activities for younger parents; walking group for parents & babies; Monkeys (UK franchise) - paint and clay
d.	Reading clubs for children
e.	Having a back garden, access to nature, trees and green areas, more parks
f.	Over reliance on volunteers, inadequate funding for clubs / activities, a lot of pressure in parents, clubs should have some level of subsidy
g.	More hands-on support to set up local clubs (advice, expertise)
h.	More youth clubs, youth cafes, Foróige, pool halls
i.	Less bureaucracy for leadership
j.	Schools often finish at 13:30 on a Friday but there are no volunteers available to run clubs at this time
k.	More information on, and spaces, in summer camps
l.	Venues need to be warm and comfortable
m.	Playgrounds need seats for parents (especially nursing mothers) and gates that close
n.	Playgrounds need to be near residential areas, have proper fencing and be kept clean and free from broken glass

o.	Activities and playgrounds need to be locally based (in estates) so that the children and their parents can easily access and monitor them
p.	More affordable activities, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer camps, particularly for larger families • Children's music activities • Swimming lessons, without having to join a private gym • Sport is key, but often is cost prohibitive • Community walks • Family fun days
q.	Local authorities should promote local landmarks for families to enjoy (e.g. Garbally, fabulous area)
r.	More clubs/places for children not interested in GAA – they have fewer options. Emphasis on sports is good, but alternatives are needed- safe spaces that do arts, crafts, gardening
s.	No opportunity for like-minded teens to meet outside of sport, i.e. song writing, music, recording, drama, art. There is a gap in social supports between 14-18 years. More activities are needed for teens
t.	There are very few indoor activities (e.g. gymnastics) and lack of indoor play activities and places for children, especially in rural areas, nothing to do if not rugby or GAA or on rainy days
u.	Alternative to group activities –music, art, yoga, mindfulness, meditation in schools, especially secondary schools
v.	Develop a voucher scheme/ subsidy that can be accessed by parents to keep children in mainstream activities. Enable parents to book directly without stigma. Advertise these schemes widely – through support services and other places, such as schools, GAA
w.	Travellers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is nothing for 14 - 16 year-old Travellers. • Football leagues and GAA should be more inclusive of Travellers
x.	Families in Direct Provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe spaces for children to play, lack of indoor play activities and places for children • Living space is very small for a family, overcrowding • Lack of stimulation can lead to horse play and children breaking things
y.	Children with Special Needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport should provide an opportunity for children with special needs to get involved with peer • Youth groups for children with special needs with paid, trained, professional staff to assist attendance and participation of children • Opening hours and accessibility is not great for public swimming pools and private pools are too expensive, with no pay as you go option • Mobility and accessibility is an obstacle for some children with special needs • There is no transport for children with special needs for afterschool activities or summer camps • Cost of indoor play places is too much – especially when a child with additional needs requires a high level of daily activity • When public play areas are very busy they are not suitable for children who have sensory needs • Minimum safety standards should be in place for public/private playgrounds and indoor play areas to accommodate children with extra needs. i.e. children who have no sense of danger, are impulsive, like to climb or are likely to run out a gate/door very quickly.
z.	Foroige and Family Services (Tusla) take children for breaks in the summer but it's on a first come first serve basis
aa.	People might feel threatened accessing places in groups/activities if Tusla are running it exclusively
bb.	A mobile activity centre that can move around the community
Area specific	
cc.	No playground in Claregalway
dd.	Playground in Clifden floods
ee.	City centre playgrounds facilities are limited
ff.	Provision of more facilities for children in Headford – Youth Project Worker
gg.	Youth club doesn't have a full-time worker which means it isn't open as often as it should (Gaeltacht)
hh.	The playground in Hymany not safe – broken glass
ii.	Local have to fundraise for insurance in Co Galway
jj.	No pool hall – children go to pubs to play pool in North Galway
kk.	Playground in Tuam Halting Site- at the moment there is no play area and there is a green space for it

*"No
playground in
Claregalway"*

Table 2: Learning and Development

Parents were asked what would help them to support their children to fulfil their potential in learning and education.

Their responses are organised under the four aims of BOBF Outcome 2: **Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development**

- Aim 2.1 Learning and Developing from Birth
- Aim 2.2 Social and Emotional Wellbeing
- Aim 2.3 Engaged in Learning
- Aim 2.4 Achieving in Education

Goal 2: Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development

Aim 2.1 Learning and Developing from Birth

a.	Provide spaces and opportunities for babies to learn from each other
b.	Accessible and convenient opening hours
c.	Website with information on local crèches and their services/facilities
d.	Apps for parents to receive progress/updates on their children in crèches
e.	Fully qualified childcare workers, with Garda vetting
f.	Schools located close to children
g.	Promote Scandinavian educational models with a focus on a holistic approach and developing the whole child
h.	Parents need to take initiative and use their energies informing themselves to a certain degree as well

"Schools located close to children"

Children with Disabilities

i.	Lakeview / Rosedale schools - doing a great job with teachers excellent. There is a problem with non-replacement of staff
j.	Help with homework at home - talk, communicate, encourage them to do work
k.	If child unhappy at school or there are unresolved issues, this can impact learning
l.	Agencies need to be cohesive in how they work with families and link with each other in order to provide a "joined up" service
m.	School staff need to be aware of where they are talking and who they are talking about - children absorb and hear all
n.	Mainstream schools - sometimes parents are given no choice by professionals, in making certain decisions, e.g. choice of school. Parents need to be confident and pro-active to look for alternative options. Knowing the right information is important and your rights re acceptance into schools
o.	If your child attends mainstream school, getting supports and services is a challenge and a fight each year
p.	July programme difficult to access - should include SNA's not just teachers

Children Living in Direct Provision Centres

q.	Cost and availability of transport to school and activities - transport is very important to us
r.	Long distance to walk to school, other Direct Provision Centres have school transport
s.	Level of English can be a challenge. A focus on learning English in preschool would be helpful as well as play
t.	Parents mental health from been in the hotel can impact on children's participation in school and activities
u.	Space impacts on mental health and ability to do homework, i.e. family living in bedroom.
v.	Not enough hours in preschool, no space in preschool for 2-year old

Homework

w.	There should be less homework. Homework is not beneficial, children need free time, activity and fresh air
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x.	In Scotland the children leave everything at school books, work – they get it all done in school
y.	Puts pressure on parents/children, prevents them doing other important things
z.	Children sometimes miss expensive afterschool activities due to excess homework
aa.	Include an exercise activity as part of nightly homework
bb.	Homework should be standardized and linked to each child's ability. It doesn't suit the learning needs of all children
cc.	Schools should have a clear homework policy that is properly implemented and communicated to the parents
dd.	Schools give conflicting messages re homework: time allocated versus detention for incomplete homework
ee.	Homework clubs are very beneficial / great
ff.	Free or part-funded homework support and extra tuition
gg.	Parents have to help children with homework, show interest. Support parents to access adult classes linked to homework
Area specific	
hh.	More afterschool facilities needed in Gort

Aim 2.2 Social and Emotional Wellbeing	
a.	Listen to children's voices
b.	Better mental health supports in schools and elsewhere. Mental and physical wellbeing classes
c.	School focus is on books, learning, targets, deadlines - more time needed for support and development
d.	A dedicated person in every school for children to talk to/advocate for them
e.	Deliver talks in schools in small groups, rather than on a whole-year basis
f.	Proactive information in schools on self-harm, not just after an event
g.	Provide advice and support to parents re talking to teachers
h.	Schools need to be more sensitive to needs of single parent family (e.g. when doing family tree projects)
i.	Ensure better communication with parents, particularly re school trips, e.g. who is accompanying the group
j.	Information on GDPR and sharing children's information
k.	Education and support for parents on how to support children emotionally and intellectually
l.	Educating children at school on other children's behaviours, i.e. the reason or understanding needed behind some of these behaviours
m.	More adolescent mental health services/supports needed (e.g. Jigsaw), in urban and rural areas
n.	Provide support to siblings when their sister/brother is going through mental health crisis
o.	There is not sufficient respite - chance to recharge the batteries, take one week's holiday per year, have to fight for respite (parent of child with special needs)
p.	Changing uniform at PE time accelerate body image issues and poor confidence
q.	Easier access to assessments and NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service)

"Listen to children's voices"

Aim 2.3 Engaged in Learning	
a.	More resources for schools
b.	If child unhappy at school or there are unresolved issues, this can impact learning
c.	Schools should adapt to a child's learning style and support them to fulfil their individual ambitions i.e. not every child wants to go to college - some want to be builders/plumbers etc
d.	Provide an outline of learning outcomes for students individually
e.	Encourage / support schools with a reward system: effort = reward
f.	More structured Transition Year with research, career guidance and work experience, could also link in with local businesses
g.	More consistency between schools in providing information or opportunities from school to school
h.	Parents should have access to adult learning
i.	Language and IT classes for parents to support child's learning
j.	More information on access avenues to education and resources
k.	Need for more collaboration between Tusla and schools. Tusla should support schools but schools should be the information sharing point
l.	Children need more "movement breaks" throughout the day. Targets for activities should be built into the school curriculum with emphasis on children being health and active at the same level as educational attainment. There should be more activity in schools, e.g. GAA Stretch & Grow, boxing as part of PE, dance classes
School Completion Programme /Home School Community Liaison (HSCL)	
m.	Role of School Completion is key, particularly at transition times, it gives child a break from class, safe space, focus on personal development
n.	Each school should have a HSCL, it's brilliant
Travellers	
o.	More Traveller specific books and resources in school. Travellers should be more visible in school books and curriculum
p.	School curriculum needs to be delivered in a way to cater for the way in which Traveller children learn
q.	Support worker to help young Travellers to transition from Junior Cert to Leaving Cert to help prevent early school leaving
r.	Racism lingers, always in the background in school activities
s.	Encourage Traveller parents to attend and make them feel welcome at parent/teacher meetings
Special Needs	
t.	Educate teachers on special needs. There is a lack of understanding
u.	Anxiety rooms in schools, supervision room, beanbags, chill out, quiet rooms, headphones, use of iPad. Equipment for sensory use
v.	Attitudes and responses from schools when parents advocate for resources can be hostile
w.	How to inform teachers and peers about special needs without causing resentment
x.	Teachers should be aware of arising issues and refer on to the designated person in the school

*"More
resources
for schools"*

Aim 2.4 Achieving in Education	
a.	At the start of the year, parents should be given accessible information on the annual curriculum
b.	Emphasis should be on the spoken Irish Language in the class room not on the written format
c.	More availability of "Leaving Cert Applied" to suit the different approaches of young people
d.	Support in maths needs to be improved – many children need help/grinds
3rd Level / Post Leaving Cert	
e.	Provide more information and support on the points system, completing the CAO and on selecting college courses, such as what subjects are needed to do particular jobs
f.	Strengthen links between parents and guidance counsellors
g.	Career guidance in school is not comprehensive enough - should focus on other routes to careers/ employment market. Career guidance counsellors need to have more hours / contact with the pupils
h.	Colleges should have an open day for parents and a YouTube channel
i.	Strengthen links between 3rd level and secondary level students – help young people to be informed of their choices by talking to a peer
j.	University websites need to have a section for parents on "how to fund my child through college"
k.	Transition Year classes in cities get to visit colleges, but in rural areas it can be too expensive (€300) to hire a bus
l.	Young people sometimes drop out of college due to transport problems
m.	Contact number with staffed phone lines to provide information and advice to parents on funding eligibility
Minority Groups	
n.	Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) programme to be provided in all universities and colleges
o.	Provide training to teachers on meeting the needs of children with special needs, mandatory CPD
p.	Parenting support skill groups with teachers re anxiety, autism, dyspraxia
q.	Ensure more support and equality in schools for children of migrants, so they have the same choices as other children
r.	Irish should not be compulsory for children of migrants. Non-Irish parents need help with Irish
s.	Provide support to migrant parents and children on third level courses as they are not familiar with them
t.	Native Irish speakers are sometimes discriminated against, might not get resources needed. Focus is on non-native learner. Materials are in English not in the native language the child Irish

"Strengthen links between parents and guidance counsellors"

Table 3: Safe and Protected from Harm

Parents were asked what would help them to keep their children safe. Their responses are organised under the four aims of BOBF Outcome 3: **Safe and Protected from Harm**

Aim 3.1 Secure, Stable, Caring Home Environment

Aim 3.2 Safe from Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Aim 3.3 Protected from Bullying and Discrimination

Aim 3.4 Safe from Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Goal 3: Safe and protected from harm

Aim 3.1 Secure, Stable, Caring Home Environment

a.	Adults need to be educated on what is safe before they can support their children
b.	Parents need to have the confidence to talk to each other to protect their children
c.	Parents need to keep the lines of communication open with children and help improving their own communication skills
d.	Be available to talk to young people. Accept what they want. The 5 Ws – Who, What, When, Where, Why
e.	TUSLA and Gardai should have a mandatory role in educating parents in child safeguarding issues. Courses/ information evenings in local venues should be made available on a rolling basis, e.g. child protection/welfare issues. Explain issues "layman's" terms. Promote parent responsibility and ability to respond
f.	Parenting courses are not child-friendly – childcare should be provided
g.	Help with parenting skills would be helpful, how to manage behaviour (parent living in Direct Provision)
h.	More accessible information and supports on all issues to do with raising children
i.	Awareness raising with parents regarding signs and symptoms of drug/alcohol use. Ensure parents know the support services available
j.	More information on childproofing the home
k.	One point of contact for single parents, 24/7 support, like Parentline
l.	Tusla are hard to get on the phone – you leave messages and there's no response, you feel like you are pestering
m.	Tusla should run an advertising campaign to promote the good work they do
n.	Women experiencing domestic violence are still victimised 5 years later, they are not protected by the Government
o.	Information leaflets on farm safety and supervision
p.	First Aid and manual handling courses to be offered to parents, as well as professionals for self-care and safety
q.	Training for parents to manage aggressive behaviour in a safe way, including self-defence for very aggressive behaviours, especially with older children

Aim 3.2 Safe from Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

a.	Support / promote children talking to their parents if they are being bullied via social media
b.	Internet safety – practical, simple information on keeping children safe on the internet
c.	Groups where parents can bring devices and be shown how to enable safety settings
d.	2-minute video clip to show parents how to set privacy and safety on internet and phones
e.	Mobile phones, monitoring activity, key stroke recorder for safety
f.	Child with special needs very competent on electronics and media
g.	Games that are interactive can be aggressive and threatening. Problem with parents buying inappropriate age games. Parents need to be willing to learn about new devices and programmes
h.	Stay Safe Programme – include online safety / bullying
i.	Run programmes in schools about domestic violence
j.	Fully qualified childcare workers and adherence to ratios of childcare workers to children
k.	Stranger Danger: do awareness-raising with parents to mirror school programme, have a 'safe word' for children to use
l.	All children should understand the concept of "a person of safety and have a number to ring

"More information on childproofing the home"

m.	Tusla has a role in promoting the safeguarding aspect of parenting to the public, via media outlets
n.	Garda responses needs to be better [domestic violence]
o.	Court: often a social worker meets a child for half an hour to discuss their wishes. As a Family Support Worker has been working with the child, they should be doing it
p.	Safe rooms are needed in court. People who understand domestic violence to be involved. Don't feel any openness with solicitors, social workers
q.	Access / Custody: Children are told to go to access visits and they do not want to go, children are stressed, there is a need for better child-focused legal representation

Aim 3.3 Protected from Bullying and Discrimination

Cyber-bullying

a.	Children are spending a lot of time on their phones- they are open to bullying and other peer pressure. Parents need to be alert
b.	More accessible information, guidelines and support for parents on managing screen time, the different type of Apps (e.g. Snapchat) and cyber-bullying. School are ideal for promoting child protection mechanisms with Parents (e.g. information evenings)
c.	Graphic adverts work - similar to the ones warning about the risks of driving when using a mobile phone
d.	Introduce a national policy on no Facebook for children under 13 years of age
e.	Promote "parent-child contracts" re screen free evenings
f.	Awareness raising should be community-wide, not just in schools, to ensure a consistent message
g.	Provide information evenings to parents in Irish in relation to online issues. All information should be available in Irish
h.	Information on screen time (Snapchat) should be delivered to the community, not to leave it totally to the school
i.	There should be a "no phones" rules in school

Other

j.	Child-friendly, appropriate responses to tackling bullying issues in schools. Help children to understand it, information on what bullying is
k.	Role play in classes to experience different situations

Aim 3.4 Safe from Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

Garda Presence

a.	More community gardai
b.	More positive interaction with Gardai, not just when there's trouble
c.	More playgrounds in estates which are monitored by the Community Warden/Community Garda to prevent anti-social behaviour
d.	Community Garda presence to monitor underage drinking and loitering in the town and park
e.	Set up neighbourhood watch

Playgrounds

f.	Safer, clean, maintained playgrounds – free from needles
g.	More awareness-raising for children re dangers of drug paraphernalia and other rubbish in playground

Road Safety

h.	Improved paths and traffic calming measures near schools and rural villages
i.	More pedestrian crossings needed, especially at schools
j.	Lower speed limits in the city and in villages
k.	Traffic is too fast in the city, outside schools, cars revving at lollypop man
l.	Cycle lanes are good but not enough of them, you are bullied as a cyclist

*"More
community
gardai"*

Table 4: Economic Security and Opportunity

Parents were asked what would help them to support their children to access economic opportunities?

Their responses are organised under the four aims of BOBF Outcome 4: **Economic Security and Opportunity**

Aim 4.1 Protected from Poverty and Social Inclusion

Aim 4.2 Living in Child /Youth Friendly Sustainable Communities

Aim 4.3 Opportunities for Ongoing education and Training

Aim 4.4 Pathways to Economic Participation and Independent Living

Goal 4: Economic Security and Opportunity

Aim 4.1 Protected from Poverty and Social Exclusion

a.	More accessible information on services / activities, signposting. A central, convenient place for families to seek services and get information
b.	Families who are struggling financially need a "go to" person for advice
c.	More information needed on bursaries / financial supports for school costs
d.	Help with paper work, more information on what to do in their situation (Parent living in Direct Provision)
e.	Make better use of community buildings, more cost accessible events and activities
f.	More information/ services for children with special needs
g.	Subsidised childcare
h.	Being able to send children to good schools
i.	Provide support to set up and run local community development groups in rural areas, some community festivals also
j.	Community groups may work better in urban area's than in rural area's due to the "clique's", therefore parents may be reluctant to become involved in community activities
k.	Payment to parents of children with special needs should increase, especially in the summer when children are out of school. It's more expensive to have keep active as cannot access the usual activities
l.	There should be an increase in Carer's Allowance
m.	It is hard to get support especially if you do not have good English
n.	Welfare trap, it feels like your trapped
o.	CSO figures are skewed – less funding if not disadvantaged area – but there are different types of disadvantage

Aim 4.2 Living in Child/Youth-Friendly Sustainable Communities

a.	Children mirror parents. Role models are very important
b.	More awards for leadership
c.	Poor road conditions Inhibit people to work in Galway city
d.	More public lighting and local rural transport links to be made available
e.	Transport to school in rural areas can be a big problem for parents
f.	Community bus is needed to access services in Ballinasloe. If you live in opposite end of town to the school and services, many families have to get taxis (as pushing buggies)
g.	Clifden has large numbers of tourists for three months then empty for 9 months, this leads to isolation for residents. Clifden needs sustainable tourism, encourage local businesses to sell local produce.
h.	Children are educated to leave the local area (Clifden) – should be encouraged to return and start businesses/ invest
i.	Poor internet connection eliminates the ability to work from home

"Subsidised childcare"

Aim 4.3 Opportunities for Ongoing Education and Training

a.	Career guidance and vocational focus should begin in primary schools
b.	More work experience to help children make informed decisions re their careers, local businesses could be involved
c.	How do people access scholarships for 3rd level? Parents need this to be more widely known. Are there scholarships for trades?
d.	Parents need information on career guidance. Parent need to access information through a central site/ service. "One stop shop"
e.	Have career fairs in the school with parents/ students and at regional/national level
f.	Have parent support groups with an educational and vocational focus (parents are a great informal source of information/experience for other parents). Have a facilitator/ Chair. Agree a theme and format. Put safeguards in place
g.	Promote more "outdoor jobs", e.g. equine industry, forestry.
h.	Career guidance in school is not comprehensive enough to make careers known to students/ parents.
i.	No alternative for early school leavers (14-16 years), they need access to training courses
j.	Youth summer work schemes to be reopened

Aim 4.4 Pathways to Economic Participation and Independent Living

a.	Barriers to employment in local area - lack of choice for professional, skilled, well-paid jobs (Gaeltacht and Ballinasloe)
b.	Travellers in mainstream employment hide their identity
c.	Confidence building with young Travellers for before applying for jobs
d.	Literacy support for older teenagers and young adults
e.	Access to job readiness certs e.g. Safe Pass, tool certificates etc
f.	More focus is needed on vocational options, trades and apprentices
g.	Personal Development and Education Plan done with Traveller teenagers and young adults
h.	Training for employers around the needs of people with additional needs - information on economic incentives for such employers
i.	Percentage of the workforce should be those with special or additional needs
j.	Provide information in schools on doing CVs
k.	Bring people who struggled in school, but have established careers now, back into schools to speak to students about alternative routes to employment
l.	Local employment service for young people and younger parents to access education and courses
m.	Classes for children on budgeting and the value of earning things
n.	Enterprise centre, chamber of commerce, & youth organisations to work together in seeing young people's potential
o.	There are very few opportunities for employment in the town. Involve local shops and business to offer work experience to young people

"Provide information in schools on doing CVs"

Children living in Direct Provision Centres

p.	Being citizens
q.	Ability to be a role model for our children
r.	Need access to employment and education
s.	Would like the right to adult education and go to college while waiting for papers
t.	Working empowers you to provide opportunities for your children

u.	Red tape - needing certain papers to access course and jobs, stuck by stamps and paper work
v.	Right to a driving license
Children with Disabilities	
w.	Training Centres, day centres offer employment and experience
x.	Some young people are limited in their opportunities
y.	Practicalities of opening a bank account if young person is unable to sign documents
z.	Young people should have access to job coach
aa.	Children who have additional needs get lost in the wider Tusla target group of children 0 – 18 years
bb.	Information for parents and teenagers about declaring diagnosis re employment, insurance, when filling in forms, going for interviews
cc.	Employers not flexible in accommodating parents of children with special needs (e.g. attending appointments). After work, it is very hard to do the programme recommendations for your child. Employees need incentives to offer part-time opportunities to staff to allow some time to be the parent at home

"Young people should have access to job coach"

Table 5: Connected, respected & contributing to their world

Parents were asked how they can promote feelings with children and young people of being connected and engaged with their families, communities and society?

Their responses are organised under the four aims of BOBF Outcome 5: **Connected, Respected and Contributing to their World.**

- Aim 5.1 Sense of Own Identity, Free from Discrimination
- Aim 5.2 Part of a Positive Network of Friends, Family and Community
- Aim 5.3 Civically Engaged, Socially and Environmentally Conscious
- Aim 5.4 Aware of Rights, Responsible and Respectful of the Law

Goal 5: Connected, respected & contributing to their world

Aim 5.1 Sense of Own Identity, Free from Discrimination

a.	Racism lingers, it is always in the background
b.	Equal opportunities for ALL children regardless of cultural background – treat all cultures fairly and equally, particularly with education
c.	More initiatives to encourage inclusion between cultures. Children need to feel part of their community
d.	More school programmes about inclusion of different cultures. Preventative, anti-discriminatory policies and procedures re cultural diversity
e.	Under the law people with special needs have been shown to be discriminated against

Aim 5.2 Part of Positive Networks of Friends, Family and Community

a.	More community groups / activities in local settings to bring families together, with accessible information on local classes, activities and groups and greater support for local resident groups
b.	Every two years, schools should host a large information event for pupils and parents, covering topics like services for drug and alcohol misuse, internet safety, CAMHS
c.	An App for parents in Galway with events, groups, activities
d.	Information on "what is a community centre"
e.	Community space to host mother and toddler groups, youth space, parents, intergenerational work, club initiatives
f.	Resource teachers to facilitate a daily meet and greet in the mornings at the school entrance
g.	Age appropriate activities for children of the same age
h.	Playgrounds are a great place for parents to meet
i.	A child with special needs is not connected to their community
j.	Education, support and awareness of special needs are needed for the wider public / community
k.	There should be a list of respite/ babysitting services – people with experience children with special needs
l.	Introduce more inter-generational programmes, to sustain a sense of community connectedness and engagement
m.	Parents have expertise in coaching, but bureaucracy prevents them from being involved in school activities (e.g. Garda clearance, insurance)
n.	Community bus for transport around town, with a ten-mile radius to collect people, for the old and young
o.	Empower parents to do things in their community, drama classes, social dancing
p.	Parents want to feel they matter
q.	The Church is disconnected from school. Population is different now, parents want choice with non-religious schools. The Church should free up their buildings for development, they need to support community development

"Playgrounds are a great place for parents to meet"

Children Living in Direct Provision	
r.	Children need to be prioritised
s.	School helps children feel a part of the community, so does playing sport
t.	When the children get older it's hard to explain why we are living in a hotel, it becomes a sense of their identity, hard to understand at young age
u.	Lack of cooking and eating together as a family is important - missing out on this. Difficult to connect in hotel as a family
v.	Change on accommodation, even on a small scale would improve, sense of connecting within the family, e.g. living room as well as a bedroom for family
w.	Feeling of uncertainty of future
x.	Climate "in the corridors" is of paper talk, stamp talk for children
y.	Local hotel management are trying, but management at the top needs to do more
z.	The Big changes are needed first
aa.	Asylum seekers have different experience across Ireland depending on location

"Feeling of uncertainty of future"

Aim 5.3 Civically Engaged, Socially and Environmentally Conscious	
a.	Encourage children, give them the drive to succeed, promote school
b.	We need an LGBT group for visibility and supporting families
c.	The local community development group was taken
d.	Need access to libraries
e.	Should have a farmer's market in the village
f.	Give homework exemption to children who engage in afterschool activities as an incentive to participate in sport/activities
g.	Youth advocates could deliver some talks to young people (in English or Irish (e.g. Transition Year students)
h.	Transition Year students could help set up and run a local information site on things for young people to do in the area

Aim 5.4 Aware of Rights, Responsible and Respectful of the Law	
a.	Gardai should be going into schools and advising children on cyber bullying and consequences. It is very limiting that Gardai or anyone need to be invited at the request of the school principal
b.	Social media: plant the seed with children at an earlier age about what is ok and not ok
c.	Improved Garda involvement with children in schools, to build positive relationships and reduce stigma, playing games etc

"Should have a farmer's market in the village"

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Prevention, Partnership and Family Support Sub-Group Members



Susan Forde [Convenor]	Prevention, Partnership and Family Support, Tusla
Aileen Davies	Teen Parenting Support Group, UCHG
Áine Shanahan	Child & Family Network Team, Tusla
Amanda Cosgrove	Galway Rape Crisis Centre
Aoibheann McCann	Galway Rural Development
Breda Golden	Brothers of Charity
Bridget McGreal	Educational Welfare Service, Tusla
Caroline Duignan	Roscommon Children and Young People's Services Committee, Tusla
Cathy Connolly	Galway Rape Crisis Centre
Charlotte Donnellan	Irish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Ciara Tyrell	COPE Galway
Debbie McDonagh	Western Region Drugs and Alcohol Task Force
Elaine Quinn	Galway Rural Development
Fiona Falvey	Health Promotion, HSE
Jacqui McGovern	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, HSE
James Applegate	Galway Rural Development
John Middleton	Solas Family Resource Centre (Headford)
Marie Gibbons	Galway / Roscommon Children and Young People's Services Committee, Tusla
Michelle Moran	Senior Child & Family Network Co-ordinator, Tusla
Morgan Mee	Galway Children and Young People's Services Committee, Tusla
Orla Curran	Senior Child & Family Network Co-ordinator, Tusla
Orla Finnegan	Galway Roscommon Education Training Board
Sinéad McGlacken	Galway Childcare Committee

Appendix 2: Focus Group Facilitators

Aileen Davies	Teen Parents Programme
Áine Shanahan	Meitheal, Tusla
Angela Flaherty	North Galway Family Services, Tusla
Angie Cotter	ARD, Family Resource Centre (Doughiska)
Breda Hicks	City East Family Services, Tusla
Carol Ann Beegan	Brothers of Charity
Caroline Canny	Western Traveller and Intercultural Development, Brú Bhríde
Caroline O'Looney	North Galway Family Services, Tusla
Catherine Higgins	South Galway Family Services, Tusla
Ciara Touhey	West Galway Family Services, Tusla
Ciara Tyrell	COPE Galway
Eamonn Mullins	North Galway Family Services, Tusla
Eileen O'Toole	West Galway Family Services, Tusla
Gráinne Ní Chuanaigh	North Galway Family Services, Tusla
Helen McCallion	ARD, Family Resource Centre (Doughiska)
Jacqui McGovern	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, HSE
Máire Egan	Solas Family Resource Centre (Headford)
Marcus Fields	West Galway Family Services, Tusla
Marie Feeney	Adolescent Support Group, FORUM Connemara
Mona Albertini	Brothers of Charity
Morgan Mee	Galway Children and Young People's Services Committee, Tusla
Natasha Muldoon	ARD, Family Resource Centre (Doughiska)
Orla Curran	Child & Family Network Co-ordinator, Tusla
Sharon Ní Cheannabháin	School Completion Programme
Síle Flannery	South Galway Family Services, Tusla
Sinéad O'Sullivan	Ballinalsoe Family Services, Tusla
Stacey Morris	Western Traveller and Intercultural Development, Brú Bhríde

Appendix 3: Methodology

The data presented in this report was collected over 2 distinct phases.

Phase 1 involved the distribution of a survey questionnaire during the period February to May 2017. Hard copies of the questionnaire were circulated to parents through schools in Galway city and county. Completed questionnaires were returned directly to the schools and then forwarded on. Parents were also provided with the option to access the survey online via the website www.surveymonkey.com.

The questionnaire comprised 8 questions which were mostly quantitative in nature, but with space for qualitative responses. Respondents were asked, as parents, what supports and services they would like in their community, what supports and services they are aware of or had accessed, and the best methods for contacting them and disseminating information. A copy of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix 3.

Questionnaires were returned anonymously save where respondents were willing to participate in a focus group as part of phase 2 of the research and accepted an invitation to provide contact details to facilitate this. Eighty respondents provided their contact details.

In total, 723 responses were completed and returned by the 8th of May 2017. Eleven of these were completed in Irish. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS statistical software. Data was analysed by Tusla Family Services Catchment Area and by the age of respondents' children. Qualitative data was reviewed and common themes were identified.

Phase 2 of the research involved the facilitation of a series of 15 focus groups. The decision to conduct focus groups was taken so that parents could have time and space to share ideas and to listen to others before forming opinions or developing positions.

Ten of the 12 focus groups brought together participants who were parenting under similar circumstances. These focus groups comprised parents of children with disabilities, Traveller parents, new Irish parents, parents with experience of domestic, sexual or gender based violence and people parenting alone. Participants in these groups were targeted with a view to capturing the perspectives of 'seldom heard' parents. These participants were invited by Tusla or by a partner organisation that had an established relationship with the parent. Twelve parents were invited to attend each focus group. Each group comprised between 8 and 10 participants.

Two of the 12 focus groups comprised parents who had identified themselves via the survey questionnaire. Fourteen parents were invited to attend each of these 2 focus groups with six and three attending.

A research oversight team comprising members of the Galway Prevention, Participation and Family Support Group drafted a Letter of Invitation, a Consent Form, a Care of Participants Protocol and a Confidentiality Protocol. This group also agreed a set of questions and a format for the focus groups. Facilitators attended a briefing in advance of hosting the focus groups. Each facilitator received a guidance document outlining the required preparation, agreed questions, scripted inputs and direction in relation to note taking.

Each focus group took place between June and September 2017. The focus groups lasted 90 minutes and each was co-facilitated by a staff member from Tusla and a partner organisation. Analysis of the notes was undertaken by an external consultant.

Appendix 4: Survey Questionnaire

Dear Parent / Carer

Tusla the Child and Family Agency, and our partner agencies are developing a strategy to support parents in Galway city and county for the next 5 years.

Therefore we are asking you as parents, what supports and services you would like in your community to support you as parents. Your views and suggestions will help us to better plan and deliver parenting support in Galway in the coming years.

We ask that you take a few minutes to complete these 6 questions.

1. What age are your children?

0-5 yrs (no of children)	5-8 yrs (no of children)	8-12 yrs (no of children)	12+ yrs (no of children)

2. What area do you live in? _____

3. What would be helpful for you, in your area, as a parent?

Parent and toddler group	Parenting Programmes	Specialised Services	Programme for those experiencing separation	Groups for parents of new babies	One to one support – centre based	Programmes for parents in school	Home Visits	Family Resource Centre/ Drop in Centre	Information evening (please give examples)

4. Would you know where to go if you needed support in your community? Please list.

What supports have you accessed in your community?

5. What is the best way to let you know what is available and what is happening?

Website	Posters	Flyers	Local Newspapers	Social Media

Other _____

6. Any other suggestions / supports that would help you as a parent, in your community?

We would also like to meet with interested parents to get your suggestions and discuss in the parenting plan in detail.

If you are interested in attending a focus group and contributing more to this strategy please include your contact details or contact **Orla Curran** on **086 2508956** or email **orla.curran@tusla.ie**

Name: _____

Email: _____ **Tel:** _____

Address: _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please return in enclosed envelope to your child's school / pre-school.

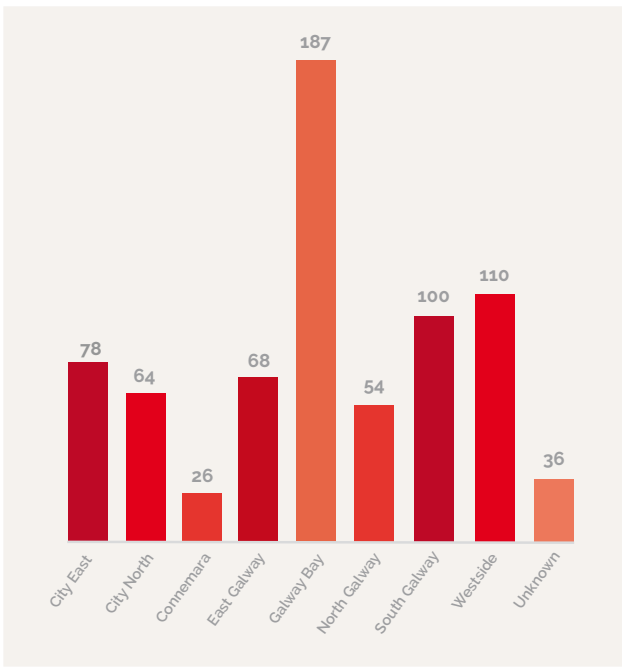
Appendix 5: Summary of the Findings of the Survey Questionnaire

Parents of children in the county of Galway were asked their views on what supports and services they would like in their community. The survey received 723 responses between February and May 2017. This is a summary of the survey findings.

1. Location of Respondents

Parents were asked to provide the area they live in. Responses were grouped according to the eight Tusla Family Service catchment areas. The highest response rate was from parents in the Galway Bay area (187), followed by Westside (110) and South Galway (100), with the lowest response rate from the Connemara area (26)

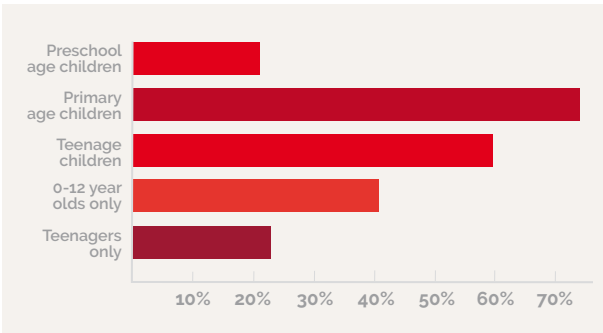
Figure 1: Number of respondents – by Catchment Area



2. Age of Children of Respondents

Parents were asked in which age groups their children were. Responses were categorised as preschool (0-4 years), primary school age (5-12 years) and adolescent children (13-18 years), as well as parents with only preadolescent children (0-12 years) or adolescent children (13-18 years).

Figure 2: Age of children of respondents [percentage of respondents]



3. Supports and Services

Parents were asked what would be helpful to them from a list of services and supports. The following supports were rated the highest by parents:

- Parenting courses (31%)
- Programmes for parents in school (24.4%)
- Information evenings (21.6%)

The least positive responses by parents were towards home visits, with only 5% of parents (37) responding positively.

The most common themes suggested for parenting courses were:

- Internet safety
- Bullying
- Special educational needs
- Mental health
- Dealing with anxiety
- Methods for communicating with teenagers
- Preparing parents and children for adolescence

Commonly suggested themes for information evenings included:

- Technology overuse
- Nutrition
- Drug awareness
- Sexual health
- Information on services available.

Several parents mentioned the need for services to be affordable and flexible.

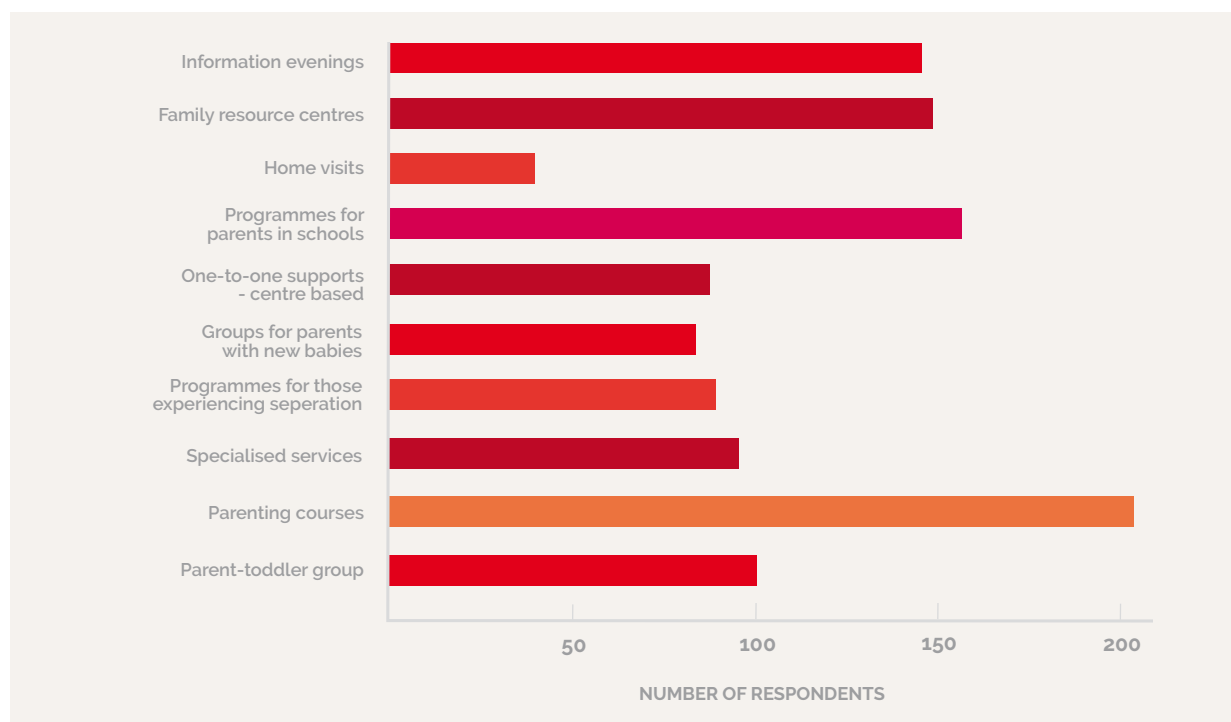


Figure 3: Positive responses to supports and services

4. Awareness of Current Services

Respondents were asked are they aware of any services currently available in their community.

- 36% stated that they were aware of at least one service in their community
- The most common services named by parents were Parent and Toddler groups, Parenting Courses (particularly in Galway Bay area) and Family Resource Centres
- Other services commonly mentioned include public health nurse, health services, Jigsaw, and childcare services.
- Parents of older children had lower levels of awareness of services available than parents of children at preschool or primary school age.

Table: Awareness of services currently available in communities by Catchment Area (Count, percentage)

	Yes	No	No Answer
City East	20 (36.4%)	35 (62.6%)	23
City North	21 (39.6%)	32 (60.4%)	11
Connemara	7 (46.7%)	8 (53.3%)	5
East Galway	14 (28.0%)	36 (72%)	18
Galway Bay	52 (34%)	101 (66%)	34
North Galway	13 (37.1%)	22 (62.9%)	19
South Galway	29 (42%)	40 (58%)	31
Westside	31 (36.9%)	53 (63.1%)	26
Total	187 (36.4%)	327 (63.6%)	167

5. Supports Accessed

Parents were asked about the supports they access in their community.

- 60% (322) of parents said that they did not access any supports
- 28% (152) mentioned one support that they had accessed
- 11% (61) outlined two or more supports that they had accessed in their community.

There was no significant difference in level of supports accessed across catchment areas. However, there was a noticeable difference depending on the age of children, with parents of adolescents accessing less support than parents of preschool and primary school age children.

The most common supports identified by parents included:

- Family Resource Centres
- Public health nurse
- Parent and toddler groups
- Breastfeeding support groups
- Parenting courses
- Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Counselling services
- Foróige
- School-based supports

6. Dissemination of Information

Respondents were asked to choose the best ways to inform them about services and supports in their community, with the following results in order of popularity:

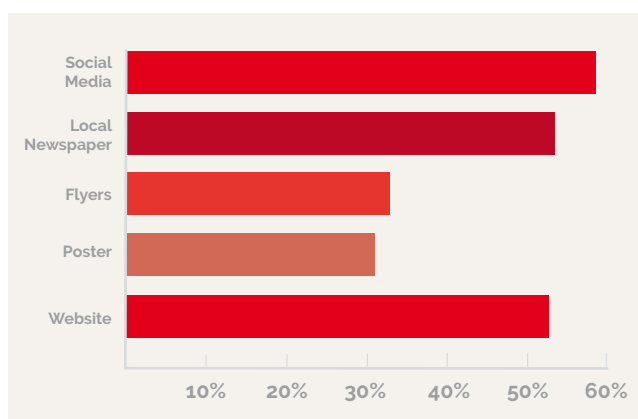
- Social media (59.5%)
- Website (43.9%)
- Local newspaper (43.8%)

Other methods mentioned were:

- Texts
- Emails
- School newsletters from the school.
- Church newsletters
- Community Facebook groups
- A Tusla app with current and upcoming events and services.
- Some parents mentioned the need for websites to be regularly updated, as they stated this wasn't the case currently.

There was no significant difference in opinions on dissemination of information between catchment areas.

Figure 4: Best form of dissemination [Percentage of respondents]



7. Common Suggestions

- Parents were asked for any other suggestions or supports that could help them. The most common responses included:
- More age-appropriate services/supports for both younger and older adolescents
- Youth clubs (Foróige was used by several respondents as a reference)
- Activities other than sport
- More support and access to information on mental health, nutrition, internet safety, anxiety, bullying, suicide and drug awareness
- More opportunities to network with other parents, particularly for parents with older children, providing both a support and social network
- More information evenings
- Homework supports and guidance for parents and children
- More access to a community or family resource centre
- More green areas/playgrounds
- There was confusion amongst some parents regarding the services Tusla provides
- Shops and bus routes





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