INTER-CULTURAL STRATEGIC PLAN
LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

2018-2022

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

I am delighted to welcome the adoption of the Intercultural Strategic Plan for County Longford (2018-2022).On behalf of Longford County Council I would like to thank the Longford Intercultural Working Group and all stakeholders for their contribution and effort in producing this Strategy.

County Longford's population is rich in diversity and while this is very positive, it can also present challenges. Longford County Council will work to help the Intercultural Working Group achieve its aims of providing a forum for sharing information, for interagency co-operation and co-ordination in the delivery of services.

Longford County Council is fully committed to improving the quality of life of all citizens in County Longford and in doing so will continue to work closely with all key stakeholders in the County.

Luie Mc Entire Cathaoirleach of Longford County Council

On behalf of Longford County Council I would like to acknowledge and embrace the rich cultural diversity within our County.

This Strategy will promote equality and facilitate greater social inclusion for all communities in County Longford. It will be an evolving document responding to changing and emerging needs.

As the Longford Intercultural Working Group begins to address the actions in the Strategy, I would like to acknowledge the ongoing work of all stakeholders in supporting people to engage with services and in providing opportunities for active participation in our community.

I look forward to working with everyone to improve the quality of life for all in County Longford.

Paddy Mahon Chief Executive of Longford County Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the Intercultural Strategic plan for County Longford (2018-2022). In addressing provision for the needs of the Migrant, Traveller and Roma and indigenous Irish communities, it recommends an agile and adaptive strategy to encourage social inclusion and cohesion for established and new minority communities across the county.

The qualitative and quantitative research for the report was conducted from 6 May – 8 June 2018. Two online surveys of 52 service providers and 55 community members were conducted. 120 people participated in focus groups in five locations across the county, and 77 semi-structured interviews were conducted with service providers and subject matter experts who generously gave their time to inform these findings.

Social integration and cohesion initiatives often begin with examining local demographics and details of social deprivation and exclusion, without consideration of the diversity dividend. The diversity dividend happens when organisations and communities with higher levels of diversity and difference outperform those who are less diverse. Simply put, communities that embrace a process of social integration and cohesion communities are regularly rewarded with robust, dynamic successful, innovative and prosperous communities

With the diversity dividend to the fore the report finds that when migration and demographic challenges arise communities are regularly rewarded with robust, dynamic and thriving societies when they:
• Engage with new and existing communities early
• Promote equality and positive action to prevent social exclusion and exploitation, and discrimination in health, education and housing, and promote positive action and adopt a human rights approach
• Educate, provide for, and promote greater access to information, language learning and amenities
• Pursue public private partnerships for training, employment, and support sport and the arts
• Promote universal access to activities, empower and encourage communities to pursue public representation

The strategic recommendations that follow from these findings, adhere to the National Migrant Integration Strategy, and the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy, and, in keeping with Longford's Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022 advocate for harnessing the creativity and innovation inherent in Longford's diverse communities.

Underpinning Longford's strategy are the public bodies and civil servants, private businesses, community workers, and networks of unsung volunteers who all seamlessly and often informally bridge gaps in information, access, and even transportation for members of marginalised and minority groups.

The report acknowledges the tremendous successes of local government, and community based organisations' efforts and commitment to foster social integration and social cohesion across the county. It documents the views of service providers and beneficiaries alike, gives equal weight to the perceptions and perspectives of new and traditional minorities groups, and recognises real resource challenges. To that end the strategy is adaptive and agile suited to a

social integration process that is subject to rapid shocks that necessitate changes in plans and provision.

The strategy recommends ten cross cutting action items building the capacity of existing initiatives in the short term, and the report explores longer term recommendations and the rationale for these recommendations for an adaptive and agile social integration and social cohesion strategy across a series of important issue areas first highlighted in the 2006 strategy.

The purpose of this strategy is to draw on existing innovations in services and support and to assist in setting the foundation for how community and state stakeholders can "future proof" Longford, namely how to create a shared future by building the support for Longford's communities to thrive together.

Based on the findings of this report, the following ten cross-cutting recommendations are made:

- Seek the appointment of an integration officer to build an integrated information and service delivery framework accessible to all communities

- Enable and expand the use of public spaces such as libraries as a place for community information and for volunteers to support people to complete documentation outside conventional office hours

- Generate and advertise an online integration resource, a single repository for access to information about living, learning and language, work and wellbeing in Longford. Make it accessible online for all service providers and community members. Support a plain English plan for public information documents

- Increase the number and type of English language learning and training opportunities as appropriate for minority and marginalized groups in formal and informal learning environments

- Promote anti-discrimination and harassment training programmes to disrupt social exclusion and bullying

- Support and reinforce community policing and crisis response efforts with Traveller, Roma and marginalised communities

- Encourage greater public-private community stakeholder engagement with the creation of corporate social responsibility programmes

- Promote, recognise and reward minority and marginalised community engagement and representation

- Support prompt processing of medical card applications to enable fast access to healthcare

- Support the development of a volunteer training programme for bilingual community members

A SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL COHESION STRATEGY FOR LONGFORD

This report presents an Intercultural Strategic plan for County Longford (2018-2022). The report considers both the attributes and existing gaps in provision and the needs of the Migrant, Traveller and Roma and host indigenous Irish communities in Longford. It recommends an agile and adaptive strategy to facilitate greater social inclusion for established and new minority communities in Longford.

The social integration and social cohesion strategy to build capacity in Longford proposes processes and plans complementary to the National Migrant Integration Strategy, and the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy.

Underpinning Longford's social integration and cohesion strategy are Longford's public bodies and civil servants, private businesses, community workers, and networks of unsung volunteers. The report acknowledges the successes of local government efforts and community based organisations, recognises the real resource challenges the county faces, and addresses the scope for supporting existing initiatives and creating new opportunities that can positively impact Longford's people and communities. The report explores how best to "future proof" Longford, namely how to create a shared future by building the support for Longford's communities to thrive together.

The strategy advocates a "diversity dividend" approach and seeks to champion the benefits of a diverse, inclusive, and cohesive Longford, one that can:

o   Prevent discrimination

o   Promote social integration and cohesion

o   Prepare all its community members to promote engagement practices and participate fully in a dynamic community

The strategic vision seeks to "future proof" Longford by:
o   Supporting human and social capital – the levels of trust and connectedness within and between groups that creates value - generation amongst its communities

o   Advocating for increased consultation, coordination, and communication within and between communities

o   Increasing trust and confidence levels between communities and statutory agencies

o   Building a thriving, resilient Longford, able to sustain shocks, and provide for people and communities

o   Striving through policy and process to create shared communities that leave no one behind.

o   Improving social mobility – the ability of people to improve their socio-economic position - for Longford's minority, migrant and marginalised communities

o   Adopting a protocol of "nothing about us without us" for all social integration and cohesion work with marginalised, minority and migrant communities

o   Providing for better community cohesion and resilience

This survey is based on the results and analysis of interviews, focus groups, surveys and observations.

Strategic Themes

Social integration and social cohesion initiatives often begin with examining demographics and details of deprivation without consideration of the diversity dividend. This is what happens when organisations and communities with higher levels of diversity and difference outperform those who are less diverse. Simply put communities that embrace a process of social integration are rewarded with more successful, innovate dynamic and diverse communities.

But the benefits of successful social integration and social cohesion are about more than numbers. Enterprising societies that engage with the process of social integration, by planning to include all community members and creating new opportunities for engagement, begin to disrupt the elements of social exclusion, and isolation.

With the diversity dividend to the fore the report finds that when migration and demographic challenges arise communities are regularly rewarded with robust, dynamic and thriving societies when they:
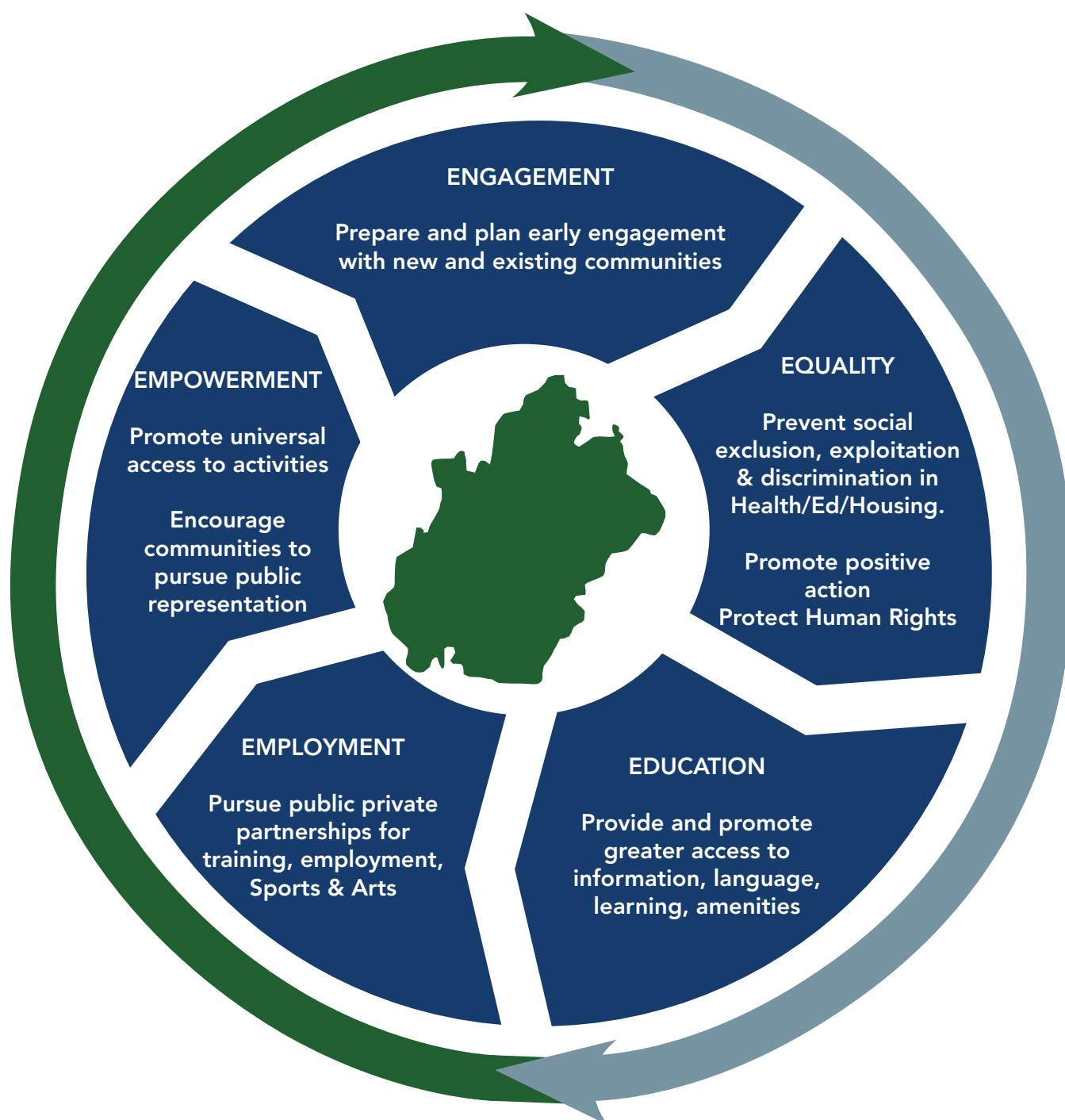•   Engage with new and existing communities early
•   Promote equality and positive action to:
- Prevent social exclusion, exploitation and discrimination in health, education and housing.
- Promote positive action and adopt a human rights approach
•   Educate, provide for, and promote: greater access to information, language learning and amenities.
•   Pursue public private partnerships for training, employment, and support sport and the arts,
•   Promote universal access to activities, empower and encourage communities to pursue public representation,

Public sector support and commitment to provide access to information, language learning, and training to all marginalised groups will encourage an equitable chance of employment. Public and private sector commitment to collaborative innovation in public-private partnerships, can in turn harness support and resources for new training schemes. These training schemes can draw on the existing traditions or language skills of the minority community.

Including all stakeholders to support recreational activities in sport and in the arts can in turn empower minority youth, and migrant workers to avail of new opportunities, to learn, to play, and to engage with and contribute to their new community, to volunteer, to stand for public office, to play for the local team.

The diversity dividend is a community's reward for setting in place processes that can begin to disrupt and undo the structural effects of deprivation.

INTERCULTURAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR COUNTY LONGFORD 2018-2022

ENGAGEMENT

Prepare and plan early engagement with new and existing communities

EQUALITY

Prevent social exclusion, exploitation & discrimination in Health/Ed/Housing.

Promote positive action
Protect Human Rights

EMPOWERMENT

Promote universal access to activities

Encourage communities to pursue public representation

EMPLOYMENT

Pursue public private partnerships for training, employment, Sports & Arts

EDUCATION

Provide and promote greater access to information, language, learning, amenities

METHODOLOGY

From 6 May- 8 June 2018, a qualitative and quantitative study of social integration and social cohesion in County Longford was undertaken by Brehon Advisory for Longford County Council and the Intercultural Working Group (IWG).

The study comprised of two qualitative surveys with one hundred and seven respondents in total, consultation with 120 community members in a series of focus groups, conducted in five population centers - Longford, Edgworthstown, Ballymahon, Lanesborough, Granard - across the county.

Semi-structured interviews with 77 service providers, three consultation meetings with the IWG and a final presentation to Longford County Council.

Surveys

As part of the study two quantitative perception surveys were conducted online through email invitations/links and shared at the meetings and focus groups.

- The Living in Longford survey – was aimed at service users, service beneficiaries, local community members, both long established residents and recent arrivals, to understand their experience of living in Longford and provide insights into how to best support their needs. There were 55 community respondents in total.
- The Working with People Living in Longford Survey – was aimed at people who provide services for people living in Longford and sought to understand their experience delivering services and meeting the needs of community members. There were 52 service provider respondents in total.

Elements of the data findings are included in other sections of this report.

Public Consultation

Provision was made for public consultation in Longford library on Friday 11 May, discussions included issues of public safety, child safety, road safety, and employment and welfare provisions for volunteers and informal language provision for new communities.

Focus Groups

The focus groups were conducted at the beginning or during the following scheduled events: beginner, elementary, and intermediate level English language classes, Soccer clubs, and Sports/Fitness Clubs, Seniors Activity programme, Youth Groups, Failte Isteach, Multi-cultural Women's meeting, Women's meeting, Midlands African Network (MAN), Alternative Therapy Meeting, Bridgeways, Lus na Greine, Longford Volunteer Center, Richmond Court. iScoil students; Community Health Care Nurses, Youth Volunteer staff, and the Bealthaine Closing Tea Dance.

After consultation with Intercultural Working Group (IWG) members, the study adopted purposive, convenience sampling methods to determine focus group composition. Multiple and varied venues were selected in order to secure as representative sample of Longford's communities as possible. Focus group participants ranged from children aged ten years and over to octogenarians. The smallest focus group had four members the largest focus group had

twelve members. In total 120 people participated.

Focus group members included the following nationalities and/or ethnic groups: Afghan, Bulgarian, Brazilian, British, Chinese, Congolese, Hungarian, Iraqi, Irish, Irish Brazilian, Irish Traveller, Kurdish, Libyan, Malaysian, Moldovan, Nigerian, Pashtun, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Roma, Romanian, Slovakian, Swiss.

Focus Group Methods: Protecting Anonymity

The anonymity of minority and marginalised community members was secured by way of an "anonymous messaging" mechanism. Rather than express their thoughts in class in a language they might not feel confident to communicate effectively in and to protect their privacy focus group members were encouraged to write what they might not want to say on slips of paper given to them for this purpose, to share what was good and what could be better in Longford. The written comments were collected in a sack and the facilitator reviewed and where necessary, translated the messages received in Bulgarian, Polish, Portuguese and Lithuanian. A sample of the translated responses from one focus group are shared below.

The table below details the anonymous translated responses in a focus group of Brazilian English language learners.

Brazilian Focus Group Sample Responses Translated
Employment opportunities for spouses - the opportunity for work permits for spouses.
Access to affordable housing the cost of renting has increased very quickly
A better local transportation network with connections to neighbouring towns is needed. *The schedule of the local buses needs to be available and accessible.*
Access to entertainment and activity options, particularly for children (i.e.: playgrounds, parks). *The cost of playing (soccer) on the astroturf in Ballymahon is expensive at five Euros for each player.*
Greater opportunities to learn English. *More frequent English language classes.*
Access to a greater variety of shops. *A bigger supermarket for Ballymahon.*
Ballymahon is a safe place to live.
The schools in Ballymahon are good for children.
The people here are trustworthy.
Would like assistance to support securing a local driving license. *Lighting of roads after dark is important for people working at night particularly during the Winter.* *The roads are dangerous for cyclists.*

Qualitative Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted (in some instances more than once) with 77 different service providers, community workers, volunteers and subject matter experts. Service providers were selected in consultation with the Intercultural Working Group (IWG) and service matter experts were selected by Brehon Advisory based on their good reputation in their respective fields and specialist knowledge about issues of integration in theory and in practice in the Irish context.

Other informal participant observation engagements included: Ballymahon PPN Wellbeing Statement consultation meeting with 19 attendees[1] at the Maria Edgeworth Literary Festival, the Oliver Goldsmith Literary Festival where host community insights into social integration and social cohesion were fielded.

The report sought to identify the gaps in provision and the needs of the migrant, Traveller and Roma community in Longford, and report on methods and plans to improve social cohesion and social integration of all vulnerable communities in County Longford. This research was conducted to help to identity, map, strengthen, and co-ordinate County Longford's social integration response and help create a comprehensive and comparative strategy and plan for advancing social integration and social cohesion County wide.

Methodology Rationale

The methodology sought to create a framework to review and update County Longford's Strategy for Social Integration in collaboration with Longford County Council and the organisations of Intercultural Working Group (IWG) (see Appendix) to establish the effectiveness of current initiatives and determine gaps and overlaps in promoting social integration for Migrant, Traveller and Roma communities in particular.

Pilot Study Findings

The research methods adopted built on existing Brehon work conducted in Longford. A preparatory workshop conducted with the IWG on 5th December 2017 reviewed existing inter-cultural cohesion support and services. Two independent surveys, and two youth trainings conducted independently by Brehon Advisory in Longford secondary schools in the autumn of 2017 focused on existing provision for marginalised youth in County Longford.
These initatives sought to map existing capabilities and responses to the needs of minority and migrant communities in Longford, and create plans and actions to surmount existing actions. The preliminary school survey findings found that young males in Longford reported greater feelings of social exclusion than young females in Longford, and second generation and young migrant males described feelings of alienation most often.

As a result of these preliminary findings, the scope of the study included social cohesion in the mapping of social integration efforts in Longford, in order to be better able to adapt to the National Migrant Integration Strategy and the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy. The pilot study findings called for:

• Further literacy and English language training
• Greater language appropriate information regarding access to resource and local sources of help and support. Information materials in Lithuanian, Latvian, Slovakian, Brazilian Portuguese, Urdu and Arabic language support would be beneficial

1. Consultants, officials and the Brehon researcher are not included in this figure

- An introduction to Longford for newcomers by existing community members including those recently arrived in Longford
- Access to informal education opportunities for young Travellers, Roma, Migrants.
- Access to vocational training opportunities, for young Travellers, Roma, Migrants
- After hours access to mental health and domestic violence support
- Responsible adult accompaniment provision for excluded youth, migrants and the vulnerable in the Criminal Justice System
- Greater community liaison and engagement
- Provision for the needs of sub sectors of each community, (gender and generational needs can differ)
- Greater care regarding private and personal information
- Re-establish community outreach (volunteers if an officer cannot be funded) replicating the successful community-policing model
- Establish greater shared community activities (Art, Sport, Music, Dance, where language is not a barrier)

Geographical Mapping and Scope

A County-wide study began on May 6th, including five population centers (Longford, Edgworthstown, Ballymahon, Lanesborough and Granard) to create a comparative case study across County Longford, including local organisations, schools, adult learning institutions, arts and drama, and sports clubs: organisations that work to empower the young, the senior, and minority groups to better understand the gaps and overlaps in existing provision made for minorities and migrants.

A level of analysis or tiered approach was employed to create an "audit of capability" for County Longford. Working with the (IWG), the audit mapped the socio-demographic realities of county Longford, to test the vulnerability of social integration, and to verify and validate how County Longford can harness existing programmes, initiatives, and efforts to create a strategic plan tailor made for Longford.

Comparing local provision across a number of urban areas can provide the ideal opportunity for a rich comparative study, an effective sampling of existing initiatives and programmes and comparative impact assessment testing and the opportunity to create integration and cohesion toolkits across sectors and geographies with specific and particular gaps and needs.

Comparative Needs Assessment Approach

By mapping and scoping the needs in five locations using surveys, workshop trainings, and qualitative interviews, the study allows for a broader urban-rural, town-village, comparison that will enrich the scope of the study and provide for robust, thorough and comprehensive County-wide conclusions.

This approach to framing is essential for the creation of replicable data, and to enable the documentation and the dissemination of relevant and representative findings in the creating of an effective County Longford integration and cohesion cross sector (health and welfare, justice and legal, education and training) "toolkits" to support vulnerable children, youth, parents, social workers, civil servants and volunteers, to train, support, and champion their integration and cohesion successes locally.

The graphic on next page details the desired outcomes of the report.

OUTCOME 1

Socio-demographic mapping of Longford

OUTCOME 2

Mapping existing integration needs, capabilities and responses

OUTCOME 3

A strategic plan for greater access to safe and inclusive places for social integration processes

INTRODUCTION: INCLUSION, IMMIGRATION, AND NEW IRISH COMMUNITIES IN CONTEXT

One of the great things about living in Longford is the sense of community. Longfordians protect their own.
(Focus Group Respondent)

It was difficult at the beginning, but I love my neighbour, she is like my white sister.
(Focus Group Respondent)

Many new Longfordians began their lives elsewhere. In the last twenty-five years, both the promise of big dreams, and the perils of conflict have led people from far-flung continents to Longford, a small county, with a population of 40,810 (CSO 2016).

- Markers of social integration and exclusion take account of deprivation, education and employment levels. These markers acknowledge that a meaningful life in any society while embedded in economic and employment security, extends to a broader set of social measures.

- Measures of social cohesion, while harder to quantify, take account of the willingness of communities of people to help and support one another. Longford's social cohesion markers of sociability: willingness to help, volunteer engagement rates, informal support networks and respect for others explain why people have come to not only reside in Longford, but to make Longford their home.

> *Longford is a great place to live and work*
> *I like Ireland. I like Irish people*
> *I admire Irish people*
> (Focus Group Respondents)

Longford is a receiving community for new migrants and for the resettlement of refugees. In order to effectively welcome and integrate new members into the community examining the way Longford currently deals with difference is important. By understanding the ways in which Longford welcomes new communities and identifying what mechanisms are perceived by newcomers as successful, Longford can better address the needs of new and existing minority groups who may feel marginalised or excluded.

This report seeks to determine what Longford as a community can do better to help engage local and host communities in enhancing the county's existing provisions and providing quality solutions to the most vulnerable, marginalised, community members.

For new migrant community members arriving at the height of the Celtic Tiger era, the promise of employment was the driving rationale for relocating to Ireland. As a result, net migration figures for Ireland increased steadily, from 8,000 in 1996, to 67,000 in 2007.
In 2004, two events shaped this period of economic boom, immigration and national integration. In the first event, Ireland became one of three European Union member states (along with the UK and Sweden) to allow unrestricted immigration from the 10 new EU-

Accession states, and, in the second, in a referendum, 80 per cent of Irish voters supported the removal of the constitutional birthright to Irish citizenship from the Irish-born children of migrants. Constitutional and legislative changes are often a reflection of existing social changes and represent a re-alignment of legal processes to the perspectives of the population. In order to address the considerable social pressures involved in any transition, effective social integration and inclusion policy amid the pace of these and subsequent changes requires an agile immigration policy, and a welcoming Irish host community.

SUPPORTING LONGFORD TOWN FC

Inclusion

Longford people are so generous I still have half a turkey in the freezer from Christmas
When you bring yourself out, Irish people help
Locals are very nice and they get involved
Now I'm staying I want to make it better for my children

(Focus Group Respondents)

In 2004, the first change, augmenting Irish immigration policy, facilitated access to work in Ireland for EU-accession states allowed for significant inward migration to Ireland for the first time. The second change, the constitutional change to the birth right to Irish citizenship, heralded a shift in legal and civic understandings of "Irishness" and altered perceptions of social inclusion and notions of, "we ourselves" and the "other" in Irish society. Combined, the two changes required Irish society to consider what it meant to be Irish, and belong in Irish society.

Between 1 May 2004 and 30 April 2005 some 85,114 workers from the new EU-10 were issued with PPS (national insurance) numbers, more than 10 times the number of new work permits

admitted to migrants from those countries in the preceding 12 months. By 2005, Ireland's proportion of 10.4 per cent foreign-born (as estimated by the OECD) exceeded that of the United Kingdom (8.3 per cent) and was similar to countries with a longer history of immigration (National Economic and Social Council (NESC), 2006, pp. 25-26). The 2006 census identified some 610,000 or 14.7 per cent of the total population (4,239,848) as born outside the state and approximately 10 per cent of the total population as "non-Irish nationals" (www.cso.ie). (B. Fanning, 2008)

Immigration

In another area people said to me "go back to your own country," not in Longford
When I say "hi "only Irish people answer me. The Irish people answer me every time

(Focus Group Respondent)

There was a concern, however, that "Ireland's history of antipathy" towards indigenous Irish Protestant, Irish Jewish and Irish Traveller minority communities (Fanning 2002:30) might prove challenging. Ongoing and overt discrimination and pervasive prejudice experienced by members of the Traveller community is described in a Traveller movement report as "the last acceptable form of racism." Escalating unemployment and the lingering legacies of social exclusion and marginalisation of these groups, might, in turn, inform Irish acceptance of, and responses to, the new minority immigrant communities. There was however little time for negative perceptions of new migrants' belonging to and integration in Irish life.

The 2008 global financial crisis heralded even greater changes. Ireland became the first eurozone state to enter recession, and unemployment returned along with net emigration. Ireland's emigration figures were the highest in twenty-five years, and the issue of belonging and association for working migrants to Ireland who remained, and didn't return "home," to where they were born, sharpened.

By autumn 2013, Ireland was plunged back into recession. 397,500 people had emigrated, with most travelling to the UK, Australia and Canada in search of work. During the same period (2008-2013) 277,400 people returned, or moved to Ireland, giving a net outward migration figure of 120,100. In the twelve months between 2012-2013, 10 people left Ireland every hour.

New Irish communities

If there is no love you can't come together

(Focus Group Respondent)

In 2018, a decade after the financial crisis, seven years after the Arab Spring uprisings in the Middle East, and protracted conflicts elsewhere (Afghanistan, Colombia, Congo, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, Somalia, Ukraine) individuals and families have fled conflict, and escaped economic insecurity, and sought sanctuary and prosperity in Ireland. Ireland's accommodation creates the opportunity for the diversity dividend, namely the opportunity for Ireland to prevent xenophobia, promote its communities and prepare them for the future where they may be a double diaspora, viewing Ireland as home and in so doing providing Ireland with a share of their social capital.

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND COHESION

At the level of society, effective social integration programmes can create and complement the objectives of sustainable human development by contributing to social integration, which is measured more readily in economic terms, namely by building material capital through employment and investment, and supporting social development, and environmental sustainability creating a "virtuous circle." Social cohesion is broadly defined as the willingness of members of a society to co-operate with each other in order to survive and prosper. In sum, it is when people believe they share the norm of not cheating on one another. Equality in access to services and employment is a key indicator of social integration.

At the individual and community level, building trust and mitigating risk, successful social integration programmes can cultivate greater cognitive and affective empathy, (understanding others' beliefs, assumptions, inferences and appreciating their experience), and contribute to building social cohesion or social capital defined as trust and "embeddedness."

The survey findings demonstrate that social cohesion is a process, one where levels of discrimination and acceptance of difference need to be better understood. For example, 62 percent of service providers surveyed were aware that their beneficiaries or clients suffered discrimination, and 92 percent were aware that their beneficiaries or clients had experienced kindness, care, acceptance and help in Longford.

Similarly, in a cross section of Longford community members surveyed while 16 percent had experienced discrimination, racism, verbal or physical abuse in Longford, 93 percent of those surveyed have experienced kindness, acceptance care and help in Longford.

In isolation any one of these figures would deliver a partial and distorted view of discrimination and acceptance in Longford, together the data tells the story of social cohesion as an adaptive process of community engagement. Social integration that includes and incorporates social cohesion initiatives have been shown to successfully mitigate conflict, minimise crime and help to build a strong dynamic, cohesive and integrated community.

Minister Michael Ring with local residents

Photo by Shelley Corcoran

PATHWAYS TO POLICIES OF INCLUSION

Social Insecurity	Exclusion	Integration Transition Actions	Inclusion	Community Security Indicators
Victim/ Pariah Perceptions/ Shared insecurities	- Scapegoating	• Broaden the base of Inclusion • Create Access to Mutual Learning • Knowledge Transfer • Create an online integrated Longford Induction Pack for Service Providers • Advocate for Mutual Learning • Provide Induction Courses for new communities /Awareness • Offer Training for host Community volunteers • Understand and disseminate legal protections and provisions	- Empathy - Enforcing legal Protections	• Parity/Equality/ Collective Safety
Inequality Discrimination	- Unequal Treatment	• Information/Access Induction to Longford Information Platform	- Supporting Engagement	• Self-Rescue Peer Support
Language Gap	- Stigma	• Shared Meaning • Translate essential guide to Longford online in essential languages	- Employment and Training	• Joined Up Integrated Upskilling and Training
Systemic Exclusion	- Segregation - Opaque Rules, Policies, and Procedures - Unclear Guidelines - Bureaucratic Ambiguities - Lack of access/ information about available resources	• Acknowledge an agreed set of policies and procedures addressing access across service providers/community groups and stakeholders • Appoint designated Integration Champions amongst Stakeholders across all sectors	- Education - Diversity formal/ informal/ sport/ culture/ music/ food/ festivals - Positive Peer Learning on Reception/ Arrival/ Relocation - Provide opportunities for consultation	• First Response Support measures in place across rural/urban community networks • Whistleblower System in place • Zero Tolerance policies on Discrimination • Designated Whistleblowing mechanisms (for claimant fraud/crime) • Community consultation mechanisms to counter crime/bullying/intimidation/ fraud
Unequal Treatment	- Instability	• Dialogue/Consultation	- Implement A Rights Based Approach	• Communities based Advocacy
Fear of Exclusion	- Escalating uncertainty and strain leading to crisis	• Coordination • Create a steering group tasked with implementing integration initiatives	- Training of Trainers - Steering Committee on Integration and Cohesion	• Minority Representation in Local Politics

Social Integration and Social Cohesion Perceptions, Platforms and Processes

In communities like Longford where minority, migrant and marginalised community needs are diverse, local government and community stakeholders face the arduous task of providing not only services to meet the needs of the host community, but, also to address the particular needs of existing, often excluded, minority groups in addition to the specific and often unfamiliar needs and challenges faced by new migrant communities. As a result, there is often a fear among the host society and minority communities that traditional social conditions are eroding. A successful strategic plan toward new dynamic and integrated cohesive communities takes time, and needs to counter the tendency for migration and transition to generate new, unanticipated social pressures on migrants, minorities, and the vulnerable host community alike.

Existing empirical findings from other contexts suggest that well-designed programmes can work on the individual, community, and society level to assist in generating social capital by building trust, knowledge and reciprocity, within and between communities.

The skills and values learned through collaborative integration efforts and community-based programmes can counter the impact of "social erosion" associated with mistrust and conflict. When combined collaborative integration efforts can provide an effective and successful platform for building trust across and between communities. Education and training based integration mechanisms are an effective means of social integration and social cohesion.[2]

In order to better build capacity for social integration and cohesion in Longford these mechanisms and pathways to inclusion are best incorporated and leveraged into a comprehensive series of processes and plans associated with the National Migrant Integration Strategy, and the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy. *(See figure on right.)*

Social Integration Support Platforms	Social Cohesion Support Platforms
Create a Shared Safe Space	Co-operation and Competition
Facilitate Protection and Safeguarding	Communication and Language
Provide Training and Mentoring	Respect for Rules
Deliver Sport and Life Skills	Problem Solving and Planning
Harness Youth Leadership	Understanding
Offer a Diversity Platform	Connecting to Others
Facilitate Gender Equality	Leadership
Facilitate Disability Equality	Resilience
Offer First Aid Training	Respect for Others
Facilitate Volunteerism	Value of Effort
Deliver Health/Wellbeing	Resilience and Respect in Defeat
Education/Awareness	Magnanimity in Success and Winning
Offer Drug Awareness Programmes	Community Coordination
Facilitate Education	Book Clubs
Mentor Against Crime	Art/Drama
English Language Training	Culture
Art and Drama Workshops	Sport
Information Awareness	Listening Skills

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2. The Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration What Next for Global Refugee Policy? Opportunities and Limits of Resettlement at Global, European and National Levels. SVR Policy Brief 2018-1

How is Integration Measured?

Assimilation and integration are very different things and others acceptance towards minorities and an active enthusiasm about their background is the single most important act of kindness and acceptance that can be given. Minorities can try their best to understand their host community but even in that terminology we understand that it is ultimately an isolating experience because they cannot fully understand what it is that gives them acceptance if they cannot get close enough to learn what it is they need to emulate or engage with to become more integrated. The hand must be extended to others in acceptance because most do not yet understand how much value and joy can be gleaned from learning about and valuing another's culture.

(Living in Longford Survey Respondent)

Measuring integration calls for a benchmark against which outcomes can be assessed. Indicators tend to refer to "an absence of violence, or an absence of discrimination." Developing and validating a migrant or minority community integration scale requires tools to better understand the integration process. There are as yet no agreed-upon positive indicators for social cohesion for minorities, marginalised, or migrant communities in the context of developed states. Integration measures tend to focus on unemployment figures among host community and migrant and/or marginalised communities to demonstrate levels of inclusion.

It is harder to capture social integration where measures often rely on surveys of attitudes, feelings, and perceptions. Although such subjective indicators go some way towards measuring how at home migrants feel in their host society, they are prone to challenges of replicability in monitoring and evaluation.

Context related facts and figures are crucial to the proper interpretation of immigrants' actual outcomes and observed differences, with Irish-born populations. Concentrations of migrants in geographically disadvantaged areas, for example, may affect effective integration in the education system and later in the job market. While areas that are home to high proportions of immigrants tend to have better integration outcomes (OECD 2015).

As a minority myself, I have always tried to better understand other minority groups and speak openly about discrimination, as I myself have faced a considerable amount, from abuse on the street to exchanges with co-workers and clients. This is a common experience for all minorities in Longford without a doubt. It is doubly harmful because minorities understand that when these things are said to them, they carry this sentiment to their families, and those around them also. This is a very isolating experience and leads minorities to doubt whether this is unsaid and felt by others, if not all, around them.

(Working with People Living In Longford Survey Respondent)

What shapes Integration outcomes at the level of the Community?

There are a number of different interrelated factors that shape integration outcomes at the community level.

- Where practicable the ability of local government and community stakeholders to consult with newcomers at the earliest practicable opportunity is important.

  o Early contact with resettled community members mitigates fear and helps to navigate expectations on the part of the host community and the new community.
  o Building resilience among new community members requires acknowledging a degree of deliberative authority engaging in dialogue (with the help of an interpreter or appropriate adult) has the effect of recognising them as persons of self-rescue and enhances engagement and builds trust and improves the likelihood of effective settlement.

- Creating the opportunities for relational autonomy after arrival is imperative.

  o The reduction of resettlement uncertainty is driven by the ability of service providers to recognise persons of self-rescue and to orient their interactions with new community and minority community members in such a way that stereotypes of both victimhood and/or pariah group is challenged.
  o Generating, and sustaining trust is essential. Negative experiences with host community members are promptly shared within and among the resettled and can promptly sway negative perceptions of officials, service providers or other members of the host community.

- Diversity proofing all local services is essential.

  o Providing essential information in an easily readable and recognized format.
  o Ensuring there is awareness and availability of resources for newly resettled communities is vital.
  o Ensuring effective and regular data collection and critically data dissemination within and between stakeholders and service providers is essential for effective integration policy implementation.
  o Create effective guidelines around data collection and not just protection particularly around public sector quotas and related issues.
  o Successfully identify, share, test, and replicate best practice across the county and between community groups and all relevant stakeholders.

- Create a mechanism for informal dispute resolution arising over micro-aggressions, the everyday environmental slights, snubs or insults, whether intentional or unintentional that communicate hostile, negative and derogatory terms to a person based on their marginalised group membership.

What shapes Integration outcomes at the level of the Individual?

Similarly, there are a number of different, interrelated factors that impact integration outcomes at the individual level.

- Being born "abroad," may constitute an obstacle in that, mastery of the language of the host country is a critical factor in integration.

  o Access to essential information shapes the pace of integration. The immigrant lacks the native-born (indigenous) in-depth knowledge of the host society, for example, understanding how the labour market functions.
  o Familiarity with public services or local networks can take time to understand, particularly when operating in a second or third language.
  o Understanding the constituent elements of a new community takes time, and integration outcomes tend to improve with an individual's duration of stay in Longford.
  o Structural differences, for example the quality of the education system, between the home country and host community (Longford) can also have an impact on the pace, process, perception, and outcome of integration.

- The rationale for leaving home shapes integration outcomes. A person's reason for coming to Ireland can also play an important part in determining outcomes, particularly in the labour market.

  o Social Capital is key to resilience for new communities, enabling access to value enhancing networks of family, and friends, and access to fulfilling activities sustains mental health and wellbeing at the level of the individual and builds effective cohesive communities.
  o Whereas labour migrants in particular sectors may have an assigned job waiting for them on arrival (food processing for example) or secure a role promptly, the experience for those fleeing from a humanitarian crisis, conflict instability, and poverty is often very different.
  o A labour migrant with a job to come to will tend to travel alone, whereas people fleeing instability and conflict are more likely to travel with dependents.

- An immigrant's country of birth shapes integration success.

  o Immigrants from lower-income countries can face greater (education/health/labour) challenges to their integration experience.
  o For indigenous, native-born minorities or members of disability communities, structural exclusion and limited access to local resources and services can create and replicate the same challenges faced by new immigrant communities.

Introduction

The legacy of socio-economic changes and migration patterns that shaped Ireland, described as "the Irish habit of going away," also shaped Longford. The historic patterns of migration are mapped in the population statistics of Longford. In the twentieth century mass emigration reached levels that were reminiscent of earlier waves, beginning in the 1850s, in the aftermath of the Great Irish Famine. The 1980s were described as another "lost" decade characterised by emigration and unemployment. Women and men were equally likely to leave home. Conversely, by the late 1990s the impact of the Celtic Tiger and liberalising employment access for non-native Irish shaped immigration to Ireland. National socio-economic changes, the impact of economic prosperity, and austerity, and the ebb and flow of migration, are all tied to the population changes in Longford seen in the chart below.

Longford Population
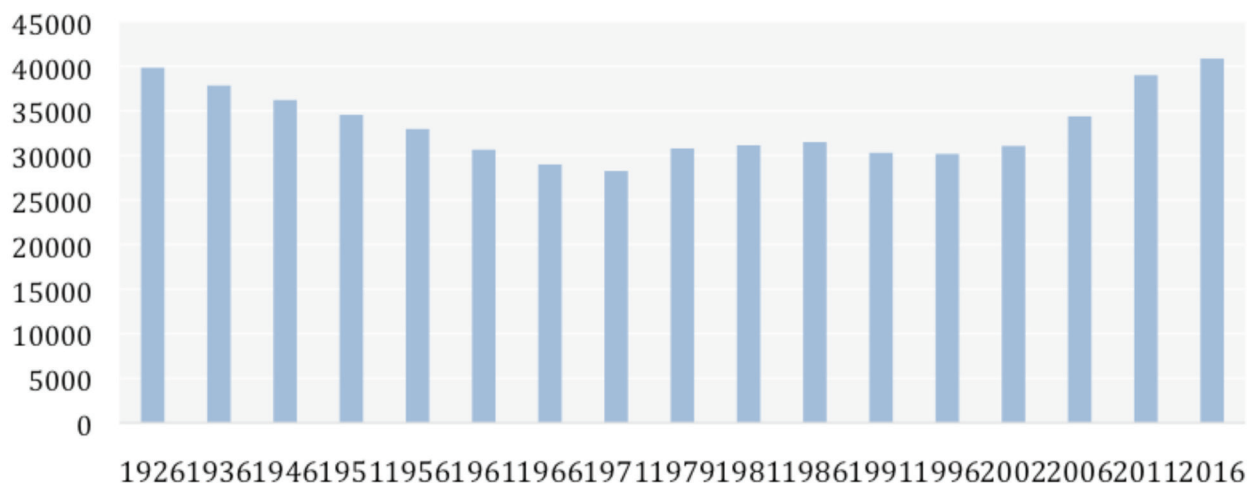
General Population of Longford

Currently, the county has a population of 40,655 an increase of 18.5 percent in 10 years (Census 2016, 2011 SAPS map and Census 2006). 66 percent of the population of Longford is rural and 34 percent of the population resides in towns.

The following chart show the population in 2016 by sex and town/rural area.

Longford Population 2016

Ethnicity

Usually Resident Population County Longford
The breakdown of all ethnicities across the censuses of 2006 to 2016 is shown below:

Ethnicity	2006		2011		2016	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
White Irish	29579	86.2%	31635	81.6%	31489	77.5%
White Irish Traveller	552	1.6%	743	1.9%	1046	2.6%
Other White	2409	7.0%	4232	10.9%	4825	11.9%
Black or Black Irish	477	1.4%	923	2.4%	869	2.1%
Asian or Asian Irish	187	0.5%	381	1.0%	672	1.7%
Other	351	1.0%	298	0.8%	675	1.7%
Not stated	740	2.2%	551	1.4%	1079	2.7%
Total	34295	100%	38763	100%	40655	100%

Nationality - Longford

The Nationality figures are provided from the Small Areas Population Statistics (SAPS) Map link
Usually Resident Population County Longford

The nationality of people living in County Longford has been evolving as follows (per respective census).

The table below show the Polish community as the single most significant nationality in Longford after the Irish (at 4.7 percent of the population).

Nationality	2006		2011		2016	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Ireland	29371	85.6%	32822	84.7%	34000	83.6%
Poland	714	2.1%	1628	4.2%	1903	4.7%
UK	2293	6.7%	1155	3.0%	1155	2.8%
Lithuania	308	0.9%	487	1.3%	540	1.3%
Other EU 28	695	2.0%	1083	2.8%	1483	3.6%
Rest of World	823	2.4%	1124	2.9%	917	2.3%
Not stated	91	0.3%	464	1.2%	657	1.6%
Total	34295	100%	38763	100%	40655	100%

Accuracy of Figures

There is some concern that the figures for nationality and ethnicity are under reported in the census. A significant number of people state neither ethnicity nor nationality. Some communities may choose not to identify or categorize themselves because of fear of discrimination, exclusion or stigmatization. The figures for the Traveller Community should be afforded the same caution, as Travellers can be reluctant to self identify particularly when committed to prison for example. (CSO 2006 Report, Travellers in Prison Initiative 2017)

Traveller Community

The Equal Status Act 2000 defines the term "Traveller community" as the community of people who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified (both by themselves and by others) as people with a shared history, culture and traditions including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland (The National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021 NTRIS).

The Traveller community in Ireland

According to the 2016 census figures there was a 5.1 percent increase in the population of Travellers in the state from 29,4956 to 30,987. (CSO2016) While the CSO figures state there are 30,987 Travellers in the Republic of Ireland, the All Ireland Health study (2010) asserted that there were 36,224 Travellers in Ireland. The Traveller population may be disinclined to self identify as Traveller fearing discrimination as outlined above.

The Traveller population in Ireland exhibits the following characteristics:

- Traveller men's life expectancy is 15 years less than the general male population.
- Suicide rates are 7 times higher than in the general population.
- Travellers constitute 10 percent of the male prison population and 22 percent of female prisoners in Irish prisons are Travellers.[3]
- Almost 1 in 8 Travellers are unable to work due to disability, which is almost 3 times the rate of the general population.
- There are 5.3 people per household, in contrast with 4.1 people for the general population.
- Only 13 percent of Travellers complete second level education, compared to 92 percent of the general population.

The Traveller Community in Longford

According to the "Ethnicity and Irish Travellers" Report on the 2016 Census, there are 1046 people in County Longford who have identified themselves as Travellers. (CSO2016) As of April 2016 there were 1049 Travellers in Longford County and 730 Travellers in Longford Town (CSO) Longford had the highest absolute increase in Traveller's per head of population meaning that there are 25.7 Travellers for every thousand people in Longford. Moreover, Longford has the biggest increase in Travellers living in

LCR clg Primary Health Care Project for Travellers Celebrate Heritage Week

permanent accommodation by 43.1 percent (or 295 people) since 2011 (CSO). The percentage of Travellers in the county under 15 years is 40 percent. (CSO Webtable EY030)

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3. Travellers in Prison Initiative (TPI) National Conference, October 20th 2017, Dublin Castle

Roma

The first challenge in detailing the experience of the Roma is the data deficit. It is estimated that there are 10 to 12 million Roma in Europe, with 6 million in the EU making the Roma the largest minority in Europe.

The number of Roma in Ireland is estimated to be between 3,000 – 5,000 people (CSO, Department of Justice). Roma come from a range of European countries including Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic (Czechia). The accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU in 2007 increased the number of Roma people coming to Ireland (Department of Justice). The Roma demographic is young, the average Roma is twenty-five, with 35.7 percent under 15 years compared with 15.7 percent of the EU population overall. The Irish Immigration Support Center (NASC) launched the first Roma specific assessment by focusing on the same themes outlined in this report with a specific focus on law and justice, issues of racial profiling of Roma as well as their representation in the Irish media.

In Ireland, Roma face barriers to access in employment, medical services, and social protection due to negative stereotyping and prejudice. The Roma's transition from asylum seekers to EU nationals provides insights into the nature and structure of social exclusion. The Roma are doubly disadvantaged, disadvantaged in their home countries and in their host communities. In the findings from a majority Roma focus group in Longford, and verified in health provider interviews, the Roma struggle with language acquisition, and suffer from overcrowding at home. The Roma respond well to healthcare provision, and strive for better play areas amenities for children, and jobs.

> *I worry about Roma children playing so close to the road*
>
> (Public Consultation)
>
> *I want to open a nail bar in Longford*
> *My children have nowhere to play close to home*
>
> (Focus Group Respondents)

An in-depth study of the Roma community in Longford would provide further insights into how exclusion persists despite efforts by the governments, institutions and organisations charged with safeguarding marginalised groups to create equal access and support to community resources.

In consultations with Traveller and Roma Communities and government stakeholders the term "cohesion" was agreed on as the term that best represented the shared goal rather than integration. (The National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS))

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

The number of displaced people in the world has trebled in 20 years. (Population - million) Numbers include refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons.

Source: 'UNHCR Statistics - The world in numbers' at http://popstats.unhcr. ort/en/
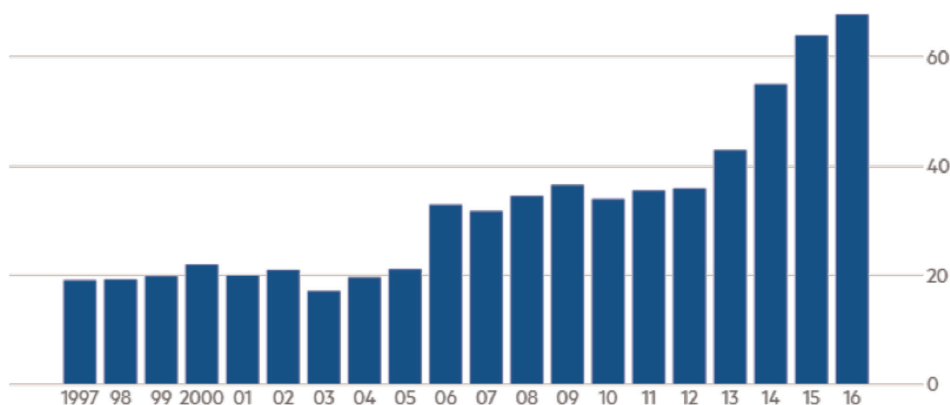
Ireland has the second lowest rate of granting asylum in the European Union (EU) at 13 percent. (FT 2018)

An asylum seeker is a person who seeks to be recognised as a refugee under the terms of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees as defined in Section 2 of the International Protection Act 2015.[4]   Under Section 2 of the Act, the legal definition of a refugee is a person who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside his or her country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it."

Established in 2000 to house asylum seekers entering the Irish State in search of international protection, the direct provision system was described as an "interim" system, which would provide accommodation for a six month period while people awaited an outcome on their application. According to the Reception and Integration Agency of the Irish government, for the period ending April 2018 (latest available), and verified in service provider interviews, there were 78 people-seeking asylum or asylum seekers in the county that has a capacity for 80 persons. This represents 0.19 percent of the total population of Longford. Asylum seekers living in direct provision currently have a weekly allowance of 21.60Euro and can buy food using a new points system.

On February 9th 2018 the Supreme Court formally ruled the ban on asylum seekers' right to work was unconstitutional.[5] The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) note this change in the law, which deprived asylum seekers from access to employment essential for realising other human rights. In lifting the prohibition on asylum seekers securing paid work, asylum seekers in Longford are now legally entitled to seek work to engage in the economic life of Longford in line with refugees. The creation of a discretionary administrative scheme to consider applications for self-employment provides a means for all refugees to "self-rescue". Self- rescue refers to the potential of self-reliance for refugees, namely, the ability of refugees to thrive once they have resettled. In allowing asylum seekers to work, Ireland's revised policy identifies the need for a European Union (EU) common asylum system with comparable standards and unified procedures that do not limit the choices of newly settled communities.

Detailing the Data in context

The European 2020 strategy is the European Union's (EU) agenda for jobs and growth. Part of the main objective of the strategy is to deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion in the Member States, while reducing the impact on the natural environment. The Eurostat data from the European Commission database, details Ireland's social inclusion score.

In 2016 (latest figures) Ireland surpassed its employment target for the twenty to sixty four age group by 1.3 percentage points at 70.3 percent. Ireland exceeded its target for early leavers from education and training, achieving a 5.1 percentage point reduction between 2008 and 2016. While employment is a measure of social inclusion, the risk of poverty is an indicator of likely social exclusion. The poverty indicator corresponds to the number of people who are at risk of poverty or severely materially deprived or living in households with very low work

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4. 1951 Refugee Convention http://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html
5. Statement by the Minister for Justice and Equality on the right to work for Asylum Seekers http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PR18000053

intensity.

Comparing the Irish figures for people at risk of poverty or social exclusion with Denmark's figures demonstrates the differing risks of social exclusion in two comparable small European Union (EU) states that joined the EU at the same time. Their respective risks of poverty and social exclusion since 2011 are in the table below.

Percentage of People at Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion		
Year	Ireland	Denmark
2011	29.4%	17.6%
2012	30.3%	17.5%
2013	29.9%	18.3%
2014	27.7%	17.9%
2015	26.0%	17.7%
2016	24.2%	16.7%

Poverty indicators, employment and welfare provision and family and household details can inform the challenges and vulnerabilities of the community. Lone parents, for example, are more likely to struggle to meet the costs of living for themselves and their children. One in five people in Ireland live in a one-parent family. One in four families with children in Ireland is a one-parent family (CSO 2016).

Housing

Suitable and affordable housing is a key factor for alleviating issues of social exclusion and deprivation. Social housing allocation can exacerbate wider issues.
Social exclusion - what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a concentration of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low income, high crime, poor health and family breakdown is made worse by poor social housing. In sum, in keeping with other deprivation indices, poor housing is a feature of social disadvantage and social exclusion.

As a result local housing initiatives seek to "enable every household to have available to them an affordable dwelling of good quality, in a good environment as far as possible at tenure of their choice" (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government). Today demand for affordable public and private housing in Longford is high. Rental prices have increased significantly after the Center Parks identified Ballymahon as the location for its new recreational park.

> *There is no affordable housing in Longford*
> *Rent is too high in Ballymahon*
> *Access to affordable housing, the cost of renting has increased very quickly*
>
> (Translated from original Focus Group Respondent)

While there are thirty new social housing units under construction in Lanesborough, the 2016 census data states that nationally, Longford ranked second only to Letterkenny in vacancy rates and only by .3 percent at 14.6 percent (CSO 2016).
Often, immigrant communities come seeking accommodation with no background knowledge of the area, and select private housing based on cost in areas that are often less desireable to

the local population.

When housing becomes available it tends to be in the most deprived areas, ultimately adding more deprivation to an already vulnerable area. Resentment and lack of understanding of local customs (loitering, and picking up after one's dog for example) can result in further displacement of local residents, leaving those who cannot sell the properties isolated particularly older people.

> *For some [new communities], gathering together and sitting outside the house, [hanging out] is common place, but it can be perceived as loitering, as anti-social behaviour and mischief making [here].*
>
> (Service Provider)

> *There is dog mess left and not cleaned up*
> *She [gesturing out the window] lets her dog mess on the grass. The children go and play football on the green and its terrible!*
> *It is very loud with music and shouting late at night.*
>
> (Focus Groups)

High levels of deprivation are generally observed in areas with high levels of local authority housing. The percentage of Local Authority housing rented in Longford increased by 2.2 from 11.2 percent in 2006, to 13.4 percent in 2016. While the number of privately owned housing homes in Longford in 2016 had increased 8.2 percent to 19.0 percent since 2006 (CSO/Pobal).

Rental Property Type

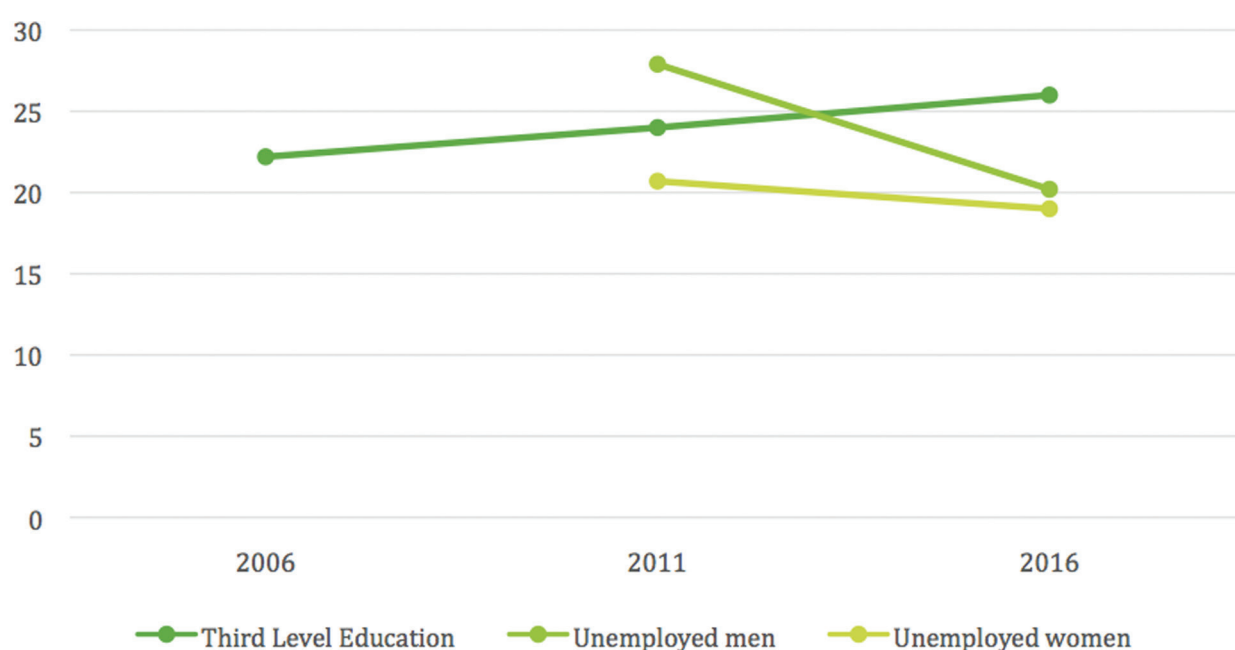Local Authority Housing   Privately Owned Housing
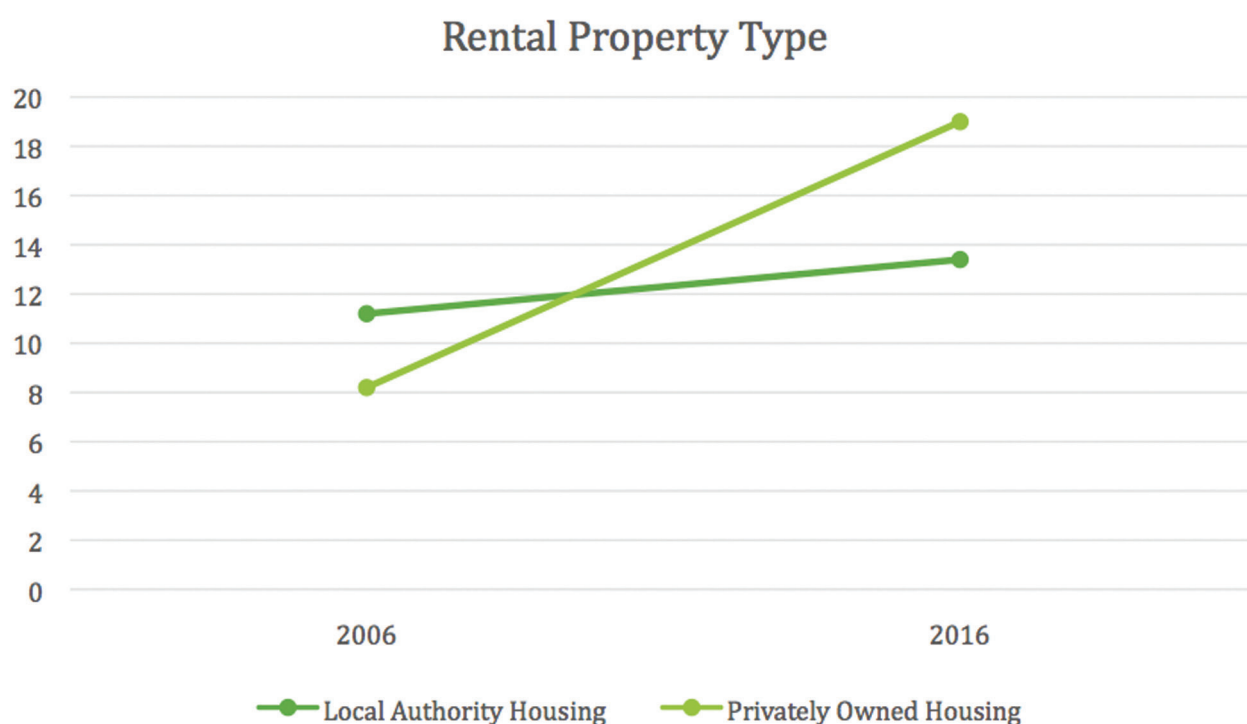
Welfare Provision

Documenting and detailing deprivation by way of indices used by the Pobal HP index for example, help to map and measure social exclusion across the country and seek to identity where best to target scarce resources, focus innovative pilot programmes and pursue extraordinary measures to mitigate the risks associated with deprivation, social exclusion
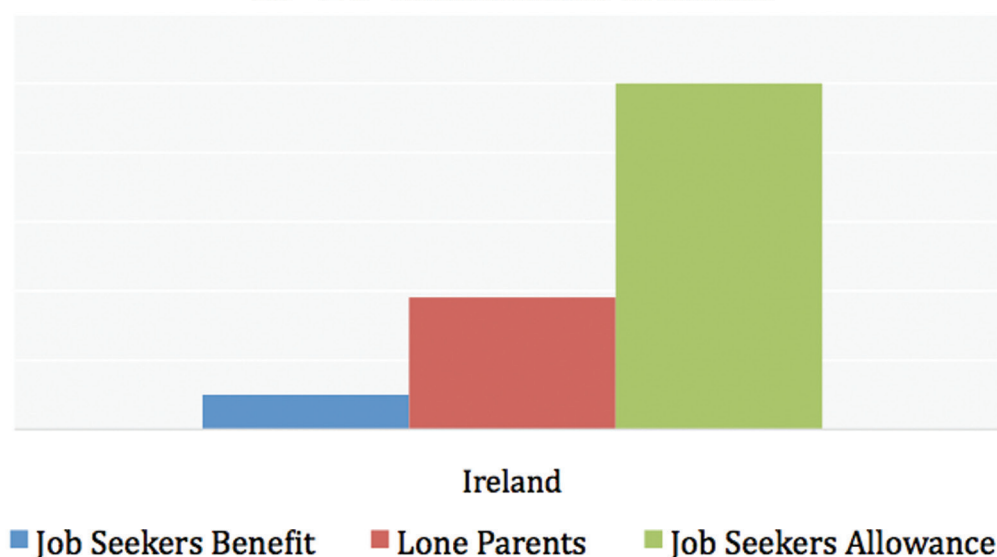
and poverty. Applying census data details to the Longford small area category context for example, and introducing the perceptions of community members, can provide for a comprehensive approach to social integration provision.

Increased educational attainment increases human capital (defined as the capacity to earn income) and can in turn help to reduce unemployment. An 3.8 percent increase in Longfordians with third level education from 22.2 percent in 2006 to 26.0 percent in 2016, and a 6.6 percent drop in people with only primary level qualifications is complimented by a reduction in unemployment figures over the same period. The number of unemployed men in Longford has decreased 7.7 percent from 27.9 percent in 2011 to 20.2 percent in 2016. The number of unemployed women has decreased 0.3 percent from 20.7 percent in 2011 to 19.0 percent in 2016. These figures need however to be compared with pre-recession unemployment rates of 10.5 percent for men and 12.9 percent for women (CS0 2016).

Third Level Education and Employment Rates

Legend: Third Level Education — Unemployed men — Unemployed women

17-25 Claimants: Ireland

Ireland

Legend: Job Seekers Benefit — Lone Parents — Job Seekers Allowance

Lone parent households are four times as likely to be living in consistent poverty compared to two-parent households. One family Ireland documents 2010 lone parent households in Longford; 86 percent are lone mothers and 14 percent are lone fathers. One-parent families make up 26.7 percent of all households in Longford (One Family 2017, CSO 2016 data update). The number of lone parents in Longford has decreased 1.3 percent from 28.0 percent in 2011.

Households that are excluded and marginalised from consuming goods and services, which are considered the norm for other people in society, due to an inability to afford them, are described as deprived. The identification of the marginalised or deprived is currently achieved on the basis of a set of eleven basic deprivation indicators. Deprivation is the inability to afford at least two of these eleven basic necessities, for example, going 24 hours without a substantial meal or being cold because parents are unable to afford to heat the home.

Combined, all of these figures including lone parent data provide a comprehensive account of the impact of deprivation and detail the ways in which greater social integration and social cohesion focusing on education and training can target youth and benefit the broader community. This comprehensive assessment of deprivation indicators notwithstanding, the broader reality of deprivation and social exclusion may still be obscured by using a narrow definition of what it means to be a lone parent family, with concerns surrounding domestic violence tending not to be adequately reflected in quantitative data alone.

> *Some families in Longford may not qualify as lone parents, but they are families where women parent alone.*
>
> (Service Provider)

17-25 Claimants as % of Total Category Claimants
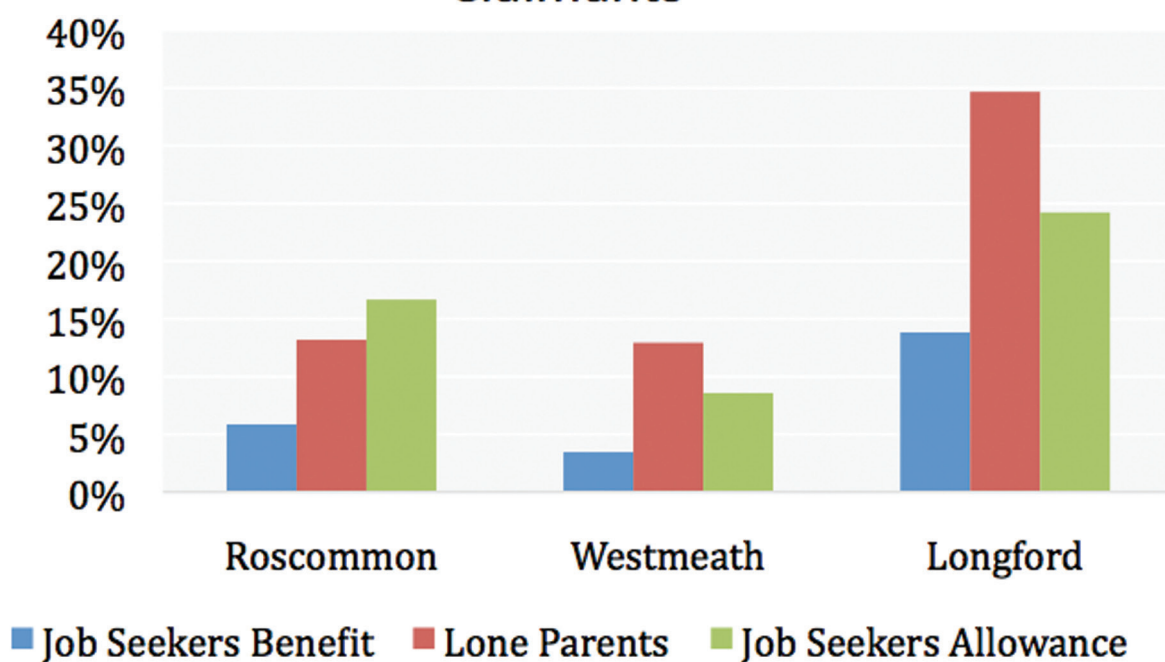
Disability and Age

Disabled members of the community can suffer from social exclusion and marginalisation. Disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that create barriers making it harder for full and effective participation in society equally. The challenges faced by people with physical and intellectual disabilities include a greater risk of victimisation and discrimination, activity limitations, and restriction in participation, all of which are barriers to social inclusion.

My friend had her handbag snatched from the back of her wheelchair

(Focus Group)

High prevalence of anti-social behaviour hinders access to the urban environment for those with intellectual and physical disabilities.
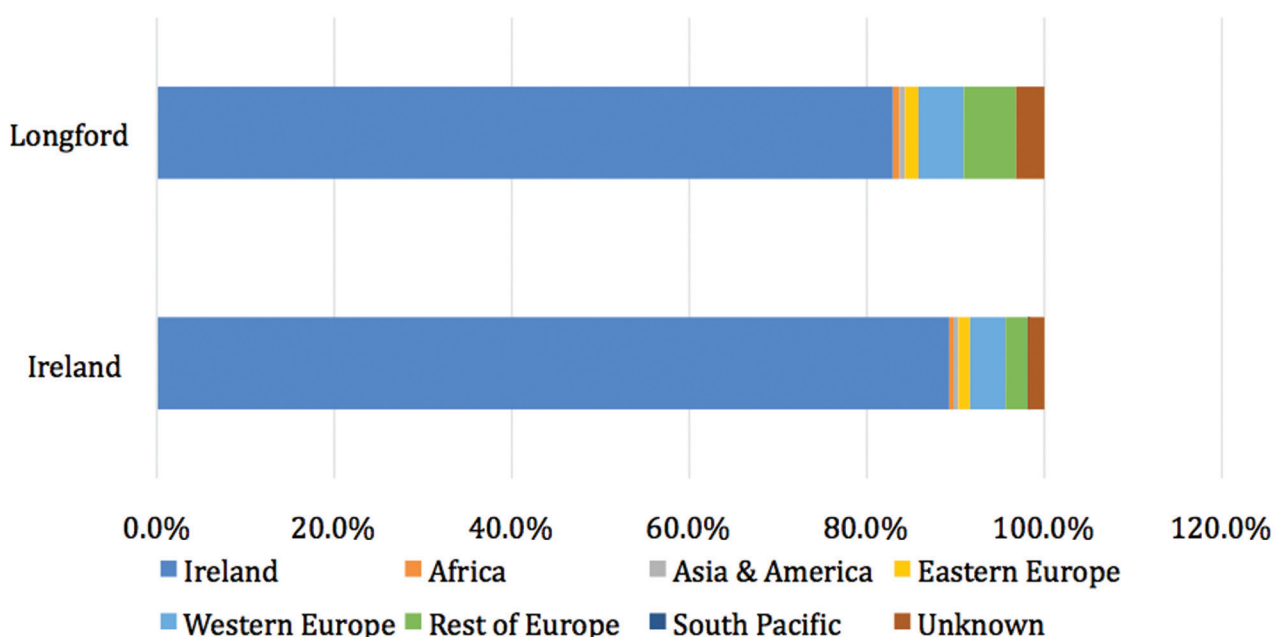
(Service Provider)

There is a risk of targeting but there is a greater risk of someone with intellectual disabilities stumbling across a situation and not having the tools to protect themselves.

(Service Provider)

Senior members of any given society share the need for a safe and accessible environment with disabled members of society, and Longford is no exception. The percentage of age dependents in Longford has increased 3.2 percent from 34.3 percent in 2006, to 37.5 percent in 2016 (Pobal/CSO 2016). For seniors with mobility issues, as well as ageing minority or marginalised community member, who may also have a disability, the discrimination faced is compounded.

Disability Claimants by Nationality

Legend: Ireland, Africa, Asia & America, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Rest of Europe, South Pacific, Unknown

Longford Disability Scheme Type

- Carers Allowance
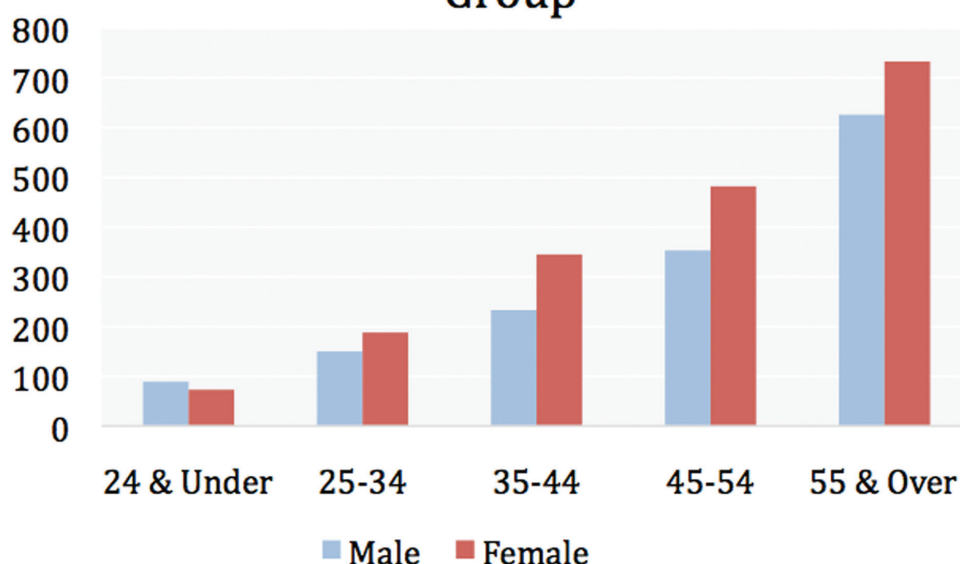- Disability Allowance
- Invalidity Pension
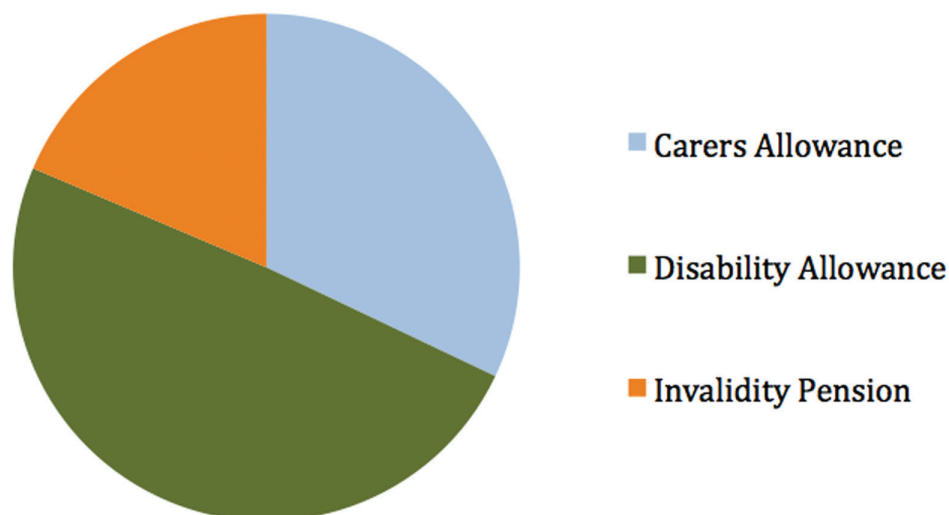
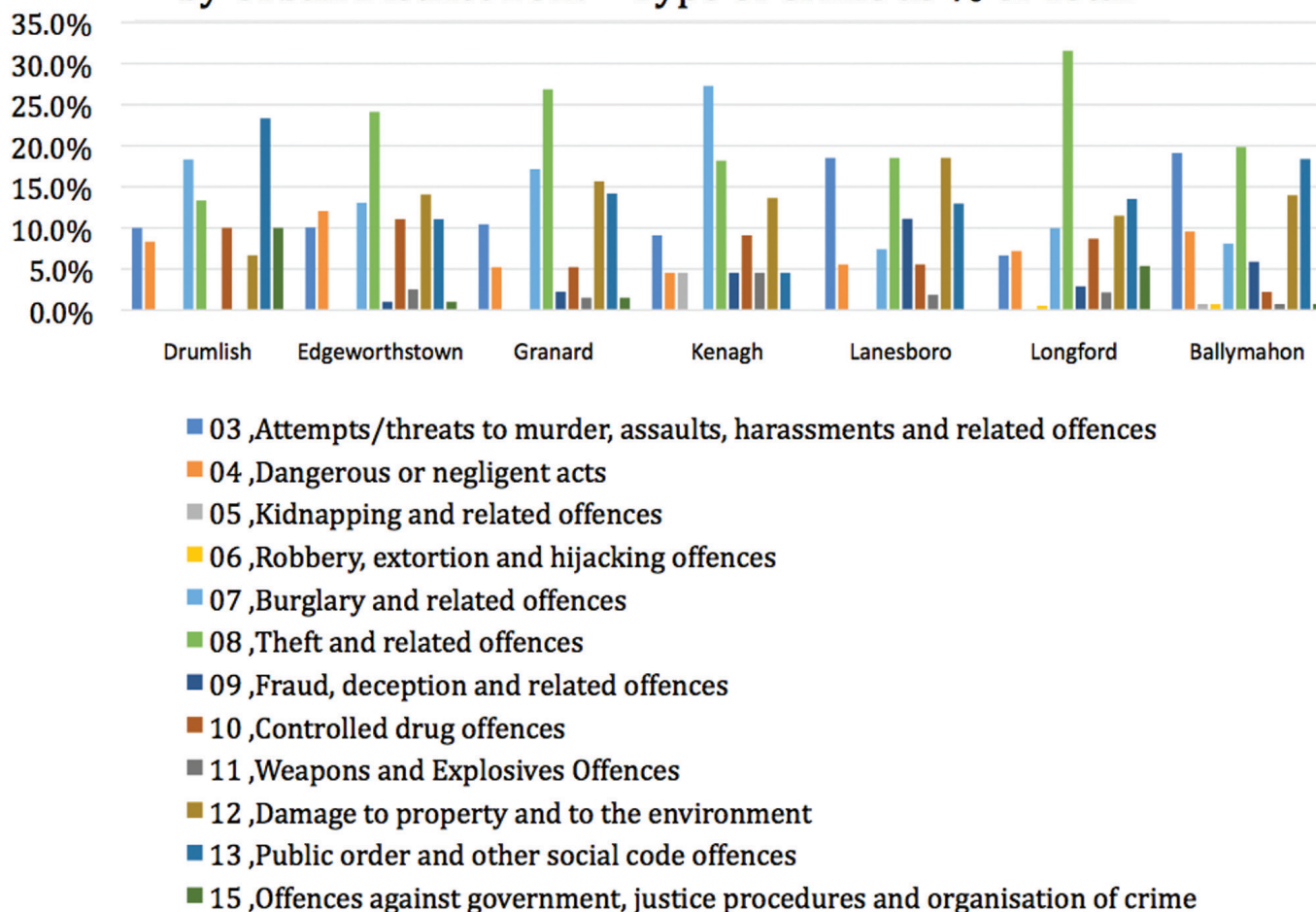## Longford Disability Claimants by Age Group

Male   Female

In the creation of the national strategy for equality in 1995, people with disabilities proposed 405 rights based recommendations to encourage greater equality and inclusion. For marginalised community members - whether excluded by disability, age, or origin -encouraging the promotion of positive action measures is important for ensuring the protection and promotion of human rights. To prohibit discrimination and prevent victimisation public initiatives can insist that reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements are provided and structure actions with a built in bias in favour of the disadvantaged.

Crime

Crime data is another indicator of deprivation but it is excluded from the Pobal HP index because of a lack of consistent data (often with delays in delivery to CSO) and persisting doubts about the validity and stability of Small Area crime-related indicators over time and space. Longford is one such small area. The Pobal HP index rationale for excluding crime concludes that measuring deprivation at local level provides the opportunity to examine crime

rates and the experience of crime and victimisation across different kinds of neighbourhoods (Pobal September 2017). The Pobal HP crime statistics criticisms notwithstanding, this report includes the figures for recorded crime by urban district in the chart below in order to better understand the variation in kind and scale of crime across the towns and county.

Recorded Crime Offences Under Reservation (Number) by Urban District 2017 - Type of Crime as % of Total

- 03 ,Attempts/threats to murder, assaults, harassments and related offences
- 04 ,Dangerous or negligent acts
- 05 ,Kidnapping and related offences
- 06 ,Robbery, extortion and hijacking offences
- 07 ,Burglary and related offences
- 08 ,Theft and related offences
- 09 ,Fraud, deception and related offences
- 10 ,Controlled drug offences
- 11 ,Weapons and Explosives Offences
- 12 ,Damage to property and to the environment
- 13 ,Public order and other social code offences
- 15 ,Offences against government, justice procedures and organisation of crime

Future Proofing Longford

Future proofing is the process of anticipating the future and developing methods of minimising the effects of shocks and stresses of future events. In order to protect or render Longford sufficiently robust to sustain another exogenous shock on the scale of the 2008 recession for example creating similar vulnerabilities, future proofing Longford takes account of the structures and characteristics of Longford's resources and challenges and seeks to consider the impact of youth unemployment, poverty, and deprivation factors on effective efforts at social inclusion. Future proofing not only takes account of deprivation and deficits, in addition to examining living conditions that might render people vulnerable or at risk (completed by the Survey on Income and Living Conditions SILC for example) and structural and legal processes and provisions; future proofing adopts a qualitative approach to accounting for the abundance of social mechanisms and informal processes such as volunteer networks that create social cohesion and are an essential part of how a modern diverse community is built.

Examining demographics and details of deprivation without consideration of the diversity dividend limits the potential for social cohesion. The diversity dividend describes when

companies with higher levels of diversity outperform those who are less diverse (Canadian Center for International Governance Innovation 2017). Studies find a diversity dividend of creativity and innovation, but the diversity dividend is about more than numbers, it is about building robust communities, addressing insecurities and perceptions of change, and helping communities prepare to deal with difference and broaden the base of social inclusion.

Social integration is a process, requiring adaptive frameworks, structures and processes to better facilitate social inclusion. An assessment of cross cutting themes, including information access, justice and legal considerations, health, welfare and protection, business and employment, volunteering, language, education and training, public representation of minority communities, leisure and recreation in Longford follows.

LONGFORD AFRICANS NETWORK

KEY CROSS CUTTING CONCERNS

INFORMATION: ACCESS AND DISSEMINATION

In keeping with the first action identified in the Government's Migrant Integration Strategy the research findings demonstrate that information access and dissemination is the most significant cross cutting gap identified by community members living in Longford.

> *We are inundated with requests for information, particularly when the Citizens Information is closed, and we're open until 8:30pm. People get very frustrated with that and so we guide them to the internet and online resources where possible*
>
> (Service Provider Interview)

> *I fill in papers, applying to welfare or just explaining to people in Edgworthstown how things work and what they need to do. I think people in the information office are quite interested to give support. I think Longford needs an office that explains, and helps fill paperwork for all residents*
>
> (Focus Group Respondent)

Priorities	Service Providers	Community Respondents
1	Services	Information
2	Information	Training
3	Training	Transport
4	Finances	Finances
5	Transport	Services

Quantitative survey findings show that information serves as the first priority for community respondents. The Citizens Information Service in Longford is second only to Dublin's O'Connell street office per population in volume of queries processed. The categories of queries fielded by the Longford office provide some insight into current information gaps. Welfare related queries rank highest at 49 per cent, followed by health, money and tax questions. In 2017, the majority of callers were Irish at 56 per cent, 27 per cent were from the EU, and the remainder identified as non-EU and other.

> *I think there is plenty to do in Longford but people don't know. There could be a notice board with all the stuff you can do.*
>
> (Service Provider)

Accessing the right information, regarding services, volunteering, training, certification, and activities dissuades communities with literacy challenges to persevere with access.

We need a forum. There was an integration officer but no inter-agency collaboration maintaining connections that people can see and approach, that's what is missing.
It is less an issue of no service provision and more a case of ill-defined services.

(Survey Respondent)

What's needed is greater inter-agency collaboration
To listen to the voice of the community the council needs to demonstrate it has an ear. Limited understanding of [on the ground] OTG issues renders some projects and services   redundant and successful projects replicated.

(Service Providers)

Evidence of best practice in this regard include the existence of a resource office and a resource officer for suicide prevention. Through this office the Health Service Executive (HSE) has created the most comprehensive personal and community information and support directory of all information sources available across the county.

The issue of clear, concise messaging and language choice in the voluntary work and welfare payment explanations is self evident below.

Garda visiting the Mosque

Voluntary Work Option	Voluntary Work and Social Welfare Payments
Dept of Employment Affairs and Social Protection If you do voluntary work within the State you may continue to qualify for a jobseeker's payment providing you are still available for and genuinely seeking work. You should complete application form VW1 available on www.welfare.ie The completed application form should be sent to your local Intreo Centre or your local Branch Office and a Deciding Officer will decide whether you may take up the voluntary work in question without affecting your jobseeker's payment. SW126 Form	Citizens' Information If you want to keep your social welfare payment and do some voluntary work, you must follow the rules set down by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

Whereas the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection guidelines are more comprehensive, the Community Information guidance is more concise. The tone of the guidance reads as prohibitory and is more likely to dissuade welfare claimants from volunteering. Presently, the SW126 form is available in English, Irish and braille and service providers advocated for the document to be translated into essential third languages (languages considered include Lithuanian, Latvian, Brazilian Portuguese, Urdu and Arabic), for Longford's community.

> *The Department's policies and procedures are written for those with a very high level of English, for legal personnel and appeals officers who are interpreting them for a select minority.*
>
> (Service Provider)

Aware of the challenges posed by some official documents, Longford's Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection is making commendable efforts to streamline information on welfare provision, by seeking to enhance relationships with the local volunteer co-ordinator to secure support from bilingual volunteers for new migrants. A county-wide initiative for plain English in public communication, adopting a format in keeping with the Department of Social and Family Affairs, funded *"Toil and Trouble: A Guide through the maze of self-employment,"* may alleviate the dissemination gap described in focus group and service provider consultations.

Actions:

- Seek the appointment of an integration officer to build an integrated information and service delivery framework accessible to all communities

The rationale for this action is based on the need to:

- create a repository for the information, services, support, and support available across County Longford
- advocate for the needs of minority communities in the county
- administer and implement an adaptive social integration and social cohesion strategic plan subject to the changing demands of a social cohesion process
- monitor, measure evaluate and champion the innovative programmes, projects and people working to secure the diversity dividend

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- Enable and expand the use of libraries as a place for Citizens Information and community volunteers to support communities by helping to explain and complete documentation outside conventional office hours

   The rationale for this action is based on the need for in person access for some community members at times to suit working hours

---

- Generate an online integration resource, a single repository for access to information about living, learning and language, work and wellbeing in Longford. Make it accessible online for all service providers and community members

The rational for this cross cutting action is based on the need for:

- enhancing access to the array of information, services, and provision available for marginalised minorities
- coordinating and consolidating information relating to provision and support for all communities
- championing the array of services and support available for communities in Longford

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- Support a plain English plan by commissioning readily readable information documents in plain English, beginning with the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Guidelines "Supports available to people on a Jobseekers' Payment," Document SW126.

The rationale for this cross cutting action is based on the need to enhance equal access, information and to promote understanding for all communities and endorsed by survey findings and service provider interviews

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- Promote and support the translation of essential integration documents into Lithuanian, Latvian, Brazilian Portuguese, Urdu and Arabic

The rationale for this action is based on feedback from interviews with service providers and private sector employers advocating for this action as a means to promote greater access, understanding and learning

JUSTICE AND LEGAL

Social cohesion creates and sustains community security. Longford has a dedicated stand-alone community-policing unit in the town, and outreach Gardaí working to prevent and disrupt crime and harness greater community liaison across and between communities. Gardaí liaise with communities' religious representatives for example, to promote communication, knowledge sharing and support, to deter discrimination, and anti-social behavior directed at minority faith groups.

Survey respondents describe Longford as relatively safe and quiet. Most notably, the qualitative responses from minority communities originating from conflict-affected states tend to agree. However, in focus groups, references are made to anxiety, insecurity, fears of bullying and intimidation, anti-social behavior escalating at night, drug related crime, theft and burglary.

In focus group findings, teenagers and younger people refer to bullying and fear of getting caught up in long running feuds of marginalized groups, worry about anti-social behavior escalating to violence, and fear intimidation by virtue of their proximity to gangs. Teens and youth made reference to gangs in one location, and the use of symbols associated with the far-right nationalist ideology to intimidate minorities was referenced, described and observed in the same location.

> *The [redacted] is covered in dirty graffiti*
> *I am frightened of getting caught up in traveller feuds when on [redacted]*
> *There are huge amounts of underage drinking and drugs*
> *I worry about walking the streets and safety, we need more Gardaí*
> (Focus Group Respondents)

Older people, minorities, and women are more likely to reference intimidation as a disincentive to calling Gardaí or seeking support. Senior citizens state they feel unsafe.

> *The Post Office in Longford town every Friday when seniors are collecting*
> *their pensions appear to have lots of welfare claimants waiting at the*
> *entrance to the P.O. it is quite intimidating. I won't go to my car alone*
> *late at night, my friend walks me to the car, and I drop them back*
> *[Urban district] is a no go area at night. Sometimes when [redacted] are*
> *fighting I do not know who to phone for help*
> (Focus Group Respondents)

In focus groups children in particular expressed a fear of being snatched and kidnapped. Children are aware of drug-related issues, and made references to drug-taking observed in the short cut en route home from school. Both adults and children demonstrate awareness of drug related crime locations.

Gardai successfully assuage fears and build trust with new communities through community policing liaison with refugees in Direct Provision and with youth groups run by Foróige, The Attic, and Longford Community Resources (LCRL). Community policing liaison efforts are all well received and impactful. Similarly, the impact of community engagement is evident in focus group responses. For example, young minorities who engage with the Community

Gardaí would call them to report a crime or to seek help. Older respondents' perception of Gardaí visibility, access, and patrolling differs. New migrants' perceptions of police may be based on their view of policing from their home countries where in some instances police have a reputation for brutality. Preconceived ideas of police can make it challenging for the Gardaí to anticipate the same levels of community engagement as might be expected from the indigenous local population. A history of Gardaí deployments on UN missions means that the Gardaí are aware of policing levels in other countries and know the factors can shape expectations of them and that engagement requires a different approach to addressing new migrant needs and concerns.
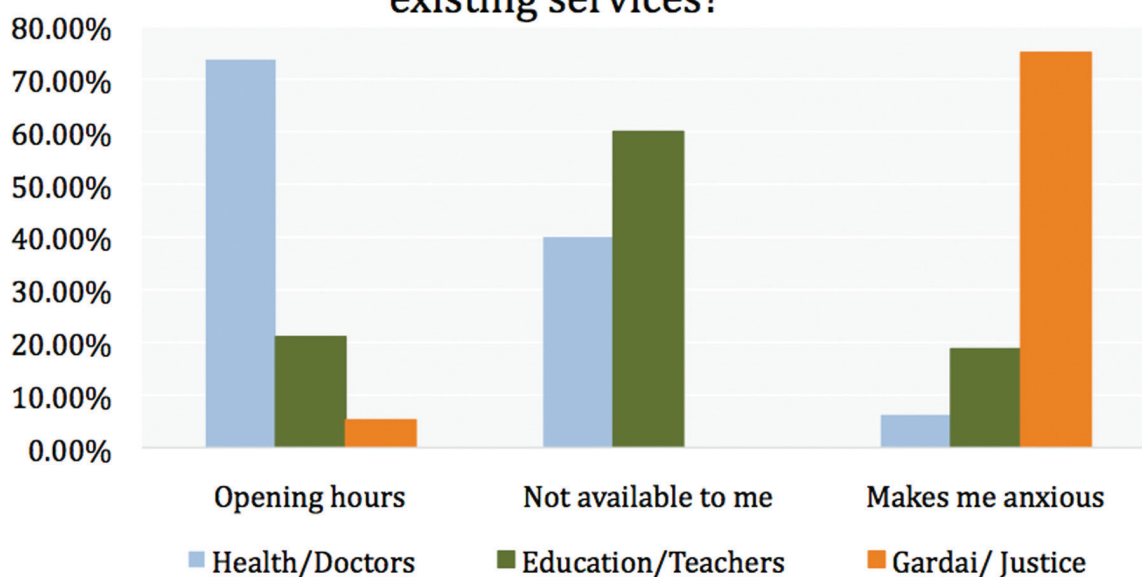
> *There are no Arabic or Urdu speaking Gardaí. At the local level Gardaí teach themselves the basics*

(Service Provider)

Womens' Multi Ethnic Group

Community Respondents: What stops you using existing services?

Legend: Health/Doctors, Education/Teachers, Gardai/ Justice

I fear calling the Gardaí in case I get my window broken
I am afraid of intimidation. Drugs are a big problem

(Focus Group Respondents)

For a successful crime prevention strategy to be sustainable, implementation is to a significant degree dependent on resources. Statistics demonstrate that with the necessary funding and resources, and effective strategies implemented in 2017 Gardaí successfully addressed and reduced Longford's volume of crime. In 2017 Longford reduced retail/shop theft from +75 per cent to -35 per cent and successfully sustained the reduction in theft over a twelve month period.

Too little visibility of Gardaí in rural areas.
Gardaí only appear with a warrant, they don't know the people before.
Greater visibility and services in rural areas are essential.
We need more Gardaí.

(Focus Group Respondents)

I remember four lads had vandalised the [redacted] club and I got a call
telling me who had done it. The young Gardai didn't know where to start
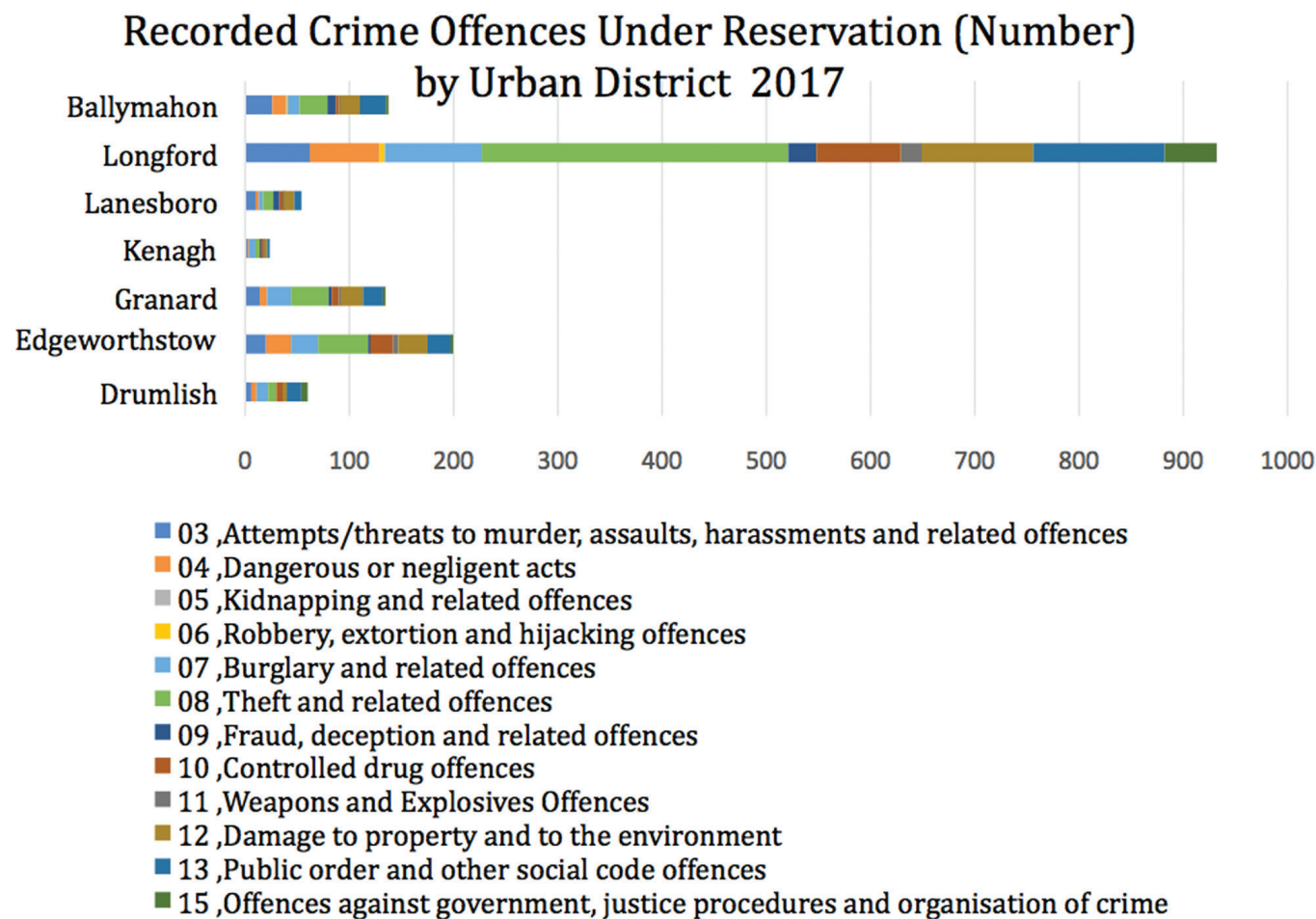
(Service Provider Interview)

Resources, resources, and resources, human, financial, and logistical,
stations/community policing

(Service Provider Interview)

For local crime prevention strategies to be sustainable, adequate funding
is imperative.

(Service Provider Interview)

For effective social cohesion community policing is essential for preventing crime, protecting vulnerable people and promoting a safe, secure community environment. Community policing is recognised as the key to community security, community safety and the improvement of life issues for the most vulnerable and marginalised.

Recorded Crime Offences Under Reservation (Number) by Urban District 2017

Legend:
- 03 ,Attempts/threats to murder, assaults, harassments and related offences
- 04 ,Dangerous or negligent acts
- 05 ,Kidnapping and related offences
- 06 ,Robbery, extortion and hijacking offences
- 07 ,Burglary and related offences
- 08 ,Theft and related offences
- 09 ,Fraud, deception and related offences
- 10 ,Controlled drug offences
- 11 ,Weapons and Explosives Offences
- 12 ,Damage to property and to the environment
- 13 ,Public order and other social code offences
- 15 ,Offences against government, justice procedures and organisation of crime

Actions:
• Compare survey data and justice related responses with the 2018 Q1 victim survey completed by Gardaí and the Criminal Justice Agencies The rationale for this action is based on interviews with service providers and the need to verify, test and triangulate community perceptions of justice and safety
• Support and reinforce community policing and crisis responses efforts with Traveller, Roma and marginalised communities, to promote Gardaí visibility in hard to reach communities • Expand existing Gardaí-Youth sport initiatives supporting integration • Raise resources for special Gardaí from minority groups and greater minority liaison • Support culturally responsive training for Criminal Justice Agencies interacting with vulnerable groups The rationale for this series of actions is based on the need to build on existing community policing successes and to forge greater provision for access, communication and trust for self-excluding communities
• Initiate a regular welcoming platform/venue to encourage greater liaison to build trust with marginalised communities through the relevant Intercultural working group (IWG) affiliations and organisations The rationale for this cross cutting action is based on the need to structure initiatives with a built in bias in favour of the disadvantaged as advocated by the social cohesion literature and endorsed by service provider and community survey respondents
• Support the development of a volunteer training programme for bilingual community members The rationale for this cross cutting action is based on the need to: • forge and enhance opportunities for access for marginalised bilingual communities • provide self excluding groups with the opportunities to harness bilingual skills • support and enhance recognition of volunteer skills and abilities • create a certified, trained "Responsible Adult" volunteer initiative for bi-lingual minority community members to support others in formal judicial and legal proceeding • ensure the right to equal access to essential services is met for all community groups

The Irish Criminal Justice Agencies Conference (ACJRD) convened in Dublin in July 13th 2018 accepted Brehon Advisory's recommendations including:

> the importance of language support
> the training and accreditation for translator services
> the translation of legal documentation, and trauma and
> culturally responsive training for Criminal Justice Agencies interacting with
> vulnerable and migrant groups and translators,
> as "the action points to support vulnerable migrants in the Criminal
> Justice System in the near future".

Children enjoying Sports Hall Athletics

Garda presentation at Late Night Soccer league
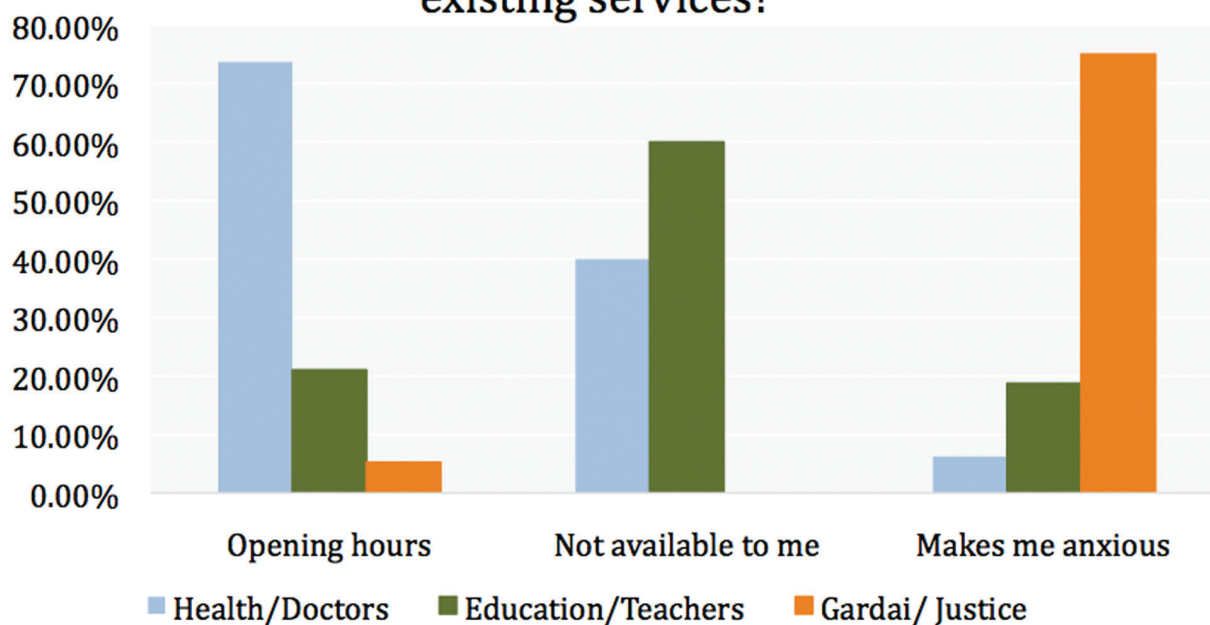
HEALTH, WELFARE AND PROTECTION

To harness the human and social capital of minority communities' equitable access to health, protection and welfare provision is essential. In keeping with the Government's Migrant Integration Strategy the importance of an integrated intercultural health strategy addressing the health and wellbeing of minority and marginalised communities is demonstrated in the survey findings.

In matters of healthcare provision and protection, establishing sufficient levels of trust, information dissemination and care is essential for access and outreach to tackle the health disadvantages associated with migration, ethnicity, and race (British Medical Journal 2018). Minority communities have the double disadvantage of structural inequalities and can also self exclude because of a fear of discrimination often endorsed by feedback from their peers or a negative experience at the initial engagement or appointment. Coordinated communication between medical service providers regarding vulnerable patients is imperative.

> *One of the people I work with finally sought support and one discriminatory, throw away line from the practitioner and after months of work the [vulnerable] person refused to go back, the consequence of that comment ripples through that person's family.*

> (Service Provider)

Community Respondents: What stops you using existing services?

Disability and access issues all require greater and more systematized coordination, communication and collaboration between medical, health, welfare and service providers. Protection provision for the intellectually and physically challenged requires the provision of safe and clean accessible public spaces, and pedestrian routes. Provision for safe, secure spaces to maintain the physical and emotional wellbeing of all communities requires environmental protections.

Health, welfare and protection go from the cradle to the grave.
                                                            (Health Service Provider Focus Group).

The sitting service run by the care association provided care for dementia and Alzheimer sufferers by people with VTEC level 5 training was hugely helpful for vulnerable minority families.
                                                            (Health Service Provider)

Transport to hospital appointments and to the GP can be a challenge.
                                                            (Health Service Provider)

The care and repair scheme funded by the Council helped vulnerable people, particularly elderly vulnerable men.
                                                            (Health Service Provider)

Limited access to healthcare for minority and migrant groups leads to social exclusion, for example language challenges and limitations of non-native English speakers result in delays in the issuing of medical cards, and elevate concerns regarding: parental consent for vaccinations, spousal consent for palliative care, data protection concerns, disease outbreaks, drug and opioid abuse, underage alcohol consumption, mental health concerns, and mental health emergencies.

The existence of the resource officer for suicide prevention referred to above has mitigated some of the communication and coordination challenges facing mental health emergencies. Yet, youth workers lament the need for greater provision for psychological services (anxiety, self harm, depression and addiction) for teenagers, noting that there is a twelve-week waiting list for access to private services.

Increasing number of mental health related referrals presenting.
                                                            (Medical Service Provider)

The dental health of some of the [redacted] minority children needs addressing. Better education around tooth decay is essential.
More community outreach nurses from the communities would be beneficial.
                                                            (Medical Service Providers Focus Group)

Overcrowding issues can prove challenging particularly regarding social protection.
                                                            (Medical Service Providers Focus Group)

Substance abuse is an issue particularly alcohol
                                                            (Medical Service Provider)

Survey respondents from the community lamented long waiting times for appointments.
I changed doctors. Things are better now.
Appointments are hard. All the doctors are full.
Getting a medical card was difficult.
There is no hospital in Longford, Longford needs a hospital
                                                            (Focus Group Respondents)

Minority community respondents and some service providers referred to non-native Irish doctors as being more responsive to new and minority community concerns. Some communities seek out their former health care provider in a neighbouring county for example.

Foreign non-Irish GPs are very understanding

(Service Provider)

We cannot and nor do we advise or advocate for one surgery over another but the list is there and they advise one another, no one wants to go from one place to the next when you know some doctors are going to be more receptive to you than others

(Service Provider)

New surgeries have more room to accommodate people surgeries are at patient capacity. Some of [minority group] go back to [redacted] to see their GP

(Medical Service Provider)

We would have a percentage of Traveller patients

(Medical Service Provider)

For well-established minority communities in Longford health and wellbeing initiatives, fellowships and organisations are only visible to the intended audience that can speak the language of the invitation.

Do you have a problem?

Come or call Alcoholics Anonymous Group
"Hope" Longford invites you to open days every Monday at 7:00pm
Contact: (Poster in Polish on notice board of the Citizens' Information office Longford)

Attic House Swimming Group

Actions:

- Support prompt processing of medical card applications to enable fast access to healthcare

The rationale for this action was based on delays in access to patient care and provision for wellbeing identified by both service providers and community members in survey and focus group responses

- Promote the creation of a trained and certified heathcare volunteer to support the expansion and build the capacity of the volunteer sitting service and care and repair service

The rationale for this cross cutting action was identified in survey responses, interview and focus group findings and is based on the need to:
- address a gap in volunteer support mechanisms,
- enhance and promote community support initiatives, and
- provide opportunities for experience and
- training for minority communities

- Create a domestic violence, substance abuse, vulnerability programme with Longford Women's Link, Community Healthcare Nurses and the Suicide prevention officer to educate minority and marginalised women on same

The rational for this cross cutting action is based on the need to enhance and promote protection initiatives, identified in interview and focus group findings

- Advocate for the improvement of transport links to hospital and GP appointments

The rationale for this cross cutting action is based on the gap identified by service providers and communities that results in missed appointments for medical support staff and delays in treatment for patients

- Promote and enhance communication, and coordination across and between health and welfare service providers

The rationale for this cross cutting action is based on the need for enhanced cooperation to secure prompt patient care, it emerged from outcomes shared service provider experiences in focus group

LANGUAGE, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The second important report finding involves the importance of English language provision, translation and interpreter services across the county, and the request for provision to be made for more English language classes.

Language skills are essential for social integration with language proficiency viewed as a measure of social cohesion. In Germany, for example refugees take a compulsory integration course consisting of 600 hours of German lessons and 100 hours of civics and while many refugees have had little education, the focus is on formal language qualifications (Economist 2017).

In countries where English is the primary language of communication in commerce and the public sphere, it is perceived as the language of opportunity and equality. Failure to learn English is associated with social exclusion and alienation. English language classes become an essential tool of social integration for new migrant communities.

> *I am in Ireland just 7 months, I like it here, but my problem is I can't speak English.*
>
> (Focus Group - Translated from original language)

> *If it were not for this class I would be isolated.*
>
> (Focus Group)

> *For many of them I am the only face of official Ireland they speak to with any regularity.*
>
> (Teaching Service Provider)

Co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020, the Longford and Westmeath Education Training Board (LWETB) had over three hundred adult students attend English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL), beginner and elementary level classes covering oral, aural and written skills since January 2018.

For the purpose of this report a series of focus groups conducted with the help of the Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board (LWETB) included English language students from Malaysia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Morocco, Ukraine, Iraq, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Moldova, China, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Nigeria, Congo, Portugal, Switzerland, and Russia.

Longford hosts both multilingual and multicultural populations, with communities originating in Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan operating in several local languages and still in need of English language classes. For example, one focus group and English language class attendee from Iraq, identifies as ethnically Kurdish, and speaks Surani the second Kurdish dialect after Kurmanji, able to communicate in Surani and in Arabic the attendee is keen to improve their English.

While some of the students are resident in Ireland for a decade or more, the average period of time the students have lived in Longford was four years. English language learners in Ireland

are a far more diverse group today than in the past. The student profile of these English classes reflects the fast changing patterns of migration in Longford. In communities hosting diverse migrant groups, the demand to learn English for life, rather than English for employment, is often greater than the capacity for provision (Simpson 2015).

Sometimes in shops ladies are not polite.
[They] are not helpful, when [they] see you don't know English well
Need to make an effort to speak English at home

(Focus Group)

In Longford there is a renewed interest in community-based classes, often taught by volunteers and attended by time poor mothers with toddlers seeking to learn essential, conversational English.

We need more English lessons
English conversation classes, no exams [and] not tested
You start to talk like Irish

(Focus Group)

Operational English is key when many [students] are pre-literate.

(Education Service Provider)

Early years educators who completed the DCYA 'equality, diversity and inclusion' guidelines for early childhood care and education

Community Respondents: Would you like English language training?

45.45% 54.55%

Yes

No
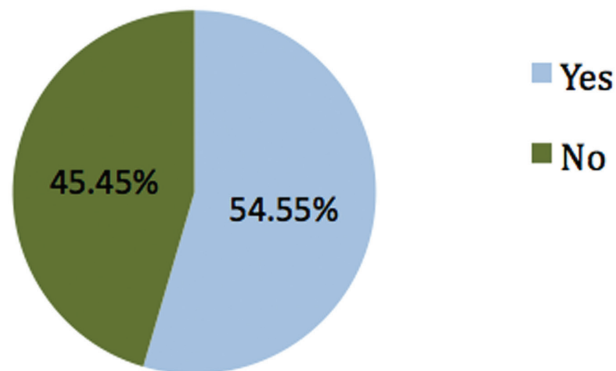
The chart above representing Community Respondents: Would you like English language training? must be interpreted in light of the fact that the survey respondents include native, indigenous Irish community members as well as recent and migrant community non-native English speakers.

Language support is essential for engaging with bureaucracy and officialdom. The need for effective English language skills is imperative particularly for accessing healthcare. The demand for interpreters and translators from service providers in the healthcare sector demonstrates this need.

> *Volunteers (with discretion) and from a patient's community, have proved invaluable in bridging the communication gap.*
>
> (Service Provider Focus Group)

> *We must acknowledge, recognise and address the realities; education for employment needs to be a priority*
>
> (Service Provider)

Certified English language courses are necessary for employment. For many skilled migrant workers their ability to pass the obligatory certifications to qualify for their role, for example in health and safety, is hindered by limited English language skills. For employment placement, career advancement and acquisition of new skills, the critical issue for many from migrant communities is the issue of English language skills.

> *For years mushroom pickers had excellent employability records. We didn't see them, and despite this, once the mushroom picking jobs were gone, without English language skills were unemployable*
>
> (Service Provider)

> *I would like to see employers support English language courses for non-nationals*
>
> (Service Provider)

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection refers clients to English language courses necessary for employment related certification through the Longford and Westmeath Education and Training board (LWETB).[6] While there are evening classes the majority of the English language courses are provided within working hours in response to student demand. Shift workers and students in focus groups refer to the limitations of part time English language classes, and express the need for intensive English language courses to enhance the English language learning experience for students.

> *Twelve-hour shifts, without overtime, make it hard for me to think in*
> *English class.*
> *I work in a factory people don't know English.*
>
> <div align="right">(Focus Group Respondents)</div>

> *We are aware that shift work presents its own set of timetabling problems*
> *and we work around that if we can, this Spring [we] set up a specific*
> *course for factory workers in Ballymahon [scheduled] in the morning*
> *before they started their shift.*
>
> <div align="right">(Service Provider)</div>

While there are courses available in the evenings, in sourcing information for English classes online one evening class scheduled for September 2018 is listed in Lanesborough and four part-time English Language courses listed across Qualifax (Ireland's National Learners' Database), and LWETB websites. Existing courses and provision notwithstanding, there is a gap in the availability of English language classes in the evenings suitable for workers, and in locations like Edgeworthstown for example. The 2016 census data shows that thirty five percent of the population of the town are non-Irish nationals and therefore less likely to have English as a first language and more likely to be in need of the kind of access to resources, and support provided by the LWETB in Longford town.

The focus group findings demonstrate that there is a call for an expansion of existing English language provision to accommodate stay-at-home mothers without transportation, and for intensive immersion English language course access, for mothers and workers from essential English to certification. The table below shows respondents preferences for learning English. The graphs demonstrates a desire for more formal English classes in a traditional school – teacher/students like environment, others requested English classes in less formal settings.

As the table on page 55 demonstrates, the need for alternative non-formal support for essential or living English language classes might be facilitated in alternative non-formal education spaces, such as Family Resource Centers, the existing Failte Isteach format is effective for women, young mothers, and for migrant workers struggling with living English. Integrating English language learning with family support and drug and alcohol education was repeated in qualitative focus group, and interview feedback from new migrant communities, as well as in survey findings.

> *Greater opportunities to learn English. (Translated from original language)*
> *More frequent English language classes. (Translated from original*
> *language)*
>
> <div align="right">(Respondent Focus Group)</div>

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6. LWETB Strategy Statement 2017-2022 http://longfordwestmeath.etb.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/05/LWETB-Strategy-Statement-2017-2022.pdf

There is a need for English language, family support, in a safe space to talk about drug and alcohol dependencies.
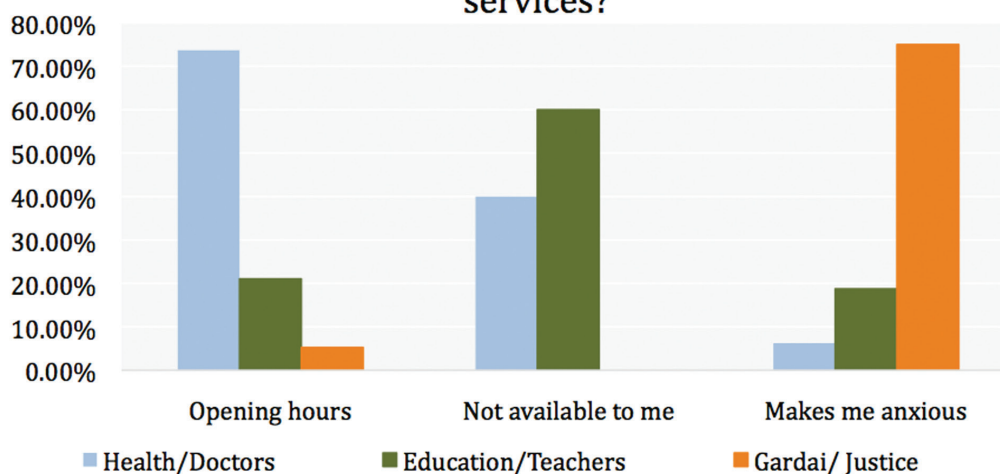
(Service Provider)

Community Respondents: Where would it be easiest for you to have English language training?
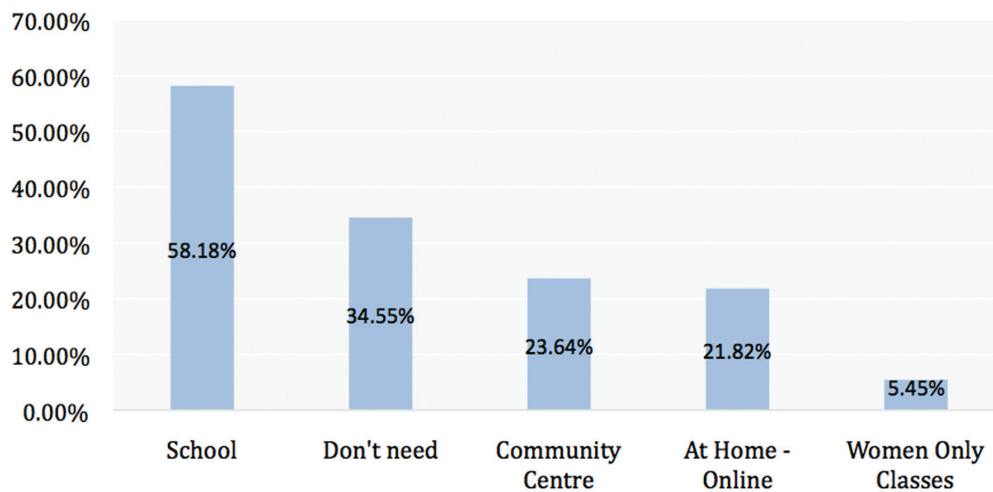
*Respondents were offered a choice of options some selected multiple preferences, for example in school setting and online

Community Respondents: What stops you using existing services?

English conversation classes, no exams not tested.
We need English language classes available at times for people who work/with children.
Essential English language support like Failte Isteach.
Access to age appropriate English classes at flexible times.
Need living language classes and classes required for certification.

(Focus Group Respondents)

English Language acquisition for children who do not speak English as a first language at home can prove challenging and ultimately impact school attendance and completion rates. While some non-native English speaker minority groups tend to self-exclude, there is a tendency for women to operate exclusively in their native tongue when others – their children or spouses - are available to represent them. This practice has ramifications on children's education and is equally prohibitive. When interviewed service providers observed that often children are

withdrawn from school to provide English language support to parents for their businesses and for their interactions with officials.   The need to translate for their parents is one reason given for children not attending school, and while there are wider determinants to be considered it is worth noting that the percentage of post-primary school children per school missing 20 days or higher in Longford is 18.9 percent. The national average is 16.7 percent. (Pobal)

> *It is particularly prevalent with the people who work in the factory.*
> *There is a language barrier.*
> *Women and mothers have no English.*
> *The children represent themselves in parent-teacher meetings.*
>
> (Education Service Providers)

Effective mechanisms for bridging the gap particularly for marginalised youth include iScoil run by County Longford Youth Service, part of Longford Community Resources (LCRL). The iScoil programme is aimed at students aged from 13 to 16 who have not attended school for at least six months and have had unsuccessful interventions. iScoil has 50 learners located in Dublin, the East Coast, Limerick, Galway and Longford. In Longford, iScoil provides a technology flexible approach, adapts online and distance learning, and in a Longford first pilot, learning is available at a fixed venue in an iScoil blended learning center allowing support and mentoring for youth on site. iScoil supports learning for young people who might otherwise be permanently excluded from formal education. Students gain a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level three qualification, equivalent to a junior certificate, at their own pace and with support.
Blended learning initiatives like iScoil could prove beneficial for girls and for other marginalised groups.

> *School was full of bullies.*
> *I am choosing courses for [state exam]*
>
> [Student Service Users]

The chart below demonstrates the level of educational attainment reached by service provider respondents and community respondents. It is worth noting that community respondents include indigenous Irish community members as well as those from new minority communities.
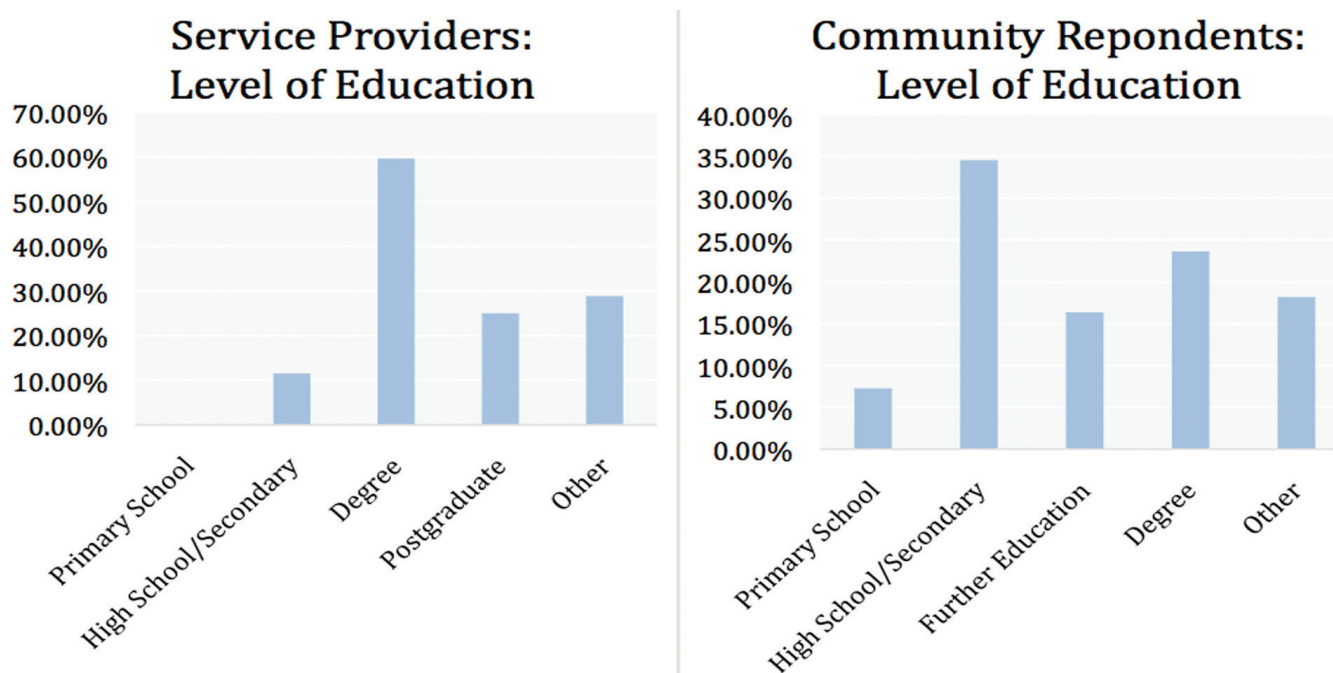
In addition to education, training provision for minority and marginalised community members is essential. At present for example, Longford hosts five training organisations issuing National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ): The National Learning Network, The Longford Westmeath Education Training Board, The Employment Development Information Centre, Longford Womens Link, and Premier Forklift Training. The broad scope of these courses can for example, provide the opportunity to consider implementing the actions and recommendations to certify bilingual community members in courses that can support social integration and social cohesion in Longford.

There are uncertified courses including programmes aimed at helping parents of children attending Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) schools. Of the nine second level schools in County Longford, four have DEIS designation.

The National Learning Network (NLN) supports people referred for one and two-year courses where mentoring and an individualised approach is provided across all five courses - particularly on the Turas (journey) programme that helps people with mental health challenges and high levels of social isolation to transition toward greater personal resilience.

The array of training course provided by the organisations listed above notwithstanding there is a need for further vocational training provision for women, particularly minority community women and female lone parents, to enable them to work part time. More women than men are likely to work part time, a trend that applies to minority and migrant communities as well as local host communities.

> *The only available part time jobs are in retail or catering and I want to learn a skill where I can set up my own business.*
>
> (Focus Group Respondent)

There is an appetite for greater access to third level education courses particularly among asylum seekers, who observed that Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) was a designated college of sanctuary for the range of initiatives provided for asylum seekers and for fostering social inclusion.

Longford Community Resources CLG
Multicultural Womens Group

Actions:
• Enhance and expand existing literacy and language classes for Roma and marginalised communities in formal and informal education settings The rationale for this action is the feedback received from focus group findings and service provider interviews seeking to capture women and youth who can self exclude
• Strive to pilot a full immersion English course (with 15-20 hours of instruction) to promote social inclusion and employability for new migrant communities The purpose of this action is to scale and build on existing provision for English language provision identified by shift workers, young mothers, and service providers alike
• Scale up and extend the iScoil programme for young self-excluding males to other minority youth and girls The purpose of this action is to address the gap in school attendance of teenage girls identified by the Education Welfare Unit (Tusla) and to the gap in teenage minority youth in some marginalised communities by welfare providers
• Support public-private partnerships and promote corporate social responsibility programmes with local businesses to sponsor English language provision and training The purpose of this action is to increase access to English language learning options for all community members and increase corporate engagement in social engagement

Language Students with Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board

BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

By supporting the communities where employees live and work, Longford's businesses can invest in communities by supporting basic needs to care for vulnerable community members; advancing education and training opportunities to support Longford's workforce; and promoting inclusive civic, cultural and economic development initiatives that can with the support of community organisations bring community members together.

> *I would like to see more meaning job opportunities for skilled African minority groups.*
>
> Survey Respondent

> *I would like people to give the chance of a job to people from Africa*
>
> Focus Group Respondent

> *Add us to the community*
>
> Survey Respondent

> *In five years time I would like to be working in a company in a job I love.*
> *In five years time I want to speak fluent English and have a job.*
> *In fives years time I want to have a better job.*
> *In five years time I hope to be a beautician.*
> *In five years time I will have a job in childcare.*
> *In five years time I want to have my own business.*
> *In five years time I hope Longford people will be less judgemental.*
>
> Survey Respondents

> *In 2004 they processed 300-400 [units] a day, and now its 1200-500 [units], we work very long shifts.*
>
> (Migrant Respondent)

Limited language provision, rising rents and housing prices mean migrant workers are unable to voice their frustrations within or about the working environment.
The migrant worker experience in Longford differs from that of the refugee or asylum seeker and from the Traveller and the Roma but all marginalized groups suffer social exclusion. Social deprivation excludes in various ways with the same outcome.

Report research findings suggest that lone migrant workers from Longford tend to send 60 percent of their salary home in remittances, living on the remainder. If workers' families move to Longford to live with them remittances levels drop. Gender shapes not only the jobs migrant workers do but also the number of jobs migrants have. Female migrant survey respondents were all far more likely to have two part time jobs than their male counterparts. The salaries women earn are less and so too are remittances they send to their country of origin.

> *The rent has gone up to 800 euro, the car 200 euro, with the car insurance, the groceries, and children, there is nothing left!*
>
> (Migrant worker, Focus Group)

Public engagement with the private sector can assist in fostering a culture of empowerment for

migrant workers, their families and those they support and encourage social cohesion.

Longford based companies can capacity build and support the community by way of corporate social responsibility initiatives. True empowerment requires an enabling environment and this means that the people of Longford must ensure that those it is trying to empower have the tools, aptitude, core competencies, values and skills base necessary to thrive.

For a corporate social responsibility framework to be effective, community and private business stakeholders can deliver and reinforce an ethical tone and ensure there are effective internal controls. For example, the C&D Food Company, has among its floor staff: 153 Irish, 60 Polish, 39 Latvian, 39 Lithuanian 12 Slovakian, 1 Russian, 3 Portuguese, 2 Pakistani, 2 Nigerian. The policy of C&D Foods adopts best practice among Longford based companies and translates their employment contracts and induction packs into the fourteen languages of the fourteen non-native English speaking nationalities that work on the floor.

Kepak provide "set up and starting work" essentials like bedding, for new immigrant employees. These practices work to increase communication and build rapport with employees who may be struggling with a language barrier.

Actions:
• Encourage greater public-private community stakeholder engagement with corporate social responsibility programmes to support internships for new and marginalised community members The purpose of this action is to harness entrepreneurial efforts by marginalised community members and increase corporate engagement in social engagement
• Recognise and reward company best practice in translation of core company documents for employees The rationale for this action is based on interviews with employers who advocate for the longer term benefits of facilitating early comprehension
• Encourage and expand relevant IWG members' engagement with migrant workers who can sometimes self-exclude The rationale for this action is based on the need to encourage greater access uptake for minorities to minimise isolation and deprivation

PUBLIC REPRESENTATION OF MINORITY AND MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Public and civic representation of minority, migrant and marginalised groups is essential for social cohesion. Greater representation of minority communities in local public life is key for future proofing Longford and promoting integration. The Pobal HP Deprivation Index for small areas (November 2017) ranks Longford as the fifth most disadvantaged Local Electoral Area in Ireland afer Cork City North-West (-12.0), followed by Glenties (-10.6), Waterford City South (-9.7), Stranorlar (-9.4), with a deprivation index of (-8.0) (Pobal 2017)

> *What if I were to stand in the local elections to represent the [redacted] community?*
> *How would that work?*
> *You mean I could be Taoiseach!*
> *I received an advert of the Internship program organized by the Immigrant Council of Ireland and asked [the Counsellor] to participate they were happy for me to shadow them and encouraged me to apply. [The councillor] has been very committed to the program, providing training and mentoring as well as introducing me to council members and Councillors.*
>
> (Service Provider Interview)

Actions:
• Encourage and enhance shadowing and internship schemes for members of minority and marginalized communities wishing to engage in public life The rationale for this action is based on the need identified in the social cohesion literature, to structure actions with built-in bias in favour of the disadvantaged or marginalised
• Recognise and reward new and minority community champions supporting social inclusion at the Longford Person of the Year Awards The rationale for this action is based on the need identified in the social cohesion literature, and on the advice of service providers, to structure actions with built-in bias in favour of the disadvantaged or marginalised

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers from new communities provided a critical contribution to the St. Patrick's Day Parade this year. Mullingar had to cancel their parade due to a lack of volunteers.

(Service Provider)

Longford Volunteer Centre Volunteer Figures	
Longford Registered Volunteers	1,392
Nationalities Registered	16
Average Age	25-49 years
Active Episodic/Weekly	50%+
Gender Balance Women : Men	2:1

Longford has a vibrant, dynamic and long-standing network of volunteer groups and organisations including the Longford Volunteer Centre; The St. Vincent de Paul; The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA).

Volunteering there is great community effort and engagement
I love working with multicultural groups in County Longford
It is a fantastic enriching learning experience.
The fundraising? It half killed me. I was near dead when it was over
For 35 years I've been volunteering.

(Service Providers)

The relentless support of these volunteers and associations notwithstanding, there are gaps in service provision not least in support for language minority communities in need, and particularly in the healthcare sector, that the use of more volunteers could bridge.

There are however, structural and procedural challenges to expanding volunteer opportunities which include, but are not limited to: insurance related concerns, the need for independent and often repeat Garda vetting for each volunteer organisation; and, the need for appropriate training for volunteer roles particularly for support in the health sector.

The two gaps in provision share the need for trained, vetted, qualified and insured volunteers with the necessary skills to support some of the most vulnerable people in the wider community. The language abilities of some of the new community members resident in Longford constitute an untapped resource for translation and interpretation support for fellow migrants, asylum seekers and community members struggling to access support when dealing with official, legal, health or bureaucrat issues.

Vulnerable, disadvantaged or marginalised groups or those without a mastery of English may have difficulty understanding their rights and entitlements, or the implications of procedures because of language or literacy limitations.

In matters of justice and bureaucracy the support of a responsible or appropriate adult defined as someone independent of the police who can support, advise, assist and observe proceedings to safeguard rights and ensure that people are able to participate effectively in a given interaction or process. The creation of an innovative certified, trained and vetted responsible adult programme could provide a fresh avenue of impartial support for minority communities and in so doing improve levels of protection and wellbeing.

In matters of health and wellbeing, the support of volunteers who can speak the same language as the vulnerable patient can prove invaluable for interpretation support and translation services, particularly in times of bereavement and crisis. This provision would support community health care providers, the patients and their families and communities alike.

Group enjoying the Moldova match

90:00
Republic of Ireland 2
Moldova 0
@FAIreland

It was so hard to ask [for help], [but] when you bring yourself out, they help

(Focus Group Respondent)

In matters of businesses employing large numbers of migrant workers and by association their families, the support of volunteers who can speak the same language, are aware of the rights and obligations of the business and the employee could help to facilitate prompt informal support to mitigate difficulties that may arise.

Proposing provision for volunteer support may prove challenging, not least because of insurance limitations. For example, the care and repair service Longford Warmer Homes provides might offer insights into omnibus insurance cover for trained volunteers. Insights into the impact of Garda Vetting requirements across Longford based organisations and the insurance frameworks considered, and a review by relevant members of the Intercultural

Working Group (IWG) could be made of the type of courses would best suit a certificated volunteer programme.

In a health service provider focus group, recommendations were made for a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) training course (equivalent to what was formerly a Further Education and Training Awards Council or FETAC credit in healthcare services), to provide an understanding of the language, terminology and roles and responsibilities relevant to working in this area
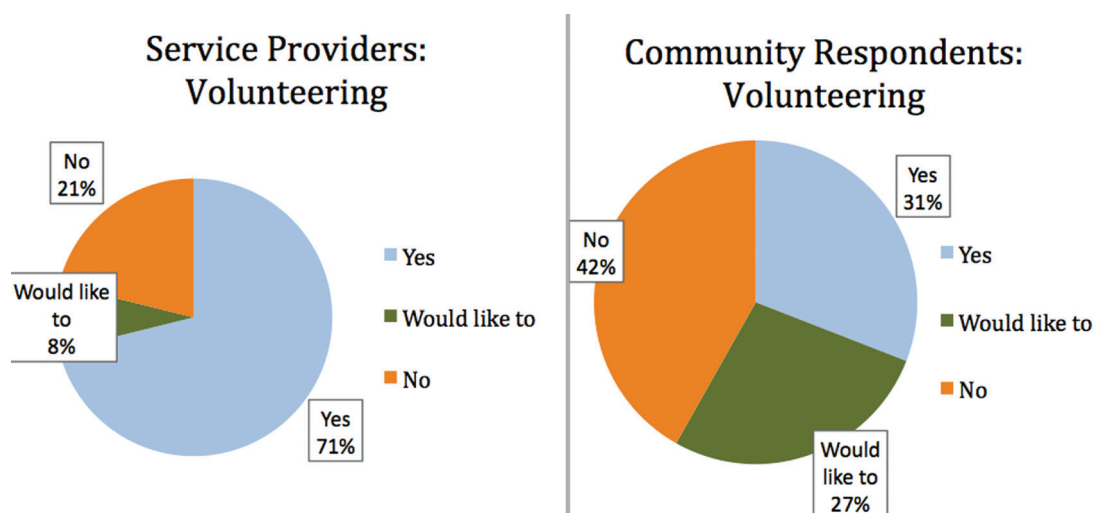
The benefits of a certified volunteer scheme for Longford would bridge the need for support that helps build social cohesion. A certified volunteer scheme could further assist the migrant and minority communities to engage with and gain experience from working with vulnerable communities. The scheme could harness and formally engage existing migrant community language skills, formalising and recognising the informal voluntary work many established new community resident of Longford do within their community, namely translating forms, supporting community members, interpreting for focus groups, and providing support and funds. Certified volunteer training would also provide the opportunity for native Irish volunteers to learn necessary skills in fundraising and grant management, by providing programme management training - all valuable experience for work in the charity and not for profit sector, as these service providers and volunteers attest to:

> *The greatest weakness is form-filling*
> *Governance is necessary but for example, governance for our organisation is the same as it is for an [Irish International Organisation]*
> *Voluntary organisations, will lose support as young people won't sign guarantees in future. In retrospect I wouldn't do it again.*
> *The great challenge is for funds – for a weekend I would be liable for the money for the project until the funding came through.*
> *Government need to wake up to voluntary contribution offered*
> *Bureaucracy for funding is a challenge, five pages of application forms to fill!*

(Service Providers and Volunteers)

Volunteering Capacity and Aptitude

Service providers already volunteering 71 percent of survey respondents. Service providers who would like to volunteer a further 8 percent of respondents.

Service Providers: Volunteering — No 21%, Would like to 8%, Yes 71% (Yes, Would like to, No)

Community Respondents: Volunteering — Yes 31%, No 42%, Would like to 27% (Yes, Would like to, No)

Language skills available among community survey respondents.

Community Respondents: What languages do you speak?
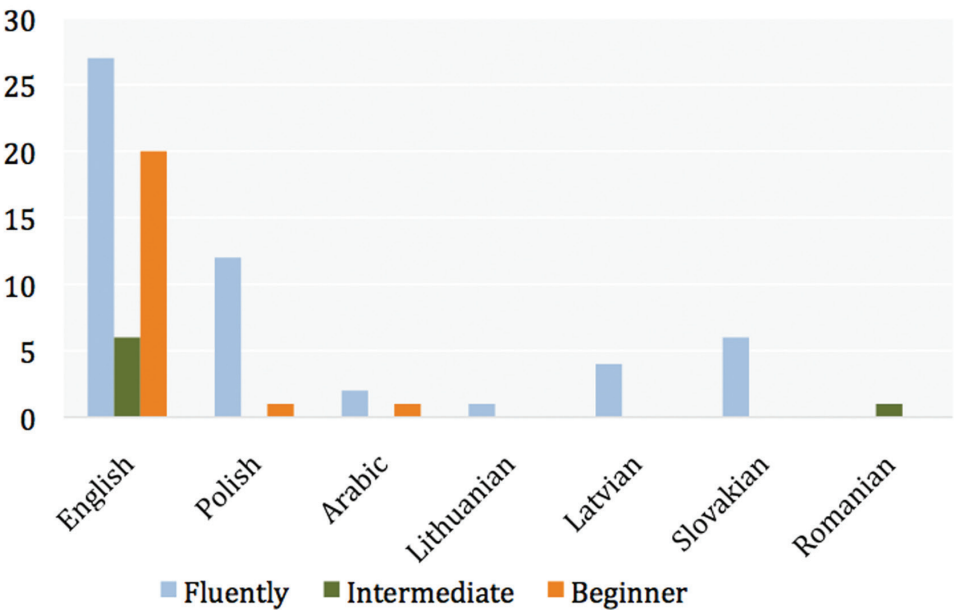
The Community Respondents: What Languages do you speak? Chart excludes more than 200 Brazilian Portuguese speakers. Brazilians respondents participated in focus groups and informal conversations with the help of translators independently of the survey.

Longford Community Resources CLG. Volunteer Centre

Actions:

- Explore and enhance existing transport and translation provision for medical visits to GP and appointments

The rationale for this action is based on the gap identified by service providers and communities that results in missed appointments for medical support staff and delays in treatment for patients

- Consult with voluntary community groups and service providers to identify core gaps volunteers could be able to fill

The rationale for this action is based on the gap identified by service providers in support for end of life care and culturally specific needs of some marginalised communities at critical times

- Strive to create a comprehensive dialogue platform for marginalised and self-excluding men as part of a mediation based workshop

The rationale for this action is based on the need to forge greater trust between marginalized men who are disinclined to approach and engage with official representatives

- Explore, measure and monitor the impact of volunteering on host community and migrant minority community engagement

The rationale for this action is based on the need to capture key performance indicators and evidence of impact to secure, maintain, and expand funding for future projects

LEISURE AND RECREATION

For youth and Traveller youth engagement, and community integration, sport and recreation are recognized measures for effective social inclusion, and when poorly managed, a mechanism for social exclusion.

> *They are born here and they are trying to fit in*
>
> (Service Provider)

> *I am invisible. No one sees me*
>
> (Focus Group Respondent)

Sport and the Arts provide the opportunity to recognise and harness the potential of the maturity, responsibility, and ambition of young migrant and minority communities. The Backstage Theatre's "Welcoming a Stranger" was positively endorsed by focus group recipients for the liberty it gave all communities to share in art, music, dance, and drama.
Longford County's literary festivals draw together poets, arts, and writers to share and celebrate Longford's rich literary heritage and Longford's famous writers.

> *There is a link between Latvia and our town in the form of the Abbé Edgeworth, there might be the possibility of building something there*
>
> (Volunteer)

The need for greater Art opportunities for all communities was mentioned and initiatives created by Longford Library staff in particular were recognized. Greater engagement for Art initiatives for youth, in particular the creation of, and reclaiming of safe spaces through what children described as "good graffiti" was suggested.

> *We could paint hopscotch all along the [redacted]*
>
> (Focus Group)

> *We could make good graffiti the [redacted]*
>
> (Focus Group)

For migrant and minority communities in particular the need to be responsive to the challenges faced by younger members of minority communities is essential.

> *Some communities don't have a culture of play for children.*
> *In some communities the children are autonomous mini-adults*
>
> (Service Providers)

The Survey respondents referred to the need for more places like the bowling alley, the Mall, the parks, and the cinema as important. In Ballymahon, Edgworthstown, and Lanesborough, LCRL youth groups addressed the lack of places to go, for young people in particular. The Attic serves as a safe and vibrant place for youth in Longford town.

Through the medium of Art, Sport, leisure and recreation young people thrive, build resilience, make friends and build teams.
The report findings demonstrate the need for far greater access for young migrant and minority

youth to fields, sports pitches and grounds.

> *Why don't Irish towns have a square where people can gather?*
> *There is a ghettoisation of minority groups*
> *It is not in our culture to go to the pub*
> *A lack of value is placed on young people there are limited activities for young people.*
> *At 3pm after school, there is no public space Integration, it has not happened yet in Longford.*
> *Outdoor facilities for teenagers, we need pull-up bars, monkey bars*
> *A running track is needed, and a long jump pit.*
> *I think Longford needs more dancing class, and singing classes*
> *Nicer spots to hang out, cheap spots for fun*
> *Different sports – Curling, dodge ball.*
> *We need more activities like Go for Life for Seniors*
> *Cycle paths, we are a relatively flat county, and we need cycle paths.*
> *Opportunities for parachuting in Abbeyshrule, and Kayaking in Ballymahon can thrive.*
> *Why is it so expensive to play on astroturf? The Mall is 30 euro an hour and that's with a discount for the organisation*
> *More activities, more places for music, more public spaces.*
> *Table tennis tables made from concrete would be a great idea.*
>
> (Young Respondents Focus Groups)

For young mothers, a space to meet and interact with others is vital.

> *Exercise can be ideal for low-income families.*
> *Everyone can exercise, all ages, seniors and youth.*
> *Sport Ireland and Go For Life, LCRL, initiatives are great.*
> *Some sports initiatives are funded by the county council but not associated with them.*
>
> (Focus Group Respondents)

Bridgeways Family Resource center in Ballymahon provide toddler groups, as does Women's Link in Longford, and Lus na Greine family resource center in Granard. Lus na Greine was lauded for facilitating a safe space, for everyone.

> *Erasmus students came to Granard last year, and we let them hang out here as their sitting room.*
>
> (Focus Group Respondent)

For all ages, greater access and opportunity to both listen to, and play music was discussed. Regular visits by priests from the new communities states of origin encourages greater engagement in Church activities.

> *[New migrant] community members will come to sing in the choir*
>
> (Service Provider)

> *We need to start a choir in Edgeworthstown. Just for fun. Lots of new words in songs. We should do something for Brazil day on 7 September in Ballymahon*
>
> (Focus Group Respondent)

Actions:
• Consult with voluntary community groups and service providers to identify core gaps in activity provisions in Arts, Leisure, Theatre, Music and Sport The rationale for this action is based on LCDP plans for activities based tourism initiates and focus group calls for activities and opportunities to gather to celebrate and share in celebrating national days of minority groups
• Develop ways to turn everyday public spaces into opportunities for children to collaborate and learn more through play and art The rationale for this action is based on the call to make public spaces available and attractive for seniors, youth and children
• Support a SOLAS scheme for minority community volunteers with training for Sport and Recreation The rationale for this action is based on the previous FAS schemes for minority community youth
• Liaise with Gardaí working with sports clubs to engage young marginalised communities into sport The rationale for this action is based on the ability to harness existing community policing and sports liaison successes, and forge opportunities to strengthen support links between the Gardaí and the Traveller and Roma communities
• Explore the opportunity for funding through Corporate Sponsorship for anti discrimination training in sports environments The rationale for this action is based on the need to: engage all relevant community stakeholders including the private sector, diversity funding streams and provide seed funding for innovative pilots beyond the remit of existing government and EU funding initiatives
• Consider how to provide universal access to sports and reduce costs to young and old community members. The rationale for this action is the gap in intergenerational engagement and the success of the Go For Life programme funded by Longford County Council
• Explore, measure and monitor the impact of sport on countering bullying and enhancing community engagement The rationale for this action is based on the need to capture key performance indicators and evidence of impact to secure, maintain, and expand funding for future projects

MEMBERS OF LONGFORD ATHLETIC CLUB

MEASURING, MONITORING AND EVALUATING ACTIONS

What gets measured gets done

<div align="right">(Service Provider)</div>

The action points detailed in this report provide a starting point to orient, direct, and ultimately drive the social inclusion and cohesion strategy for Longford.
In order to test the actions and ensure these objectives are effectively realized, a series of measures and evaluations need to be periodically conducted.

A measuring framework designed across all stakeholders – public and private actors service providers and beneficiaries – could provide continuous, ongoing feedback, capable of agile readjustment of actions if necessary and improvements where preferable.
As mentioned above, there is no agreed set of indicators for measuring social integration or social cohesion in developed states with a diversifying population. The design framework outlined below could provide a blueprint for same.

Design Framework
- Design a simple and effective agile action framework
- The Intercultural Working Group in consultation and with support from community representatives can initiate, develop and account for the framework.

Measuring (KPIs) – The framework can measure how services and initiatives are best implemented and how integration and cohesion targets set for Longford can be met
KPI Examples could include:
- Number of initiatives created per action
- Number of people and/or communities reached per initiative
The Percentage of people with access to and engaging with the information platform to use the integration driven information resource
- The number of foreign languages available on the integrated information resource (platform/website/app) and the corresponding people reached.

Monitoring - by observing the progress and quality of the integration and cohesion activities, an evaluation on progress, aligned to target outcomes can be made.
Examples of efficient monitoring tools could include:
- A prompt periodic survey to key stakeholders across communities
- Community sessions run by community representatives
- Community level of engaging in public representation
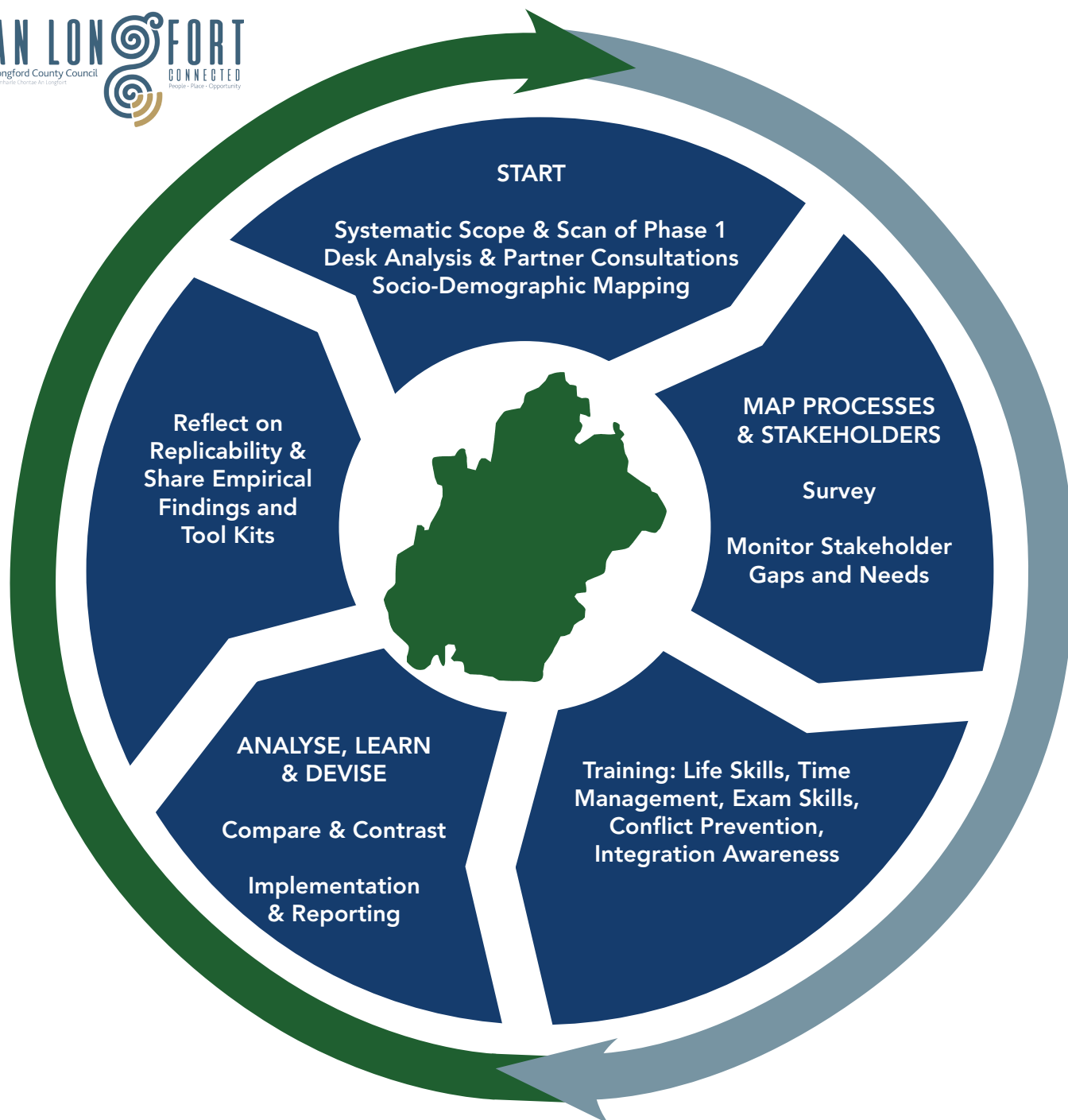- Private sector Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives

Evaluation – gathering information through measuring and monitoring to determine overall achievement and alignment with objectives.
Centralised periodic review of measures and efficacy of the actions proposed, could effectively drive improvements, and ellicit insights into the access of services and efficacy of each action promote social integration and cohesion.

The design framework outlined above could provide a mechanism for recalibrating social integration and assessing the efficacy of social cohesion indicators in real time across Longford.

Collecting and Evaluating Local Integration Events Template Toolkit	
Number of People in Attendance	• Head count during the event • Someone on the door with a 'clicker' • Create a Tally Chart
Demographic of Attendees: **Age range/ethnicity/gender**	• Optional anonymous form at the end • Optional forms on chairs for people to complete • World Map for people to mark where they were born
Do They Attend Other Community Groups?	• Show of hands and Organiser to count • Ping pong balls in a bucket at the end • Ask people as they enter the meeting
What impact did the event have on people? **Finding different ways of gathering responses to the question:** **'What did this event make you think and feel?'**	• Organisers to note informal feedback at the end of the event • Flip chart paper/ poster/blackboard with Emojis representing different emotions – people to tick and annotate accordingly • Post it notes for people to stick on walls • Postcards for people to write a couple of sentences on • Short video clips of attendees made on organisers' phones • Ask people to tweet using the Organisations Twitter Handle • If you have a specific Facebook page, ask people to comment and 'like' it
What does Social Integration mean to you?	• Flip chart on wall – people write words up/ postcards to write words • Ideally do this prior to and after the event to identity a shift in attitudes
Data/questions	**Options for collecting the data**
Previous levels of involvement:	• Write questions on the wall next to the questions as they come in • Put stickers next to the questions (maybe on the wall) • Have tins to collect counters in
What it feels like to take part (artists/ performers/facilitators): • **What is the best thing about taking part?** • **What would you change?**	• Short video clips of performers made on organisers' phones • Capture verbal feedback

INTERCULTURAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR COUNTY LONGFORD 2018-2022

START

Systematic Scope & Scan of Phase 1
Desk Analysis & Partner Consultations
Socio-Demographic Mapping

MAP PROCESSES & STAKEHOLDERS

Survey

Monitor Stakeholder Gaps and Needs

Training: Life Skills, Time Management, Exam Skills, Conflict Prevention, Integration Awareness

ANALYSE, LEARN & DEVISE

Compare & Contrast

Implementation & Reporting

Reflect on Replicability & Share Empirical Findings and Tool Kits

Methodology: Perceptions and Measurements

QUALITATIVE

QUANTITATIVE

Minorities and Migrants

Host Community

Social Integration and Cohesion Planning and Processes

SURVEY RESULTS

As part of the study two surveys were conducted online through email invitations/links and shared at the meetings and workshops.

- The Living in Longford survey – was aimed at service users, service beneficiaries, local community members, both long established residents and recent arrivals, to understand their experience of living in Longford and provide insights into how to best support their needs. There were 55 community respondents in total.
- The Working with People Living in Longford Survey – was aimed at people who provide services for people living in Longford and sought to understand their experience delivering services and meeting the needs of community members. There were 52 service provider respondents in total.

Elements of the data findings are included in other sections of this report. The following information continues the survey results.

The first section concentrates on the characteristics of the all respondents by survey: age, residence, ethnicity, and level of education.

The second section concentrates on questions focusing on the community respondents: namely place of residence before County Longford, household size and language(s) spoken. The third section focuses on the questions specific to the services offered by the services provider respondents: client profile, services sector and government/department most likely to access these services.

The fourth and final section provides questions and responses relevant to both surveys to better contrast responses from community beneficiaries and service providers:

- Beneficiaries/Clients Group needs versus. Perceived Group Needs & Support required to improve services
- Volunteering
- Who to access in case of need - from both perspectives
- Training and Support Required - from both perspectives
- Integration – how integrated do people feel?
- Discrimination and Acceptance – what kinds of discrimination are experienced? How is acceptance communicated?
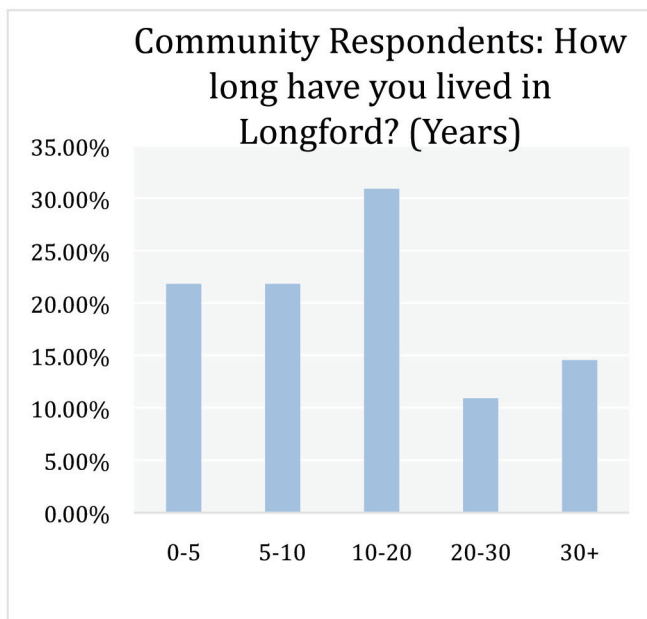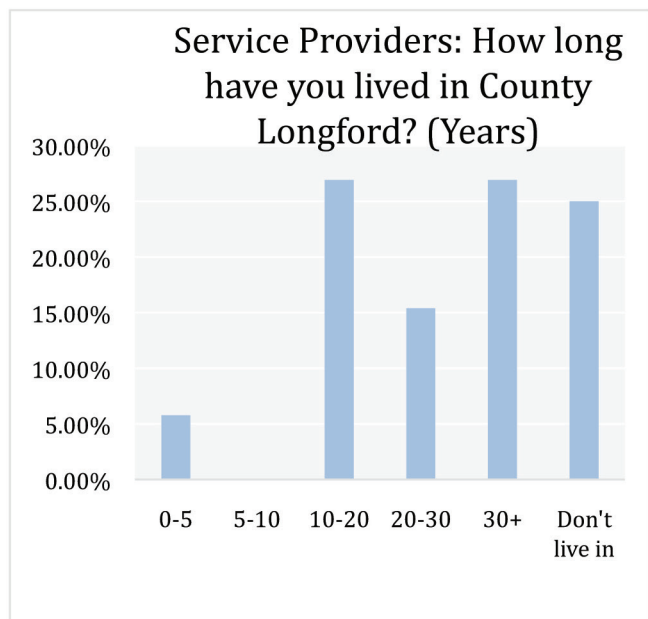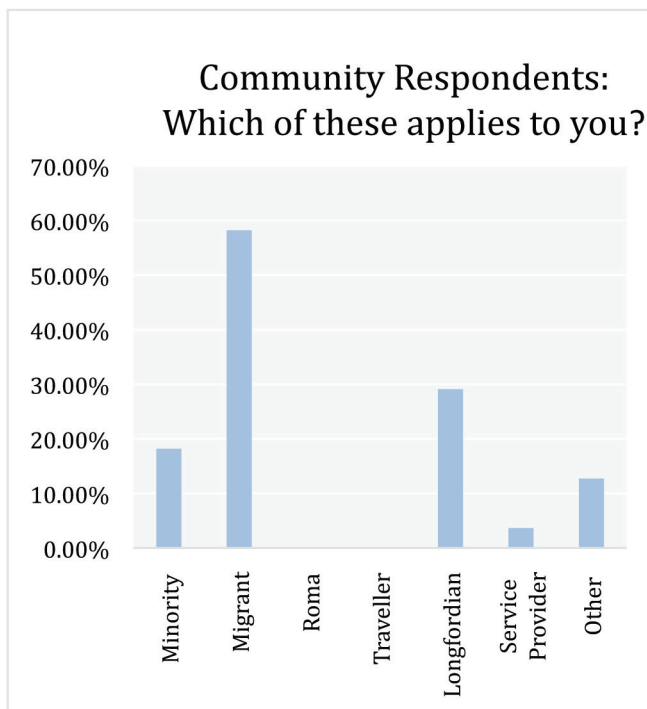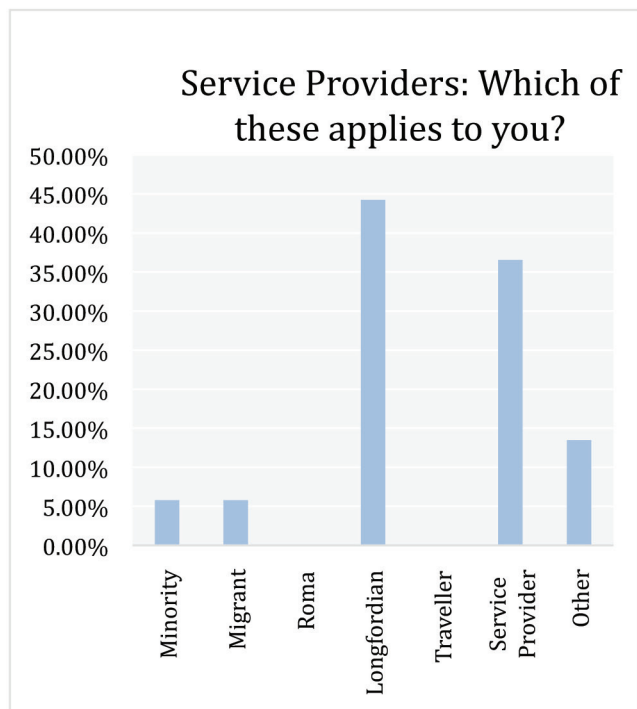
1. Respondents Characteristics

Age

Service Providers: Age

Community Respondents: Age

Place of Residence

Service Providers: I live in...
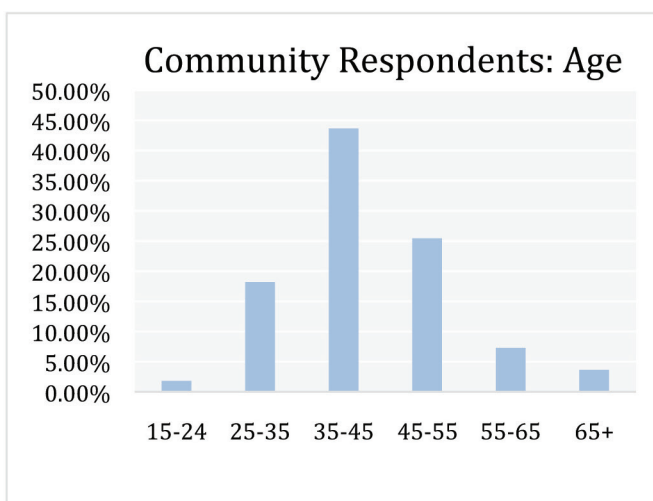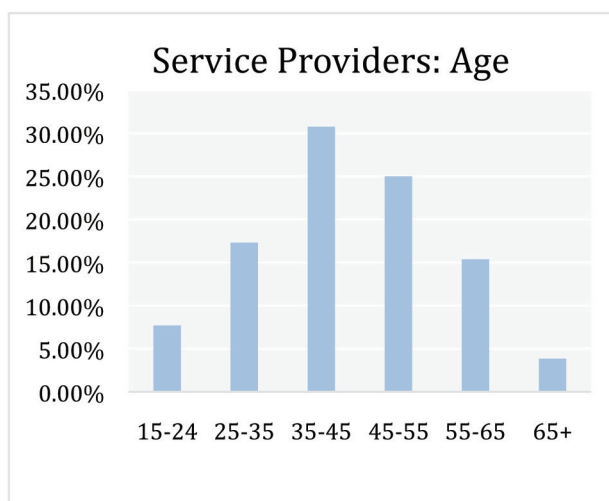
Community Respondents: I live in...
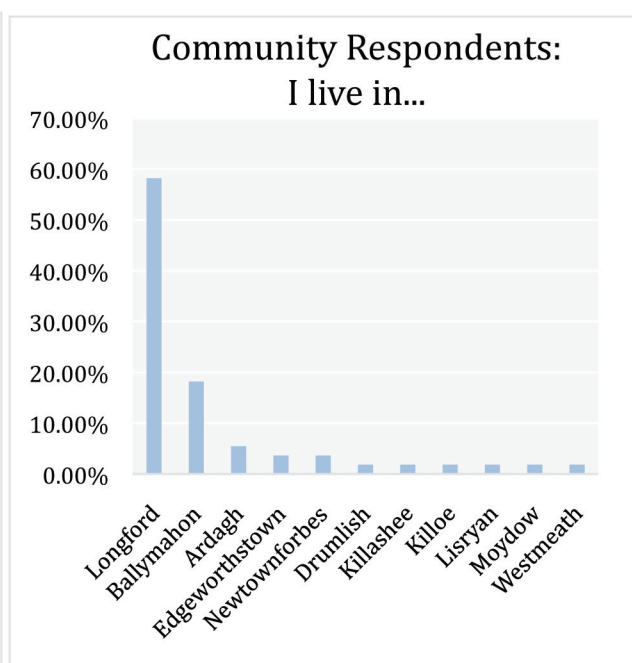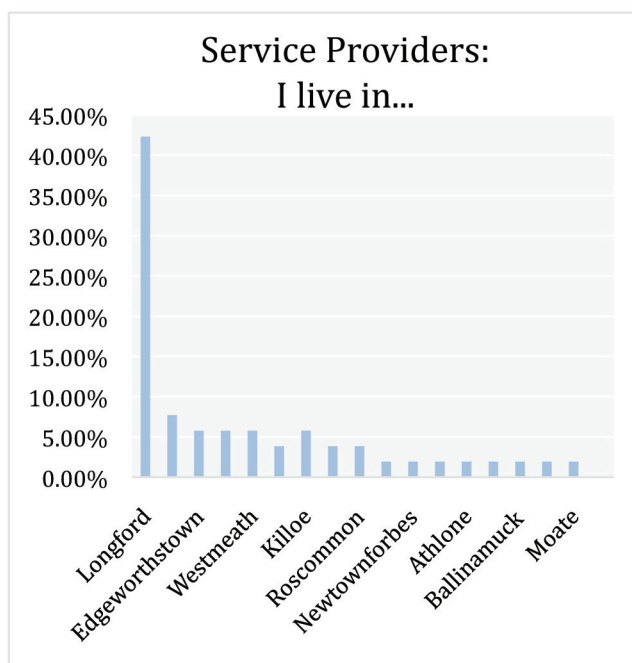
Length of Residence in County Longford

Ethnicity

Level of education

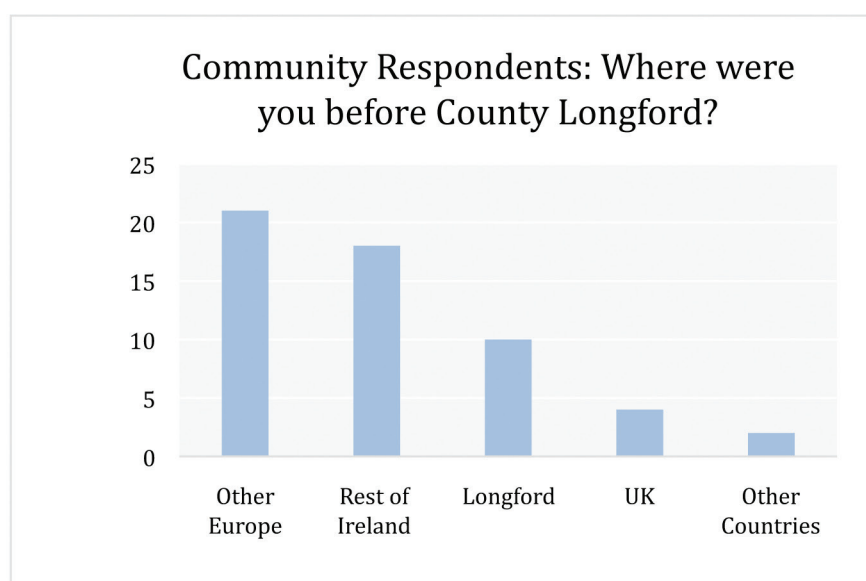**Service Providers: Level of Education**

Community Respondents: Level of Education
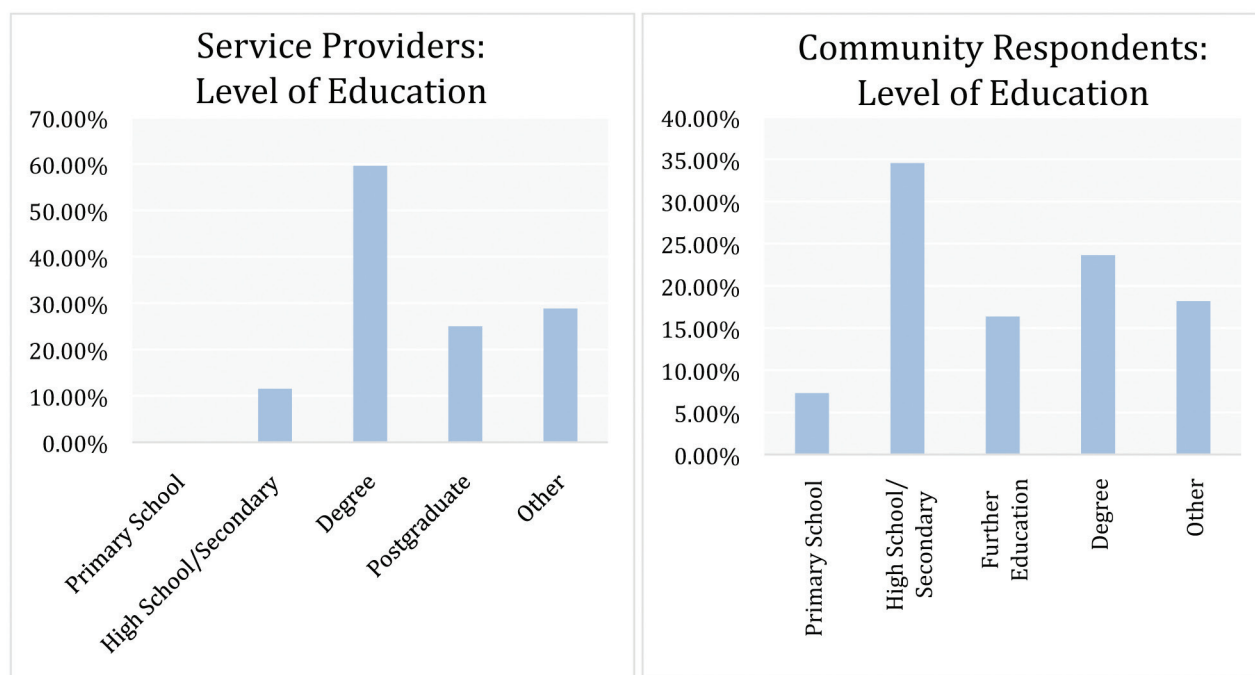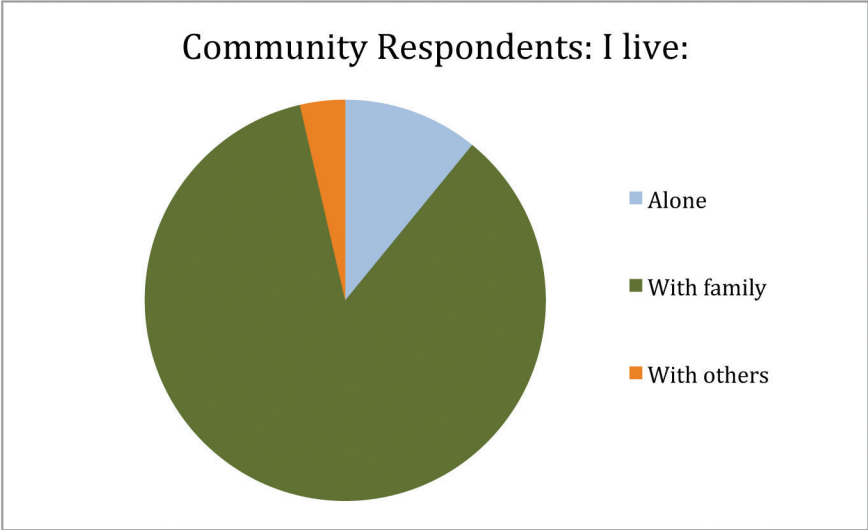

2. **Community Respondents Data**

Place of residence prior to coming to County Longford
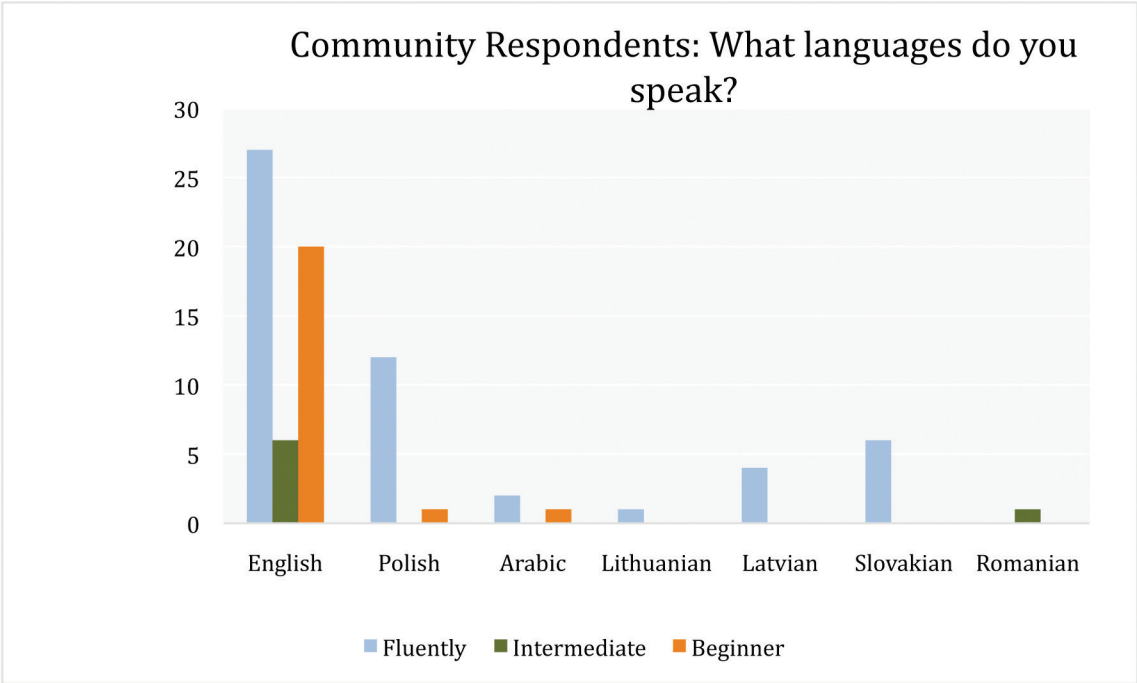
Community Respondents: Where were you before County Longford?

Household

Community Respondents: I live:

- Alone
- With family
- With others

Languages Spoken

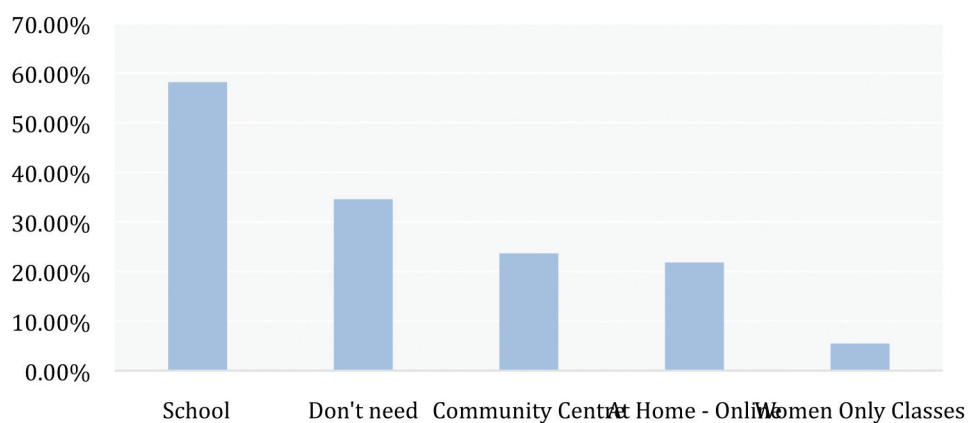## Community Respondents: What languages do you speak?
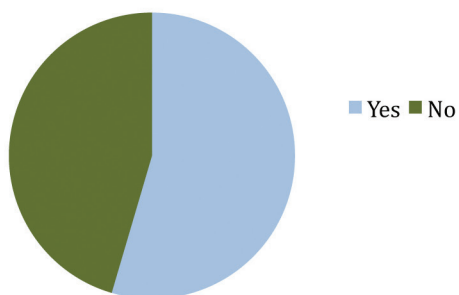
- Fluently
- Intermediate
- Beginner

Community Respondents: Would you like English language training?

Legend: ■ Yes ■ No

Community Respondents: Where would it be easiest for you to have English language training?

Categories: School, Don't need, Community Centre, At Home - Online, Women Only Classes

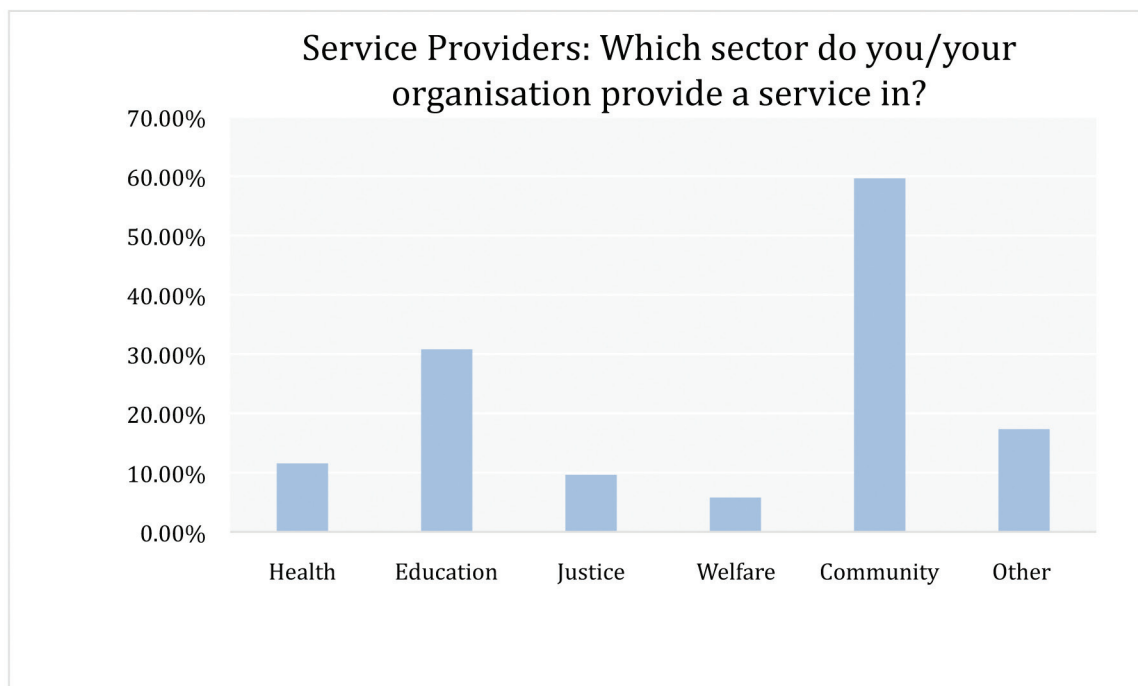### 3. Service Providers Respondents

Client Profile

I spend most of my time helping people who self identify as...

Categories: Host Comunity, Migrant, Minority, Traveller, Roma

78

Services Offered

Service Providers: Which sector do you/your organisation provide a service in?

Government Department/agency most likely to access

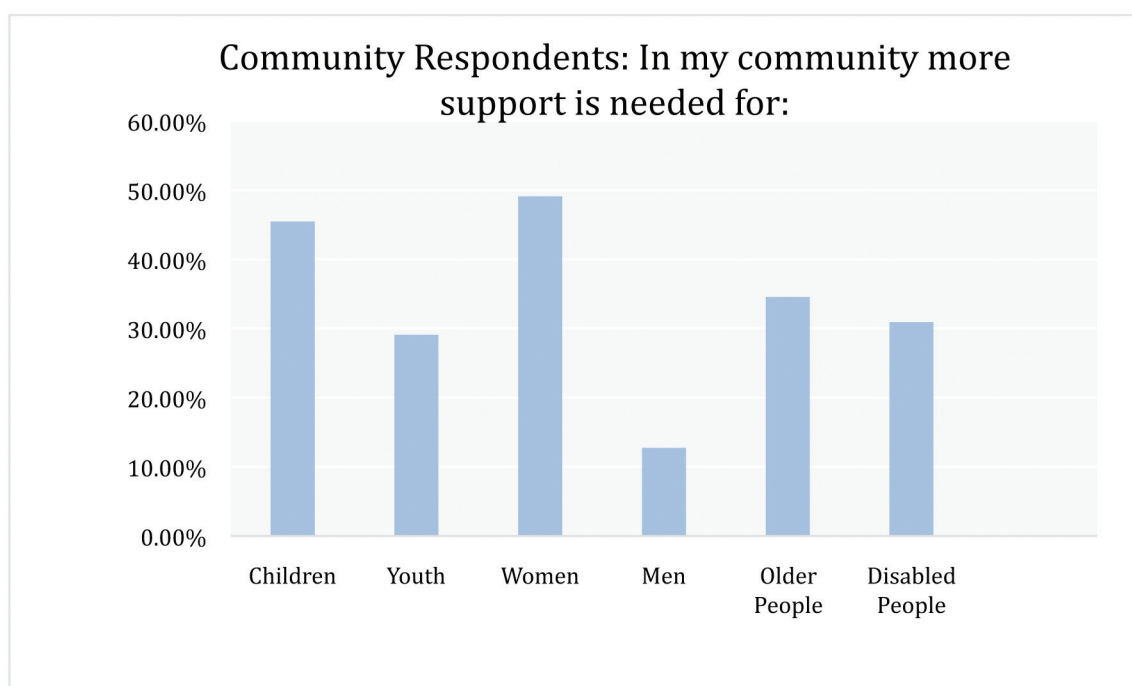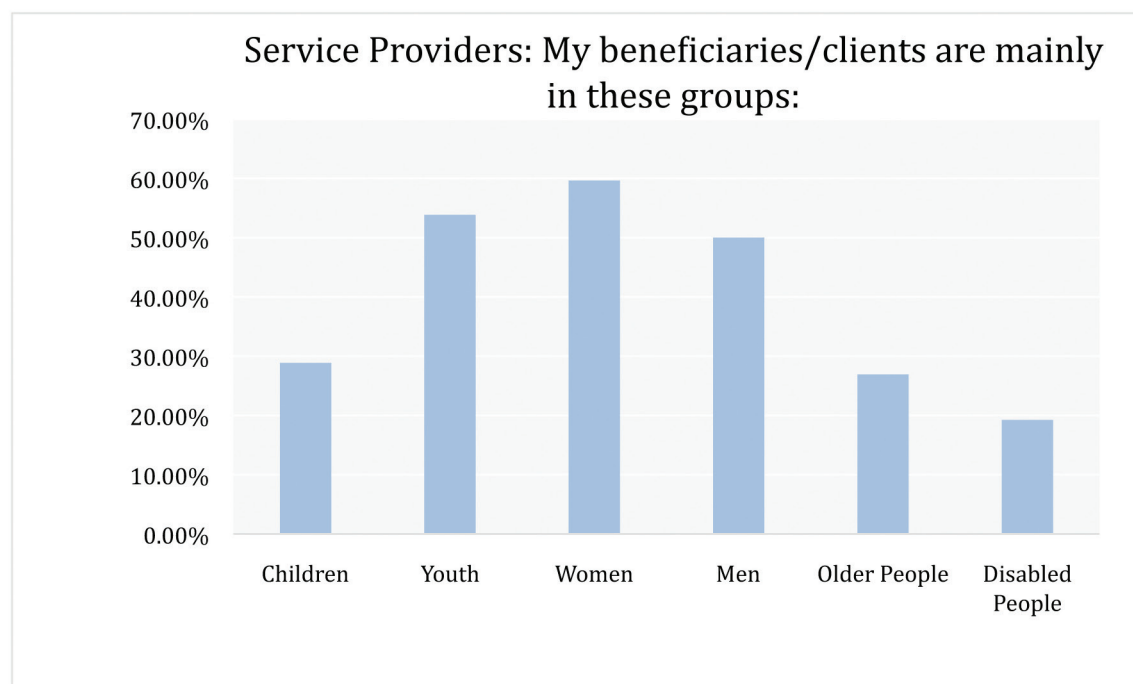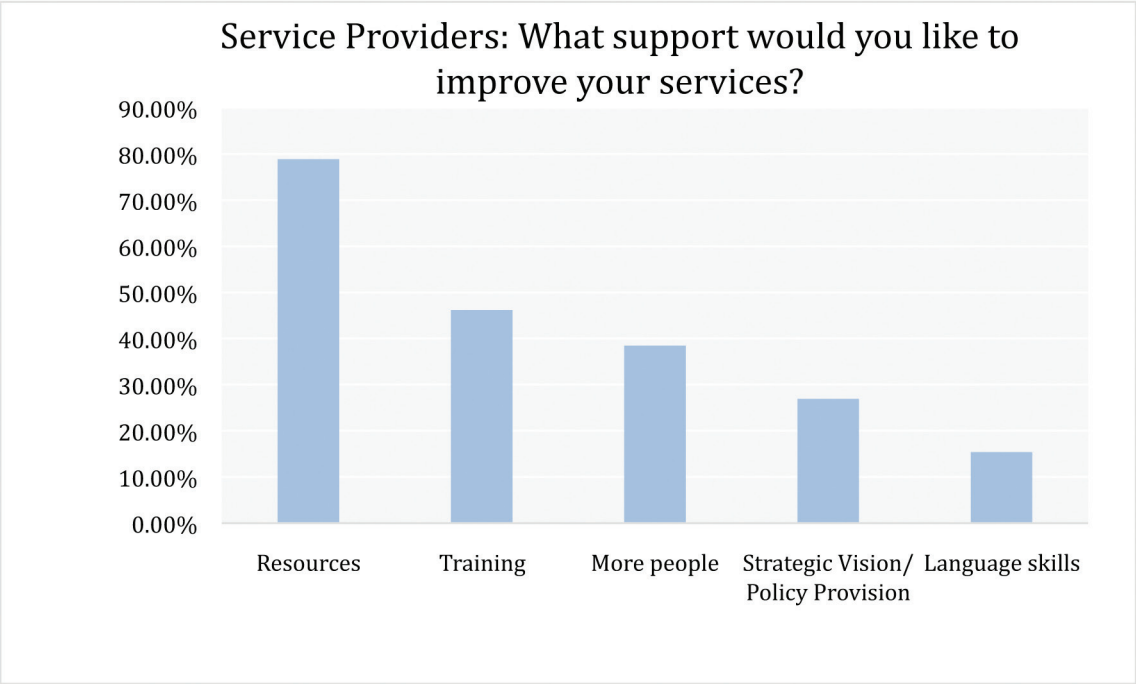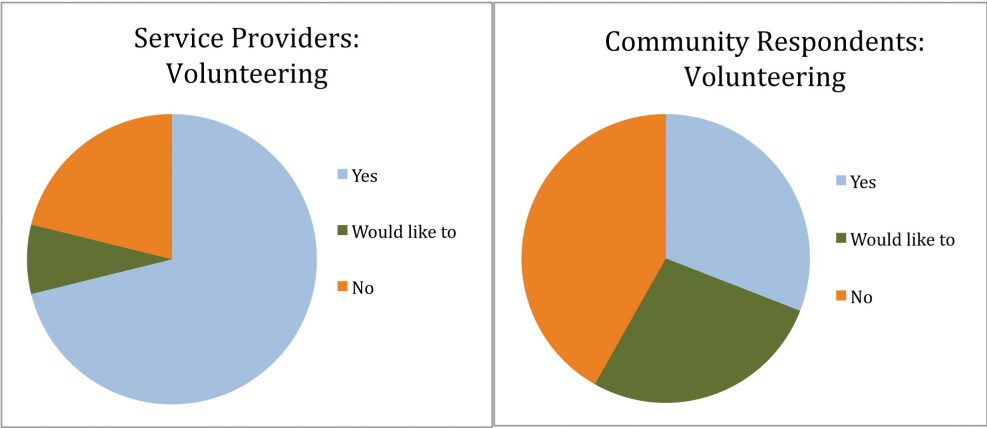**Service Providers: In your role at work, which government department/agency are you most likely to access?**

4. Responses from both perspectives

Beneficiaries/Clients Groups versus Perceived Group Needs & Support required to improve services
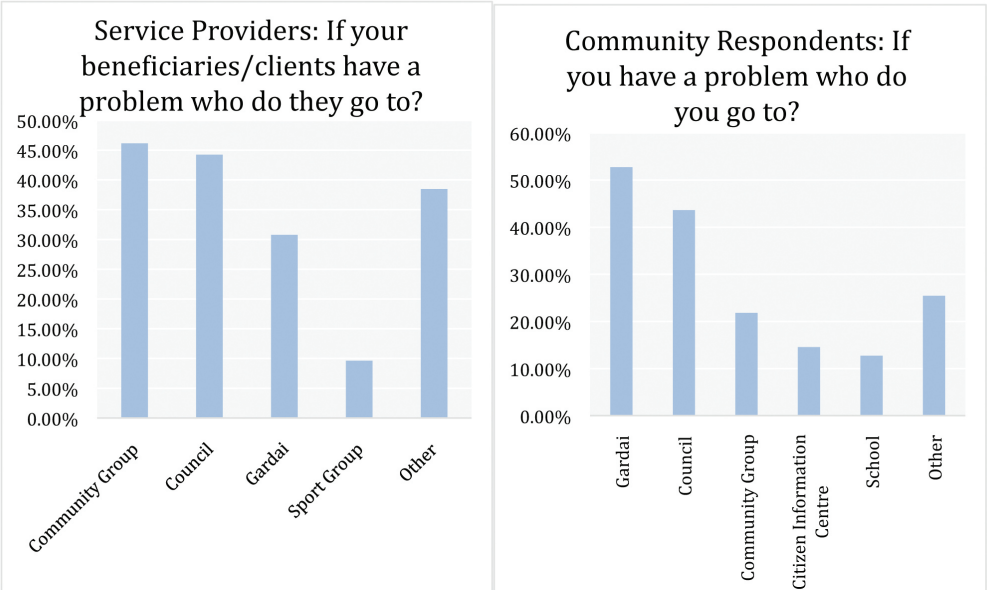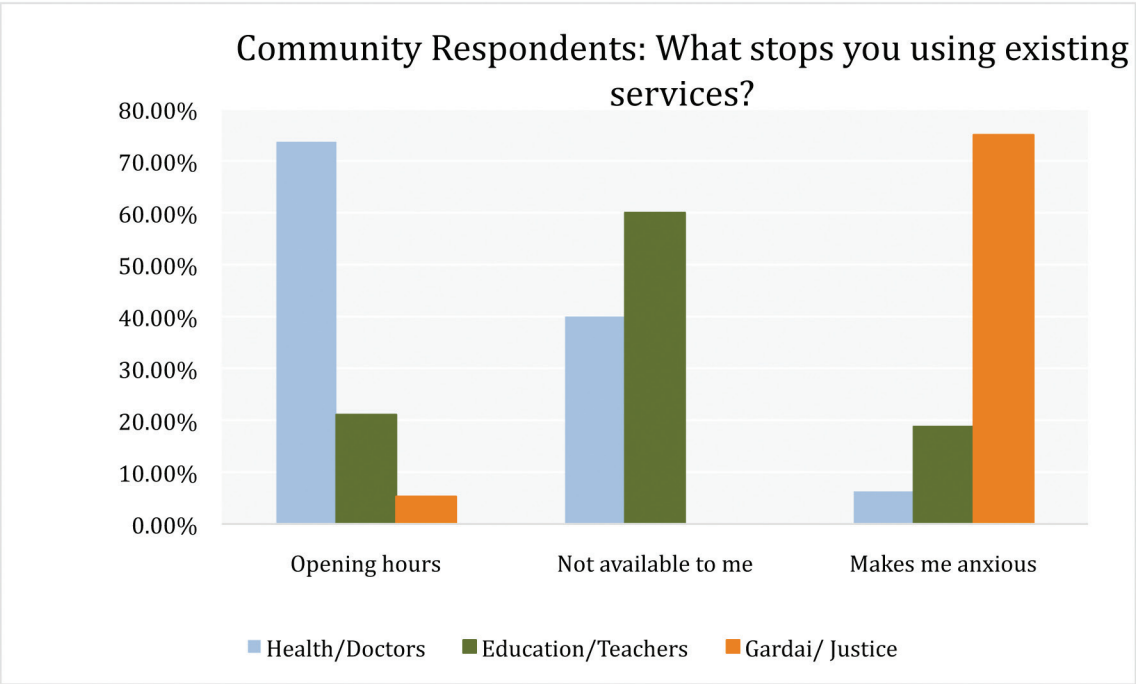
Service Providers: My beneficiaries/clients are mainly in these groups:

Community Respondents: In my community more support is needed for:

Service Providers: What support would you like to improve your services?

Bar chart with percentage (y-axis from 0.00% to 90.00%):
- Resources: ~79%
- Training: ~46%
- More people: ~39%
- Strategic Vision/Policy Provision: ~27%
- Language skills: ~16%

Volunteering

Service Providers: Volunteering

Pie chart with categories:
- Yes
- Would like to
- No

Community Respondents: Volunteering

Pie chart with categories:
- Yes
- Would like to
- No

Who is access in case of need - from both perspectives

Service Providers: If your beneficiaries/clients have a problem who do they go to?

Bar chart (y-axis from 0.00% to 50.00%):
- Community Group: ~46%
- Council: ~44%
- Gardai: ~31%
- Sport Group: ~10%
- Other: ~38%

Community Respondents: If you have a problem who do you go to?

Bar chart (y-axis from 0.00% to 60.00%):
- Gardai: ~53%
- Council: ~44%
- Community Group: ~22%
- Citizen Information Centre: ~15%
- School: ~13%
- Other: ~26%

Community Respondents: In an emergency I would call...

Community Respondents: What stops you using existing services?

Legend: Health/Doctors, Education/Teachers, Gardai/ Justice

Training and Support Required - from both perspectives

Service Providers: What training and support would you like more of, for your beneficiaries/clients?

Category	Value
Literacy, reading and writing	~4.2
Employment skills based training (e.g. carpentry, metal work)	~3.9
IT and computing skills	~3.6
Civic education: laws, rules, and skills	~3.2
Practical skills	~3.2
Numeracy: numbers, budgets and day to day finances	~3.2

(Axis: 0, 0.5, 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, 3, 3.5, 4, 4.5)

Community Respondents: What training and support would you like more?

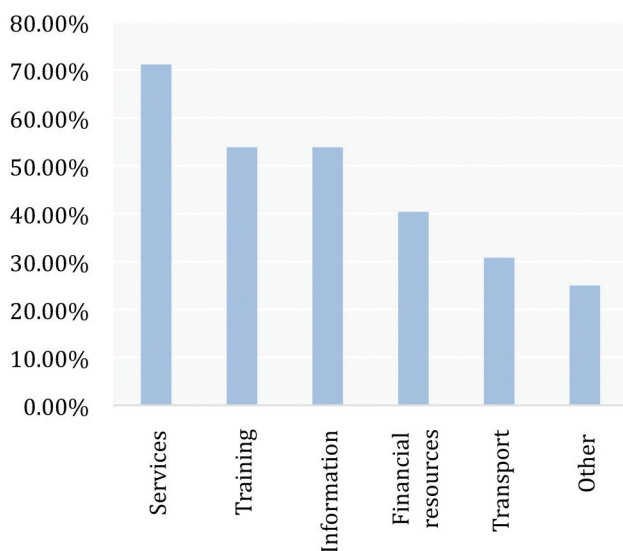| Category	Value
Literacy, reading and writing	~42%
Practical skills	~42%
Other	~34%
IT and computing skills	~33%
Civic education: laws, rules, and skills	~19%
Employment skills based training (e.g. carpentry, metal ...)	~19%
Numeracy: numbers, budgets and day to day finances	~7%

(Axis: 0.00%, 10.00%, 20.00%, 30.00%, 40.00%, 50.00%)

Integration

Community Respondents: In your opinion, how well are your beneficiaries/clients integrated in Longford Community?
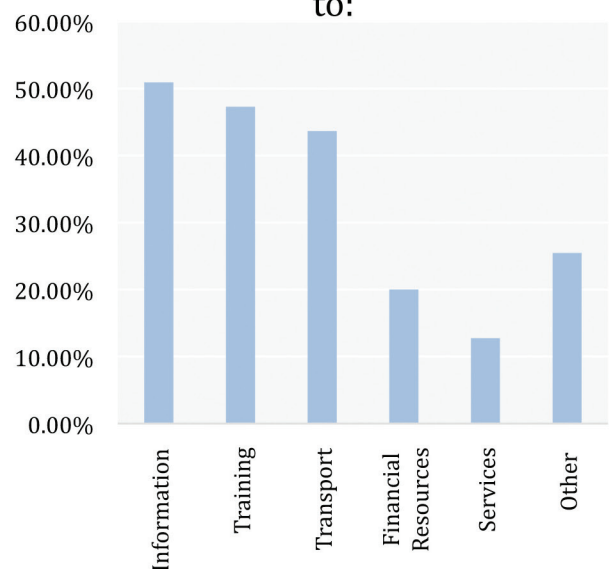
- Fully
- Very
- Somewhat
- A little
- Not at all
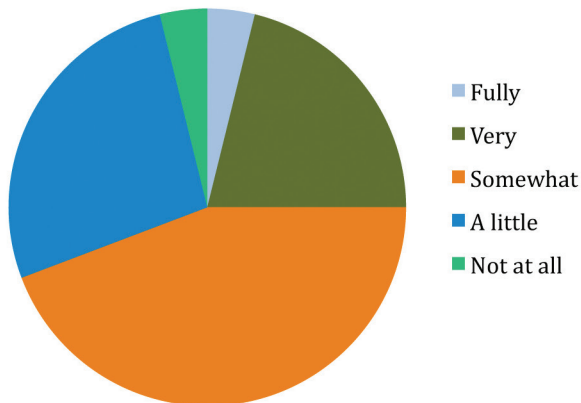
Community Repondents: I feel a part of Longford's community.
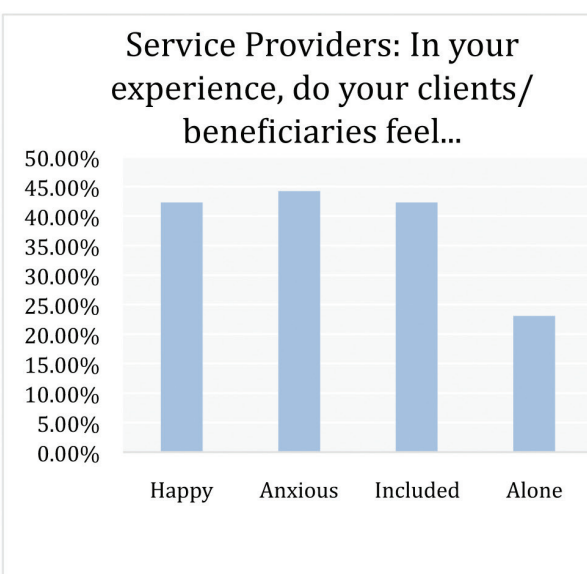
- Yes
- No
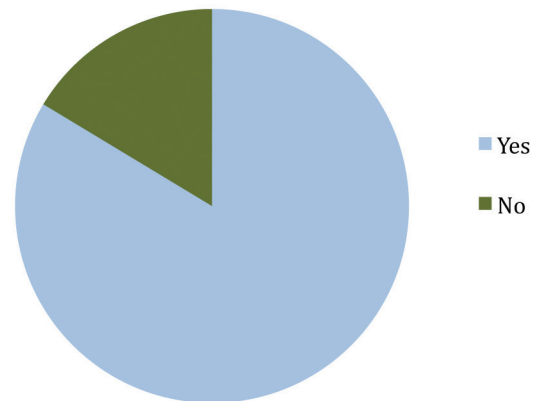
Service Providers: Clients/beneficiaries would feel more a part of Longford if they had greater access to:

80.00%
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%

Services | Training | Information | Financial resources | Transport | Other

Community Respondents: I would feel more a part of Longford if I had greater access to:

60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%

Information | Training | Transport | Financial Resources | Services | Other

Service Providers: To your knowledge, have your clients/ beneficiaries experienced discrimination, racism, verbal abuse or physical abuse in Longford.

- Yes
- No

Community Respondents: I/my family have experienced discrimination, racism, verbal or physical abuse in Longford.

- Yes
- No

Service Providers:To your knowledge, have your clients/ beneficiaries experienced kindness, acceptance, care and help in Longford.

- Yes
- No

Community Respondents: I/my family have experienced kindness, acceptance, care and help in Longford.

- Yes
- No

Service Providers: In your experience, do your clients/ beneficiaries feel...

Happy   Anxious   Included   Alone

Community Respondents: Most of the time I feel...

Happy   Anxious   Included   Alone

Links and Relevant References

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Membership of Longford Intercultural Working Group

Name	Organisation
Ciaran Murphy	Longford County Council
Mary Reynolds	Longford County Council
Frances Stephenson	Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board (Adult Literacy)
Uruemu Adejinmi	Longford African Network
Lionel Mullally	An Garda Siochána
Angela Keaveney	Longford Women's Link
Adrian Greene	Longford Community Resources Clg.
Nuala O'Brien	Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board (Community Education)
Siobhan McGuinness	Longford Sports Partnership
Siobhan Cronogue	Public Participation Network
Tony Kemple	Dept. Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Laura McPhillips	Longford County Council
Carrieann Belton	Longford County Childcare Committee
Hilery Greenan	Education Welfare Board (Tusla)
Patricia Forde	Longford Sports Partnership
Marie Fitzpatrick	Education Welfare Board (Tusla)

Brehon Advisory[7] provided the consulting services for this strategy. They are a UK based non-profit company established in 2013 to provide research driven education and strategic mapping, training, risk assessments and security training, data assessment, and evaluation services in conflict-affected states across the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. Brehon in turn seeks to inform and broaden education approaches and policies toward refugee and vulnerable children and youth.

7. Brehon Advisory is a non-profit company registered in the UK. Registration No. 8416166. http://brehonadvisory.com

INTER-CULTURAL STRATEGIC PLAN

LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL **2018-2022**