



Limerick

**Children and Young People's
Services Committee**

**Children and Young People's Plan,
2021 – 2023**

Executive Summary

Section 1: Introduction

The purpose of the Children and Young People's Services Committees is to secure better outcomes for children and young people through more effective integration of existing services and interventions at local level.

CYPSCs work towards the five national outcomes for children and young people in Ireland. These are that children and young people

- 1. Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing**
- 2. Are achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development**
- 3. Are safe and protected from harm**
- 4. Have economic security and opportunity**
- 5. Are connected, respected and contributing to their world**

Children and Young People's Services Committee in Limerick

Limerick city was one of four pilot Children's Services Committees (now CYPSC) sites established by the then OMCYA in 2007. As the establishment of the CSC coincided with the establishment of the Limerick Regeneration Agency, the first phase of the work of the CYPSC was very closely aligned, both in terms of geography and programme priorities.

Limerick CYPSC has been in place for 14 years. Limerick CYPSC was fortunate to receive investment through the Programme Innovation Development Fund (PIDF), the National Early Years Access Initiative (NEYAI) and the Area Based Childhood Programme (ABC) during a period of economic downturn. This allowed CYPSC to play a strong role in influencing the development of service response in Limerick City.

As Limerick CYPSC begins its next cycle of implementation it is important to reflect on the ever-changing landscape in which CYPSC operate. Throughout the formation period of the then Limerick City CSC pilot through to the development and implementation of two Children and Young People's Plans, much has changed. The establishment of Tusla and the emergence of the Prevention, Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) programme; the mainstreaming of CYPSC under Tusla; institutional change both locally and nationally; the expansion of the CYPSC to encompass the county of Limerick; and its expanded remit to also include young people up to 25 years of age have all contributed to a significant change of the landscape in which CYPSC operate.

CYPSC are increasingly identified in strategies as playing a role in the local implementation of national policy. The need for strategic partnership and with LCDC is ever more evident. This is no more so apparent than in Healthy Ireland identifying CYPSC and LCDC as the key structures through which to channel funding to address local needs relating to health and wellbeing. The fact the CYPSCs have been viewed as a vehicle to respond to local needs of children and young people is reaffirming in this sense.

It is within this context the Limerick CYPSC presents its next Children and Young People's Plan. In October 2018 the committee agreed a new set of operating principles. Actions in this plan have been measured through the prism of these principles. As implementation of this plan begins, Limerick CYPSC has identified its core role as promoting progressive and systemic change within the system of supports for children, young people and their families.

Limerick CYPSC Members

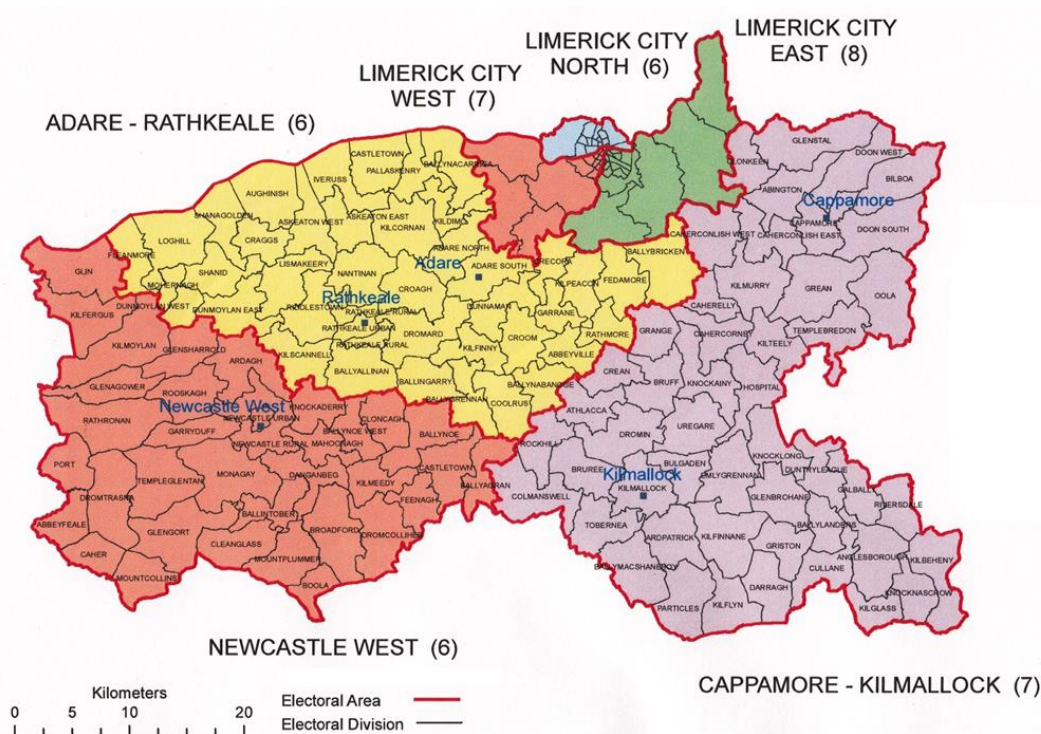
	Name	Position	Organisation
1	Aisling O'Neill (Chair)	Area Manager, Mid West	Tusla Child and Family Agency
2	Seamus O'Connor (Vice Chair)	Chief Information Officer, Limerick LCDC	Limerick City and County Council
3	Aisling Finucane	General Manager, Primary Care	Health Service Executive
4	Anne Delaney	Manager	Limerick Childcare Committee
5	Anne Kavanagh	CEO	PAUL Partnership
6	David Dineen	Regional Manager	Tusla Education Support Service
7	David Studer	Limerick CYPSC Coordinator	Tusla Child and Family Agency
8	Eileen O'Keeffe	Development Manager	Ballyhoura Development
9	Helen Ryan	Deputy Principal, Mungret Community College	Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
10	Irene Gilmore	Senior Probation Officer	Probation Services
11	Majella Hanrahan	Deputy Principal, Castletroy College	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals
12	Mary McGrath	Manager, Hospital Family Resource Centre	Family Resource Centres
13	Mary Shanahan	Director of Public Health Nursing	Health Service Executive
13	Mick Parry	General Manager	Tusla Child and Family Agency
14	Shay Riordan	CEO	West Limerick Resources
15	Sinead Hickey	Prevention, Partnership and Family Support Manager	Tusla Child and Family Agency
16	Sinead Toomey	Principal, Thomond Primary School	Irish Primary Principles Network
17	Stephanie Whyte	Assistant Director of Children's Services	Barnardos
18	tbc	tbc	An Garda Síochána

Socio-Demographic Profile

Notable Findings

- The population of Limerick City and County has experienced a 1.6% increase since the 2011 Census. The most densely populated areas are Limerick City and its suburbs.
- The County has higher rates of Children (under 18 years) than the City. However, there are higher rates of young people (0-24 years) close to, and in, the city.
- Limerick City tends to have lower young age dependency rates than Limerick County.
- Higher variation in the Pobal HP Deprivation Index is present in the City than in the County and there are also higher levels of deprivation in the City. John's A, which is extremely disadvantaged, (-31.91) received the lowest Pobal HP Deprivation score nationally.
- Limerick City and County has lower rates of non-Irish nationals than the national average. The highest rates of non-Irish nationals in Limerick City and County are around the City centre.
- Limerick City and County has a higher rate of children and young people diagnosed with a disability than the national average.
- Limerick City and County has a higher Traveller population than the national average.
- Lone Parent Rates are much lower in the County than in the city. Higher rates of lone parent households tend to be those which are also more disadvantaged.
- The unemployment rate in Limerick City and County is higher than the national average. The City has higher rates of unemployment than the County. Higher unemployment rates were seen among young people.
- There were 79 unemployment blackspots in Ireland in 2016. 17 of these were in Limerick City, which means almost half (45%) of the EDs of Limerick City still suffer from very high levels of unemployment.

County Limerick with Electoral Divisions and Municipal Districts



Vital Indicators

	Limerick Total	Limerick % / rate	State Total	State % / rate	+ or – State
Child and Youth Population: Number and percentage (compared to overall population) of children and young people aged 0 – 24 years. (CSO, 2016)	65,428	33.6%	1,582,463	33.2%	+
Child Population: Number and percentage (compared to overall population) of children 0 – 17 years. (CSO, 2016)	47,090	24.2%	1,190,127	25.0%	-
Young Adult Population: Number and percentage of young people (compared to overall population) aged 18 – 24 years. (CSO, 2016)	18,338	9.4%	392,336	8.2%	+
Infant Mortality: The number of deaths among infants under 1 year per 1,000 live births (CSO, 2016)	9	3.4	205	3.1	+
Traveller Children and Young People: Number and percentage (compared to Limerick population) of Traveller children and young people. (CSO, 2016)	876	1.34%	18,018	11.4	+
Non-Irish national children and young people: Number and r percentage (compared to Limerick population) of foreign national children (CSO, 2016)	4,784	7.32%	127,689	80.7	-
Children and young people with a disability: Number and percentage (compared to Limerick population) of children and young people with a disability (CSO, 2016)	5,135	7.85%	112,551	71.1	+
Children and young people registered as having a physical or sensory disability: Number and percentage (compared to Limerick population) of children and young people (CSO, 2016)	1,291	1.97%	28,803	18.2	+
Family Structure: Number and percentage of children living in a lone-parent household. (CSO, 2016)		21%		19.9%	+

Summary of Service Provision

On the surface level, the children and young people of Limerick city and county are well served with provision of services. However, many of those services are focused in the areas of disadvantage within Limerick city. Despite a significant amount of services located in the city, consultations with stakeholders also highlighted insufficient funding within these areas to challenge the myriad of social issues that are underpinned by poverty and disadvantage and, in some instances, issues of overlap tied to unclear referral pathways. While there are a significant amount of services, they are hampered by limited funding and long waiting lists. In the county areas, services that are present tend to congregate around the two largest urban areas of Kilmallock (East Limerick) and Newcastle West (West Limerick) with even more limited services in smaller rural towns such as Croom, Cappamore, Hospital, Caherconlish (East Limerick) and Abbeyfeale, Rathkeale and Askeaton (West Limerick).

Summary of Needs Analysis

Limerick City and County is a vibrant, active and diverse county. Home to 65,428 children and young people between 0 -24 years of age, the county is characterised by wide-ranging contrasts of urban and rural, poverty and affluence, ethnicity and service provision. It should be said that many children and young people are thriving in their communities, schools, and with family, even despite sometimes very challenging circumstances. Some children, however, need better and more support to be able to reach their full potential. Services working with children and young people are undertaking excellent work in communities across Limerick and are demonstrating great strength and dynamism to support children, young people and their families. Notwithstanding the good work already happening, gaps in service provision and unmet needs are evident in Limerick.

When identifying its local priorities for the coming years, Limerick CYPSC reflected on a number of local and national strategies and research and has identified activities that it will undertake over the next three years. The needs analysis is categorised in line with the Five National Outcomes.

The priority areas and associated objectives in this plan are guided by the needs analysis and underpinned by the Limerick CYPSC operating principles which were agreed by committee members in October 2018. While a number of areas of need emerge in the needs analysis, it is important to acknowledge that this plan is constrained in how it can respond to these, primarily due to limitations of the CYPSC initiative, national policy, resources and, in some instances, the system itself. While for the majority of children and young people, the mainstream system of services and supports serve them well, for those who do not fit into the mainstream, the system can be difficult to navigate. Where Limerick CYPSC feels it doesn't have the capacity or resources to respond to identified areas of need, it has an advocacy role, feeding back local issues of concern through designated structures under the CYPSC initiative.

Key Considerations

Across the narrative of the needs analysis it is very clear that there is a social gradient in achieving positive outcomes for our children and young people. Children and young people from areas of disadvantage or from minority groups are less healthy, face additional barriers in education, are less safe and have poorer employment opportunities.

There are a significant number of children and young people in Limerick who are either living in deprivation or part of a minority group. Within the needs analysis certain key groups are considered in the narrative of each national outcome. Below is a short section on groups of key consideration. While some of the priority areas Limerick CYPSC have identified below consider the population of children and young people as a whole, certain groups have a particular focus.

Disadvantage

There are a significant number communities identified by Pobal as areas of disadvantage across Limerick city and county. Consultations with stakeholders across all geographic locations and sectors all identified the underpinning issue of poverty and social exclusion as the most significant barrier facing children, young people and families from achieving positive outcomes across all national outcomes framework. This is exacerbated by intergenerational cycles of poverty. Children and young people who are poorer are less healthy, face additional barriers in education, are less safe and have poorer employment opportunities.

Disability

The challenges facing children and young people with either a physical, sensory or intellectual disability are significant for them and their families. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRDP) was ratified by Ireland in 2018. Ratification means that the State agrees to be held to account for implementation the articles of the UNCRDP. The preamble of the UNCRDP states that “recognising that children with disabilities should have full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children, and recalling obligations to that end undertaken by States Parties to the Convention of the Rights of the Child.”¹ The convention goes on to detail rights with regard to health, education participation amongst others.

A national programme called ‘Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People’ (PDS) is the key policy document for the disability sector pertaining to children and young people with disabilities. PDS is seeking to make access to the services children need easier; to provide services in a way that is considered fair; and to enable health services to work with families and education services to support children and young people with disabilities to achieve their optimal potential. It is important to note that while PDS addresses structures which in turn has the potential to impact on the capacity through eradication of inefficiencies of services, it does not address resource deficit within disability services.

Travellers

The rate of Traveller population in Limerick is higher than the national average. There is a significant background of research evidence on the extreme disadvantage facing Travellers in a number of life domains – education, employment, housing and health. Travellers also face high levels of prejudice and discrimination in Ireland. The increasing disadvantage in terms of health as the life course progresses is a characteristic of cumulative disadvantage, a process whereby early adverse experiences shape the long-term trajectory, with the effects accumulating over the life course resulting in a larger gap in later life. This evidence has been underpinned by the recent launch of the *East Limerick Traveller Health Baseline Needs Assessment 2019* which highlights some extremely grave statistics. Of particular concern is that this peer-led assessment counted more than twice as many (113%) Travellers in East Limerick than the census. The fact that only 29 Travellers (6.8%) were identified over the age of 50 and 4 Travellers (0.9%) over 65 were identified is stark evidence of the reduced life expectancy of Travellers when compared to the general population.

Migrant Communities

Non-Irish national migrant communities can face significant barriers to integration and access of services for children and young people and their families. While in Limerick as a whole, a lower percentage of the population are non-Irish (9.6%) compared to the national average. There are major concentrations of migrant diaspora in Limerick city (City Centre, Dooradoyle/Raheen) and county (Newcastle West, Adare and Caherconlish) electoral districts.

The Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) has one Direct Provision Centre in Limerick city (Griffin House), s family centre. A further Direct Provision Centre is based in Knockalisheen, just over the Limerick border, and hosts families with a capacity of 250 people. Most of these families access services in Limerick. A number of Syrian families have also been resettled in the last number of years in Newcastle West and Limerick City under EU resettlement and relocation programmes.

In February 2021 the government produced the *White Paper on Ending Direct Provision*. Subsequent to that document, the Ombudsman for Children Office produced *Safety & Welfare of Children in Direct*

¹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities (CRDP), [online], available at: www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/preamble.html

Provision: An investigation by the Ombudsman for Children's Office in April 2021. Both the White Paper and the OCO report cite the role CYPSCs should play in supporting the coordination of local services to respond to vulnerability of children and young people in the direct provision system. In Limerick an International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) Child and Family Support Network is already established that seeks to bring organisations together in order to respond to the needs of children, young people and families living in Direct Provision.

The Limerick Integration Working Group produced, and is responsible for coordinating the implementation of, *Belonging to Limerick: Limerick City and County Integration Plan 2018 – 2022*. The Plan identified five priority thematic areas based on migrant needs, local knowledge and a policy and literature review:

- Language, Education and Employment
- Information and Communication
- Access to Public Services
- Cultural Awareness and Anti-Racism
- Active Community Participation.

Homelessness

Living in homeless accommodation presents many challenges for children that impact across all five national outcomes that Government has outlined for children and young people. Social, emotional, cognitive and physical developmental needs of babies and children is of notable concern. Hotels and B&Bs have limited resources to offer onsite and small, cramped spaces without proper cooking facilities, recreational or play space, and even separate living/sleeping quarters are constant challenges and struggles for families. The systemic issue at the heart of this crisis is the lack of sufficient housing and the long term outcomes for babies, children and young people in homelessness has yet to be seen. Additionally, it important to note that some families who present as homeless are as a direct result of domestic violence. The impact of the housing crisis on access to housing also affects young men and women leaving care or young women who have been victims of domestic violence.

Summary of the Limerick CYPSC Children and Young People’s Plan Priorities

Limerick CYPSC has reflected on the needs analysis and has taken a number of considerations into account:

1. **Limerick CPYSC Operating Principles:** In October 2018 the committee agreed a new set of operating principles. It was agreed that actions identified would need to be measured through the prism of these principles if they were to appear in the action plan.
2. **Systemic Change:** Limerick CYPSC is interested in promoting progressive and systemic change within the system of supports for children, young people and their families. Within that premise, it is important that any efforts to undertake this task must be sustainable or present a strong argument as to why an action should be progressed if sustainability is not confirmed at the outset.
3. **Using the Plan:** Not all areas identified as a need can be addressed in the Limerick CYPSC Children and Young People’s Plan. For example, consultations with professionals highlighted a significant gap in creative therapy supports for children and young people. While Limerick CYPSC may not be able to directly address this identified need, it is anticipated that this plan will be used as a resource by partner agencies to evidence need when applying for additional funding and resources through from the core funders and any other funding opportunities that may arise.
4. **Advocacy:** Limerick CYPSC will use the opportunities it gets to advocate for the needs identified in this plan. This includes advocacy at a local level amongst partner agencies and advocacy at a national level.

Outcome Areas	Local Priority Areas*
1. Active and healthy, physical and mental wellbeing	1. Physical Health, Wellbeing and Play 2. Diet, Nutrition and a Healthy Weight 3. Drugs and Alcohol 4. Child and Youth Mental Health & Wellbeing 5. Sexual Health and Healthy Relationships
2. Achieving full potential in learning and development	6. Early Years 7. School Attendance 8. Realising Potential and Post-Primary Opportunities
3. Safe and protected from harm	9. Parenting and Family Support 10. Prevention, Partnership and Family Support 11. Homelessness 12. Youth Justice
4. Economic security and opportunity	13. Food Poverty 14. Education and Employment opportunities
5. Connected, respected and contributing to their world	15. Social Opportunities for children with disabilities 16. Children and Young People actively influence decisions that affect their lives

Change Management	Local Priority Areas
Change management - CYPSC may also identify priority areas relating to change management and supports needed to enable interagency collaboration at local level, e.g. development of interagency protocols, development of information sharing protocols, interagency training.	16. Strategic Partnerships 17. Commitment of senior personnel across member agencies to Limerick CYPSC 18. Research, Evaluation and Learning 19. Critical Incident Protocol 20. Advocacy for Children, young people and families in Limerick 21. Communication 22. Trauma Informed Services 23. Covid-19 Response

Monitoring and Review

Limerick CYPSC recognises the importance of measuring outcomes, monitoring implementation and reviewing our plan and structures. We are committed to ensuring all our processes are quality-driven and outcomes focussed. Limerick CYPSC will use the CYPSC Planning and Reporting Framework as its guide for ensuring our processes are meeting the required standards. While Limerick CYPSC will oversee the progress of the plan, locally, this will be supported by progress/annual updates and feed into national structures such as Tusla Child and Family Agency and the CYPSC National Steering Group. The following monitoring and review processes will be undertaken by Limerick CYPSC throughout the life-cycle of each 3 year plan:

Monitoring and Review	Description
Annual Progress Report	Updates and progress from the 3 year plan, involvement of children and young people in our structures; interagency activity; challenges and achievements. Limerick CYPSC will utilise this information to inform decision to enact developments or changes within the 3 year strategic plan
Mid-Year Progress Update	Monitoring mid-year to check if 3-year plan is on schedule; and will enable CYPSC to highlight local issues or challenges to national level structures.
Annual Programme of Work	Each year of the CYPP, CYPSC will produce an annual statement of intent/action outlining the work to be undertaken and achieved.