

# St. Catherine's Community Services Centre



## Annual Report 2015

## Foreword from the Chair

On behalf of St Catherine's Community Services Centre I am delighted to present this annual report of our activities for 2015. In November Carlow County Council held a special reception to commemorate our 40 years of service to the local community and acknowledge the contribution of all our staff and volunteers who have served over this time. The character and spirit of St Catherine's was set by our founders 40 years ago and is reflected in our mission statement, which is to provide quality services responsive to local needs with a view to empowering and enriching individuals, families and communities in Carlow and its environs.

Our 2015 Accounts record a small deficit for the year. This is an indication of how difficult it remains to balance the books and how carefully we have to manage our resources while also meeting the needs of the community. The on-going support of our funders is key and we would like to acknowledge the support of Tusla, the Office of the Minister of Children and Youth Affairs, Health Service Executive, Department of Social Protection, Solas, Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board, Carlow County Council, the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, the European Refugee Fund and individual supporters.

This challenge will remain as we develop and grow. We will need to constantly assess and improve our services while being proactive in expanding our programmes to meet future needs. To this end in 2015 we drew up a new Strategic Plan for the years 2015-2017 to help us focus on changing demands for services that we currently offer or may be able to offer. The plan details how we can improve on what we are doing, compliment what we are doing and identifies potential new activities.

However, to ensure we can continue to provide such support we will need the continued backing of our funders and of the communities that use our services. We wish to assure those who support St Catherine's that we strive to operate to the highest standards and comply firmly with the principles of good governance with full transparency. The Board has commenced the journey towards adopting the Governance Code for the Community and Voluntary sector and this will continue until we formally adopt the Code.

I would like express the Board's appreciation to Niall and to all the staff and volunteers who contribute to make St Catherine's the dynamic organisation it is. Year after year we see the same enthusiasm and drive to improve our programmes and services. We are confident that this will continue with great results.

**Adrian Dunlevy**  
**August 2016**

## Note from the Director of Services

St. Catherine's was formally founded in 1975 so we celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday in 2015. While it is very important to plan and look forward, a milestone like our 40<sup>th</sup> is a good opportunity to celebrate our achievements and the people who have got us here.

Luckily we have the St. Catherine's Minutes Book that starts in 1974 with the first meeting when representatives of nearly 30 local organisations came together to discuss setting up what is now St. Catherine's. A few things jump out:

1. The hundreds of people who have been involved in setting up and developing St. Catherine's over the years from Committee and Board members to staff, volunteers, funders and supporters
2. The energy and drive of the founders. Fr. Sean Kelly, the first Chair of St. Catherine's is quoted in the second Committee meeting as saying "...the time for talking has gone, the time for action has arrived". In the next meeting "...the frustration of waiting and talking instead of acting was clearly expressed". By the next meeting premises were secured, a social worker was in place and St. Catherine's was up and running!
3. The sense of continuity over the last 40 years. The initial meetings set out the role of St. Catherine's - to identify gaps in local services and to meet them as they evolve. In a nutshell that's still our role! The services identified as being needed in 1975 were services for the elderly, services for families in times of crisis, informal adult education, pre-school play groups, youth services and community information. These are now core services in St. Catherine's and other organisations such as Carlow Regional Youth Services and Citizens Information
4. It cost £20 a week to run St. Catherine's in 1977 which sounds like serious value for money. It's a few euros more now as we've grown to employ nearly 60 staff, crucially supported by over 80 volunteers. However funders please note, while the cost has gone up the value for money remains!

So I would sincerely like to thank:

- Our founding members, our current Board members and everyone in between
- Our current staff and all previous members of staff, who's shoulders we're standing on
- All our volunteers and supporters without whom we couldn't survive
- Our funders and partners in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. We depend and work closely with other agencies in virtually everything we do
- The services based in St. Catherine's – Citizens Information Service, Accord, National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities and the other services that use the Centre
- The people of Carlow who've used our services and supported us for the past 40 years

Here's to the next 40 years of St. Catherine's Community Services Centre.

**Niall Morris**  
**August 2016**

## 2015 In Figures

**64**

Socially Monitored Alarms were Installed

**16**

Rohingyan participants attended training as part of the CREWE programme

**20,144**

Meals on Wheels Cooked and Delivered

**17**

Want to Work participants completed pre-employment training

**16**

Pages in the Nationalist celebrating 40 years of St. Catherine's

**4**

Mothers from the Moving On Programme progressed into further education, training and/or employment

**1250+**

Health related engagements with the Travelling Community

**88**

Members of the Traveller Community participated in pre-development programmes

**50**

Traveller Men engaged in health related group activities

**4**

Participants from the LFEL and PFW courses secured employment

**102**

QQI Awards delivered in Community Education

**24**

Participants from the Community Education LFEL and PFW courses progressed into further education and training

**48**

Teenagers and their families were supported through the Teen Parent Support Programme

**70+**

Volunteers engaged in St. Catherine's

**5**

Teen Mothers moved into further training/education

**224**

Children attended our childcare services weekly

### New in 2015

- Traveller Pride became a 3 day Festival including a concert in the Visual Centre
- A pre-development parenting programme was delivered to young Traveller couples
- St. Catherine's celebrated 40 years of delivering community services in Carlow
  - St. Catherine's participated in the Strengthening Families programme
- Meals on Wheels Standards of Excellence Quality Assessment Framework launch

## **Mission Statement:**

Our mission is to provide quality services responsive to local needs, based on equality, diversity, justice and inclusion with a view to empowering and enriching individuals, families and communities in Carlow and its environs.

## **Aims:**

- To ensure work is responsive to local need with respect for equality, individuality and diversity
- To empower people to take control over their own lives and to participate fully in society
- To reduce the barriers to participation of those most at risk of exclusion, poverty and disadvantage

## **Objectives:**

- To involve and consult with participants, target groups and local community in the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of all programmes and activities
- To work in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies and community groups to ensure an effective, coordinated and strategic response to local needs
- To proactively encourage and facilitate the participation of those at risk of exclusion, poverty and disadvantage
- To do this through the provision of information, support, community and developmental education
- To promote and support voluntary work as a means of providing services and to recognise and value the role and work of volunteers
- To evaluate and plan the work of St Catherine's on a regular basis in order to ensure that it is remaining responsive to identified need

## **Our Volunteers**

St. Catherine's would like to thank all our volunteers for their hard work and commitment to St. Catherine's in 2015. There were over 70 volunteers who regularly assisted in Meals on Wheels, Administration and Reception, Caretaking, Childcare and After Schools. St. Catherine's hosted our Annual Volunteer Christmas party in December to say thank you to our volunteers. Over 50 volunteers attended.

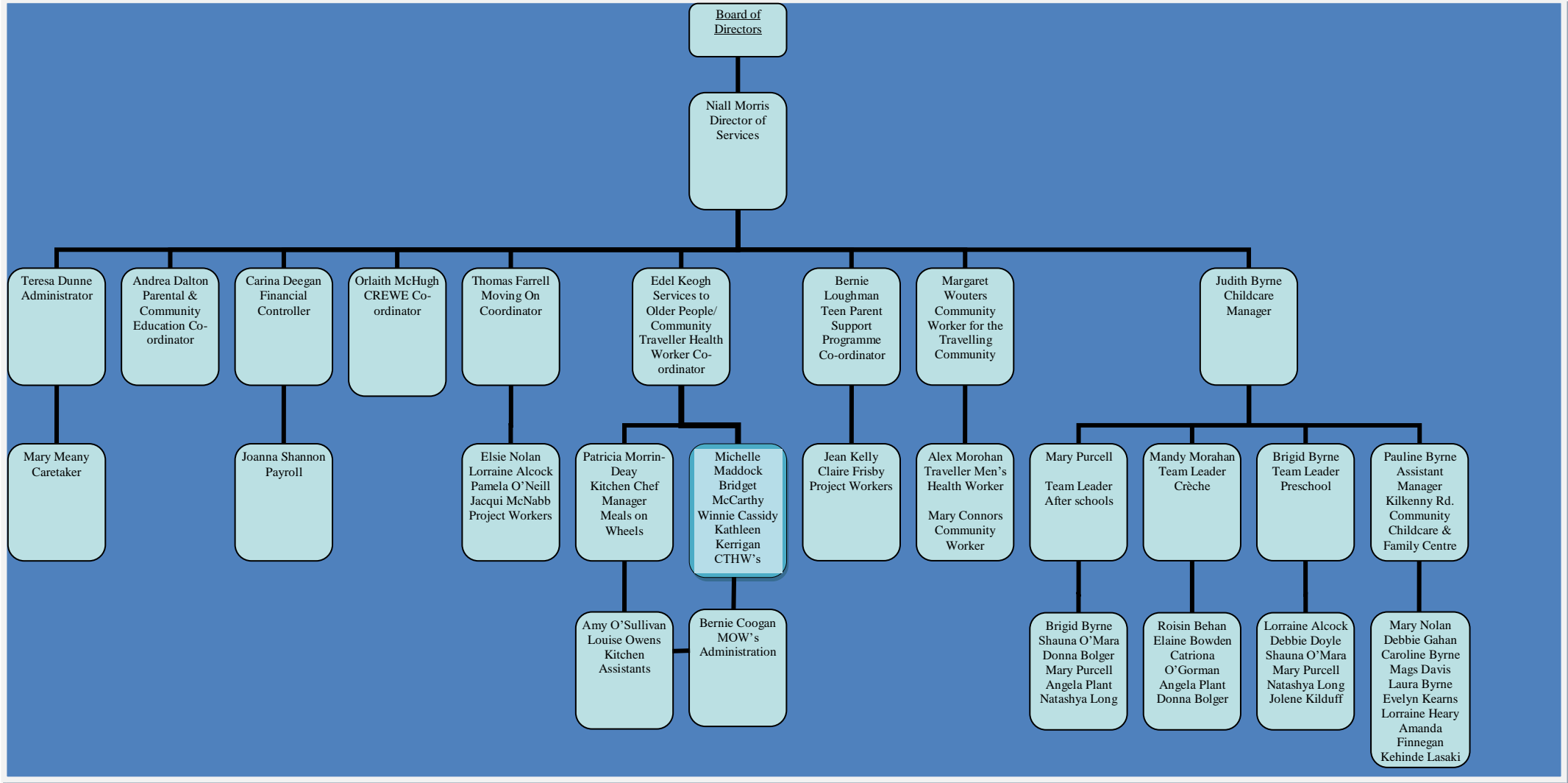
## **Our Board**

We would like to thank our Board members for their time and commitment to St. Catherine's:

- |                             |                               |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| - Adrian Dunlevy (Chair)    | - Frank Comerford (Secretary) |
| - Brian Buckley (Treasurer) | - Marian Duffy                |
| - Andrea Dalton             | - Maura Dowling               |
| - Fr. Liam Morgan           | - Fr. Bill Kemmy              |
| - Fr. Tom Little            |                               |

A special thanks to Fr. Liam Morgan who resigned from the Board in 2015 and welcome to our new Treasurer Brian Buckley who joined the Board in January.

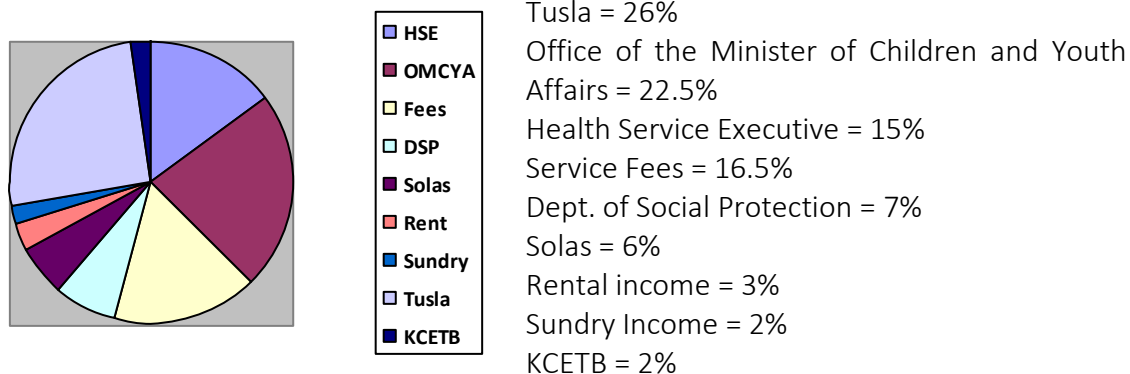
# St. Catherine's Community Services Centre Organisational Chart 2015



## Financial Overview

2015 Summary Profit and Loss Account	
Grant Funding	1,128,949
Income from Services	234,207
Rental Income	48,335
Sundry Income	7,754
<b>Turnover</b>	<b>1,419,245</b>
Programme & Administration Expenses	-1,460,413
Plus Other Operating Income	
Government Grants Received	5,374
<b>Operating Deficit</b>	<b>-35,794</b>
Plus Bank Interest Received	9,579
Interest payable	0
<b>Deficit</b>	<b>-26,215</b>

### St. Catherine's Sources of Funding 2015



Sundry Income includes funding from Carlow County Council, the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, the European Refugee Fund and individual donations.

St. Catherine's work is funded from funding agency grants for specific programmes and projects, service fees and rental income and donations. We would like to acknowledge the support of our funders, service users and all our donors.

# St Catherine's Childcare Service and the Kilkenny Road Community Childcare and Family Centre

St. Catherine's now offers two Community Childcare services in Carlow town with the opening of the Kilkenny Road Community Childcare and Family Centre in September 2014.

## St. Catherine's Childcare Service

St. Catherine's Childcare Service is a Community Childcare Service. We have provided high quality, child centred childcare and early years education in Carlow since 1975. We are committed to providing a service that focuses on the individual needs of the child and providing a warm and welcoming environment for children and their parents and carers. St. Catherine's is an Early Childhood Ireland Centre of Excellence childcare facility and offers the following services:

### Crèche

St. Catherine's offers a crèche service for Wobblers (12 to 30 months) and Toddlers (30 months to 3 years plus). We offer 28 places.

### Pre-School Service & ECCE scheme

The Pre-School provides an opportunity for children aged 2 years 10 months to school-going age to learn through play. There are 22 places in the ECCE or free pre-school service and 12 in the junior pre-school room.

### After Schools Programme

After Schools provides a play based developmental programme including homework support. It gives children up to 4<sup>th</sup> class an opportunity to socialise and play in a safe, secure environment outside school time. We have 34 after schools places per day.

## Kilkenny Road Community Childcare and Family Centre

Given the increasing demand for affordable childcare in Carlow, St. Catherine's, working with Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB) and the Carlow County Childcare Committee, opened a new Community Childcare service in the Kilkenny Road Community Childcare and Family Centre in September 2014. Full and part-time childcare is available in the following services from 8.30am to 5.30pm:

### Crèche

The crèche offers full and part-time places for wobblers (12 to 30 months) and toddlers (30 months to 3 years plus). We offer 22 places.

### Pre-School Service & ECCE scheme

The Pre-School provides an opportunity for children aged 3 years to school-going age to learn through play. There are 22 places in the ECCE or free pre-school service in the mornings and 16 places in the afternoon preschool room.



## Our Guiding Objectives:

- Provide a high quality child-centred childcare service that is affordable for families most at risk of disadvantage enabling parents to engage in employment, training and education opportunities
- Provide an integrated childcare service that meets the needs of children from diverse backgrounds including Travellers, Rohingya and other new communities and children who require extra emotional, developmental and family support and families engaged with Tusla Social Workers
- Work with and support parents by providing practical parenting help and family support
- Provide a safe and stimulating environment for children of all backgrounds where they will be supported to reach their full potential in all areas of development
- Link families into support services that meet their needs
- To up skill staff in training programmes such as Parents Plus to enable them to provide more family and one to one support
- To facilitate access visits for families of children in care

Many of our childcare places are taken by participants on education and training programmes in St. Catherine's including the Moving On programme and Learning for Everyday Life and referrals from the Teen Parent Support Programme and our Traveller Development Programmes. A number of children with more complex needs including welfare concerns are also referred by external agencies such as Tusla Social Work service.

## 2015 Outcomes

- 144 childcare places were available between both services in 2015 and 224 individual children attended from 206 families
- 33 children graduated from Preschool between both services prepared for the transition to primary school
- The Childcare Service enabled more than 80 parents from disadvantaged communities to participate in employment, training or education in St. Catherine's and other centres by providing access to affordable childcare and family support
- Parents and carers were supported with their parenting by staff providing practical advice and support in areas including hygiene, nutrition and effective play. This led to observable improvements in their children's wellbeing
- Each child's welfare was prioritised and their needs met via a range of supports. Through monitoring and recording the child's wellbeing the effectiveness of interventions put in place can be measured. This was backed up by feedback from third parties, such as Social Workers, working with some families
- Parents and teachers reported that children attending the After School service became observably better at completing their homework and developed good homework habits
- 4 volunteers assisted in Childcare in 2015

- St. Catherine’s Childcare Service provided a safe, secure and child friendly location for access visits for families with children in care. Four families, referred by Tusla availed of the service
- St Catherine’s Childcare received €16,988 under the Childcare Capital Grant 2015 to replace the soft playground surface and €404.98 for the upgrade of ICT equipment
- Kilkenny Road Childcare received €399.99 under the Childcare Capital Grant 2015 for the upgrade of ICT equipment
- Both Childcare centres are participating in the Siolta Quality Assurance programme and will work towards achieving the Siolta Quality Assurance award over the next 2 years

### Events/Activities

- National Pyjama Day, held in March raised €208 for Irish Autism Action
- The Children’s Christmas Party was held on the 22nd December in the Seven Oaks and was attended by staff, parents, carers and Santa
- Our Preschool Graduation was held in June. 22 children from St Catherine’s and 11 from the Kilkenny Road received their certificates of attendance for the year. The event was attended by parents and guardians
- We had an end of year Fun Day in June for all the crèche and preschool children. Different fun activities were organised for the children including a visit from Dave’s Jungle

### Parent’s Feedback in 2015

“Very happy with the childcare, great staff, services, my son absolutely loves it there, keep it up! Will be looking forward to September”

“I have recommended St. Catherine's childcare services to people before and would again. Keep up the good work. There will be many happy children going on to big school.”

“Thank you for the patience, love, kindness and warmth that all the teachers showed the whole year to our child.”

“All the staff that has been around my child are wonderful. She talks about them all and is very happy with them. Thank you to everyone in the Wobbler Room who have taken care of her! Absolutely wonderful staff.”

# St. Catherine's Teen Parent Support Programme Carlow, Kilkenny & Tipperary South

The TPSP is a free, confidential support service for teenage parents, their children and their families in Carlow and Kilkenny. TPSP offer antenatal and postnatal support to teenage mothers and fathers up until the child is 2 years of age. The main emphasis of the TPSP is school retention, parenting and sexual health. The TPSP team offers one to one support, advice and information to meet the needs of the teen parent and their families.

Supports offered include:

- Support, information and advocacy on a range of issues including parenting, welfare rights and entitlements, legal issues, education and training opportunities, childcare options
- Heighten awareness of teen parenthood amongst mainstream teen service providers.
- Enabling teen parents to stay in and/or return to mainstream education.
- Providing teen parents and their children with opportunity for social interaction/integration thus avoiding social isolation.
- Providing young people with appropriate information and support to make healthy sexual choices

## 2015 Outcomes

- Of the 11 national TPSP programmes the Carlow/Kilkenny/Tipperary South TPSP is the only TPSP delivering a service across three counties
- TPSP received 43 new referrals in 2015. 24 took up the service, 3 in Tipperary South, 10 in Kilkenny and 11 in Carlow. 13 cases were referred by Midwifery, 2 by Tusla Social Workers, 3 self-referred, 2 were referred by Tusla Aftercare Workers, 1 by Home School Liaison, 1 by Finglas TPSP, 1 by a Juvenile Liaison Officer and 1 referred by Kilkenny Employment for Youth (KEY)
- The Carlow/Kilkenny/Tipperary South TPSP were engaged actively with 48 teen parents and their families at the end of 2015
- 11 teenage parents were being supported to remain in mainstream secondary education. This represents 23% of teen parents engaged in the project overall.
- 1 teen parent continued in third level education while 4 started on the St. Catherine's QQI Level 4 Moving On Programme
- 11 teen mothers, 6 teen fathers and 3 grandmothers engaged in ante and postnatal classes. Another 2 teen mothers received outreach antenatal classes. One expectant mother in her early twenties with poor mental health received individual outreach ante natal classes
- TPSP visited 35 secondary schools in Carlow, Kilkenny and Tipperary South to provide information, advice and support for students who are pregnant and those who are parents
- 37 cases were closed in 2015

## St. Catherine's Traveller Programmes

St. Catherine's Traveller programmes aim to achieve social justice and equality outcomes for Travellers in Carlow. Developments in 2015 include:

- Additional resources were provided by the HSE in 2015 with the recruitment of a Traveller Mental Health Liaison Nurse and a Traveller Public Health Nurse. Both posts were very welcome and are a huge support to the Travelling community and our Traveller programmes in our work to address health challenges experienced by participants.
- Traveller programme staff upskilled via training in Interculturalism, WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan), Drug Awareness, Tusla Meitheal (Family Support), Cancer Screening, Defibrillator and First Aid, Asthma, Domestic Violence and Blood Pressure training
- The Traveller Community Development Worker and Men's Health Worker, supported by the Teen Parenting Programme, delivered a Traveller specific pre-development parenting programme targeting young Traveller couples
- There was a noticeable increase in men accessing services and participating in programmes

### Traveller Community Development and Family Support

This programme works with Travellers in County Carlow and its environs and has developed informal learning opportunities that provide spaces for the community to understand and practice community development. The model of delivery of the planned programmes enables participants to evaluate their own learning, engage in personal and social development and collective action. The main areas of focus are education, housing, family support, health and welfare.

This programme aims to maximize Traveller participation in both activities and issues which matter to Travellers in County Carlow. It works towards increasing Traveller involvement, participation and representation on decision making bodies and on Travellers capacity to engage with these issues and advocate for themselves and their families. Capacity building is done through both individual and group work. Staff support and advocate on behalf of Travellers on issues including family support, education, health, housing and welfare issues. Interagency work is an integral part of the community development and family support programme and staff work extensively with a range of agencies and bodies.

#### 2015 Outcomes

- 61 Travellers participated in groups including Driver Theory, Swimming, Water Aerobics, Healthy Lifestyles, Sewing and Zumba Dance with health inputs on cardiovascular health, breast screening, mental health, addiction and domestic violence. Health promotion, education and housing were development themes in the groups, and these informed the community development processes, feeding into inter-agency groups

- 3 Traveller couples participated in a Traveller specific pre-development parenting programme targeting young Traveller couples
- 255 participants attended the drop-in service, and were supported with accommodation, welfare, health and education issues. Referrals were made to other services in St. Catherine's and externally
- The Carlow Traveller Network met seven times this year and focused on accommodation, Traveller Pride and other issues
- Travellers participated as members of the Carlow Traveller Interagency Group and the Education and Accommodation sub groups, the Regional Traveller Health Unit and HSE Traveller Health Unit

## **Traveller Pride Day**

Building on last year's success, the 2015 Traveller Pride was extended to a three day festival. Day one was Culture Day and featured the Navan Traveller Workshop's Living History exhibition including a Barrel top wagon and campsite with a shelter tent and working tinsmith. Local families brought items for display including another barrel top wagon and examples of Traveller crafts and recited poetry and sang songs. A photography exhibition presented past and present lives of Travellers. Crafts made by the women's groups and work carried out by the Men's shed were displayed. Over 100 people attended.

A Cancer Awareness Event was held on day two and was aimed at local Traveller families. The event featured speakers from local and national support services including Carlow Eist Cancer Support, the Marie Keating Foundation and the Irish Cancer Society with a focus on raising awareness, the importance of screening, how to access screening and the benefit of early detection for recovery. Over 60 people attended.

The Festival culminated with a night of live performances in the Visual Arts Centre featuring local and national Traveller performers of all ages. This was a fantastic success and was attended by approximately 200 people, the majority of whom were Travellers. The Festival was very successful and attendees reported a great sense of pride fostered in Traveller identity. The number of men participating and attending events was very strong.

## **Traveller Men's Health Work**

The Men's Health Program covers Counties Carlow and Kilkenny. The programme works to improve Traveller Men's health including cardio vascular health, mental health and to raise cancer awareness. It also works to increase Traveller men's participation around issues that affect the community. 2015 saw the expansion of the Men's Shed and its' official opening in October 2015. The camper van continued to be very effective in outreach in terms of providing information/education and one to one support.

The programs objectives are to:

- Increase awareness of good health practice
- Increase awareness and uptake of health services
- Ensure equal treatment for Traveller men by service providers
- Promote culturally appropriate services

- Provide drop-in and outreach service to men and support them in accessing services

## 2015 Outcomes

- 28 men in Carlow and 22 men in Kilkenny engaged in football and cardio-vascular programmes. They were also engaged in outreach and one to one work through the camper van
- 8 men engaged in the Travellers Men's Shed, mainly in woodwork and repairs and a crib was made for the community garden in St. Mary's Park. 4 men engaged in garden work and 3 men worked on bike repairs
- 15 men received advice and information in terms of their physical health and 20 in term of their mental health
- There were 271 client engagements in 2015 with 107 drop-ins and through the drop in 164 outreach contacts

## Community Traveller Health Workers

The CTHW programme aims to improve health outcomes for Traveller families in Carlow. The programme is a needs-based response that supports Travellers, their children and their families and aims to improve participants' awareness and uptake of health services. The main focus is on cardiovascular health, diabetes and cancer screening.

The CTHWs facilitate a drop-in service for Traveller families three mornings per week to provide information and support around health needs such as doctor appointments, medical card renewals and cancer screening appointments. The CTHP represents and promotes representation of Travellers on the various different health committees and fora, to influence policies and practices which impact on the lives of Travellers.

## 2015 Outcomes

- There were 1080 client engagements in 2015 through the drop in and outreach service
- An estimated 250 people engaged with CTHP, with approximately 80 of those being new referrals. Appointments and referrals were made to internal and external programs as appropriate.
- 403 referrals were made to health services and other service providers internally and externally
- Culture Awareness Training was delivered to 14 staff of St. Luke's Hospital. This helped to create more positive attitudes towards Travellers and develop more culturally appropriate responses to their health needs.
- 19 Traveller women engaged in health education groups focused on physical and mental health using creative methodologies. Health inputs covered cholesterol, diabetes, blood pressure screening, weight management, stress management, domestic violence and cancer screening

## Community and Parental Education

St. Catherine's provide a range of community education courses designed to provide accessible courses at low cost to encourage people with no or low educational qualifications to re-engage in learning and training in a supported environment. The main courses provided are:

### Learning for Everyday Life (LFEL)

- LFEL is a 28 week QQI accredited course aimed at people disengaged from education and training with low levels of confidence that addresses basic learning needs while providing a Key Worker to work on the individual needs of the participant and their families
- Participants can achieve a Major Level 3 Award in General Learning completing six individual component modules including Maths, Communications, Personal Effectiveness, IT Skills, Office Procedures and Career Preparation
- The SOUL (Soft Outcomes Universal Learning) system is used to support one to one mentoring work and as a measurement of the personal development and growth of participants
- LFEL aims to progress participants into mainstream education, training and employment. One to one support and guidance is provided by the KCETB Adult Education and Guidance Service. Guest speakers also highlighted progression options from the Institute of Further education, BTEI, VTOS, Carlow College, St Anne's in Tullow and Carlow Institute of Technology
- Intensive family and personal support is provided through an allocated Key Worker to address family, health, social and other issues that act as barriers to participation and progression
- Participants have the opportunity of attending one hour ESOL training per week to help with English language skills

### Preparation for Work

This is a QQI accredited part-time 11 week course that provides participants with an opportunity to prepare for and gain experience in the labour market and to explore progression options. It is targeted at people with limited or no experience of working and works to provide the skills and confidence required to gain employment. One to one support is also provided on progression options and family and personal issues.

### Community Education Courses

St. Catherine's facilitates access to short term community based adult education courses designed to provide participants with a good experience of their first step back into education. These courses are low cost and accessible with a fee reduction for people in

receipt of social welfare. The courses provided in 2015 were Computers for Beginners, Computers for Improvers, Childcare, Yoga and Make Up & Nail Art and Ipad for Beginners and Improvers.

A number of Benefit 4 courses were also run in 2015. These courses were aimed at people with little or no computer experience and were either over 55 and/or in receipt of social welfare. Each free course provided 8 hours tuition in using the internet and email.

## **Family Support Work**

Family and individual support is provided to all participants. Support was provided for a wide range of issues including accommodation, domestic violence, sexual abuse, child protection and welfare, access, education and rights and entitlements.

Intensive support is also provided to families with children in care. This support coupled with the increased confidence and self-esteem that parents derive from participating in community education improves parental capacity by building on the strengths of parents. This can prevent children going into care as well as helping children return from care to their families.

## **2015 Outcomes**

- 30 candidates presented 102 QQI modules for accreditation. One external authentication took place and it highly commended the standard of work produced
- 10 Learning for Everyday Life (LFEL) participants achieved a QQI Level 3 Major Award in General Learning while 14 participants achieved component awards
- 12 of the LFEL group progressed into further education in the BTEI formal strand, VTOS and Carlow Institute of Further Education, 3 into part-time employment, 1 joined a Community Employment Scheme and 1 participant set up her own business
- The SOUL Record system showed significant personal growth and development amongst all LFEL course participants
- 19 participants enrolled on the Preparation for Work (PFW) course, 17 completed the course and 17 achieved QQI accreditation
- 17 participants successfully completed work placements
- 12 PFW participants progressed onto further education in the BTEI formal strand, VTOS, and Carlow Institute of Further Education with another 3 participants entering part-time employment
- 158 people participated in the short, generally evening Community Education courses. Evaluations of all courses were very positive
- 164 people completed Benefit 4 courses
- 38 families availed of family and individual support including families with children in care



# CREWE – The Carlow Rohingya Education and Work Experience Programme

Following on from the Carlow Rohingya Resettlement Programme (2009 – 2012) the CREWE project (Carlow Rohingya Education and Work Experience) commenced in February 2014 and ran until January 2015. The project was then extended and ran from March until June 2016. The aim of the CREWE Programme was *'To develop the targets groups capacity to seek and obtain training, education and employment, while also enhancing life, language and social skills, personal development and day to day interaction and integration with the local community'* (ERF application 2013).

The CREWE project was co-financed by the European Refugee Fund and was supported by the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. This project adopted an interagency approach with funding and/or practical support received from Carlow County Development Partnership, Carlow Regional Youth Services, Carlow Local Authorities, Kilkenny Carlow ETB, Carlow Enterprise Board and the Department of Social Protection. 17 members of the Rohingya community participated in the extended programme and another 9 members of the community were supported from the initial programme.

The extended project focused on:

- Supported work experience placements
- Themed workshops focusing on the world of work including work options, basic employee entitlements, understanding job advertisements, sourcing employment, employment schemes, workplace etiquette and behaviour and external supports
- One to one support with progression into education, training or employment including developing Individual Learning Plans and supporting those who have progressed into further education, training and employment
- Language Skills and Social Learning through non accredited practical based learning opportunities such as horticulture, sewing and knitting and cultural studies
- One to one support and advice with personal and social issues
- Enterprise Programme to raise awareness of self-employment services and supports

## 2015 Outcomes

- 7 participants gained work experience and 2 participants secured employment
- Approximately 70 hours of one to one support was accessed between drop in and scheduled appointments. Issues included Social Welfare queries, Medical Card Queries, job applications, progression planning and family support
- 67 referrals were made on participants behalf to agencies such as the HSE, Citizens Information, Carlow County Council and the Department of Social Protection (DSP)
- 16 participants attended non-accredited training courses including Language for Work, Cultural Studies, Crafts for Women, Gardening and Entrepreneurial Skills
- 26 members of the Rohingya community attended information meetings with local agencies and services designed to respond to participants needs and raise awareness of these needs on an on-going basis. Agencies included DSP, Carlow Adult Literacy Agency and County Carlow Development Partnership

# Moving On Programme for Young Mothers

The Moving On Programme aims to enhance the lifelong prospects of young mothers in County Carlow by enabling them to achieve inclusion in education, training, enterprise opportunities, the local labour market and their own communities. The main aims of the programme include:

- Enhancing the personal and social development of the participant
- The extension of the participants education and learning to enhance their life prospects
- Supporting the participants' parenting role and providing family support
- Engaging in advocacy and work to promote social change
- Raising aspirations
- Enabling young mothers to develop career pathways and progress to further education, training and employment

According to Treoir, lone parent households continue to be at high risk of poverty with a rate of 28.4%. This is a 100% increase from the 2006 figures and compared to a 16% at risk of poverty rate in the general population. The consistent poverty rate in 2013 was 8.2% compared with 7.7% in 2012. Lone parents are also ten times more likely to be welfare dependent and nine times more likely to be on Rent Supplement.

The Moving On Programme seeks to address the issues of poverty and marginalisation for young mothers by providing:

- A 40 week community education programme
- A QQI Level 4 Major Award in Applied Employment Skills, equivalent to a Leaving Certificate qualification
- 1 to 1 personal development and support using the SOUL (Soft Outcomes Universal Learning) system to measure the personal development growth of participants
- Work experience and career guidance
- Group work projects such as a certified enterprise project

## 2015 Outcomes

- 6 participants completed the programme with 4 gaining the overall QQI Major Award
- 3 people progressed into mainstream further education and training
- 1 person secured employment
- The SOUL record measured significant improvements in all participants levels of self-esteem, confidence and social skills
- 20 participants started the 2015/16 programme

## Challenges

The 2014/2015 programme was challenging for participants as it was the first year no training allowance was paid and participants had to pay a weekly contribution for childcare costs. This cost proved too much for a number of participants who dropped out early in the programme. Funding has since been secured to cover total childcare costs for all participants on the 2015/16 programme.

# St. Catherine's Services for Older People

## Meals on Wheels

St Catherine's Meals-On-Wheels service provides hot nutritious meals to older people who are unable to cook for themselves allowing them to live independently in their own homes. The daily visit from the volunteer delivering the meal also provides social contact for recipients helping to alleviate isolation while also monitoring their well-being. Some Meals on Wheels facts and figures include:

- The service operates 5 days per week 51 weeks of the year including Christmas Day
- The service is staffed by a Co-ordinator, Chef/Kitchen Manager and Kitchen Assistant and a team of over 50 volunteers who help prepare, cook and deliver meals daily
- St. Catherine's Meals on Wheels caters for up to 100 recipients per day
- Meals are provided to 3 outreach services, Bethany House Alzheimer's Unit and Leighlinbridge and Fenagh Meals on Wheels services
- The cost of the main meal and dessert is €5.00.
- The service works in partnership with the Public Health Nurses to ensure that all referrals meet the specific dietary requirements of recipients including high protein, diabetic, gluten free and pureed meals
- The service maintains a Birthday book ensuring all recipients birthdays and other significant events are remembered and celebrated. The cards are made by volunteers and participants from the Delta Centre

## 2015 Outcomes

- Approximately 20,144 meals were cooked and delivered in 2015
- St. Catherine's provided training to the Tullow Day Care Centre to pilot the Standard of Excellence quality process. The Standards of Excellence Research and Assessment Framework was formally launched by Imelda Byrne, from RTE's ICA Bootcamp in May. It is now being used by local Meals on Wheels services and work continued to promote the Framework to national Meals on Wheels services
- Meals on Wheels volunteers attended the annual Christmas volunteer party
- New volunteers were recruited through Carlow Volunteer Centre, local press, newsletters and existing volunteers
- Donations funded new equipment and utensils and a new kitchen layout improved operations
- 2 people attended dementia training

## Socially Monitored Alarms/Senior Alerts Service

St Catherine's, as a member of the Carlow Older Persons Network has coordinated the provision of Socially Monitored Alarms to older people in Carlow town, Tullow, Leighlinbridge and surrounding areas since 2003. People over 65 with a landline or mobile can apply for the alarm. The alarm is monitored 24 hours a day ensuring older people in need can summon help instantly in emergency situations. It provides peace of mind and security for older people and their families allowing them to live independently in their own homes. The

service can be accessed directly by people over 65 and referrals are also made through Public Health Nurses, the Gardai and local Community Alert representatives.

## **2015 Outcomes**

- 93 applications were made in total. 41 new alarms and 29 pendants were installed while 23 alarms were reused and reinstalled
- Pobal took on the administration of the renamed Senior Alerts Services (SAS) service in 2015 and training was completed on the new application process. The Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government fund the service
- Presentations on the SAS and Meals on Wheels service were made to the Carlow Older Persons Network, Hackettstown Day Care Centre, Carlow Kilkenny Age Friendly Forum and at a Carlow Library Information Morning

## **Carlow Older Persons Network**

St. Catherine's is a member of the Carlow Older Persons Network (COPN) that aims to engage with and support older people to fully participate in community life. The Network brings together individual older people and groups and local agencies to work collaboratively to identify and respond to needs and to share information and resources. The Network actively informs older people and the wider community about issues affecting older people and the activities of the Carlow Older Person's Network.

## **2015 Activities**

- The Autumn Tea Dance took place in October and included a Fancy Dress competition
- The Spring Dance took place in March with a competition for an Easter Bonnet
- Bealtaine week in May hosted a number of events for older people including the launch of the Meals on Wheels Standard of Excellence Framework and St. John's Caring Centre Hackettstown Meals on Wheels Leaflet launch
- The Fish and Chip Project presented over 200 hand knitted blankets for new born babies in Africa in Bealtaine week

# Want to Work

Want to Work was piloted in 2014 by St. Catherine's. It is modelled on the successful Work Winner programme developed and run by Tipperary Youth Services since 2011. It provides young people most at risk of long term joblessness with meaningful work experience in jobs they are interested in, along with tailored training and high levels of personal support. Want to Work aims to progress participants into jobs or career related training or education. The 2015 programme started in November.

## Content

- The first 6 weeks are spent in job preparation. This includes numeracy and literacy assessments by KCETB, manual handling, first aid and workplace safety training and one to one meetings and workshops to discuss career goals and plans
- Work placements are sought in areas participants are interested in and have an aptitude for
- Participants are enrolled on the First Steps Internship programme for 20 to 30 hours per week for 26 weeks and both the participant and employer are supported to make the placement a success
- Career related training is identified and provided making the participant more employable at the end of the placement
- The group meets weekly to provide personal support, attend training and to build peer support and for one to one reviews

## 2015 Outcomes

- Approximately 265 letters were sent via the DSP to qualifying under 25's in Carlow and over 60 people attended the open day
- 20 participants were selected and the pre-employment phase of the programme commenced in November and continued into January 2015
- Pre-employment training was provided in first aid, manual handling, communication skills, team working, career planning and CV preparation
- One to one work was carried out with the participants to identify the areas of work they were interested in
- 20 participants started this phase of the programme and 17 completed it. Work placements started from January 2016

## Other Activities and Events

### Strengthening Families Programme

Strengthening Families is a 14 week skills based course for parents and teens from 12 to 16 years. It is designed to build positive family relationships and give families the practical skills to deal with the challenges and outside influences that impact on all families. Each evening of the course involved classes in parent skills, teen skills and family life skills training. The groups were run by facilitators trained in the SFP and with experience of working with young people and families in the community.

Strengthening Families ran from January 2015 and was based in and led by Bagenalstown Family Resource Centre. It included families and facilitators from Bagenalstown Family Resource Centre, Forward Steps Tullow, Carlow Regional Youth Services and County Carlow Development Partnership. St. Catherine's referred 5 families to the programme. Four families completed the programme. One family left Ireland during the programme but all five were very positive about the benefits of the programme to their families.

### The Plots Community Garden and Allotments

The Plots Community Garden/Allotments are located in the Plots between St. Mary's Park and Rathnapish. The gardens were established in 2013 and contain a small training centre under the management of St. Catherine's Community Services Centre and 30 allotments.

In 2015 St. Catherine's worked with the garden committee and Carlow County Council to ensure the sustainability and continued development of the community gardens/allotments.

#### 2015 Outcomes

- A total of 36 growers and 3 organisations were supported
- External organisations such as Delta Centre, REHAB Care and Éist took up allotments
- A cover was purchased for the compost area
- A chicken coop and chickens were purchased for the allotments
- A summer party and a Harvest Festival was held in the gardens for the growers and their children
- A polytunnel was purchased for the growers use in the allotments
- Turkeys were raised for growers for Christmas
- The paths around between the allotments were resurfaced to ensure ease of access for all

#### Successes

This was the third full year of the Community Gardens/Allotments. The main success has been to keep the Community Garden/Allotments full and to further develop it by adding a polytunnel and chickens. Its' continued success has been down to the dedication of the residents on the committee and their passion to ensure it continues to thrive. Demand for

allotments is strong as the nine allotments that became available during the year were quickly taken up by other growers.

### **St. Catherine's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations**

St. Catherine's celebrated 40 years of delivering community services in Carlow in 2015. The event was marked with:

- A Reception hosted by the Cathaoirleach and members of Carlow County Council in the Council Chambers to mark 40 years of service to the people of Carlow
- A 16 page Supplement was published with the Carlow Nationalist profiling the organisation and its services
- The cutting of St. Catherine's 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday cake at a party attended by staff, volunteers and service users in St. Catherine's

### **Counselling Service**

St. Catherine's internal counselling service responds to the emotional needs of programme participants and service users. Clients are referred by Programme Co-ordinators and Managers and include teen parents and their families, members of the Travelling community and new communities, young mothers and their families and other service users.

The service is delivered in conjunction with PCI College, Dublin and is managed by their Practice Supervisor. Clients with complex needs are referred to specialist counsellors or mental health services by our Practice Supervisor. In 2015 over 90 hours of counselling was delivered to 15 people.

## Inter-Agency Collaborative Work

St Catherine's were represented on or worked with the following Committees/Working Groups in 2015:

- Carlow Traveller Network
- Regional Traveller Health Network
- Carlow/Kilkenny Traveller's Health Committee
- Carlow Traveller Interagency Group
- Carlow Integration Forum
- Tusla Child and Family Partnership, Prevention and Family Support structures
- Teen Parent Support Programme National Advisory Committee
- County Carlow Public Participation Network (PPN) and Local Community and Development Committee (LCDC)
- Aontas Community Education Meetings
- Carlow Older Persons Network
- Carlow Older Persons Forum
- Carlow Kilkenny Joint Older Persons Service Providers Forum
- Carlow Age Friendly County Committee
- Community Education Network
- County Carlow Children and Young Person's Services Committee and the Parenting and Child Welfare and Protection Sub-Groups
- Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
- Irish Traveller Movement
- Comhairle na nOg
- HSE Traveller Health Unit and sub groups



## Additional Services based in St Catherine's

- **Carlow Citizen Information Carlow**

Citizens Information is a voluntary organisation serving the people of Carlow since May 1973, Their mission is to increase people's awareness of their rights and entitlements and to empower them by providing a free, confidential, independent, impartial, accurate, integrated and comprehensive information and advocacy service.

- **Accord**

Accord is a voluntary organisation that aims to promote a deeper understanding of Christian marriage. They offer people the means to safeguard and nourish their marriage and family relationships through the provision of pre marriage courses and counselling services.

- **Legal Aid**

Legal Aid provides legal services in relation to civil law matters to eligible persons. These legal services include legal advice and legal aid. Legal aid means representation by a solicitor or barrister in civil proceedings in the District, Circuit, High and Supreme Courts.

- **Alcoholics Anonymous**

AA is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

- **Al Anon**

Al Anon Is a support organisation for families, relatives and friends whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking,

- **Grow**

A Mental Health Organisation, which helps people who have suffered, or are suffering, from mental health problems. Members are helped to recover from all form of breakdown, or indeed, to prevent such happening.

- **Overeaters Anonymous**

Overeaters Anonymous offers a program of recovery from compulsive eating. Worldwide meetings provide a fellowship of experience, strength and hope where members respect one another's anonymity. OA charges no dues or fees; it is self-supporting through member contributions.

- **National Advocacy Service**

The National Advocacy Service (NAS) was set up to provide independent, representative advocacy services for people with disabilities.