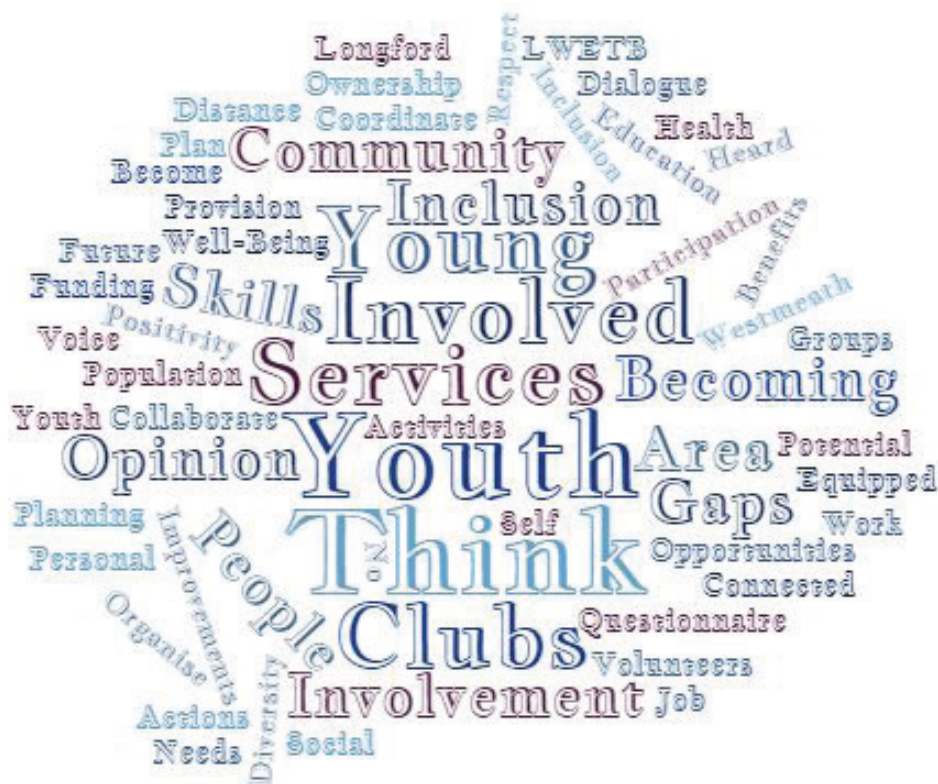




*Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
an Longfoirt agus na hIarmhí*
Longford and Westmeath
Education and Training Board



A plan to support the provision, co-ordination, administration and assessment of youth work in Longford and Westmeath

Bríomhar | Ilchineálach | Nuálach
Dynamic | Diverse | Innovative

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FOREWORD



Dr. Christy Duffy
Chief Executive, LWETB

I am delighted to introduce the LWETB Youth Work Plan 2019-2022. This is a significant document that sets out the direction for LWETB's Youth Work Unit over the coming four years. It is also an inaugural plan, being the first one ever developed to strategically document the statutory responsibilities of LWETB in relation to youth work in the region.

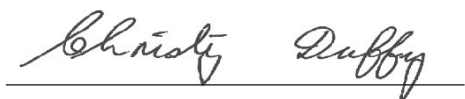
The document sets out the legislative basis and policy context for the plan. It is also noteworthy in that it describes in detail the socio-economic profile of the Longford and Westmeath region which forms the foundation for the plan. The methodology which frames the shaping of the plan is also outlined. The plan then maps out the current level of youth work services within the Longford Westmeath region both in terms of provision and funding of services.

All of the above provides a framework within which a needs analysis is carried out that incorporates primary research, focus groups and questionnaires. The result is a set of priority needs within the youth work domain of the region. These identified needs lead to a set of actions that comprises the Youth Work Plan 2019-2022.

These are grouped under the four core statutory youth work functions of ETBs as outlined in the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. Finally, a mechanism to ensure the implementation and monitoring of these actions is then summarised.

As this plan is launched I would like to thank all those who contributed to its creation and development. This includes the full range of providers and stakeholders, the young people of the region and the Youth Work Committee and board of LWETB. The driving force behind this work is the Youth Work Unit of LWETB under the Director of Services Liz Lavery and in particular the commitment and passion of our Youth Officer Maria Fox.

The plan sets out a pathway to ensure the needs identified can be met over the coming years. LWETB looks forward to working with all those with an interest in the future of young people in Longford and Westmeath to enable this become a reality.



Dr. Christy Duffy
Chief Executive, LWETB

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Youth Work and the Role of Education and Training Boards

Education and Training Boards (ETBs) have a legislative responsibility in relation to youth work in Ireland. This is set out in the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013, which states that the functions of ETBs with regard to youth work are to:

Support the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of youth work services in its functional area and provide such information as may be requested by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in relation to such support; and

Assess whether the manner in which it performs its functions is economical, efficient and effective. (Education and Training Boards Act, Section 10(1)(j,k)).

The Education and Training Boards Act goes on to state (Section 10(6)) that “youth work” has the same meaning as it has in the Youth Work Act 2001, where it is defined that:

“Youth work” means a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is –

(a) complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training; and

(b) provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations.
(Youth Work Act, 2001, Section 3).

In the Youth Work Act (Section 2(1)), a “young person” is interpreted as a person who has not attained the age of 25 years.

Youth work is primarily focused on young people aged 10 to 24 years, although there is also a significant level of activity with the under 10s. Youth work achieves a range of outcomes for young people, for example, communication skills, confidence and building relationships, through activities combining enjoyment, challenge and learning. (DCYA, 2014b).

In practice, this includes volunteer-led youth groups, as well as youth projects with paid workers. The latter category incorporates a wide range of projects, including ones supporting young people considered to be at risk of exclusion, youth information centres, projects supporting voluntary youth activity and general youth work services. Youth work is delivered by both paid staff and volunteers, who play a key role in ensuring that young people have opportunities to be active members of their local communities. Youth workers support a range of approaches, which allow young people to engage and help ensure that services are responsive to young people’s needs and circumstances.

The quality of youth work carried out in each ETB area is supported through national quality standards initiatives. (DCYA, 2010; DCYA, 2013). (See section 1.2.5 for further details on quality standards).

ETB Youth Work Committees

In light of the ETBs' youth work functions as identified in the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013, ETBI has, since 2014 recommended that ETBs establish a Youth Work Committee. In agreeing a standardised approach to the establishment of such committees, Terms of Reference were agreed by ETBI nationally. The remit of the Youth Work Committee is to:

1. Be informed of the youth work function conducted by Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board;
2. Inform Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board of the information relating to youth work, received by it, from the Executive of Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board.
3. Provide oversight of Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board youth work function.

The Youth Work Committee does not and shall not fulfil any executive functions of the Education & Training Board as these are within the remit of the Chief Executive and/or his/her delegates. The committee brings together members of the ETB itself, along with youth organisations, other state bodies and young people. Please see Appendix for full Terms of Reference of the LWETB Youth Work Committee.

Relevant ETB Structures and Strategies

ETB Strategy Statement

Longford and Westmeath ETB is a local statutory, education and training authority established under the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. LWETB provides education and training services to a population of 129,643 across two counties.

Under Section 27 of the ETB Act 2013, the Chief Executive of an ETB is required to prepare and submit a strategy statement to the board for every five-year period. (Government of Ireland, 2013). In 2017, LWETB developed a 'Strategy Statement 2017-2022' as required under the Act. The LWETB Youth Work Plan forms part of this overall strategy.

LWETB's Vision Statement is to 'develop and deliver nationally and internationally recognised high quality, vibrant, professional education and training services' (p.5). We endeavour to ensure that our dynamic and innovative services will meet the needs of young people and adults across the LWETB region.



**Longford and Westmeath
Education and Training Board**

**Strategy Statement
2017 - 2022**

Our Strategy Statement also clearly established the values of the organisation as stated below:



The Strategy sets out the high level goals and objectives for LWETB for the next five years which provide a framework for reviewing achievements and provide operational goals to guide the organisation in the provision of a progressive range of services. These goals are set out below:

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS 2017-2022	
Goal 1	Deliver Professional, high quality, learner-centred education and training services
Goal 2	Enhance the learning experiences and outcomes for learners
Goal 3	Foster effective communication, collaboration and partnerships
Goal 4	Progress the development of effective organisational structures
Goal 5	Support a culture of continuous development with staff

This Youth Work Plan is influenced by LWETB's guiding principles and goals established in our Strategy Statement 2017 – 2022.

Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy

The Further Education and Training Strategy, 2014 -2019 (Solas, 2014) sets out five high-level goals as a roadmap for the FET sector. It is expected that, with the implementation of the Further Education and Training Strategy, the FET sector will be able to respond more effectively to the training needs of young people, thereby delivering better outcomes. Within this and in the context of the ETB Youth Work Plan, there is potential to develop linkages between FET and youth work services.

Second-Level Schools

A core element of the work of LWETB is the operation of post-primary schools. LWETB is responsible for the operation of eight secondary schools in the Longford and Westmeath region. Given the complementary nature of youth work in respect of formal education, there is also potential to develop linkages between schools operated by the ETB and youth work services, including for example School Completion Programmes.

POLICY CONTEXT

Role of Department of Children and Youth Affairs

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was agreed early 2017 between the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI). (DCYA and ETBI, 2017). This sets out, inter alia, the role of DCYA and ETBI as described in this section.

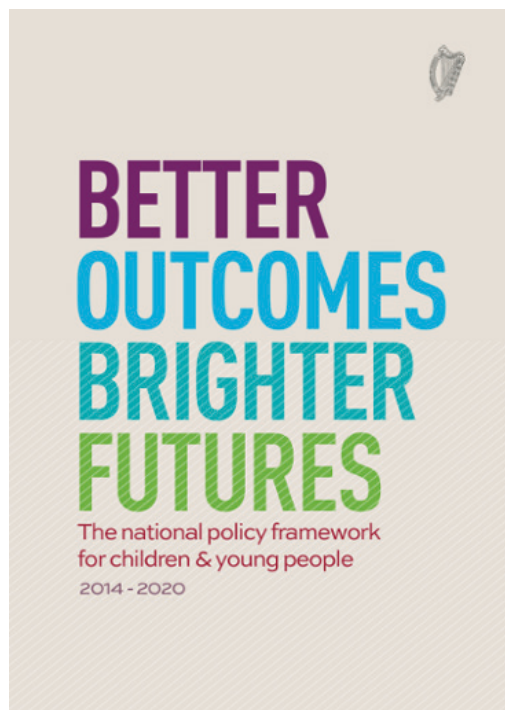
DCYA was established in June 2011 and it is the principal Department to whom ETBs report in relation to their youth work functions. It has a mandate in relation to policy and service provision for children and young people. It comprises a number of interrelated strands, including the direct provision of universal and targeted services, and working to achieve the harmonisation of relevant policy and provision across Government so as to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

The DCYA strategic and operational objectives are informed by the following:

- Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures – The national policy framework for children and young people, 2014-2020
- National Youth Strategy, 2015 – 2020
- Recommendations of the Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes, 2014 (VfMPR)
- National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision making, 2015-2020
- National Quality Standards Initiatives (National Quality Standards Framework for the Youth Work Sector / National Quality Standards for Volunteer-led Youth groups).
- Directives and circulars pertaining to public accounts procedures and by needs identified by ETBs locally

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures – The national policy framework for children and young people, 2014-2020 (BOBF) is the first overarching national policy framework for children and young people (aged 0-24 years), developed and led by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs on behalf of the Government. Almost all policy areas have a direct or indirect effect on children



and young people's lives. The purpose of the framework is to coordinate policy across Government to achieve better outcomes for children and young people. (DCYA, 2014a). It advances the following vision:

“Our vision is to make Ireland the best small country 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.” (p.22).

BOBF identifies five national outcomes areas, namely:

1. Active and healthy, physical and mental well-being
2. Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development
3. Safe and protected from harm
4. Economic security and opportunity
5. Connected, respected and contributing to their world. (p.22).

National Youth Strategy

The National Youth Strategy, 2015-2020 has its basis in BOBF and, in particular, its youth-specific commitments. The purpose of the National Youth Strategy is to coordinate policy and services across Government and other stakeholders so as to enable all young people aged 10-24 years to realise their maximum potential. (DCYA and ETBI, 2016).

The National Youth Strategy is a universal strategy for all young people aged 10 to 24 years, while having particular regard to those young people who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing the poorest outcomes and, therefore, in most need of support. (DCYA, 2015a).

The aim of the National Youth Strategy is “to enable all young people to realise their maximum potential, by respecting their rights and hearing their voices, while protecting and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood.” (p.22). The National Youth Strategy sets out Government's aims and objectives in relation to each of the five BOBF national outcomes areas, namely: (p.3).

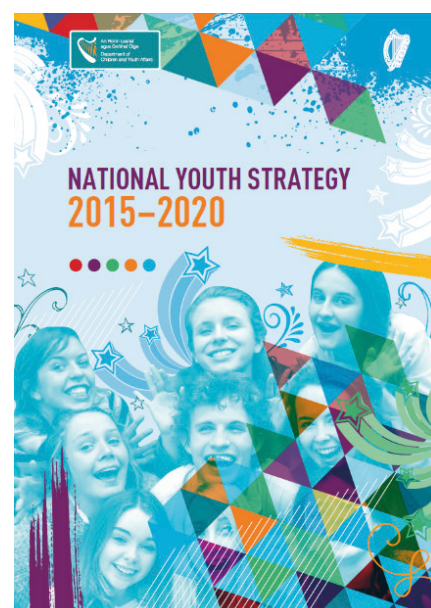


Table 1: National Youth Strategy Objectives

1. Active and healthy, physical and mental well-being	
Objective 1.	Young people enjoy a healthy lifestyle, in particular with regard to their physical, mental and sexual health and well-being.
Objective 2	Young people benefit from involvement in recreational and cultural opportunities including youth work, arts, and sports.
2. Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development	
Objective 3	Young people's core skills, competencies and attributes are enhanced and promoted through accessible, responsive, formal and non-formal education and learning opportunities.
Objective 4	Young people benefit from strengthened transition supports at all levels as they move through the education system
3. Safe and protected from harm	
Objective 5	Young people, and in particular vulnerable and marginalised young people, are supported to feel safe at home, in school, in their communities and online, and are empowered to speak out when feeling unsafe or vulnerable.
Objective 6	Young people have safe places and spaces where they can socialise and develop.
4. Economic security and opportunity	
Objective 7	Young people are better able to participate in the labour market through enhanced employability skills that complement formal learning and training qualifications and entrepreneurship opportunities.
Objective 8	Young people are a particular focus in policies that address social inclusion and poverty.
5. Connected, respected and contributing to their world	
Objective 9	Young people are included in society, are environmentally aware, their equality and rights are upheld, their diversity celebrated, and they are empowered to be active global citizens.
Objective 10	Young people's autonomy is supported, their active citizenship fostered, and their voice strengthened through political, social and civic engagement.

The strategy identifies some fifty priority actions to be delivered by Government Departments, state agencies and by others, including the voluntary youth services sector, from 2015 to 2020. These actions are designed to address matters that are a high priority for young people themselves. With specific regard to young people, the DCYA works to support and promote non-formal and informal education (youth work) and other developmental opportunities and activities to secure good outcomes for young people. The DCYA administers funding to support the provision of youth services by the voluntary youth sector for these purposes.

Importantly in the context of the ETB Youth Work Plan, the strategy also identifies DCYA-led enabling actions in support of the National Youth Strategy, as follows: (p.35).

Table 2: Enabling Actions in National Youth Strategy

Focus of DCYA-led enabling actions in support of the National Youth Strategy
Ensuring quality services
Focus on prevention and early intervention
Improving coordination and collaboration
Access to quality information

Some of these areas have a direct relevance in relation to the statutory youth work functions of ETBs. For example, ensuring quality services encompasses the quality standards initiatives for the youth work sector.

Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes

The Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes (VfMPR) (DCYA, 2014b) involved an indepth scrutiny of three major funding programmes that target disadvantaged young people and are administered by the DCYA. The three schemes that were the subject of the VfMPR are:

- Special Projects for Youth (SPY)
- Young People's Facilities and Services Fund 1 and 2
- Local Drugs Task Force Projects.

The review makes recommendations for the future operation of the schemes and in relation to their future development to ensure effective, value for money services that are designed to secure the best outcomes for young people. In particular, it recommends that one targeted scheme should replace the existing three schemes and that this new scheme should be based on evidence of what works and clear objectives to be achieved for young people.

As part of the VfMPR, a focused literature review was commissioned, which identifies seven potent mechanisms, or outcomes, that have relevance to DCYA policy objectives. The review states that:

“In short, these attributes should help young people to be more employable, less likely to engage in problematic drug-taking or alcohol misuse, and less likely to drop out of school and/ or engage in anti-social behaviour.” (p.115).

These potent mechanisms are set out below. Note that, in its work to implement the recommendations of the VfMPR, DCYA has used the term proximal outcomes in place of potent mechanisms.



Table 3: Outcomes identified in Value For Money & Policy Review of Youth Programmes

Potent Mechanisms (or Proximal Outcomes)
Communication skills
Confidence and agency
Planning and problem-solving
Relationships
Creativity and imagination
Resilience and determination
Emotional intelligence

The implementation of the recommendations of the VfMPR has been identified by DCYA and ETBI as a priority area of work in their current MOU. (DCYA and ETBI, 2016). As such, the ETB Youth Work Plan acknowledges the recommendations arising from the review and endeavours to progress relevant actions in line with these recommendations in conjunction with the DCYA and, where appropriate, with ETB Youth Work Committees.

Quality Standards Initiatives

The DCYA is responsible for facilitating the implementation of Quality Standards Initiatives within the youth sector – the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work (NQSFW) and National Quality Standards for Volunteer-led Youth groups (NQSFWLYG).

According to the DCYA (2010), the NQSFW is primarily a support and developmental tool for youth work organisations. It enables organisations to assess service provision and to identify areas for development. There is also an external assessment function, carried out by the ETB, which serves to validate the self-assessment process. Services partaking in the NQSFW process are expected to commit to a process of continuous improvement, through engagement in the standards. All projects and services funded by the DCYA are required to participate in the NQSFW.

Standards for volunteer-led youth groups (NQSFWLYG) were introduced by the DCYA in 2013, with the aim being “to help to improve the quality of programmes and activities for young people and the way in which they are provided”. (DCYA, 2013, p.v). Through the standards, young people are encouraged and supported to be centrally involved in aspects of their youth group, in areas such as planning, design and delivery of activities.

National youth organisations have a role in supporting their affiliated youth groups to attain the standards. For non-affiliated youth groups, it is the role of ETBs to support the implementation of the standards. ETBs also provide advice and support in relation to the standards for personnel of national youth organisations where required.

Children and Young People's Services Committees

Children and Young People's Services committees (CYPSCs) are established on a county basis to facilitate an inter-agency approach to meeting the needs of children and young people aged 0-24 years, focussed on the five national outcomes areas identified in BOBF. (DCYA, 2016). CYPSCs bring together representatives of the statutory and community and voluntary sector to provide a forum for joint planning, integrated service delivery and coordination of activity to ensure the delivery of improved and effective services for children, young people and their families.

The Longford Westmeath CYPSC is made up of senior manager representatives from community, voluntary and statutory agencies that provide support, and /or service delivery to children and young people in counties Longford and Westmeath. LWETB engages with Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services through Youth Officer representation on the Committee. Longford and Westmeath CYPSC are currently developing a local three year Children and Young People's Plan. LWETB through Youth Officer engagement is participating in its development.

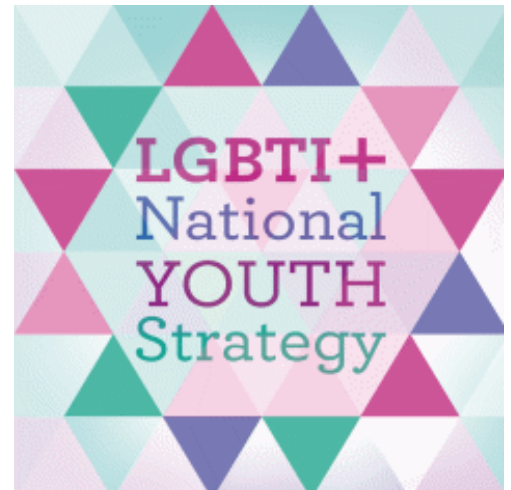
LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy

The LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020 was launched in 2018 by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. This Strategy is a first for Ireland and for the world and was informed by the views of thousands of young people and by those who work with them, and on their behalf. The Strategy revolves around three main goals:

Goal 1: Create a Safe, Supportive and Inclusive Environment for LGBTI+ young people

Goal 2: Improve the Mental, Physical and Sexual Health and Wellbeing of the Entire LGBTI+ Community

Goal 3: Develop the Research and Data Environment to Better Understand the Lives of LGBTI+ young people



The Strategy identifies 15 objectives and 59 actions to achieve these three main goals. The strategy requires cross Departmental involvement to lead and assist in the delivery of actions. Actions include a wide variety of areas such as schools, higher education institutions, health and social services, workplaces, youth services and the wider community. LWETB has a role to play in supporting these actions.

Other Relevant Initiatives

In addition to national policy and legislation; a number of local area initiatives, plans and services influence the lives of young people and the work of youth service providers and are, therefore, also relevant to this plan. These include:

- Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) – Longford and Westmeath
- Local youth services' plans in Longford and Westmeath
- Midland Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (MRDATF)
- Local Development Company Strategies – Longford and Westmeath
- Longford and Westmeath CYPSC Plan

European Policy Context

In terms of national and international policy provisions, there have been significant developments in the youth work sector at European level which have informed and influenced policy development in Ireland. For example, the European Youth Strategy, 2010- 2018, along with the 2008 Council of Europe's Youth Policy Agenda 2020, had an influence on Ireland's Better Outcomes Brighter Futures policy document. Other relevant policy developments at European level include:

- EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering: A renewed open method for coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities
- Europe 2020 Strategy
- Council of Europe Youth Policy Agenda 2020 (2008)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Statement of Vision and Principles

The LWETB Youth Work Plan embraces the vision as set out in Better Outcomes Brighter Futures:

"Our vision is to make Ireland the best small country 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." (DCYA, 2014a, p.22).

The LWETB Youth Work Plan also subscribes to the following principles, which are central to the National Youth Strategy and its implementation: (DCYA, 2015b, p.iv).

Table 4: Principles in National Youth Strategy

Young people and those who support them:

1. Young people are valued in their own right, and recognised as integral to society.
2. Young people are acknowledged as key drivers in achieving their cognitive, emotional, social, economic and cultural development.
3. Parents, families, other significant adults and communities are recognised as playing a critical role in the development and progression of young people.

Professionals and volunteers working with young people:

1. Professionals and volunteers who work with young people are respected, valued and appropriately supported in their work.
2. Those providing services for young people act in the best interests of young people, and respect and uphold young people's rights.

Policies and practices:

1. An equality perspective is integrated into all policy and practice.

Service development and delivery:

1. Government and other stakeholders work collaboratively, with vertical and horizontal communication and cooperation, to achieve more effective services and supports for young people.
2. Services for young people are open, accessible, resourced and provide additional support in response to particular needs.
3. Services for young people are quality assured, outcomes focused and informed by evidence.

The National Youth Work Development Plan (2003-2007) identified a set of eight principles, which were informed by the results of a comprehensive research and consultation. (DES, 2003). These principles are that the National Youth Work Development Plan should:

- a. Uphold the “voluntary dimension” of youth work, in the various senses outlined in Part Two of this document and as now defined in law, as an integral part of the tradition of youth work and of its distinctive contribution to Irish society.
- b. Recognise and uphold the right of young people to participate (in age appropriate levels of responsibility) as full partners in the development and delivery of all aspects of youth work.
- c. Promote equality, openness and inclusiveness at all levels and in all areas of youth work.

- d. Acknowledge the vital role played by paid youth workers, both in their direct work with young people and their support work with volunteers and organisations.
- e. Strive to enhance and support professionalism and the highest standards of quality, efficiency and safety (for both young people and adults) among youth work providers, including organisations, volunteers and paid staff.
- f. Learn from, and build on, the many strengths of existing processes, relationships and provision, while also responding flexibly and imaginatively to the changing environment in which youth work is practiced.
- g. Acknowledge the right of communities (both local communities and communities of interest or culture) to active participation and involvement in the development and delivery of youth work to meet the needs of their young people.
- h. Promote learning by young people through youth work, having regard to, and in a manner complementary with learning undertaken in formal education settings. (p.17).

The above principles continue to have a relevance in the context of the LWETB Youth Work Plan.

SECTION 2: METHODOLOGY

The broad parameters of the LWETB Youth Work Plan were agreed through the structures of ETBI, with the plan then being localised according to the context of this ETB. In line with its terms of reference, the LWETB Youth Work Committee provided input into the preparation of the LWETB Youth Work Plan. The Committee is representative of a range of organisations and meets quarterly to advise on LWETB's Youth Work core functions of provision, administration, coordination and assessment. In addition, it facilitates the sharing of information and supports the co-ordination of youth activities to provide maximum opportunities for young people in our area.

Consultation for the development of this plan was facilitated by the Youth Officer and Youth Support Officer from LWETB. Research was carried out to inform a needs analysis for the purposes of formulating the plan. In this respect, a mixed-method research design was deployed, consisting of the following:

Primary Research

Consultation for the development of the plan consisted of input from the LWETB Youth Work Committee, which is representative of a range of youth service stakeholders and focus groups involving young people in the region involved in youth clubs, projects and active in their own communities.

Focus group discussions were held with:

- Longford Comhairle na nÓg
- Westmeath Comhairle na nÓg
- Youth Work Ireland Midlands Youth Forum
- County Longford Youth Services Participants

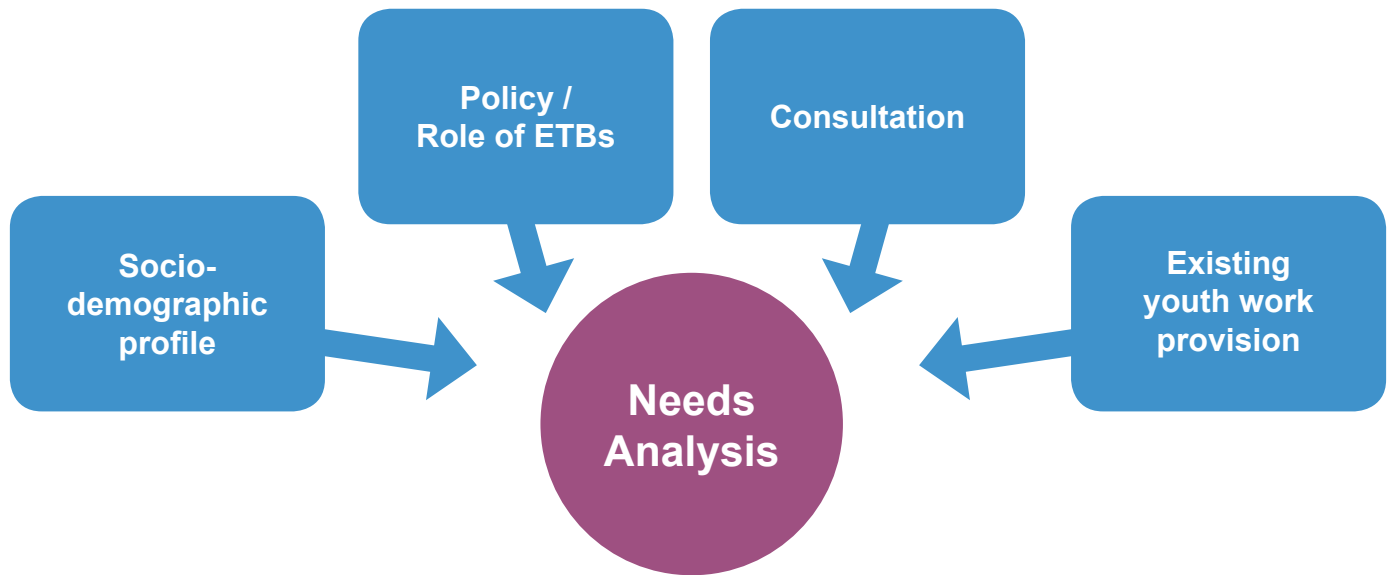
Secondary Research

A comprehensive phase of desktop research and review of local and national reports, Pobal and CSO statistics was undertaken to develop a detailed socio-economic and demographic profile of young people in Longford and Westmeath aged 10 – 24 years (county, town, DED and small area). This research was carried out to inform a needs analysis for the purposes of formulating the plan, and the identified actions.

The conclusion of this phase of the project served to assist in identifying the needs facing young people, how youth work can respond to these needs and support the youth work sector (professional and volunteer led) in our area, and by doing so inform the Youth Work Plan actions.

Need Assessment and Actions

Socio-demographic data for the Longford and Westmeath ETB area are presented in Section 3, and in Section 4; youth work services operating in the LWETB area are outlined. Section 5 presents need analysis which have been distilled as shown below:



Process of Needs Analysis

In framing these actions, particular focus was given to the LWETB Youth Work remit as referenced in the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013 which is to support the:

- Provision of Youth Work
- Coordination of Youth Work
- Administration of Youth Work
- Assessment of Youth Work

The actions which will be undertaken by LWETB to implement the Youth Work Plan will be presented in Section 6. A draft plan was presented to the Youth Work Committee prior to finalisation.

SECTION 3: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

General Population

Longford and Westmeath ETB has the smallest population of any ETB in the country. The territory covered by LWETB spans an area of 2,931 sq. km, with a total population of 129,643. This represents 2.7% of the State population (4,761,865).¹ The populations of Longford and Westmeath are 40,873 and 88,770 respectively.

In 2016, the population density for the State was 70 persons per sq km. Co. Longford had a population density of 39.65 persons per sq km, and Co. Westmeath had a population density of 50.9 persons per sq km (CYPSC 201, p14). It is an area with identifiable instances of deprivation and need. The area is characterised by dispersal of population which can prove to be a challenge to service delivery. A 2018 service mapping exercise of current service provision (both volunteer and staff led) for children in the 0-24 age group undertaken by Longford Westmeath CYPSC found that 50% of services based in Longford indicated that up to 20% of their users travel between 61 and 80 kilometres (p19) to avail of their services. In Westmeath; seventy five percent (75%) of organisations indicated that up to 35% of their users travelled between 61 and 80 kilometres to access their services (CYPSC 2018, p32).

Disadvantage

According to data based on the Pobal HP Deprivation Index (2015), the area is predominately rural with an overall well below average socio-economic makeup (9th most disadvantaged out of 40 constituencies) and has a HP Deprivation score of – 2.7.²

According to 2015 CSO figures, both Longford and Westmeath's average disposable income is lower than the state average of €20,334 and Dublin average of €23,298. The average disposable income for Westmeath is €18,309 and €17,828 for Longford.

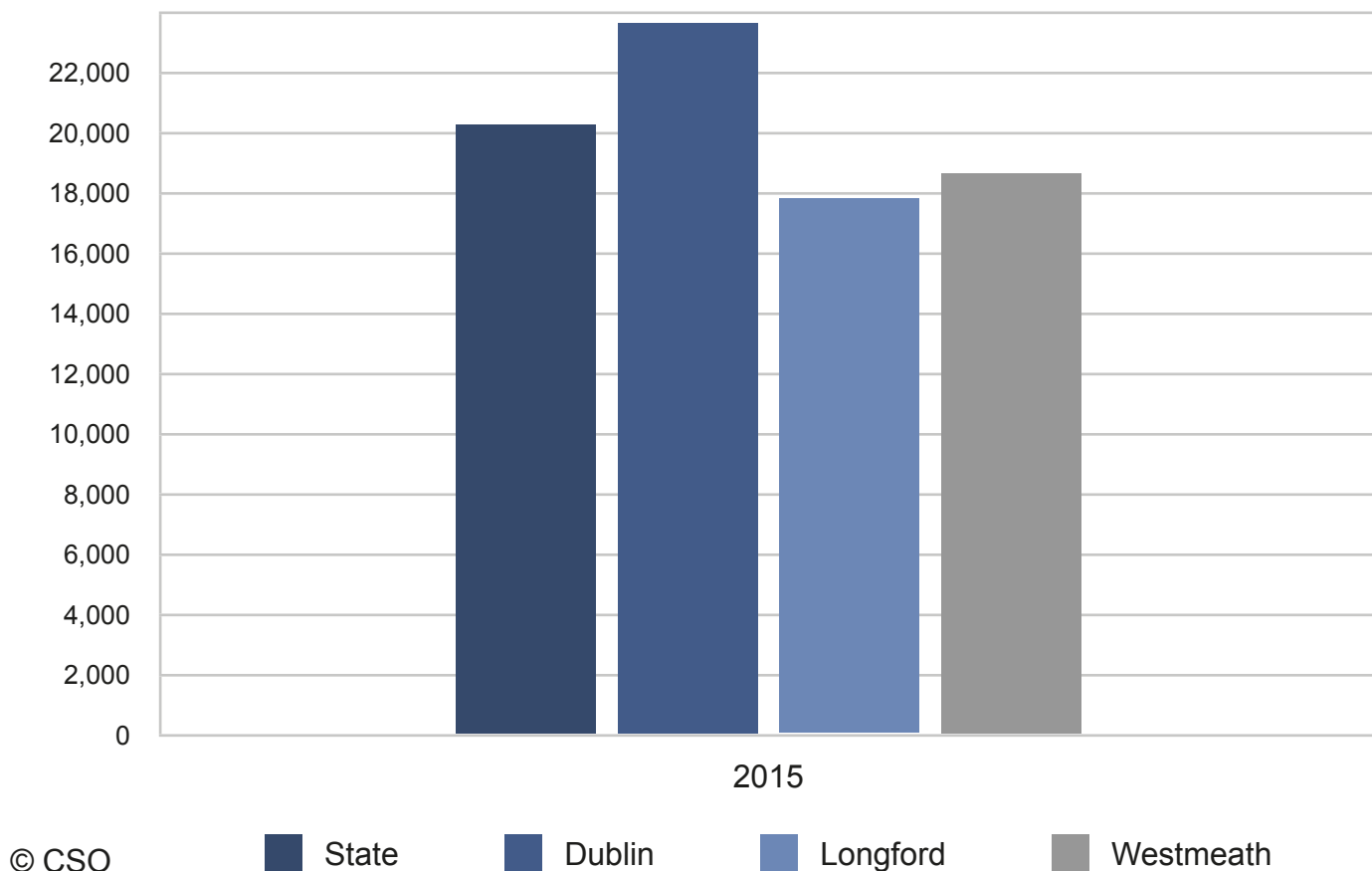
Of the 46,777 households in the Longford and Westmeath region in 2016, a total of 4,435 were rented from the local authority. This represents 9.48% of all households in the area, and is above the average of 8.4% nationally.³

¹ Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee CYPSC (2017): Socio-Demographic Profile – Longford Westmeath. Unpublished document. P11

² Haase, Trutz (2015) Constituency Profiles for 2016 General Election Based on the Pobal HP Deprivation Index. December 2015.

³ Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee CYPSC (2017): Socio-Demographic Profile – Longford Westmeath. Unpublished document.p43

Disposable Income per Person (Euro) by County and Region and Year



Unemployment

The 2016 Census found that the national average unemployment rate was 12.9%. Both Westmeath and Longford's unemployment rate was substantially higher than the national average for both males and females:

Local Authority Area	Male Unemployment Rate 2016	Female Unemployment Rate 2016
Longford	20.2	19.0
Westmeath	16.6	15.5

Equally for those aged between 15-24 in 2016, there was a higher than the national average unemployment rate in both counties. However, there was a higher labour force participation rate in the region compared to national averages.

Labour Force Participation Rate 2011-2016:

		Age 15-24		Age 25-34	
County	Indicator	Male	Female	Male	Female
Longford	Labour Force Participation Rate	38.0	31.8	92.4	80.0
	Unemployment Rate	35.6	38.9	25.1	20.3
Westmeath	Labour Force Participation Rate	36.2	31.0	90.4	79.5
	Unemployment Rate	33.3	30.9	17.1	16.2
State	Labour Force Participation Rate	34.5	30.4	91.0	82.3
	Unemployment Rate	27.3	23.7	14.0	11.9

Source: CYPSC 2017,p.22

Family Composition

In 2016, there were 11,505 families recorded as living in the Longford and Westmeath region (CYPSC,2017,p.27). In terms of family composition, the lone parent average is above the national rate in Longford, but slightly below average in Westmeath. However, there are many E.D's in both counties with significantly higher lone parent averages. The CSO Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2016 analysis of consistent poverty rates by household composition shows that individuals living in households where there was one adult and one or more children aged under 18 had the highest consistent poverty rate at 24.6%.⁴

Longford and Westmeath ED by Lone Parent Ratio:

ED Name	County	Total Population 2016	Total Population Aged 0-24	Lone Parents Ratio 2006	Lone Parents Ratio 2011	Lone Parents Ratio 2011
Athlone West Urban	Westmeath	3,260	942	43.00	38.11	38.00
Longford No.1 Urban	Longford	3,592	1,202	48.59	44.80	36.06
Mullingar North Urban	Westmeath	5,610	1,952	40.26	34.84	32.70
Milltown	Westmeath	299	120	15.00	23.08	32.00
Ballinallee	Longford	625	226	24.53	35.80	31.50
Ballinamuck West	Longford	437	132	15.56	21.15	31.00
Athlone East Rural	Westmeath	7,560	2,974	35.44	31.28	29.93
Athlone East Urban	Westmeath	4,382	1,126	38.41	31.23	29.42
Meathas Truim	Longford	2,335	850	26.74	29.15	27.20
Kinturk	Westmeath	1,344	420	23.62	27.61	26.86
Castlelost	Westmeath	1,692	655	20.43	21.99	26.83
Kilbixy	Westmeath	603	208	24.66	28.57	26.50
Longford Rural	Longford	5,704	2,116	34.62	29.06	26.22
Drumlisk	Longford	1,475	547	22.12	26.01	26.17
Ballymahon	Longford	2,674	867	25.74	26.26	26.00
Raharney	Westmeath	506	190	18.31	22.95	26.00
Killashee	Longford	437	142	20.69	43.64	25.50
Currygrane	Longford	139	51	11.76	23.08	25.00

Source: 2016 Pobal HP Deprivation Index: Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2017)

⁴ Central Statistics Office (2016) CSO Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2016.

Youth Population

In terms of youth in the area, there are a total of 44,836 people under the age of 25 in Longford and Westmeath. Of these, 9,515 are aged between 0-4, 10,334 aged between 5-9, 9,434 between ages 10-14, 8,581 between 15-19 and 6,972 aged between 20-24. The largest cohort is aged 10 to 14 years of age at 23.05% of the under 25 population. In 2016, there was a total population of 37,864 between the ages of 0-19 in the Longford and Westmeath area (CYPSC Socio Demographic Profile p15). Longford and Westmeath has a total population of 29,283 in the 0-14 age range and a total working age population of 91,747 in the 15-64 age range, giving a young dependency ratio of 31.92% (i.e. number of young people as a percentage of working age population); the third highest in the country.⁵

Age Bands

Westmeath has a greater proportion of the population aged between 15 -24 years than Longford, which has a higher proportion within the 0-14 age ranges. The table below distils the two counties by age band:

Numbers of under 25 year olds in Longford and Westmeath:

	Age 0-4	Age 5-9	Age 10-14	Age 15-19	Age 20-24	Total 0-24
Co. Longford (Number)	3,051	3,386	3,071	2,603	1,954	14,065
Co. Longford (%)	21.69	24.07	21.83	18.51	13.89	100.00
Co. Westmeath	6,464	6,948	6,363	5,978	5,018	30,771
Co. Westmeath (%)	21.01	22.58	20.68	19.43	16.31	100.00
Total Longford-Westmeath	9,515	10,334	9,434	8,581	6,972	44,836
Total (5)	21.22	23.05	21.04	19.14	15.55	100.00

Source: CSO Census of Population 2016

The most populous ED's by 0-24 age group are identified in the below table:

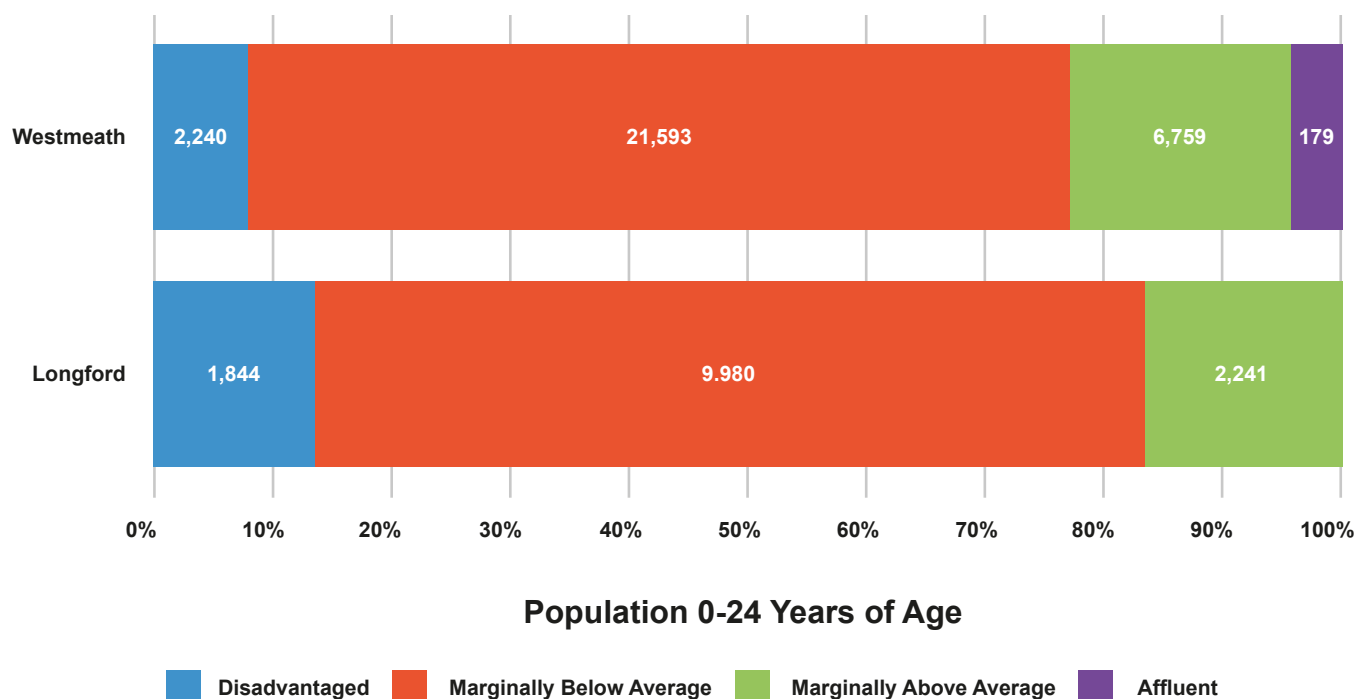
County	Most Densely Populated EDs	Population 2016	Population Aged 0-24	Percentage Population Aged 0-24	Actual change 2011-2016	Percentage change 2011-2016	Population density (persons per sq km)	Area (sq km)
Co. Longford	Longford No. 1 Urban	3,592	1,202	33.46	429	13.6	2068.8	1.74
	Longford No. 2 Urban	1,029	316	30.71	86	9.1	631.8	1.63
Co. Westmeath	Mullingar North Urban	5,610	1,952	34.80	295	5.6	2087.3	2.69
	Athlone East Urban	4,382	1,126	25.70	251	6.1	1794.4	2.44

Source: CSO StatBank / Profile 2 - Population Distribution and Movements / E2013

⁵ Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee CYPSC (2019) Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2021. Unpublished document. p.15

Disadvantage Among Under 25 Cohort

As regards affluence and deprivation in the under 25 cohort, only 179 in Westmeath are considered affluent. In Westmeath, 2,240 are disadvantaged with 21,593 marginally below average in deprivation terms. In Longford, 1,884 could be seen as disadvantaged, and 9,980 marginally below average.⁶

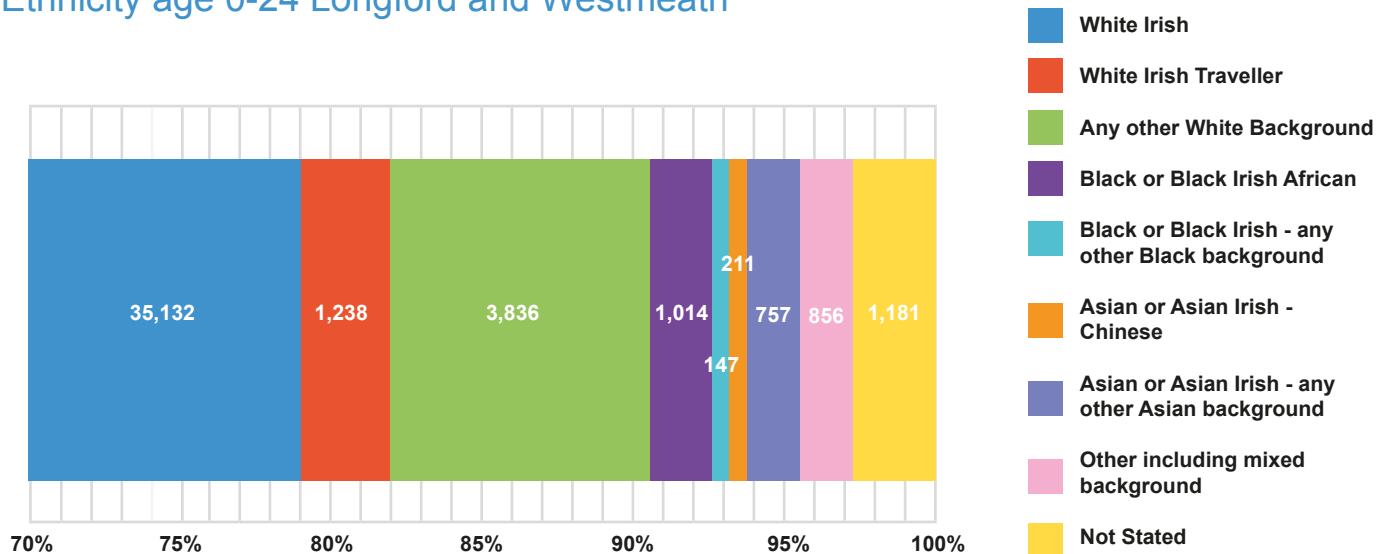


Youth Ethnicity

With regard to ethnicity among the 0-24 age cohort in Longford and Westmeath, the 2016 Census shows 35,132 identified as White Irish, 1,238 as White Irish Traveller, 3,836 as from any other White background, 1,014 as Black or Black Irish African, 147 as Black or Black Irish from any other background, 211 as Asian or Asian Irish – Chinese, 757 as Asian or Asian Irish – any other background. 856 identified as other including mixed background. The ethnicity of 1,181 of the age group was not stated.

⁶ Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee CYPSC (2017): Socio-Demographic Profile – Longford Westmeath. Unpublished document.p33

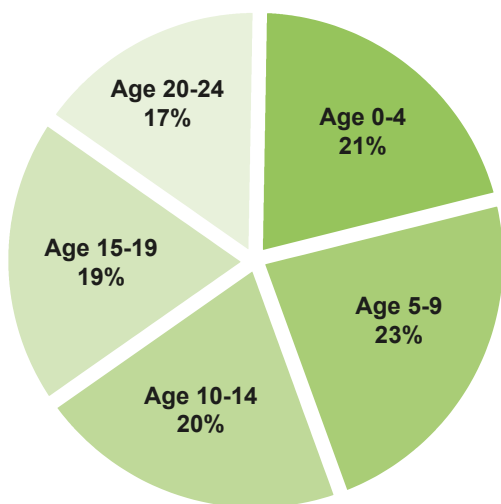
Ethnicity age 0-24 Longford and Westmeath



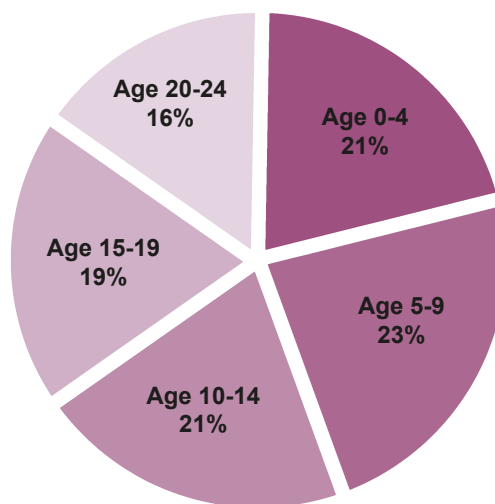
Source: CSO Census of Population

Population Trends in Longford and Westmeath

In 2016, the Longford and Westmeath area had 2 percentage points more of its population aged 0-24 than was the case in the rest of the state.



State Population Aged 0-24
by Age Band 2016



Longford Westmeath Population Aged 0-24
by Age Band 2016

Source: CYPSC 2017,p.5

Between the years 2011-2016, the population of Longford and Westmeath increased by 3.57%, which was just above the national average state increase of 3.3%.⁷

⁷ Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee CYPSC (2017): Socio-Demographic Profile – Longford Westmeath. Unpublished document.p13

Population Movement 2016

The CSO (2013) Regional Population Projections 2016-2031 project that the Midland Region could see its population increase by 25,000 by 2031 to 309,000 if internal migration patterns return to the traditional patterns which were last observed in the mid-1990s (CYPSC, 2017, p. 14)

Education

There are seven designated DEIS (Delivering Equality in Schools) Post Primary schools in the area; four in Longford and three in Westmeath. The DEIS initiative provides additional supports to schools judged to be most in need in disadvantaged areas.

School	County
Ardscoil Phadraig, Granard	Longford
Ballymahon Vocational School	Longford
Castlepollard Community College	Westmeath
Columba College, Kilucan	Westmeath
Lanesboro Community College	Longford
Mullingar Community College	Westmeath
Templemichael College	Longford

Disability

In Longford and Westmeath, the highest incidence of disability is in the 15-19 cohort.⁸

Drug and Alcohol Misuse

The alcohol consumption rate for Ireland is one of the highest in Europe at 11.9 litres per capita in 2010.⁹ A My World Survey of young people's mental health in Ireland showed that excessive use of alcohol is associated with poor mental health and wellbeing, with strong links between excessive drinking and suicidal behaviour in young adults.¹⁰ The Midland Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force is charged with co-ordinating a collective response to drug and alcohol misuse in the counties of Longford, Westmeath, Laois and Offaly. In 2014, 426 clients in assessment or treatment were under 24 years of age. Across all age profiles in 2014, 17% of people in treatment were from Longford (up 1%) and 36% (highest in region) from Westmeath.¹¹

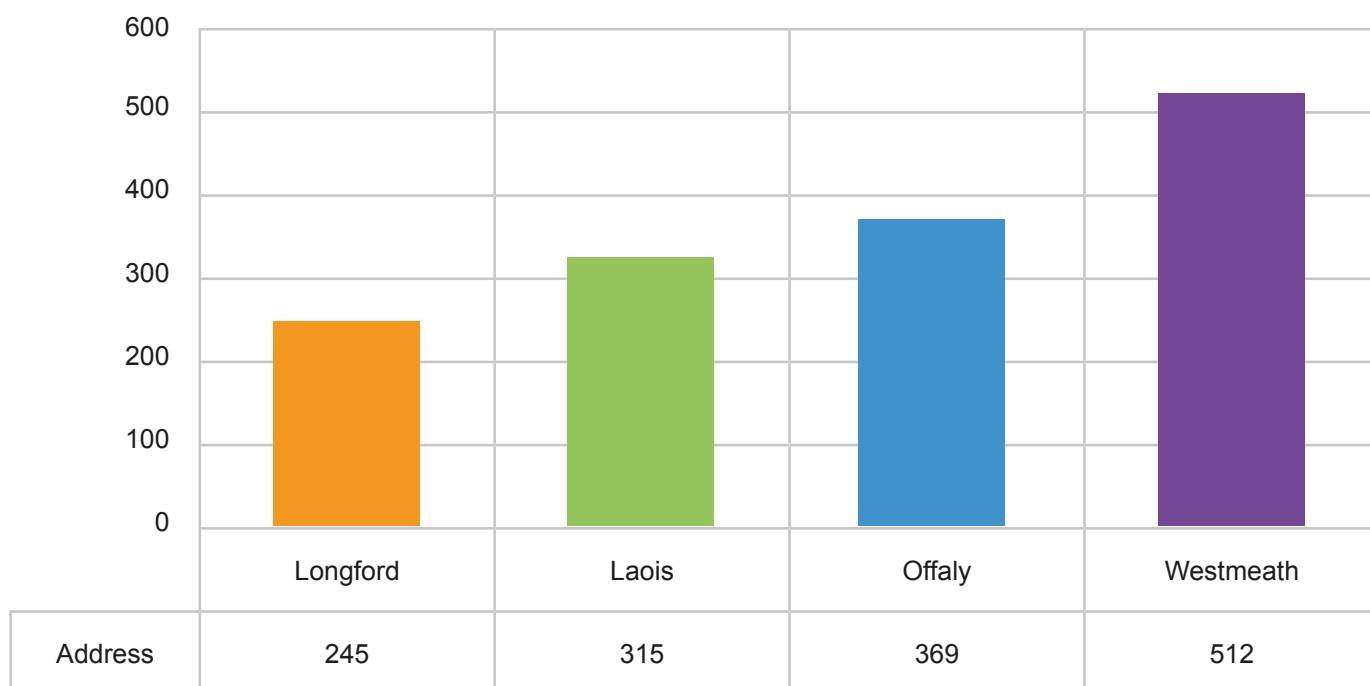
⁸ Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee CYPSC (2017): Socio-Demographic Profile – Longford Westmeath. Unpublished document p.45

⁹ Department of Health (2013) Healthy Ireland - A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 – 2025. Dublin: The Stationary Office. p.10

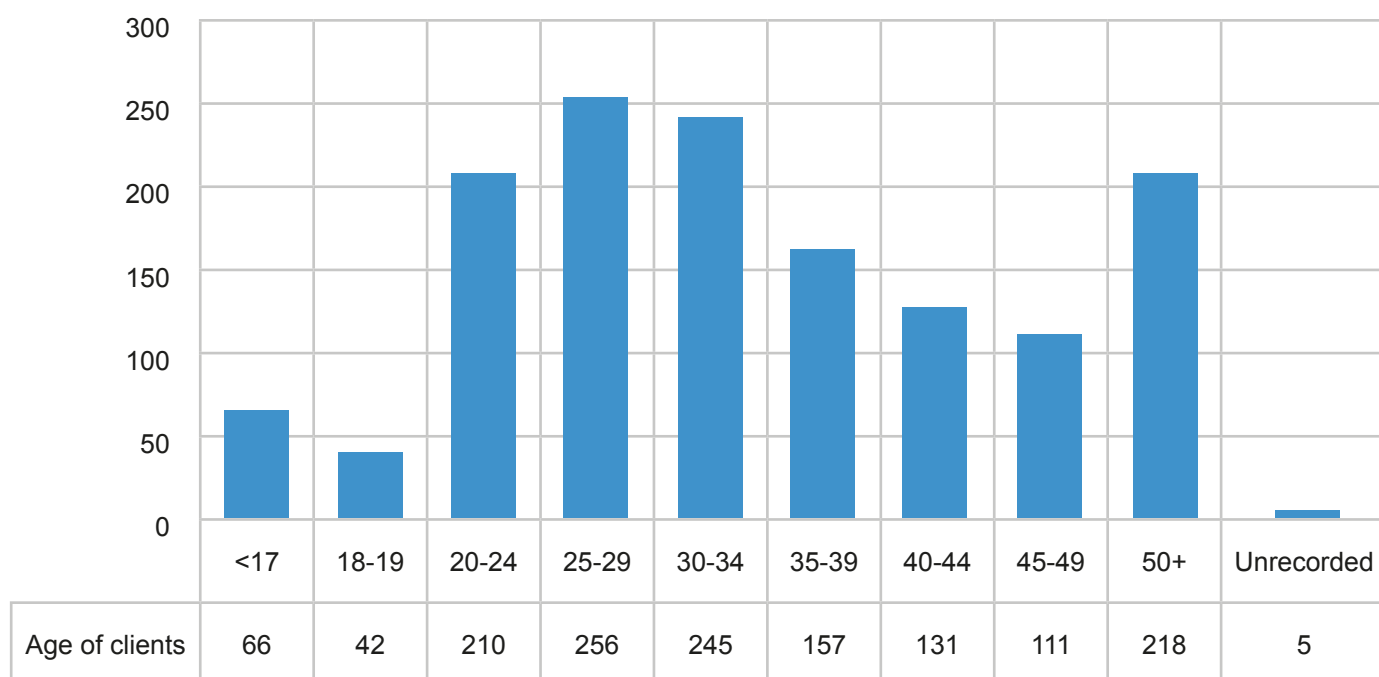
¹⁰ Mental Health Services Midlands Louth Meath (2018), Connecting for Life Midlands Louth Meath Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2018-2018 p.32

¹¹ Midland Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (2017) Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2017 – 2018 p.15

County of Residence of Clients Assessment / Treatment, MRDATF Area, 2014



Age of Clients in Assessment / Treatment, MRDATF Area, 2014

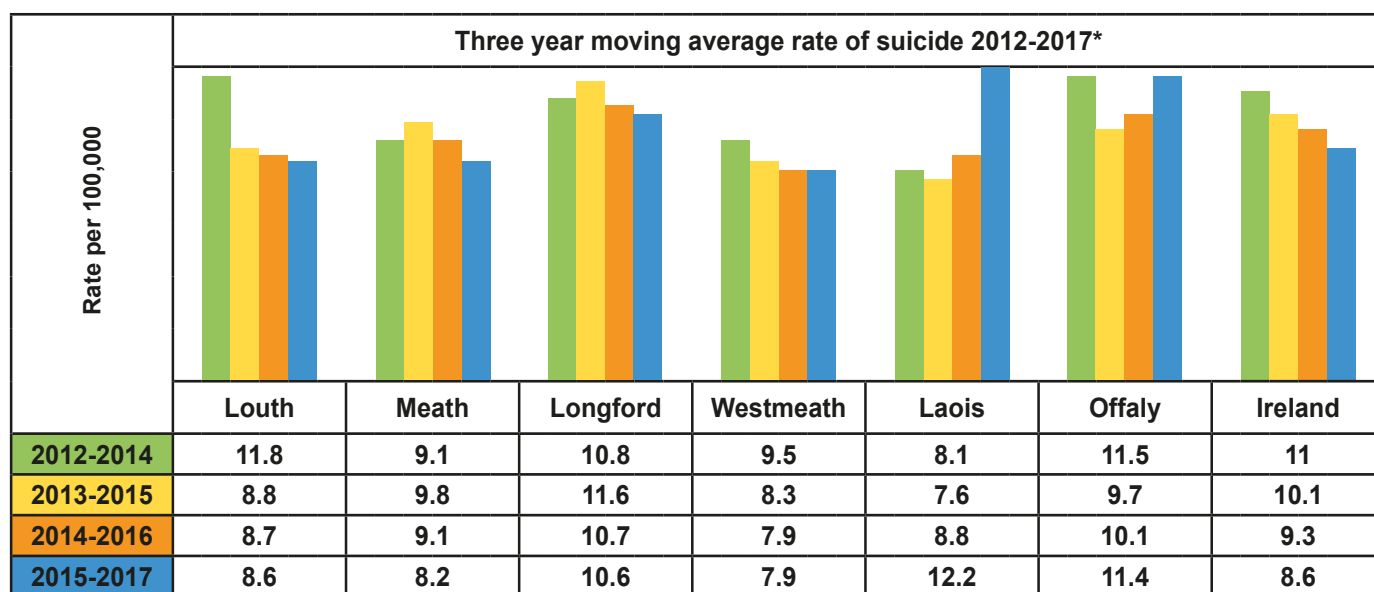


Source: MRDAFT Drug and Alcohol Strategic Plan 2017 – 2018

Mental Health and Well Being

According to the HSE Fifth Annual Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service Report 2012 – 2013, one in ten children and adolescents suffer from mental health disorder that are associated with “considerable distress and substantial interference with personal functions such as family and social relationships, their capacity to cope with day-to-day stresses and life challenges, and their learning”¹² In Ireland, the mortality rate from suicide in the 15-24 age group is the fourth highest in the EU, and the third highest among young men aged 15-19.¹³ There is no concrete data on overall mental health statistics available specific to the area and age group 10-24, but there are 44,836 people under the age of 24 in Longford and Westmeath. Pieta House currently provides one to one therapeutic support free of charge to people experiencing suicidal ideation, attempted suicide and those who are engaging in self-harm from their centre in Athlone. In addition, the following Family Resource Centres provide some counselling services to groups and individuals in the region: Lus Na Greine Family Resource Centre, Granard, Bridgeways Family Resource Centre, Ballymahon, Cara Phort Family Resource Centre, Mullingar and the Monsignor McCarthy Family Resource Centre, Athlone.

The below 3 year moving average suicide rate per 100,000 of population displays rates in the Midlands Louth Meath area. In the years 2013 – 2017, the suicide rate in Longford was higher than the national average.



* Rates for 2016 and 2017 are provisional and subject to change

Source: Mental Health Services Midlands Louth Meath (2018), Connecting for Life Midlands
Louth Meath Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2018-2018 p 22

¹² HSE (2013) Fifth Annual Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service Report 2012 – 2013. Available at: 10

¹³ Department of Health (2013) Healthy Ireland - A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 – 2025.
Dublin: The Stationary Office. p.10

A survey carried out in 2018 by the Mental Health Services Midlands Louth Meath across the regions found the below factors were perceived as making people vulnerable to self-harm and suicide.

Challenges or Risk Factors	% of respondents who identified this
Lack of services or long waiting lists	29%
Lack of knowledge of signs, appropriate responses and services	28%
Lack of support in the community	23%
Mental health related stigma	20%
Stress and lack of coping strategies and skills	14%
Not enough services for youth and children	12%
Previous experiences of mental health issues	9%
Isolation and loneliness	9%
Drug or alcohol difficulties	8%
Schools not equipped to provide supports / referrals	6%
Lack of 24 hour crisis support	6%
Other issues identified by 5% of respondents or fewer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life / Lifestyle Factors • Being a member of a marginalised group (eg: LGBTQI+, people with disabilities, refugees and migrants) • Being a victim of bullying • Bereavement • Financial or employment issues / debt • Relationship issues (home life or significant others) • Abuse (sexual and physical) 	

Source: Mental Health Services Midlands Louth Meath (2018), Connecting for Life Midlands Louth Meath Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2018-2018 p 47)

LGBTI+ Youth

The National Youth Strategy identifies LGBTI+ young people as a specific group to be considered in the context of focused provision for young people. Specifically, the Strategy draws attention to the issue of homophobic bullying in schools and other settings, and this, together with family rejection, has been identified in research as leading to poor mental health outcomes in later life.¹⁴ There are no concrete figures available on the proportion of population belonging to the LGBTI+ community in Longford and Westmeath but there is a defined need to provide focused provision for those within the cohort.

Children in Care

In 2015, 6,384 were in the care of Tulsa, the Child and Family Agency. In 2011, there were 5.9 per 1,000 children in care in the Midlands area.¹⁵ For 2017, there was a significant increase in the referral rates, with 7,307 referrals recorded for the year, 14% of the national figure. This is an instance of 92 referrals per 1000 children for 2017. Again, for 2017, the Midlands area shows the highest number of actual referrals and the highest instance of referrals per capita.¹⁶

Child Welfare

In the area of child welfare and protection, across the Midlands area (which includes Longford and Westmeath) there were 57.8 referrals per 1,000 children in 2015 compared to the national average of 38 per 1,000.¹⁷

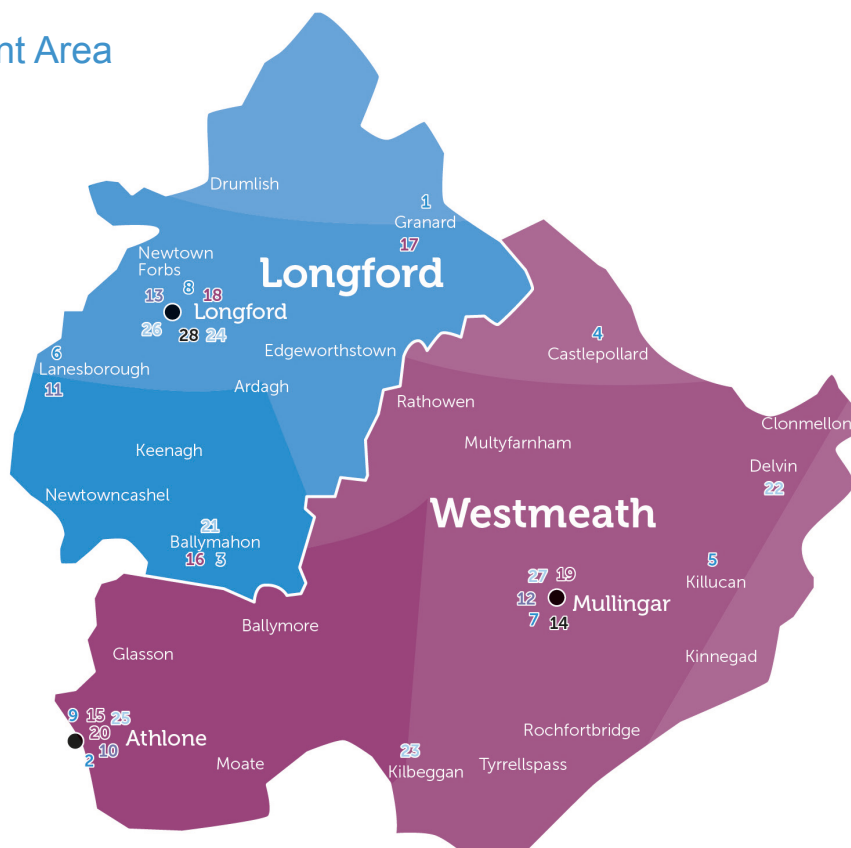
¹⁴ Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015a) National Youth Strategy, 2015-2020. Government Publications: Dublin. p.10

¹⁵ Department of Children and Youth Affairs – State of the Nation’s Children Ireland 2016 p. 213

¹⁶ Longford Westmeath Children and Young People’s Services Committee CYPSC (2019) Children and Young People’s Plan 2019-2021. Unpublished document. p.19

¹⁷ Department of Children and Youth Affairs – State of the Nation’s Children Ireland 2016 p. 113

LWETB Catchment Area



Location of LWETB Services	
Schools	Further Education and Training
1 Ardscoil Phádraig, Granard	15 Athlone FET Centre
2 Athlone Community College	16 Ballymahon FET Centre
3 Ballymahon Vocational School	17 Granard FET Centre
4 Castlepollard Community College	18 Longford FET Centre
5 Columba College, Killucan	19 Mullingar FET Centre
6 Lanesboro Community College	20 Athlone Training Centre
7 Mullingar Community College	
8 Templemichael Community College	
9 St. Anthony's, Athlone	
PLC Provision	Youthreach and VTOS
10 Athlone Community College	21 Ballymahon Youthreach
11 Lanesboro Community College	22 Delvin Youthreach
12 Mullingar Community College	23 Kilbeggan Youthreach
13 Templemichael College, Longford	24 Longford Youthreach
	25 Athlone VTOS
	26 Longford VTOS
	27 Mullingar VTOS
LWETB Offices	
14 LWETB Head Office Mullingar	
28 Longford Office	

COUNTY WESTMEATH PROFILE

General Population

County Westmeath is predominantly a rural county, with Census 2016 showing a population of 88,770, an increase from the 2011 Census (86,164). The county's population has increased by 38% in the past 20 years and by 2.6% since 2011. The population of Westmeath is now at its highest in 150 years.

The county has three electoral areas; Mullingar-Coole, Mullingar-Kilbeggan and Athlone, which in turn form the Mullingar and Athlone Municipal Districts through which many of the local services are delivered by the Council. The two main urban centres in the county are Athlone and Mullingar, both of which have experienced significant population growth since 2011.

Disadvantage

According to the 2011 Pobal HP Deprivation Index Area Profile for County Westmeath, of the 105 EDs in County Westmeath, about two-thirds (68) are marginally below average, while 34 are marginally above average and three fall into the disadvantaged category. The most affluent parts of the county are the wider environs around Athlone and Mullingar, but excluding the towns themselves and their immediate surroundings. The most disadvantaged EDs are Mullingar North Urban (-12.0), Finnea (-10.8) and Milltown (-10.4), which classify as 'disadvantaged' areas. All other EDs are at the most 'marginally below average'.¹⁸

Unemployment

Westmeath has the 7th highest rate of unemployment in the country compared to a national average of 12.9% in 2016.¹⁹ In 2016, male and female unemployment rates stood at 16.6% and 15.5% respectively.

Lone Parent Ratio

The lone parent ratio in the county is marginally less than average at 19.68% compared to 19.9% nationally. Reflecting the urban-rural dichotomy within the county, Athlone West Urban (38.1%), Mullingar North Urban (34.8%), Athlone East Rural (31.3%) and Athlone East Urban (31.2%) all have rates which are high by national comparison.²⁰

Traveller Population

According to the 2016 Census, there are 1,002 members of the travelling community in the county. Overall, 17.4 per 1,000 children in the county are from the community. This is above the national average of 12.4 children per thousand.²¹

¹⁸ Engling, Feline and Haase Trutz (2013) The 2011 Pobal HP Deprivation Index – Area Profile for County Westmeath p.1

¹⁹ Central Statistics Office (2017) - Census 2016 Summary Results - Part 2. Dublin: Central Statistics Office. p.24

²⁰ Engling, Feline and Haase Trutz (2013) The 2011 Pobal HP Deprivation Index – Area Profile for County Westmeath p.2

²¹ Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2016) State of the Nation's Children Ireland 2016 Dublin: Government Publications p .28

Ethnicity

In terms of ethnicity, Westmeath has a high proportion of non-Irish national children showing an increase of 94.4 of non-Irish national children per thousand; just less than Dublin County at 97.0 and well above the national average of 82.5²². From a population of 87,891 people, 73,763 identified as either white Irish or white Irish traveller. 12.6% of 2016 Census respondents identified as non-Irish national, which is above the national average of 11.42%. There are significant numbers of Polish and Lithuanians living in the county (2,328 and 1026 respectively). Polish features as the most used foreign language in the county (2,559). There are also a significant number living in Westmeath who identify as 'Asian or Asian Irish'.

Usually resident population by ethnic or cultural background – Westmeath:

Ethnic or Cultural Background	Persons
White Irish	72,761
White Irish Traveller	1,002
Other White	7,746
Black or Black Irish	1,340
Asian or Asian Irish	1,929
Other	1,232
Not Stated	1,881
Total	87,891

Source: Census 2016

Of the 11,386 people who speak a foreign language in Westmeath, 2,108 stated that they did not speak English well or not at all. This equates to 18.51% of the foreign language speaking population living in Westmeath who do not have fluent English. 310 people did not indicate whether they had an ability to speak the language.

Ability to Speak English	Persons
Very well	5,734
Well	3,544
Not well	1,497
Not at all	301
Not Stated	310
Total	11,386

Source: Census 2016

²² Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2016) State of the Nation's Children Ireland 2016. Dublin: Government Publications p.29

Education

With regard to education, Westmeath has a higher than average percentage of postprimary school children per county recording 20 days or more absence from school at 18.3% compared to the national average of 14.9% during 2015-2016.²³ The Leaving Certificate retention rate for children in the 2010 school entry cohort in the county was 91.44%, just slightly higher than the national rate of 91.2%.²⁴ There are thirteen Post Primary schools in the county, three of which have DEIS designation; Castlepollard Community College, Columba College, Kilucan and Mullingar Community College.

Disability

In relation to disability, the 2016 Census records 11,887 people with a disability in the county. In terms of statistics, Westmeath has a rate of 59.3 per 1000 children registered with a disability, which is higher than the national average of 57.8 per thousand.²⁵ Equally, in 2016, Westmeath records a higher than average rate of children registered as having a physical and/or sensory disability with a rate of 9.5 per thousand compared nationally to an average of 5.4 per thousand (State of the Nation's Children 2016:110). In the realm of intellectual disability however, the county has a below average amount of children registered with a rate of 6.2 per thousand.²⁶ The county also records a higher than average rate per thousand at 6.8 children who provide regular unpaid personal help caring for a friend or family member. This compares as significantly higher than the national rate of 5.6 per thousand (State of the Nation's Children 2016:36)

Mental Health and Well Being

As regards mental health admissions, there were 30.4 per 100,000 children in Westmeath referred, which is below the average rate of 43.8 per thousand.²⁷ Service Providers for children and young people in the 0-24 cohort in Westmeath cited CAMHS services for young people as an unmet need in the county.²⁸

Youth Crime

There were 17,615 referrals nationally to Garda Diversion Programmes in 2016.²⁹ Of this number, there were 179 children from Westmeath referred to Garda Diversion programmes in 2016, which was a 16% increase on 2015 figures.³⁰

²³ Tusla Child and Family Agency (2016). Tulsa School Attendance Data from Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2015-2016, Analysis and Report to the Child and Family Agency. Dublin: Government Publications. p.23

²⁴ Department of Education and Skill (2017) Retention Rates of Pupils in Second-Level Schools 2010 Entry Cohort. Dublin: Government Publications.p.16

²⁵ Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2016) State of the Nation's Children Ireland 2016. Dublin: Government Publications. p. 34

²⁶ Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2016) State of the Nation's Children Ireland 2016. Dublin: Government Publications. p 107

²⁷ Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2016) State of the Nation's Children Ireland 2016. Dublin: Government Publications. p 216

²⁸ Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee (2018) Services Mapping – Longford Westmeath. Unpublished document. p 34

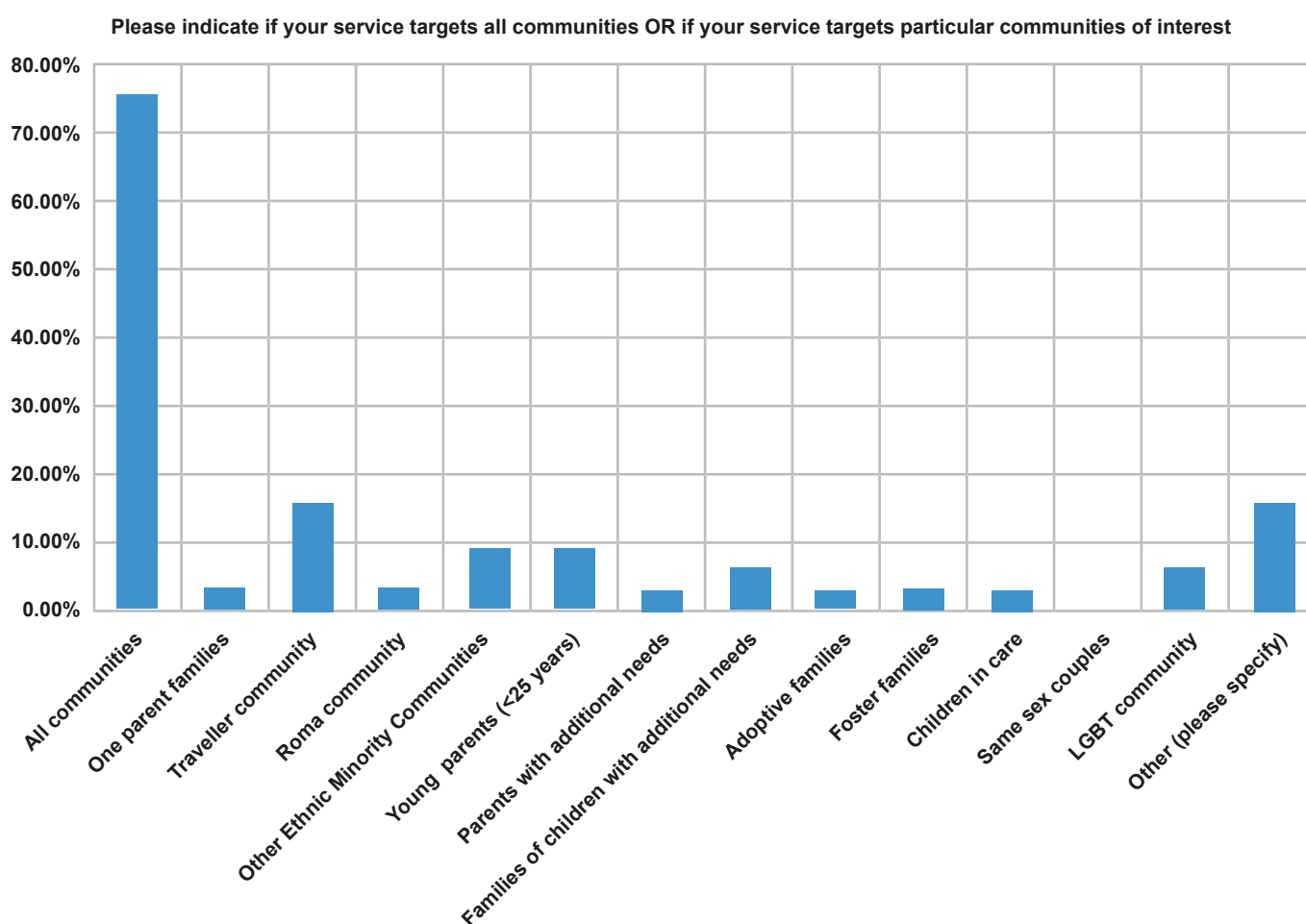
²⁹ Garda Bureau of Community Engagement (2016) Annual Report 2016 of the Committee Appointed to Monitor the Effectiveness of the Diversion Programme. Dublin: Government Publications.p.12

³⁰ Garda Bureau of Community Engagement (2016) Annual Report 2016 of the Committee Appointed to Monitor the Effectiveness of the Diversion Programme. Dublin: Government Publications. p.16

Youth Service Provision

In terms of current service provision (both volunteer and staff led) for children and young people in the 0-24 cohort in Westmeath, 16% target their services to meet the needs of the traveller community. Nine percent (9%) work specifically with other ethnic minority communities and young parents up to 25 years. Over 6% work specifically with families of children with additional needs and the LGBTI+ community. Three percent (3%) support one parent families, Roma community, parents with additional needs, adoptive families, foster families and children in care. No service is specifically designed to support the needs of same sex families.³¹ (CYPSC Services Mapping p 26)

Target Communities of Interest

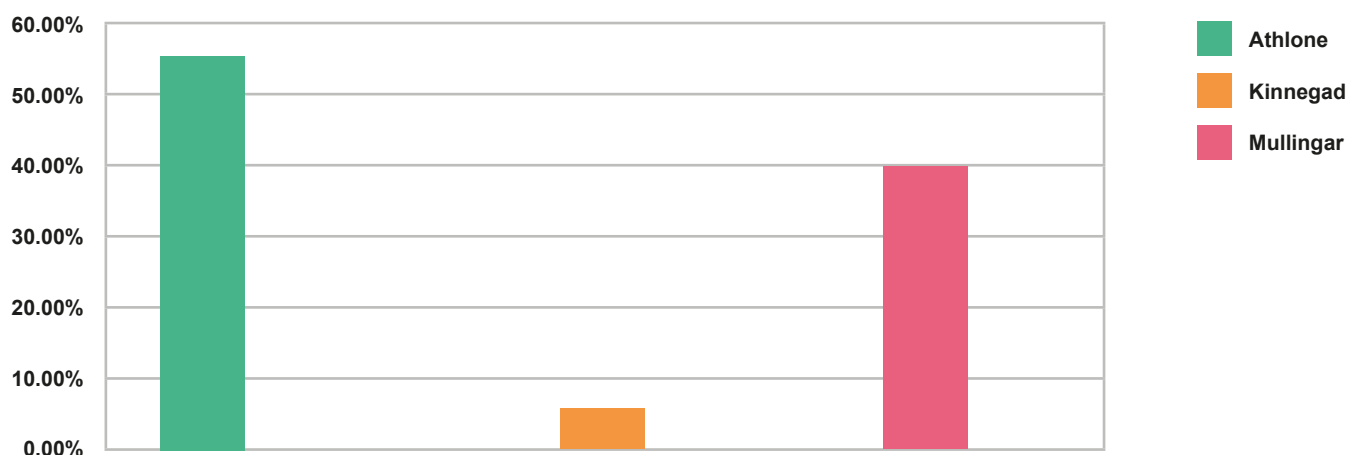


Source: Longford Westmeath
CYPSC Services Mapping p.2

³¹ Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee (2018) Services Mapping – Longford Westmeath. Unpublished document p.26

Youth Service Location

If your service operates from County Westmeath, please indicate where your service is based



Source: (CYPSC Services Mapping p 34)

Of the organisations providing services for children and young people in the 0-24 age group in Westmeath, 56% of responding organisations base their services in Athlone. Almost 41% base their services in Mullingar whilst just over 3% are based in Kinnegad.³²

Area Profiles

The areas highlighted below have high levels of deprivation and need which include unemployment, lone parent ratios and additional need for youth services.

Athlone

The population of Athlone has increased significantly by nearly 6 per cent since 2011, and it is now the 14th most populated town in Ireland with a population of 21,349 people living in the town, up almost 1,200 from five years before.³³ The town has a direct-provision centre that houses 284 asylum-seekers. Athlone is a designated RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) area, which is a focused Government initiative designed to target 51 of the most disadvantaged urban areas and provincial towns in the country. The town is divided into three E.D's - Athlone West Urban, Athlone East Urban and Athlone East Rural.

The town has one family resource centre; the Monsignor McCarthy Centre located in Athlone West Urban which has a population 3,260 and a significant deprivation score of -9.21. Unemployment in the area is high with rates of 26.32% for males and 22.16% for females. The lone parent ratio is nearly double the national average at 38%. There are 942 of the population aged 24 and under in the locality, 530 of which are aged 10-24. 16.42% of the population live in local authority rented housing which is well above the national average.

³² Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee (2018) Services Mapping – Longford Westmeath. Unpublished document p.31

³³ Central Statistics Office (2016) Census of Population 2016 - Profile 2 Population Distribution and Movements Dublin: Central Statistics Office

Athlone East Urban has a population of 4,072 and a deprivation score of -2.83. It has an above national average lone parent ratio of 29.42%. The rate of unemployment in the area is high for both males at 20.83% and females at 21.09%. 1126 of the population are 24 years of age and under. 666 are within the 10-24 age cohort.

Athlone East Rural has a population of 7,560 and a deprivation score of -2.09. The lone parent ratio is higher than the national average at 29.93%. The unemployment rate is also high with 21.39% of males and 18.86% of females without work. The area has a significant amount of inhabitants aged 24 years and under with 2,974 (39.3%) falling into this age cohort. 1,699 are aged between 10-24 years. The percentage of people in local authority housing is also above average at 13.18%.

In total, there are 5,042 young people under the age of 25 in the Athlone catchment area, 2,895 of which fall into the 10-24 age category traditionally served by youth services.

Mullingar

Since 2011, Mullingar has experienced significant population growth. The town falls into large town status and features in the 2016 Census as the 15th most populated settlement in the country. The town has a population of 20,928, which is a 4.1% increase since the 2011 Census.³⁴

Mullingar is a designated RAPID area which is a focused Government initiative to target the 51 most disadvantaged urban areas and provincial towns in the country. The area has one family resource centre; Ballynacargy FRC which is situated in Ballynacargy and services the rural area, west of Mullingar.

Mullingar North Urban has a population of 5,610 and a significant deprivation score of -12.78. The lone parent ratio in the area is above average at 32.7%. In relation to education, only 20% of the population has a third level qualification, in contrast with the national average of 42.0%. Unemployment in the area is very high for both males and females at 35.39% and 31.84% respectively. There are 1,952 people in the area under the age of 25 or 34.7% of the population, 1,045 of which are aged 10-24 years of age.

Mullingar South Urban has a population of 4,422 people and a deprivation score of -0.88. It has a high lone parent ratio of 20.85%. Unemployment rates are above average for both males at 18.43% and females at 18.99%. There are 1,294 of the population aged 24 and under in the E.D. 642 of these are aged 10-24 years. Mullingar Rural has a population of 10,783 and a deprivation score of -0.56. 10.38% of the population have primary education only, which is above the national rate of 13.3%. There is a total of 3476 under the age of 18 years of age in the rural area of Mullingar. In the Longford and Westmeath area, Mullingar Rural has the highest number of families with children of less than 15 years of age. (1,168 families).³⁵ There is a total of 4096 in the population under the age of 25, of which 2,134 are within the 10-24 age category. In total, there are 7,342 aged 24 and under (3,821 aged between 10-24 years) in the Mullingar region thus underlining the need for youth services in the area.

³⁴ Central Statistics Office (2016) Census of Population 2016 - Profile 2 Population Distribution and Movements
 Dublin: Central Statistics Office

³⁵ Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee CYPSC (2017): Socio-Demographic Profile – Longford Westmeath. Unpublished document p.27

North East Westmeath Profile

LWETB has identified rural disadvantaged areas as having an emerging need for youth services. Many of these areas have experienced population growth since 2006 onwards, and have high levels of unemployment, lone parent ratios and above average rates of local authority housing; all of which can be indications of social exclusion.

Castlepollard

The Census records Castlepollard (referred to as Kinturk in the Census) as having a population of 1,344. The town has a Pobal HP deprivation score of -8.92. The lone parent ratio is above the national average at 26.86%. The area also has a low proportion of population with third level education at 19.89%. 12.46% live in local authority rented housing, which is above the national average. In addition, the town's disadvantage is highlighted by its unemployment rates which are above the national average at 24.91% for males and 18.71% for females.

There is a total of 420 under the age of 25 in the area with 252 of these within the 10-24 years cohort. Castlepollard has one DEIS post primary school (Castlepollard Community College), a library and no family resource centre.

Collinstown

Collinstown village has a population of 501 and a Pobal deprivation score of -4.7. This is a significant increase from -0.45 in 2006. The population increased by 9.98% between the years 2006-2011. The town has a low percentage of the population with third level education at 29.04%, which is lower than the national average. Unemployment is also above the national average with figures for male unemployment at 16.34% and 15.03% for females.

There is a total population of 178 of the population 24 years of age and under; with 75 of these within the 10-24 age bracket. The area has a community hall, G.A.A Club and playground, but does not have a post primary school or family resource centre.

Delvin

Delvin recorded a total population of 1072 in the 2016 Census. It has a Pobal Deprivation score of -6.85, a notable increase from its 2006 score of -1.25. The population in the area increased significantly by 36.35% between 2006 and 2011. The town has a lone parent ratio of 24.25%, which is above the national average. The proportion of people with a third level education is also well below average at 25.52%. The town's unemployment rate for males is high at 22.75% and for females at 19.96%. 53 members of the population have a disability. In addition, the village records 11.57% of people living in rented local authority housing which is above the national average rate.

There is a total population of 405 aged 24 and under; 218 of which are aged between 10-24 years. The town has a YouthReach Centre which caters for 25 students and a community hall. The town does not have a post primary school or family resource centre to cater for increasing need.

Killucan

Killucan has a population of 1,826 and a deprivation score of -3.22, an increase from the 2006 score of 0.59. The 2011 Census recorded a 34.88% population change. The area has a high percentage of people with primary education only at 15.83% and the proportion of people with a third level education is well below average at 26.56%. Female unemployment is 17.10% and 12.61% of males are not working. There are 64 people with a disability in the area.

There are 631 people under the age of 25 with 315 within the 10-24 age bracket. The town has a post primary school (Columba College) which is a designated DEIS school, a library and has a community services centre. The area has no family resource centre.

Kinnegad

According to Pobal's 2018 Geoprofile, Kinnegad has a population of 2915 and a Pobal HB deprivation score of -4.22 which highlights disadvantage in the area. The area's deprivation score increased from -3.54 in 2011. The population of pre-school age children (0-4) was 252, of primary school going age (5-12) was 503 and of secondary school going age (13-18) was 280. There are 188 people in the 19-24 age cohort. The total population under 25 years is 1,223 with a total of 636 aged between 10 and 24 years of age.

Between 2006-2011, the town experienced a very significant increase of 18.96% in population. The lone parent ratio in the town is above average at 24.89%. In terms of third level qualifications, the population has a below average third level attainment at 27.26%. 2016 Census figures showed that unemployment was also above the national rate with rates of unemployment for males and females at 14.71% and 20.41% respectively. Currently the town has no Family Resource Centre to address social inclusion. The town also has no second level school.

In the 2011 Census, non-Irish nationals accounted for 13.0 per cent of the population of Kinnegad compared with a national average figure of 12.0 per cent. Polish and UK Nationals were the largest groups (64 persons each).

County Longford Profile

General Population

The 2016 Census recorded the overall population of County Longford at 40,873 persons. It is the second smallest population nationally but has a growing population. Census 2016 found that Longford's population grew by 4.8 per cent since 2011, which was 1% higher than the national average of 3.8 per cent.³⁶ Longford has the third highest young dependency ratio in the state at 37.2%.³⁷

Longford town is the administrative centre of the county with 18 Councillors representing the Municipal Districts of Ballymahon, Granard and Longford. The other main urban centres in the county are Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown, Granard and Lanesboro. According to the 2016 Census, urban areas in County Longford have a total population of 14,305, making up 35% of the overall population of the county. Since 2011, the urban areas within the county have seen an increase in population of 12.12% (1,315 individuals). This is in strong contrast with rural areas where the overall increase was just 2.15% (558 individuals).³⁸

Disadvantage

County Longford is also one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged and materially deprived areas in the country.³⁹ According to the Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2016, Longford is the 5th most disadvantaged local electoral area in Ireland. County Longford had a relative deprivation index score of -6.0 for 2016 which is the third highest deprivation rating in the country behind Donegal and Limerick City with - 6.4 and -6.3, respectively.⁴⁰

Unemployment

At the time of the last Census, Co. Longford recorded the highest rate of unemployment in the state (19.6% compared to 12.9% nationally) with urban unemployment particularly high at 29.3%. The below table highlights the fact that the highest levels of unemployment in the county are in urban areas:

³⁶ Central Statistics Office (2016) Census 2016 Summary Results – Part 1.p.8

³⁷ Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee (2019) Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2021. Unpublished document p 35

³⁸ Longford Community Resources Clg (2017) SICAP Tender 2017' p 2

³⁹ Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2017) The 2016 Pobal HP Deprivation Index

⁴⁰ Longford Community Resources Clg (2017) SICAP Tender 2017' p.25

Unemployment by electoral division		
Electoral Division	2006 Unemployment rate (%)	2016 Unemployment rate (%)
Longford No. 1 Urban	24.43	39.70
Meathas Truim	22.21	27.70
Longford Rural	15.59	27.44
Foxhall	26.05	26.05
Granard Urban	11.49	24.95
Newtownforbes	8.06	21.69
Ballymahon	12.83	21.00
Kilcommock	8.82	20.08
County	13.20	19.60
Census 2006 – 2016 cso.ie		

Ethnicity

In terms of ethnic diversity, the 2016 Census showed that non-Irish nationals accounted for 14.75% of the population of County Longford, compared with a national figure of 11.42%. Of particular note is that in the ten years between 2006 and 2016, the number of Polish and people who identified as “Other European Nationalities” grew at a significantly faster rate than the national average, at 163.9% and 169.6% respectively.⁴¹ In addition, the “Asian or Asian Irish” population increased by 257.4% over the same time. The areas with the highest percentage of ethnic minorities are Longford town, Edgeworthstown, Granard and Ballymahon; with lesser but increasing numbers now also living in the Newtownforbes, Lanesboro and Drumlish areas. The county had the highest proportion of non-Irish national children in the country, at a rate of 118.3 per 1,000, higher than Dublin County at 97.0 and the national average of 82.5.⁴² The 2016 Census showed that two towns in the county had the highest national proportion (2nd and 3rd place in the census respectively) of non-Irish nationals; Edgeworthstown with 32.3% (667 persons) and Ballymahon with 32.1% (599 persons). The town of Longford was also placed 7th in the towns with the highest percentage of non-Irish nationals.

⁴¹ Longford Community Resources Clg (2017) SICAP Tender 2017’ p 5

⁴² Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2016) State of the Nation’s Children Ireland 2016. p.31

Towns in Ireland with the highest percentage of non-Irish nationals, 2016

Town	County	Number of Residents	% of non-Irish nationals	Number of non-Irish nationals	The largest non-Irish group (number)
Ballyhaunis	Mayo	2,383	39.5	941	Polish - 159
Edgeworthstown	Longford	2,062	32.3	667	Polish - 163
Ballymahon	Longford	1,866	32.1	599	Polish - 273
Ballyjamesduff	Cavan	2,689	30.2	812	Polish - 311
Monaghan	Monaghan	7,597	30.1	2,287	Lithuanian - 1,004
Saggart	Dublin	3,145	28.9	909	Polish - 326
Longford	Longford	10,011	27.4	2,740	Polish - 1,004
Cahir	Tipperary	3,590	27.3	979	Polish - 340
Gort	Galway	2,951	26.6	785	Brazilian - 397
Cavan	Cavan	10,656	26.2	2,790	Polish - 827

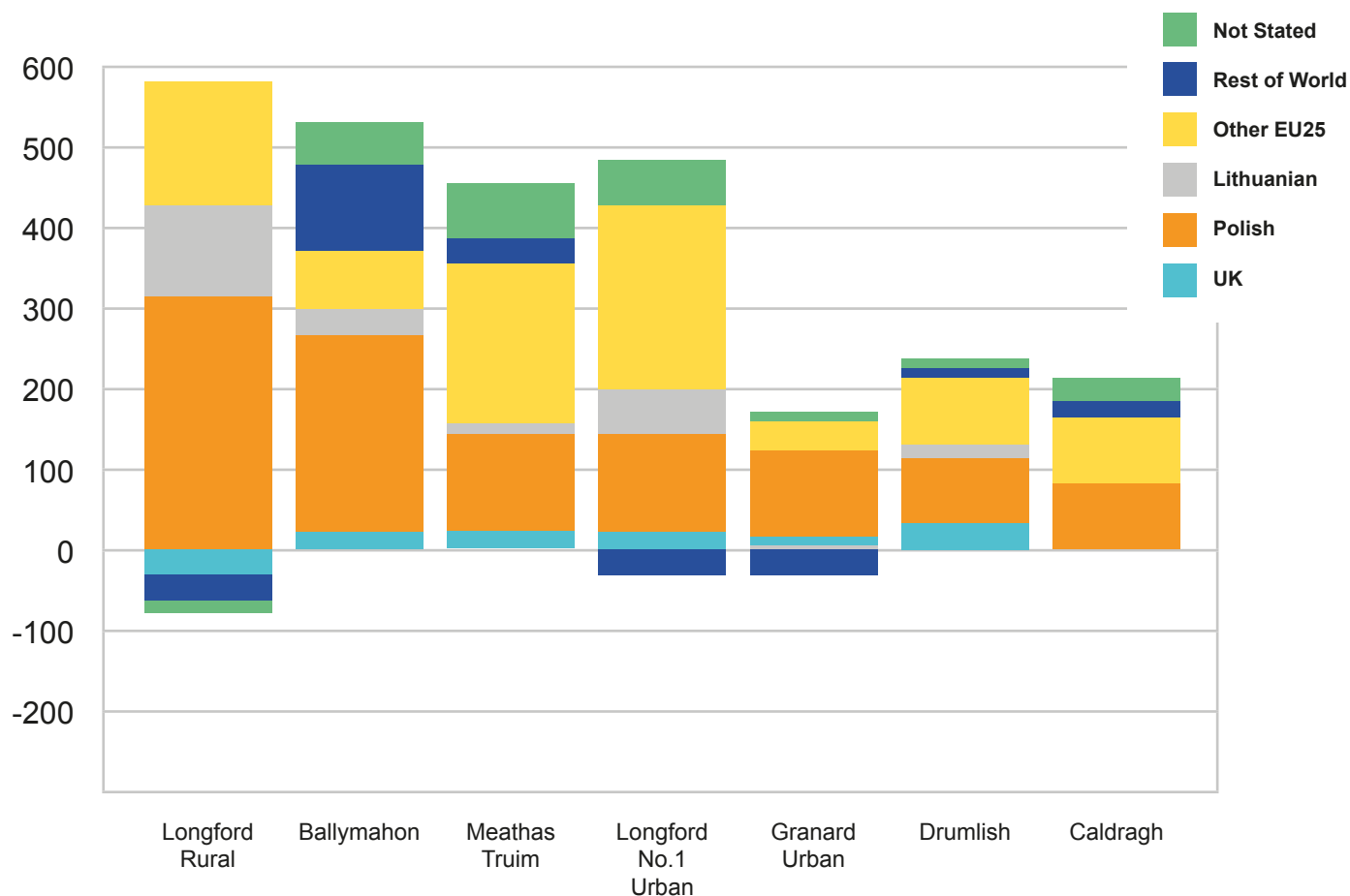
Source: www.cso.ie

Changes in Nationalities 2006 – 2016								
	Ireland	UK	Poland	Lithuania	Other EU28	Rest of World	Not Stated	Total
2006 – 2016 Longford Change (%)	12.6	7.6	163.9	77.0	169.6	9.2	68.0	19.3
2006 – 2016 National Change (%)	10.1	-8.4	93.6	48.4	94.8	-12.1	57.8	12.4

Census 2016 cso.ie

The areas which recorded the largest growth in non-Irish nationalities in Longford are shown below:

Source: Census 2016 cso.ie



Education

Regarding education, the percentage of post-primary school children per school missing 20 days or higher in Longford is 18.9% compared to the national average of 16.7%.⁴³ The Leaving Certificate retention rate for children in the 2010 school entry cohort in the county is 87.50%, which is below to the national rate of 91.2%.⁴⁴ Of the nine second level schools in County Longford, four have DEIS designation, including one each in Granard and Ballymahon. Census 2016 records county Longford and Wexford as having the lowest percentage of persons with a third level qualification, both at 32.5 per cent.⁴⁵ In addition, the 2016 Census showed that Longford also has a high percentage of the population with primary education only at 17.5%, compared to the national average of 11%.

Lone Parent Ratio

The lone parent ratio in the county is 20.4% compared to 19.9% nationally. The birth rate to females under 20 years of age of 17.1% is well above the national average of 12.3%.⁴⁶

⁴³ Department of Children and Youth Affairs – State of the Nation's Children Ireland 2016 p.74

⁴⁴ Department of Education and Skills (2017): Retention Rates of Pupils in Second-Level Schools 2010 Entry Cohort. p.14

⁴⁵ Central Statistics Office (2016) Census of Population 2016 – Profile 10 Education, Skills and the Irish Language. Dublin: Central Statistics Office.

⁴⁶ Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee CYPSC (2017): Socio-Demographic Profile – Longford Westmeath. Unpublished document.p.43

Traveller Population

2016 CSO figures show Longford having the biggest percentage increase in overall Traveller numbers (40.8% from 2006), the highest absolute increase (303) and the highest number of Travellers per head of population (2.6% compared to 0.7%) in the state.⁴⁷ In addition, county Longford has the highest proportion of Traveller children in the country with 3.5% of all children in the county being Traveller children, almost three times higher than the national average of 1.2%. Longford has 35.3 per thousand children from the Traveller community compared to the national average of 12.4 per thousand.⁴⁸

Youth Crime

Figures from 2012 – 2013 show that Longford experienced a growth in crime of 4.75%. This figure is in contrast to the national average figures for crime which fell by 6.5%. The crime rate for the county was 85.8 per 1,000 population based on 2013 total crimes. A breakdown by crime by settlements show that Edgeworthstown and Granard reported the highest rates of crime with a rate of 109 per 1,000 population.⁴⁹ In terms of referral to Garda Diversion Programmes, there were 174 children referred in the Longford/Roscommon area, which was an increase of 5% from 2015.⁵⁰

Mental Health and Wellbeing

As regards mental health admissions, there were 56.6 per 100,000 children in Longford referred, which is higher the national average rate of 43.8 per thousand.⁵¹ Service Providers for children and young people in the 0-24 cohort in Longford cited mental health services and supports for young people as an unmet need in the county.⁵²

Disability

The county records the lowest rate of children registered as having an intellectual disability at 4.4%, compared to the national rate of 7.9%.⁵³ However, the rate of children registered as having a physical and/or sensory disability is 7.6%, or 81 children /young people across the county which is significantly higher than the national rate of 5.4%.⁵⁴

Youth Service Provision

In terms of current service provision (both volunteer led and staff led) for children and young people within the 0-24 cohort in Longford, 20% target their services to the needs of the Traveller community. A further 4% stated that they work specifically with one parent families, Roma community, young parents up to 25 years, parents with additional needs, adoptive families, foster families, families of same sex couples and the LGBTI+ community. However, no organisations indicated that they specifically target services to other ethnic minority communities, families of children with additional needs or children in care.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Central Statistics Office (2016) 6. Ethnicity and Irish Travellers Dublin: Central Statistics Office.

⁴⁸ Department of Children and Youth Affairs – State of the Nation's Children Ireland 2016 p. 28

⁴⁹ Longford Community Resources Cig (2017) SICAP Tender 2017' p 22

⁵⁰ Garda Bureau of Community Engagement (2016) Annual Report 2016 of the Committee Appointed to Monitor the Effectiveness of the Diversion Programme. Dublin: Government Publications. p.16

⁵¹ Department of Children and Youth Affairs – State of the Nation's Children Ireland 2016 p.216

⁵² Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee (2018) Services Mapping – Longford Westmeath. Unpublished document p.21

⁵³ Department of Children and Youth Affairs – State of the Nation's Children Ireland 2016 p.107

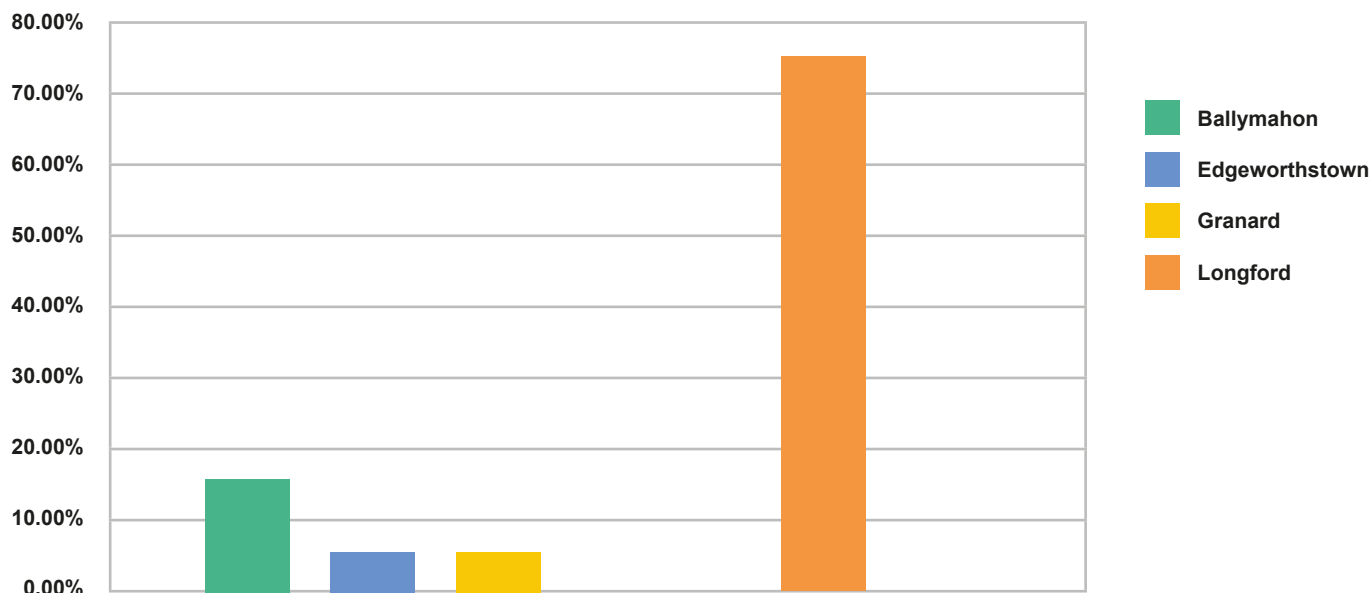
⁵⁴ Department of Children and Youth Affairs – State of the Nation's Children Ireland 2016 p.110

⁵⁵ Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee (2018) Services Mapping – Longford

Youth Service Location

Of the organisations providing services for children and young people in the 0-24 cohort in Longford, seventy six percent (76%) of responding organisations base their services in Longford. Sixteen percent (16%) are based in Ballymahon, and 4% in each case in Edgeworthstown and Granard.⁵⁶

If your service operates from County Longford, please indicate where your service is based.



Source: CYPSC Servic Mapping Longford Westmeath p18

Youth Population

The total number of young people in the county aged between 0-24 is 14,065, of which 7,628 are aged between 10 and 24 years of age. 34.41% of the population are 24 and under. Longford has a slightly higher proportion of children aged 0 – 14 and a lower proportion of persons aged 25 – 44 than the national average.⁵⁷

Longford Population by Age Bracket			
Age	Longford (%)	National (%)	Difference
0 - 14	23.26	21.14	+2.12
15 - 24	11.15	12.11	-0.96
25 - 44	27.19	29.53	-2.34
45 - 64	24.15	23.84	+0.31
65+	14.25	13.39	+0.86
Census 2006 – 2016 cso.ie			

Westmeath. Unpublished document p.13

⁵⁶ Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee (2018) Services Mapping – Longford Westmeath. Unpublished document p.18

⁵⁷ Longford Community Resources Clg (2017) SICAP Tender 2017'p.3

Area Profiles

The areas highlighted below experience high levels of deprivation including unemployment, lone parent ratios and local authority rented accommodation.

Ballymahon

Ballymahon was identified in the 2011 Census as one of the fastest growing towns in Ireland. Between the years 2006-2016, Ballymahon experienced a significant increase of 48.39% in population, with Census 2016 recording 2,674 persons living in the area. The total number of young people under 25 years of age is 867, of which 462 or 17% of the population are aged 10-24 years of age. The 2011 census found that non-Irish nationals accounted for 27.6% of the population compared with the national average of 12.0%. Polish were the largest group, followed by UK nationals.⁵⁸ This figure increased to 32.1% of the population in the 2016 Census, making Ballymahon the third highest town in the country with non-Irish national populations.

The town falls into the disadvantaged category with a Pobal Deprivation score of - 5.11. Unemployment rates are high with 22.18% of males and 21.09% of females out of work. In addition, the lone parent ratio is above average at 26%. A significant number of the population (20.61%) live in rented local authority housing which is well above the national average figure.

There are two secondary schools (one DEIS), a Youthreach Centre and a Family Resource Centre based in Ballymahon.

Edgeworthstown

According to Census 2016, the population of Edgeworthstown is 2,335 persons and there are 850 of those aged 24 and under. 467 or 20% of the total population are aged between 10-24 years. Between the years 2006-2016, the town experienced significant growth of 51.23%. Census 2016 found that the town has the highest proportion of non-Irish nationals of all the main settlements in County Longford, with 32.3% of its population being of non-Irish nationality.

The town has a Pobal Deprivation Score of -9.75 with unemployment rates of 27.55% for males and 27.01 for females. The lone parent ratio is also high at 27.20 per cent. 16.47 per cent of the population live in local authority housing, which is well above the national average. The 2011 Census area profile found that 570 persons spoke a language other than English or Irish at home, and of these 182 could not speak English well or at all. Polish was the most common language spoken at home with 110 speakers.⁵⁹

LWETB has identified a need for the development of youth services in the town to address, among other concerns, the social integration of young people from new communities in the town. In particular work is needed with members of the Pakistani and also the traveller communities. Currently, Edgeworthstown has no second level school, Family Resource Centre, Youthreach Centre, Irish Youth Justice Project, Primary Care Centre or Community Services Project.

⁵⁸ Central Statistics Office (2011) Census 2011 Results, Area Profile for Town Ballymahon, Co. Longford. Dublin: Central Statistics Office

⁵⁹ Central Statistics Office (2011) Census 2011 Results, Area Profile for Town Meathas Truim (Or Edgeworthstown), Co. Longford. Dublin: Central Statistics Office

Granard

The population of Granard following the last Census is 1,096, of which 174 (15%) are aged between 10 and 24 years. There are also 111 under the age of 25 in the Granard rural area. In the 2011 Census profile of the town, non-Irish nationals accounted for 24.4 per cent of the area compared to the national average of 12.0 per cent. Polish (149 persons) were the largest grouping, followed by Bulgaria. 252 persons spoke a language other than English at home with 101 of these not speaking English well or at all.⁶⁰

Granard Urban has a notable Pobal Deprivation Score of -11.27 while rural Granard has a score of -6.11. Unemployment rates in urban Granard are high with 26.09% of males and 30.05% of females unemployed. The urban area also has a high proportion of the population of 20.40% in rented local authority housing. There are two second level schools in the town including a designated DEIS school (Ard Scoil Phadraig). The town also has a Family Resource Centre which acts as primary referral, support and engagement point for the population.

Longford Town

Longford town and its environs has a population of 10,325 and falls into the category of large town since the 2011 census. The town can be defined as disadvantaged with Longford No.1 Urban recording a Pobal Deprivation Score of -15.85. Unemployment is also high with 43.13% of males and 34.82% of females unemployed in Longford Urban No.1 E.D. 31.02 per cent of the population reside in rented local authority housing in Longford Urban 1, which is well above the national average.

According to the 2016 Census, Longford has a population of 2,746 non-Irish nationals living in the town. This is the seventh highest percentages of non-Irish nationals in the country with 27.4% of the population being non Irish. In addition, the Electoral Divisions of Longford Rural and Longford No. 1 Urban are home to the largest Traveller populations by a significant margin (475 and 244, respectively). Longford Rural which is the largest E.D by traveller population has shown an increase of 119.9%.⁶¹

According to Census 2016, of the towns with 1,500 or more persons, Longford town had the second highest number of travellers with 730 persons after Tuam. The town also has a direct provision centre which accommodates approximately 70 persons. In terms of youth, there is a total of 3,531 people under the age of 25 living in Longford Urban 1 and 2, and Longford Rural, with 1418 of these living in the two urban areas combined. The most densely populated EDs in County Longford are Longford No 1 and No 2 Urban areas, with over 32% in these areas in the 0-24 age group.⁶²

⁶⁰ Central Statistics Office (2011) Census 2011 Results, Area Profile for Town Granard Legal Town, Co. Longford.

⁶¹ Longford Community Resources Clg (2017) SICAP Tender 2017'p.9

⁶² Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee (2019) Children and Young People's Plan 2019-2021. Unpublished document p.13

West and North Rural County Longford including the Towns and Villages of Lanesboro, Newtownforbes, Drumlish and Ballinalee.

Within these towns there are particular groups and populations of young people requiring specific attention. This includes young travellers, migrants and NEET (not in Employment, Education, or Training) young people. As a result of the disperse and geographically divergent nature of the towns and villages in the county, accessibility and isolation are features of life for some sections of the population. There is very limited public transport infrastructure in existence. Consequently, there is a need to provide transport to enable the participation of some of the young people.

The population of Drumlish experienced the second highest increase in population in the county of 57.75% between 2006 and 2011 to 1475 persons.⁶³ There are 547 of these under the age of 25 in the area. Equally, Ballinalee experienced population growth between 2006-2016, and its population increased from 453 in 2006 to 625.

There are 226 of the population under the age of 25, equating to 36% of the population. Lanesboro recorded a population of 1,377 in Census 2011, of which non-Irish nationals accounted for 16.8 per cent of the population, compared with a national average of 12.0 per cent. Latvians (74 persons) were the largest group, followed by Polish (51 persons).

Newtownforbes has a population of 897 with 284 aged 24 and under. Deprivation levels in the area have also significantly increased from -2.98 in 2006 to -8.10 in 2016.

⁶³ Source Longford Community Resources Clg SICAP Tender 2017' p2

SECTION 4: EXISTING YOUTH WORK PROVISION

This section provides an overview of the main youth work and related activities that are currently in place in Longford and Westmeath ETB's functional area. Activities are listed under two headings – staff-led provision and volunteer-led provision.

Funding Administered by LWETB in 2019



What's Happening....?

10 Professional Projects operated by:
 Foróige, Youth Work Ireland Midlands, Longford Community Resources,
 Extern, Athlone Community Taskforce, Football Association of Ireland



Staff Led Youth Work Provision In LWETB Region

Staff-led Youth Work Services

Type	Services in LWETB Area
Targeted Youth Funding Scheme (TYFS) Funding source: DCYA (Youth Affairs Unit)	ACT Gateway Project, Athlone Foróige Gateway Project, Athlone FAI Football in the Community Project Athlone Athlone Youth Project, Youth Work Ireland Midlands Athlone Traveller Project, Youth Work Ireland Midlands Mullingar Youth Project, Youth Work Ireland Midlands Longford Town Youth Project, Longford Community Resources Co Longford Youth Project, Longford Community Resources
Youth Information Centres Funding source: DCYA (Youth Affairs Unit)	Youth Information Centre, Athlone
Comhairle na nÓg Funding source: DCYA (Citizen Participation Unit)	Longford Comhairle na nÓg Westmeath Comhairle na nÓg
Garda Youth Diversion Projects Funding source: DCYA (Irish Youth Justice Service)	ALF Project, Athlone EYE Project, Mullingar LEAP Project, Longford
LGBTI + Service Grant Scheme Funding source: DCYA (Youth Affairs Unit)	Athlone Youth Project, Youth Work Ireland Midlands
Youth projects supported through Drugs and Alcohol Task Forces Funding source: Department of Health	Extern MYDAS Project, Longford and Westmeath Longford Drug and Alcohol Network

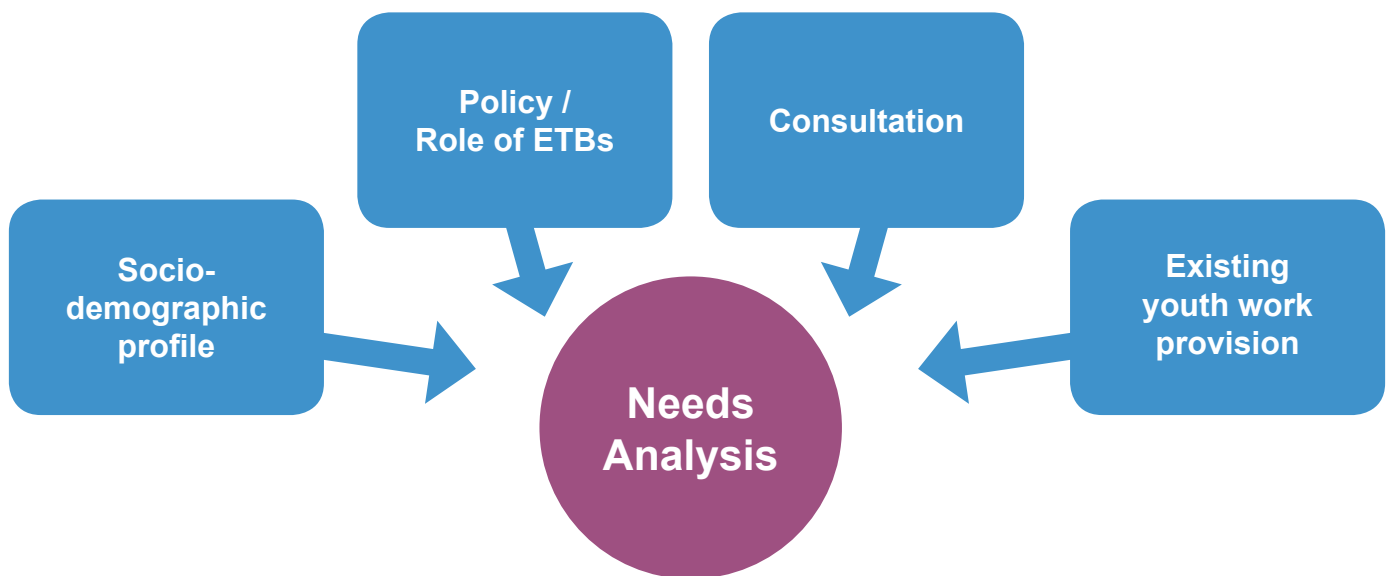
Volunteer Led Youth Work Provision LWETB Region

Youth Club / Group	Location
1. 1st, 3rd, 5th Longford Scouts	Longford
2. 1st, 10th Westmeath Scouts, Mullingar	Westmeath
3. 2nd Westmeath (St Mary's) Scout Group, Athlone	Westmeath
4. 3rd Westmeath Scouts, Delvin	Westmeath
5. 5th Westmeath Scouts, Killucan	Westmeath
6. 7th Westmeath Scouts, Castlepollard	Westmeath
7. Ardagh Guides	Longford
8. Athlone District Girl Guides	Westmeath
9. Attic House Foróige Clubs	Longford
10. Attic House Youth Café	Longford
11. Backstage Youth Theatre	Longford
12. Ballinamuck Juniors Foróige Club	Longford
13. Ballymahon Foróige Club	Longford
14. Ballymore Youth Club	Westmeath
15. Boys' Brigade Longford	Longford
16. Boys' Brigade Mullingar	Westmeath
17. Castledaly Foróige Club	Westmeath
18. Church Street Youth Group	Longford
19. CIA Youth Club	Longford
20. Coder Dungeon, Clonmellon	Westmeath
21. CoderDojo, Longford	Longford
22. CoderDojo, Mullingar	Westmeath
23. District Foróige Club, Athlone	Westmeath
24. Drumard Foróige Club	Longford
25. Drumlish Foróige Club	Longford
26. Edgeworthstown Foróige Club	Longford
27. Girls Friendly Society, Longford	Longford
28. Granard Youth Club	Longford
29. Kinnegad Youth Club	Westmeath
30. Longford Autism Foróige Club	Longford
31. Longford Guides and Brownies	Longford
32. Moate Foróige Club	Westmeath
33. Mostrim Youth Players	Longford
34. Moyvoughley Foróige Club	Westmeath
35. Mullingar Charity Variety Group	Westmeath
36. Mullingar Voluntary Youth Academy	Westmeath
37. North Longford Guides	Longford
38. Order of Malta, Athlone Cadets	Westmeath
39. Order of Malta, Mullingar Cadets	Westmeath
40. Rochfortbridge No Name Club	Westmeath
41. Rosemount Foróige Club	Westmeath
42. Spring to Life Social Group, Mullingar	Westmeath
43. St Joseph's Foróige Club, Steamstown	Westmeath
44. The Emerald Lakes Theatrical & Team Community Group	Westmeath
45. Yo Yo Youth Café, Mullingar	Westmeath

SECTION 5: NEEDS ANALYSIS

This section presents a summary of findings from research carried out in the preparation of the LWETB Youth Work Plan. These findings are considered in light of the policy context, the statutory youth work role of the ETB, the socio-demographic profile of the LWETB area and the range of existing service provision. The Education and Training Boards Act 2013, P2 S10 (1) clearly states that LWETB has statutory responsibility to support the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of youth work services in its functional area. The below method was utilised to inform a needs analysis for the LWETB region:

Primary Research



Primary research was undertaken through a mixed research method incorporating focus groups and questionnaires.

Focus Groups

Focus group discussions were held with:

- Longford Comhairle na nÓg
- Westmeath Comhairle na nÓg
- Youth Work Ireland Midlands Youth Forum
- County Longford Youth Service Participants

The main questions asked to each group were;

1. What do you think are the benefits of being involved in youth clubs and groups,
2. What do you see as barriers from becoming involved in youth clubs and groups,
3. How do you think young people can contribute to improving youth work services in Longford and Westmeath, and
4. Is there anything else you would like to add?

The final question was kept open in nature to encourage discourse among young people and provide an opportunity for them to share opinions on services and need within the area. The following are the main responses to each question.

Benefits

The young people who participated in the focus groups were vociferous in their articulation of the benefits of being involved in youth clubs and groups, which highlights the value of youth work services in the LWETB region. Common themes included:

BENEFITS	
Do Fun Stuff	Builds Self-Esteem
Develops Confidence	You Can Talk To Your Youth Workers
Staff Are Great	They Are Good For Advice
You Can Find Out Your Talents	Allows You To Try New Things
Keeps You Active	Helps With Public Speaking
Something To Look Forward To	Better Understanding Of Community
Get Away From Problems	Learn New Stuff Like Drug Awareness
Organising Stuff	Assertiveness
Safe Place To Be	Independence
Relieves Stress	Opportunities To Achieve Your Potential

Barriers to Participation

Participants shared a number of perceived barriers that were common among all groups. Of particular note was views relating to travel and geography, the perception among older teenagers that youth groups can be seen as for younger age profiles only, and inadequate publicity regarding knowing what youth clubs do and where they are located. The below is a reflective snapshot of opinions shared across groups:

BARRIERS	
Sometimes It's (Groups) Not Advertised Enough	Limited Spaces
Not Enough Publicity So You Know The Clubs Are There	Not Knowing What A Youth Club Is And What They Do
Some People Can See It Might Be For Very Young People	Transport – Hard To Get From Moate
Location – Often Difficult For Young People In Rural Areas	There's Not One In Every Town
Not Advertised Enough	Location
Travel	Too Much Homework
Lack Of Confidence	Awareness

Young Peoples Contribution to Youth Work Services

When questioned about how young people can contribute to improving youth work services in Longford and Westmeath, responses across focus groups centred on communication such as 'giving feedback', social media', 'having meetings' and to 'make voice heard'. Of particular note, was the suggestion of strengthening 'links on Board'. Young people across the region have an appetite for communication and participation, and are open to having their voice heard.

HOW YOUTH CAN CONTRIBUTE TO YOUTH SERVICES	
I Don't Know About Representatives On The LWETB Youth Committee	We Could Have Meetings To Have Our Own Say In Things
Make Voices Heard	Giving Feedback
You Could Tell People About The Stuff You Do	Social Media
Apart From The Comhairle And School Councils There Aren't Many Ways To Have Your Voice Heard- A Way Of Expressing How Things Can Be Done	Need To Know They Are Listened To And What Difference Their Contribution Is
Could Strengthen Links On Boards	Participate

Observation and Needs

The final question put to Youth Focus Groups was purposely open in nature in order to gain an insight into young people's observations, particularly in the realm of need in youth services. Well-being and mental health emerged across focus groups as a concern. Additional hours, equipment, funding and youth workers was raised by all groups. In addition, the subject of promotion and more interaction with LWETB was raised highlighting that young people would like to make a contribution to youth work development and planning within the region.

OBSERVATIONS AND NEEDS	
Would Love More Youth Group Time – Only An Hour	If It Would Be Twice A Week
More Programmes For Well-Being And More Services To Talk About Problems – In Schools	When You Have Issues...You Try To See A Counsellor And They Are Busy, You Might Not Be Able To Talk Until A Week Later
Have Your Own Youth Space	Mental Health Care
Promotion – More Would Go – Not Promoted Enough To Secondary	We'd Like More Interaction With LWETB's Other Groups
More Funding	More Sports Equipment
Counselling Services	Different Age Groups (More Services)
More Advertising	More Activities

Youth Work Committee Questionnaire

The LWETB Youth Work Committee are representative of stakeholders within the region and provided input into the LWETB Youth Work Plan through submission of questionnaires and consultation at Committee meetings. Committee Members were invited to comment on what is working within the four statutory youth work pillars and what requires improvement. The below is a synopsis of the responses received:

Area	What is Working	Areas of Improvement
Provision of Youth Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in youth work provision in Co. Longford including rural areas through recent LWETB allocation. • MRDTF funded service delivering a drug and alcohol programme to targeted young people • Increase in Family Support projects supported by Tulsa • Services such as Gateway Youth project in Athlone, LEAP Garda Diversion Project, Attic House Teen Project, Foroige clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee has the remit of oversight of youth work rather than provision. • More provision is needed across both counties
Coordination of Youth Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth providers working with targeted young people work together to ensure the best possible approach and response for each young person is achieved. • Coordinated structures such as Local Drug and Alcohol Forum, Joint Policing Committee, advisory groups for various projects and services, including Comhairle na nÓg, Health promotion, School completion. • Coordinated approach to youth provision in Athlone with a collaborative approach for Gateway Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more coordination between services and an understanding of what stakeholders are providing on the ground. • Youth Work Plan to assist in enhancing co-ordination
Administration of Youth Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing well through the use of the NQSF • Child Safeguarding and child protection • Operational Policies, Procedures and guidelines • Data Protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This area could be more coordinated and informed.
Assessment of Youth Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilisation of the NQSF • Emphasis on planning and evaluation of youth work helps recognise benefits for young people and assists improvement and accountability. • Planning and Logic Model • Monitoring, Self-evaluation and reflective practice • Research and evaluation studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak, hard to measure the impact or effectiveness of work. • Need assessment tools and mechanisms to show VFM and the impact of the work.

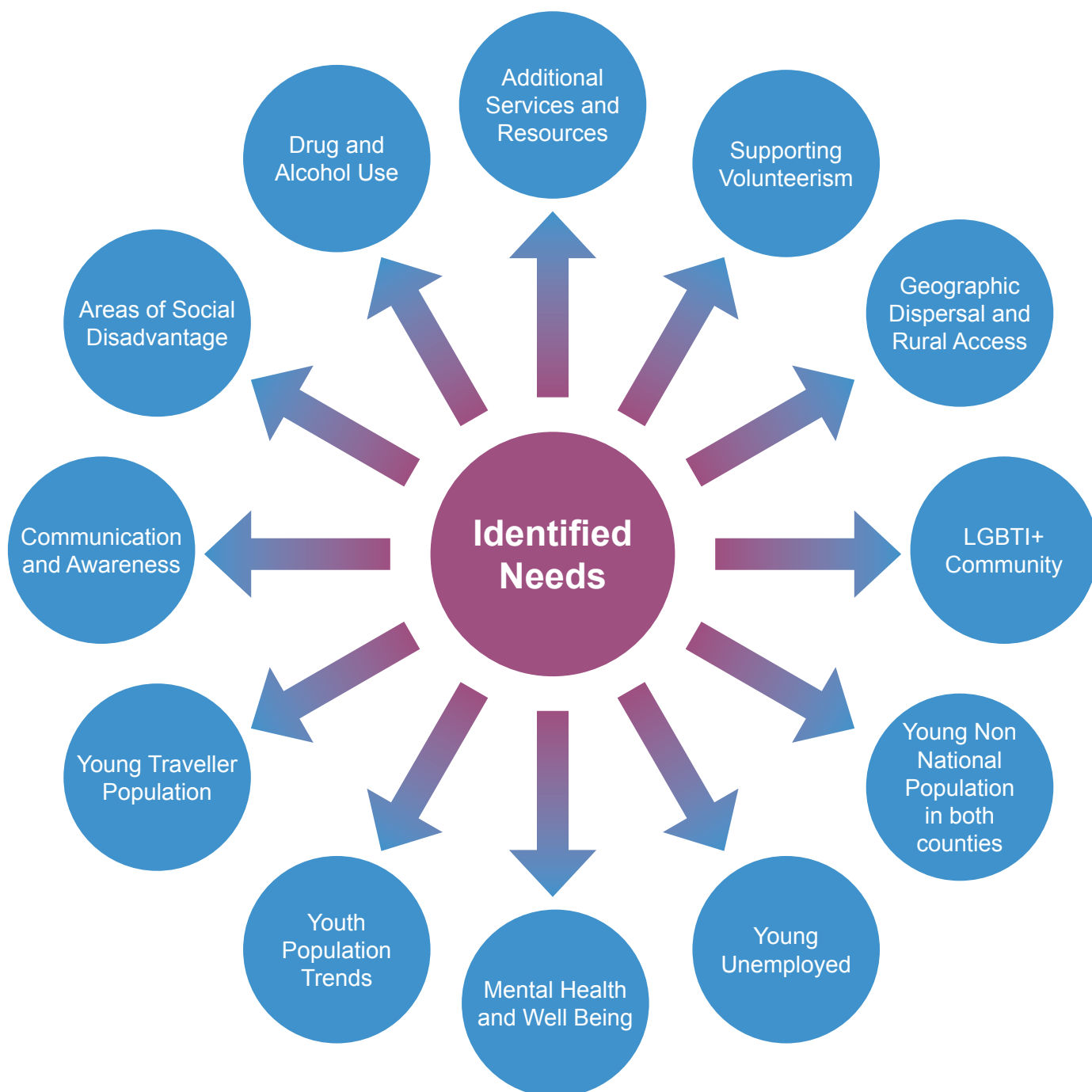
Gaps Identified

As stakeholders with experience within the sector, Committee members were also asked to identify gaps in the domain.

- Youth Services for Traveller and Roma communities – particularly in Longford where there are a higher percentage than the national average of both living in the area (2.6% and 0.24% respectively)
- Clear referral pathways to targeted services
- Longford has a higher than average population of NEETS (Young People Not in Education, Training or Employment) of 21% compared to 1.4% nationally, a lower Leaving Certificate Retention
- Resourcing of universal early interventions and preventative youth service
- Cohort of young people with issues who do not fit threshold for targeted intervention would benefit from universal service provision
- Community-based services could be resourced and funded to enable them to address emerging issues
- Need to identify and support children with additional needs at any early stage
- Additional assistance to voluntary committees managing some services (e.g Attic House, Longford)

Needs Analysis

Analysis of secondary and primary research indicates a myriad of needs exist within the Longford Westmeath region. This is a summary of priority needs within the youth work services domain to serve the 10-24 age cohort in the Longford and Westmeath area which LWETB can play a part in assisting to support:



SECTION 6: ACTION PLAN

Core Statutory Functions

A set of actions arises from the statutory youth work functions of ETBs, which are to:

Support the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of youth work services in its functional area and provide such information as may be requested by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in relation to such support; and

Assess whether the manner in which it performs its functions is economical, efficient and effective.

(Education and Training Boards Act, Section 10(1)(j,k)).

Identified actions in the LWETB Youth Work Plan form a core body of work in relation to the LWETB's youth work functions and also take cognisance of the current national policy objectives outlined below. Actions can be adapted to also consider any new or emerging local or national strategies that may arise over the lifetime of the Plan.

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People (2014-2020) Objectives	LWETB Strategic Goals 2017-2022
1. Young people are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing	1. Deliver professional high quality, learner-centred education and training services
2. Young people are achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development	2. Enhance the learning experiences and outcomes for learners
3. Young people are safe and protected from harm	3. Foster effective communication, collaboration and partnerships
4. Young people have economic security and opportunity	4. Progress the development of effective organisational structures
5. Young people are connected, respected and contributing to their world	5. Support a culture of continuous development with staff

LWETB Youth Work Actions 2019-2022

The following actions and implementation timelines have been identified:

ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
1. SUPPORTING THE PROVISION OF YOUTH WORK	
1. Advocate and apply for resources to support existing youth work services in Longford and Westmeath.	2019-2022
2. Develop detailed Area Profiles of Longford and Westmeath to assist in identifying areas with additional and/or emerging youth work needs.	2019-2022
3. Support youth work services to address the social disadvantage and inclusion needs of particular groups of young people e.g. young travellers, young LGBTI+, young non-Irish nationals, rural youth etc.	2019-2022
4. Highlight access and rural isolation issues to advocate for more youth work service provision in rural Longford and Westmeath.	2019-2022
5. Promote youth mental health and well-being in the provision of youth work services.	2019-2022
6. Apply for funding to conduct an audit of the physical infrastructure available to support youth work services in Longford and Westmeath	2020- 2022
2. SUPPORTING THE COORDINATION OF YOUTH WORK	
1. Develop an example and model of good practice within the LWETB Youth Work Unit that links formal education (schools) and nonformal education (youth work) to ensure a holistic approach to the development of young people.	2020-2022
2. Participate in the Longford and Westmeath CYPSC and where appropriate to support the work of its sub structures.	2019-2022
3. Participate in appropriate interagency collaborative networks, e.g. Regional Drugs Taskforce, Local Community Development Committees, Sports Partnerships.	2019-2022
4. Participate on advisory/steering groups of local youth work projects and services.	2019-2022
5. Manage the LWETB Youth Work Committee as per the Terms of Reference.	2019-2022
6. Engage with DCYA, DOH and other relevant public bodies and agencies.	2019-2022
7. Work collaboratively with colleagues across the ETB sector locally and nationally.	2019-2022
8. Develop a communications strategy to raise awareness and promote the benefits of youth work for young people and their communities.	2020
3. SUPPORTING THE ADMINISTRATION OF YOUTH WORK	
1. Administration of existing funding streams and schemes on behalf of DCYA and DoH.	2019-2022
2. Administration of new funding streams as they arise, e.g LGBTI+, Youth Employability Initiative, Capital funding etc.	2019-2022

ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE
3. Carry out mid-level governance role regarding compliance and oversight of funded projects and services.	2019-2022
4. Submit annual reporting requirements to DCYA and DoH in a timely manner.	2019-2022
5. Support projects and services in moving to the new DCYA funding methods and procedures.	2019-2020
6. Up-date of Youth Work Unit section of LWETB website.	2019
4. SUPPORTING THE ASSESSMENT OF YOUTH WORK	
1. Monitor funded projects and services for the efficient, effective and equitable use of public funding.	2019-2022
2. Apply good governance and oversight procedures of funded projects and services.	2019-2022
3. Ensure National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work (NQSF) and National Quality Standards for Volunteer-led Youth groups (NQSFLYG) are implemented in accordance with DCYA direction.	2019-2022
4. Support youth led, evidence based and outcome focused practice in youth work projects and services.	2019-2022

SECTION 7: IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The publication of this Youth Work Plan represents a significant landmark for LWETB in that it is the first time that the statutory responsibilities of the authority to “support the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of youth work services” have been set out strategically. While there is full commitment to achieving the aims of the LWETB Youth Work Plan, it is imperative to note however that implementation of some identified actions are contingent on requisite resource allocation.

The implementation of this Youth Work Plan is an executive function of LWETB and will therefore be monitored in the normal course of the LWETB’s business. The following measures will be put in place to monitor the implementation of the LWETB Youth Work Plan:

- The Plan will be considered on an ongoing basis by the LWETB Youth Work Committee and by the Board of LWETB.
- An annual Service Plan will be developed.
- The Plan will be reviewed and monitored regularly by the LWETB executive taking cognisance of emerging local need and relevant national developments.
- An end of term review of the Plan will be carried out.

As a mid-level governance structure, LWETB plays a critical role on behalf of the state in the successful implementation and delivery of youth work funding which should ultimately lead to achieving better outcomes for young people. LWETB is committed to the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of quality youth work projects and services in the region and will endeavour to achieve the actions identified in this Plan to support the development of young people and their communities across Longford and Westmeath.

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APPENDIX

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND AGENDA FOR LWETB YOUTH WORK COMMITTEE 2019

Section 10 of the Education & Training Boards Act 2013 ('the Act') sets out the functions of each Education and Training Board ('ETB'). The youth work function for an ETB is provided for in subsection (j), namely to: "support the provision, co-ordination, administration and assessment of youth work services in its functional area and provide such information as may be requested by the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs in relation to such support."

A Youth Work Committee may be established by the ETB in accordance with Section 44 of the Act. Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board has, on the 18th day of November 2019, established the Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board Youth Work Committee.

Chairperson

A member of Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board, was also appointed as the Chairperson of Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board Youth Work Committee on the above date, pursuant to the powers of the ETB, as set out in section 44(4) of the Education & Training Board Act 2013.

Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board also determined these Terms of Reference for the Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board Youth Work Committee on the above date, in line with the board's powers under section 44(1) and same are signed hereunder by the Chairperson of Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board as verification of said determination.

Duties of Committee

The remit of the Youth Work Committee is to:

1. Be informed of the youth work function conducted by Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board;
2. Inform Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board of the information relating to youth work, received by it, from the Executive of Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board.
3. Provide oversight of Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board youth work function.

The Youth Work Committee does not and shall not fulfil any executive functions of the Education & Training Board as these are within the remit of the Chief Executive and/or his/her delegates.

Membership of ETB Youth Work Committees

A Youth Work Committee shall have no more than 12 members, pursuant to section 44(2) of the Act. Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board Youth Work Committee shall consist of 12 members.

Membership may consist partly of members of the Education & Training Board and partly of members who are not members of that board but whom are appointed by Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board.

Removal of Members

A member of the committee may be removed from office at any time by the Education and Training Board, in line with section 44(13) of the Act. The Education and Training Board may also dissolve the committee at any time, as provided for under section 44(15).

Regulation of Meetings

The quorum for the Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board Youth Work Committee shall be 5.

Meetings of the Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board Youth Work Committee will be held a minimum of once and no more than four times per annum.

Meetings will follow a pre-determined agenda, in line with the template set out hereunder and will be agreed between the Chairperson of the Committee and the Executive. Same should be circulated to all Committee members up to 7 days in advance of each meeting.

Term of Office of Committee

The duration of appointment of the Youth Work Committee is for the term of the Board of LWETB. The term of office of the Board of LWETB will coincide with the local elections and will therefore terminate with the next local election.

Section 44 of the Education & Training Board Act 2013 also provides that the appointing members to committees is a matter for the ETB board. In considering the most effective composition of the Youth Work Committees, the ETBI Youth Work Committee recommends to ETBs boards the appointment of at least 1 and no more than 3, members of the ETB and for the remaining membership to include representation from the following 4 groups:

- Representatives from the Voluntary Youth Sector (a minimum of 1 and not more than 3);
- Representatives from Statutory Bodies e.g. HSE, An Garda Síochána, Local Authorities, Children's Services Committees (a minimum of 1 and not more than 3);
- Young Persons from Comhairle na nÓg or similar youth structure, one male and one female (a maximum of 2);
- Co-option representatives of organisations with an interest in the youth work sector e.g. third level colleges providing youth work courses in the ETB area (not more than 1).

It is important that the participation of young people is supported and that capacity building is provided to these representatives to maximise their participation.

Agenda for Youth Work Committee Meetings

You are requested to attend the next meeting of Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board Youth Work Committee to be held:

Date:

Venue:

Agenda

1	Chairperson Welcome & Opening of the Meeting
2	Apologies
3	Ratification of Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board Youth Work Committee Minutes _____ / _____ / _____
4	Matters Arising
5	Update on Youth Work Function within Longford and Westmeath Education & Training Board
6	Updates on National Youth Work Developments
7	Date for next meeting
8	A.O.B.

