

St. Catherine's Community Services Centre



Annual Report 2017

Foreword from the Chair

Our 2017 Annual Report indicates 2017 has been another huge year of positive outcomes and achievements for St. Catherine's that builds on our steady progress of previous years and further consolidates our position as an effective Community Services Centre.

Management and staffs' ability to encourage community involvement and form successful working partnerships has been the driver of our success. In reviewing our ability to adjust our services to meet changing needs the Board acknowledges the determined focus of all staff to deliver our services. Under the leadership of the Director of Services, Niall Morris and our long serving staff coupled with the enthusiasm of our new staff, we have seen our newest programmes such as the Carlow Catalyst Programme for Women and the Digital Skills for Citizens programme flourish.

For over 40 years there has always been an unsung quiet group of volunteers who are pivotal in providing the services enjoyed by users of the centre. Their only reward is the knowledge they are helping the community. Their help is greatly appreciated. The Board of Directors are the guiding hand of the operation, composed of members who give their time voluntarily and to whom I wish to express my sincere gratitude for their time and support during the year.

Finally to all our funders and sponsors, we are grateful for the support and confidence we receive. We thank them for their trust and commit ourselves to continue to effectively deliver the programmes they entrust to us.

Adrian Dunlevy - September 2018

Note from the Director of Services

2017 was another busy year for us. We aim to add new services and develop existing services to meet the demands of the communities we serve where possible. 2017 examples include:

- The Digital Skills for Citizens programme - offering free IT training to "non-liners"
- Tusla led Meitheal service to support young people and families facing challenges
- The Carlow Catalyst programme for Women – offering a range of training and developmental supports

We could not continue to operate and grow without the support of a large number of people so I would sincerely like to thank:

- All our staff for their hard work and dedication
- All our volunteers and supporters without whom we couldn't survive
- Our Board members for their guidance
- 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 continue to support us and use our services

Niall Morris - September 2018

2017 In Figures

147

Socially Monitored Alarms and Pendants were Installed

4 Teen Mothers moved into further training or education

8 supported to stay in secondary school

19,417

Meals on Wheels Cooked and Delivered

21

QQI Level 3 module awards earned by 13 Making Connections learners including 2 Majors

897 Learners

attended **94** Digital Skills courses countywide

8 Mothers from Moving On went on to further education/training/jobs

10 earned QQI Level 4 Major Awards

1150+

Health related engagements with the Travelling Community

61

Members of the Traveller Community participated in pre-development programmes

41

Traveller Men engaged in health related group activities

8

Participants from the LFEL and PFW courses secured employment

105

QQI Awards delivered in Community Education

19

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

63

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

70+

Volunteers engaged in St. Catherine's

€45k

Saved by 99 savers in our new Community Savings Club

187

Children attended our 2 childcare services weekly

New in 2017

- Digital Skills for Citizens programme - offering free IT training to “non-liners”
 - Tusla led Meitheal service to support young people and families facing challenges
- Carlow Catalyst programme for Women – offering a range of training and developmental supports

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
- Reduce 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 and 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 2017. 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 40 volunteers attended.

Our Board

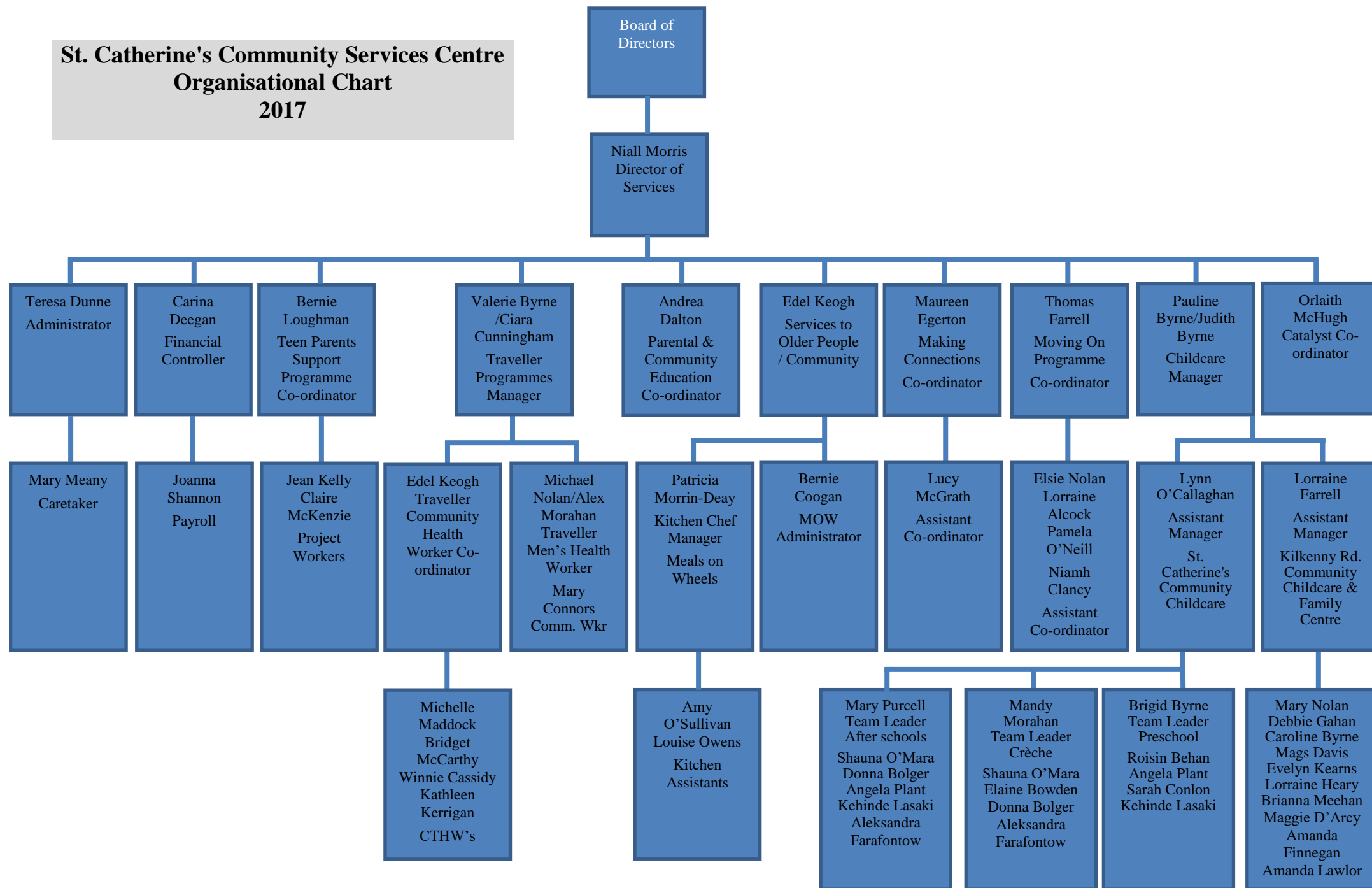
We would like to thank our Board members for their time and commitment to St. Catherine's:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| - Adrian Dunlevy (Chair) | - Frank Comerford (Secretary) |
| - Brian Buckley (Treasurer) | - Marian Duffy |
| - Maura Dowling | - Fr. Tom Little |
| - Sean Scanlon | - Eamonn Ellis |

St. Catherine's Board met 10 times in 2017. The Audit sub committee met 3 times. The members are the Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and the Director of Services.

A special thanks to Fr. Bill Kemmy who resigned as a Director in 2017.

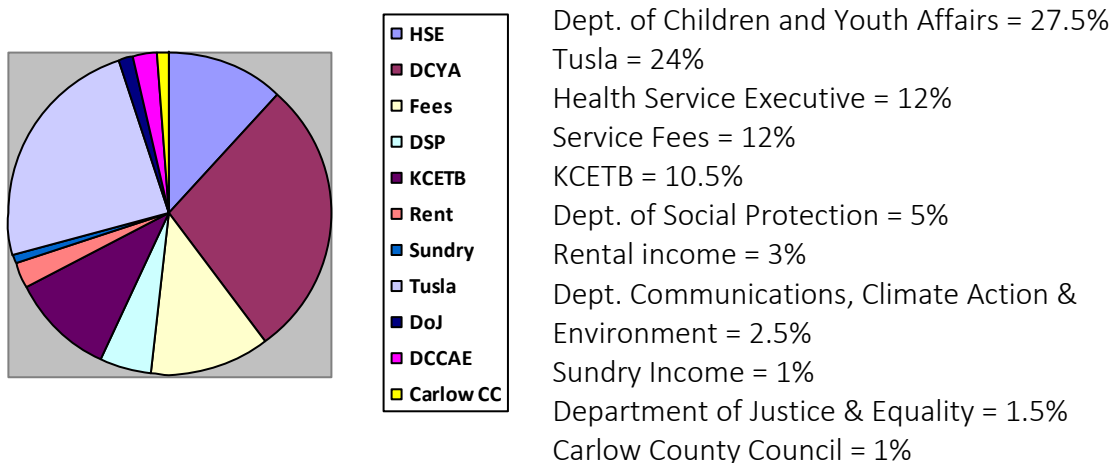
St. Catherine's Community Services Centre Organisational Chart 2017



Financial Overview

| 2017 Summary Profit and Loss Account | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | 2017 | 2016 |
| Grant Funding | 1,479,492 | 1,292,431 |
| Income from Services | 215,132 | 269,840 |
| Rental Income | 46,467 | 45,250 |
| Sundry Income | 14,718 | 26,807 |
| | | |
| Turnover | 1,755,809 | 1,634,328 |
| | | |
| Programme & Administration Expenses | -1,660,212 | -1,601,979 |
| | | |
| Plus Other Operating Income | | |
| Government Grants Received & Released | 6,624 | 6,624 |
| | | |
| Operating Surplus/Deficit | 102,221 | 38,973 |
| | | |
| Plus Bank Interest Received | 527 | 1,152 |
| | | |
| Interest payable | 0 | 0 |
| | | |
| Surplus | 102,748 | 40,125 |

St. Catherine's Sources of Funding 2017



Sundry Income includes funding from Carlow County Development Partnership, Leargas, ESB, St. Stephen's Green Trust 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 and thank our funders, service users and donors for their continuing support. Our funders are listed on our end page.

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

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 16 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 4th 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

St. Catherine's 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 33 places in the ECCE or free pre-school rooms 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

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 are also referred by external agencies such as Tusla Social Work service.

2017 Outcomes

- 155 childcare places were available between both services and 187 individual children attended
- 39 children graduated from Preschool prepared for the transition to primary school
- The Childcare Service enabled more than 50 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
- Parents and teachers reported that children attending the After School service became observably better at completing their homework and developed good homework habits
- 2 volunteers assisted in Childcare in 2017
- St Catherine's Childcare received €4348 under the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) Early Years Capital Grant to purchase outdoor equipment
- Two staff members completed a training programme for early childhood educators on the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and guidelines
- One staff member completed the LINC Programme (Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years)

Events/Activities

- National Pyjama Day, held in March raised €257 for children's charities
- The Children's Christmas Party was held in December in the Seven Oaks and was attended by staff, parents, carers and Santa
- Our Preschool Graduation was held in June. All the children from St Catherine's and 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.

Parent's Feedback in 2017

"I'm very happy with the service"

"I want to use this opportunity to thank every member of the entire team for a job well done. We appreciate everyone of you from the Childcare Manager to all the other members. May you all have a blissful and pleasant summer. Thank you once again"

"Very pleasant and warm and welcoming staff. Very happy in all service aspects. Cannot complement enough"

"Very happy with the staff. Happy child, happy mammy"

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, Kilkenny and Tipperary South. 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 and 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 an opportunity for social interaction and integration thus avoiding social isolation
- Providing young people with appropriate information and support to make healthy sexual choices

2017 Outcomes

- TPSP received 35 new referrals in 2017. 25 took up the service, 4 in Tipperary South, 11 in Kilkenny and 10 in Carlow. 19 cases were referred by Midwifery, 1 by Tusla Social Workers, 1 by a public health nurse and there were 4 self-referrals
- The Carlow/Kilkenny/Tipperary South TPSP were engaged actively with 63 teen parents and their families at the end of 2017. 16 cases were closed in 2017
- 8 teen parents were being supported to remain in mainstream secondary education
- 4 teen mothers progressed onto our QQI Level 4 Moving On Programme for Mothers
- 5 teen mothers and 1 teen father engaged in ante and postnatal classes. Another teen mother and father engaged in outreach antenatal classes
- TPSP visited 35 secondary schools in the region to provide information, advice and support for students who are pregnant and those who are parents
- Of the 11 national TPSP programmes the Carlow/Kilkenny/Tipperary South TPSP is the only TPSP delivering a service across three counties

St. Catherine's Traveller Programmes

St. Catherine's Traveller programmes aim to achieve social justice and equality outcomes for Travellers in Carlow. Developments in 2017 include:

- On-going representation at the Carlow Traveller Interagency Group (CTIG) and sub groups. The work was supported by staff from St. Catherine's
- Development of Community understanding of the recognition of Traveller ethnicity through workshops and planned meetings
- In collaboration with the Traveller Mental Health nurse and Public Health nurse more individual support and mental health awareness information was provided to groups, families and individuals
- Traveller programme staff upskilled via training in the areas of mental health, Tusla Meitheal process, Suicide and Survive, National Asthma screening updates, medical card updates, domestic violence, cardio-vascular training including blood pressure and weight and stress management training
- Advocacy training facilitated by Carlow College for Primary Health Care Workers and members of the Carlow Traveller Forum
- The Traveller Programmes held a variety of open mornings on mental health including a Mensana event on wellbeing, and child immunisation and cancer screening services
- Participation from programme staff in the Carlow Suicide Prevention Planning Group

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 in 2017 were supporting recognition of Traveller Ethnicity within the community, 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 housing, family support, health, 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.

2017 Outcomes

- 48 Travellers participated in groups including Swimming, Water Aerobics, Gym, Literacy, Healthy Lifestyles and Music 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 outcomes were fed into inter-agency groups

- 159 individual contacts were made through the drop-in and outreach service in 2017 and were supported with housing, welfare, health and education issues.
- The Carlow Traveller Forum met seven times this year and focused on Housing, Traveller Ethnicity, and health. The Carlow Traveller Forum was also supported by the Traveller Interagency – Education subcommittee to apply for funding to the Department of Justice and Equality to recruit a Development Worker to promote, recruit and support further the development of the Traveller Forum
- Travellers participated as members of the Irish Traveller Movement accommodation working group, the Carlow Traveller Interagency Group and its Education and Accommodation sub groups, the Regional Traveller Health Unit and HSE Traveller Health Unit
- Staff represented St. Catherine's on the County Carlow Women's Forum and the Carlow Suicide Prevention Planning Group

Traveller Pride Festival

The 2017 Traveller Pride Festival continued as a three day event. Overall the Festival was successful and attendees reported a great sense of pride fostered in Traveller. Day one was Culture Day and featured a tin smith demonstration, a craft and culture exhibition with pieces from the women's groups, Men's shed and from local families and a photography exhibition of the past and present lives of Travellers. A Traveller woman sang on the day and over 80 Travellers and over 20 members of the settled community attended.

The following evening featured a night of live performances in the Visual Arts Centre with local and national Traveller performers. This was enjoyed by all and was attended by approximately 150 people, the majority of whom were Travellers.

A health morning was held on day three and was aimed at local Traveller families. The CTHW's provided information and literature on particular health topics including Diabetes, Cardiovascular health, mental health and cancer screening.

Traveller Men's Health Work

The Men's Health Programme 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.

2017 Outcomes

- 14 men in Kilkenny participated in football and cardio-vascular programmes
- 3 men in Kilkenny engaged with family support and the cardio-vascular and mental health programmes, with additional support through the Mental Health Nurse
- 18 men engaged in the Men's Shed in the Wetlands, Kilkenny
- 3 men from Bestfield, Carlow engaged in pre-development work and basket weaving

- 3 men engaged in the St. Catherine's Travellers Men's Shed, Carlow and worked on woodwork projects, gardening and the refurbishment of a cart. Health inputs were delivered including support from the Mental Health Nurse.
- There were 244 client engagements in 2017 through drop-ins and outreach

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, mental health and cancer awareness and screening services.

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, to influence policies and practices which impact on the lives of Travellers.

2017 Outcomes

- Culture Awareness Training was delivered to 39 people from local agencies including Ardu, Drugs Outreach Workers, Carlow Regional Youth Services, St. Vincent de Paul Monastery Hostel and St. Luke's Hospital staff
- There were 714 client engagements in 2017 through the drop in and outreach service
- 23 Traveller women engaged in health education groups focused on physical and mental health. Health inputs covered cholesterol, diabetes, blood pressure screening, weight management, stress management and cancer screening
- Two Health Open mornings were held in 2017 and focused on chronic conditions, heart health, immunisations, SCIDS and child development. 26 women attended
- The Health workers attended training in the areas of diabetes, blood pressure and heart health and SAOR training (Support, Ask & Assess, Offer assistance & Refer)
- The Health workers were represented on the Traveller Culture Awareness training evaluation steering committee and the Traveller Mental Health Liaison Nurse evaluation steering committee

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 29 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
- Intensive family and personal support is provided to address family, health, social and other issues that act as barriers to participation and progression
- Participants have the opportunity of attending ESOL training 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 2017 were Computers for Beginners, MS Word, Yoga, Make Up & Nail Art, Ipad for Beginners and Improvers, Healthy Eating and Nutrition and Tablets/Smartphones for Beginners and Improvers.

Digital Skills for Citizens Programme

The Digital Skills for Citizens programme commenced in 2017. St Catherine's successfully applied for a grant to provide free IT Training. Each free course provided 10 hours tuition in using the internet and email. These courses were aimed at people with little or no computer experience who satisfied eligibility criteria.

Community and Parental Education 2017 Outcomes

- 20 candidates presented 105 QQI modules for accreditation. One external authentication took place and it highly commended the standard of work produced
- 9 Learning for Everyday Life (LFEL) participants achieved a QQI Level 3 Major Award in General Learning while 5 participants achieved component awards. 14 completed a food safety module and achieved an EHO Primary Certificate in Food Safety
- 6 of the LFEL group progressed into further education in the BTEI formal strand, VTOS and Carlow Institute of Further Education, 5 into part-time employment and 1 joined a Community Employment Scheme and 1 joined Rehabcare.
- The SOUL Record system showed significant personal growth and development amongst all LFEL course participants
- 20 participants enrolled on the Preparation for Work (PFW) course and 15 achieved QQI accreditation
- 15 participants successfully completed work placements
- 9 PFW participants achieved a manual handling accreditation
- 9 PFW participants achieved QQI Level 5 Occupational First Aid.
- 9 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 and 2 joined CE schemes
- 1049 people participated in the short, generally evening Community Education courses and the DSCG Courses. Evaluations of all courses were very positive
- 94 DSCG courses were organised and 897 participants took part in them. 16 of these were organised by our partner organisations including Carlow Enterprise Centre, Ballon Business and Training Centre, Forward Steps Family Resource Centre and Carlow Library Services
- The International Women's Group ran for 11 weeks in 2017 and 16 women attended.
- 38 families availed of family and individual support including families with children in care

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

SILC 2017 shows that households with one adult and one or more children had the highest deprivation rate in 2015 at 57.9%, over twice the national average of 25.5% and above the EU average. They also had the highest consistent poverty rate at 26.2%. 59% of lone parent households with one or more children experienced enforced deprivation. This compares to 29% of the general population. When the highest level of education of the head of household was lower secondary, 23% were at risk of poverty and over 14% were in consistent poverty. In contrast, just 8% of households with a third level degree or above were at risk of poverty, and 4% were in consistent poverty.

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

- A 42 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

2017 Outcomes

- 19 learners started the 2016/17 programme, with 14 gaining minor awards at QQI level 4 and 5.
- 11 learners completed the programme with 10 gaining the overall QQI level 4 Major Award in Employment Skills
- 4 learners progressed into mainstream further education at QQI Level 5
- 2 learners progressed into mainstream further education at QQI Level 7
- 2 learners secured employment
- The SOUL record measured significant improvements in all participants levels of self-esteem, confidence and social skills

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 2 outreach services, Bethany House Alzheimer's Unit in Carlow and Leighlinbridge Meals on Wheels services
- The cost of the main meal and dessert is €5.50.
- 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 handmade by volunteers and participants from the Delta Centre

2017 Outcomes

- 19,417 meals were cooked and delivered in 2017
- The Standards of Excellence Research and Assessment Framework promoted and supported other meals on Wheels services in Carlow to adopt the Framework to help services develop and benchmark their service
- New volunteers were recruited through Carlow Volunteer Centre, local press, newsletters and existing volunteers. Volunteers attended the Volunteer Centre's "Thank you event" and St. Catherine's annual Christmas volunteer party
- Meals on Wheels Volunteers were awarded a Carlow Volunteer Centre Paddy Looney Memorial Award in recognition of their service to their community
- New kitchen equipment and utensils were added in 2017 and the new layout has improved the operation of the kitchen
- The Senior Community Development Worker for Older Persons completed Designated Liaison Officer for Safeguarding Vulnerable adults training with the HSE

Socially Monitored Alarms/Senior Alerts Service

St Catherine's has coordinated the provision of the Senior Alerts Service 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 or their families and referrals are also made through Public Health Nurses, the Gardai and local Community Alert representatives. The SAS is administered by Pobal and funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development.

2017 Outcomes

- 147 applications were approved for new alarms, pendants and the reinstallation of used alarms
- Training was completed with Pobal on the administration of the SAS scheme
- Two presentations on the SAS and Meals on Wheels service were made to the HSE Public Health Nurse team in Carlow
- From 1st November 2017 no maintenance fee was charged for new landline or GSM applications

Carlow Age Friendly County

St. Catherine's is a member of the Carlow Age Friendly County Committee that is working to enable people in Carlow to age with security and dignity and with the capacity to participate fully in life. The voice of the older person is at the heart of the Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme.

2017 Activities

- St Catherine's participated in Age Friendly week by compiling and sending out an Information Pack to all our service users with details of a range of community and other services aimed at older people
- The Older Persons team assisted in the research and consultation process with older people that fed into the Carlow County Age Friendly 2017 - 2022 Action Plan

Making Connections

Making Connections is a KCETB funded Local Training Initiative that supports individuals who have become distanced from mainstream education and training programme and are experiencing isolation and marginalisation as a result of circumstances related to social and economic disadvantage.

Making Connections participants are referred from a range of agencies that support people who are in recovery from substance misuse and addiction, progressing from homelessness and those who are linked with the probationary and prison services.

Making Connections supports recovery through education, raising competency levels and offering tailored flexible training as well as meaningful daily activity. Recovery and social reintegration services are considered a guiding principle for substance misuse treatment (NDS) This supported environment offers the opportunity for learners to complete nationally recognised QQI level 3 modular and overall awards. The unique element of the programme is the 'one to one' delivery of the programme. The programme has the capacity for 18 learners.

Key Elements of the Programme

- One to one tuition
- Part –time flexible learning
- Individualised learning supports
- Learner paced learning
- Scheduled appointments
- Continuous in-take through referral systems

2017 Outcomes

- 13 Participants completed QQI accredited modules
- 21 QQI Level 3 Modules Certified
- 2 QQI Level 3 Major Awards achieved
- 1 External Authentication completed
- 17 participants participated in the Making Connections AONTAS STAR award project application process with 7 testimonials from support services and agencies
- 1 participant progressed into Community Employment, 1 progressed onto third level education and one participant secured seasonal employment

Outcomes also include structured daily activity and learner led responsibility for appointments. Learners reported an increased awareness of supports and opportunities in education and training options. Learners report renewed interest in personal development which has resulted in improved levels of self-confidence and self-esteem.

Carlow Catalyst Programme For Women

In May 2017 St Catherine's were awarded funding to deliver the Carlow Catalyst Programme for Women, as part of the European Social Fund Programme for Employment, Inclusion and Learning 2014 -2020. The programme is one of 18 funded nationally to promote gender equality. Catalyst will be delivered in Carlow town and county on an on-going basis up until spring 2020.

This programme targets women not in employment but not registered as unemployed with a view to building their self-confidence, raising their skills and increasing their future training, education or employment prospects. Certain social welfare payments are acceptable. For example if a potential participant is in receipt of a lone parent payment, a carers allowance, disability allowance or are classified as an adult dependent for social welfare purposes, then they are eligible to take part in the Catalyst programme.

The Catalyst Programme offers a range of training and developmental options including:

- Initial hobby based/personal development programmes
- Work related programmes such as the QQI accredited Preparation for Work programme. Information sessions facilitated by relevant local organisations/agencies
- Basic computer skills training
- Work related workshops

Interested participants, once registered, can pick and choose what supports are most relevant to them. Throughout their engagement with the programme, staff will be there to offer advice, support and guidance and to help participants explore and move towards employment or educational options relevant to their interests and needs.

While the programme specifically targets women not in employment or not registered as unemployed,

2017 Outcomes

- Project Coordinator appointed August 2017
- Steering Group Committee established with representation from 9 community, voluntary and statutory agencies
- 3 women's group established
- 3 hobby based training programmes commenced November 2017
- 19 women participated in and completed Personal Development course in Carlow
- 13 women participated in and completed Make Up Course in Carlow
- 7 women participated in and completed Personal Development course in Tullow
- 3 women registered with programme for one to one and future training options
- 18 women participated in CV master classes delivered by Carlow Jobs Club
- Approximately 90 women enquired about/engaged with the programme by year end 2017

The Plots Community Garden and Allotments

The Plots Community Garden/Allotments are located in the Plots between St. Mary's Park and Rathnapish. The garden was established in 2013 and contains two polytunnels, a chicken coop, tool shed, growers cabin and 33 allotments.

In 2017 St. Catherine's worked with the garden committee and Carlow County Council to ensure the sustainability and continued development of the community gardens/allotments.

2017 Outcomes

- A total of 30 growers and 2 organisations were supported
- External organisations including the Delta Centre and Lá Nua took up allotments
- Shelving was built in the polytunnel for growers to propagate their seeds and to allow more growing space
- A summer party was held in the gardens for the growers and their children
- Turkeys were raised for growers for Christmas
- A CE worker supported the work in the allotments
- Organic seeds were sourced for the growers from the Carlow Community Garden Network
- Apples trees were planted
- Funding was secured to extend the fence to create extra space for raised beds

Successes

This was the fifth full year of the community gardens/allotments. The community continue to work hard to develop the Community Garden/Allotments. There is a strong garden committee comprising of 5 local residents and growers and the continued success of the Community Garden/Allotments has been down to the dedication of the committee and growers.

The main success has been to keep the Community Garden/Allotments full and to further develop the allotments by securing funding to extend the fence and create more space for raised beds, etc.

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 2017 nine people accessed approximately 110 hours of support.

St. Catherine's Community Savings Club

The Community Savings Club commenced in January 2016 to allow people save for upcoming items and events including Christmas, First Communion and back to school costs. The aim is to encourage people to get into the habit of saving rather than borrowing, particularly from moneylenders and others offering high interest loans.

Based in St. Catherine's, the Club opens every Friday from 12.30pm to 1.30pm and savers can lodge any amount up to €50 per week. In 2017 ninety nine savers were registered and savings for the year totalled just over €45,000. The bulk of savings were withdrawn for use at Christmas.

Access and Family Support Programme with Tusla Social Work and General Family Support

St. Catherine's entered into an agreement with Tusla to second two staff members to provide an Access and Family Support service to the Social Work Department in 2016. The programme provided 40 hours of support weekly to Social Work in 2017. The work includes:

- Facilitating and supporting supervised access visits between parents and children in care
- Providing family support to empower parents and enhance parental ability
- Linking families into support networks and community services

Additionally, family and individual support is widely provided to participants and service users accessing most St. Catherine's services and programmes. 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.

An International Women's Group ran for 11 weeks and 16 women attended

Tusla Meitheal Support for Families

Meitheal is a TUSLA led national practice model to assist families to get the help and support that they need when facing challenges that are difficult to overcome. A Lead Practitioner works with the family to identify their needs & strengths and to put a plan in place that requires one or more service. St. Catherine's service is provided by our TPSP staff team.

2017 Outcomes

- TPSP received the first Meitheal referral in July 2017. Of the 11 referrals received 9 actively availed of Meitheal support
- Referrals came from the Child and Family Support Network Co-ordinator, Tusla Social Workers , Ardu and self-referrals
- Challenges faced by families included behavioural issues, emotional issues, bereavement, educational issues, relationship issues, separation, mental health issues, learning disabilities, addiction, financial issues and parenting
- All of the families who engaged in Meitheals reported that they welcomed and valued the support

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Inter-Agency Collaborative Work

St Catherine's were represented on or worked with the following interagency structures in 2017:

- HSE Traveller Health Unit and sub groups and the Regional Traveller Health Network
- Carlow/Kilkenny Traveller's Health Committee
- Carlow Traveller Interagency Group (TIG) and Kilkenny TIG and sub groups including the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
- Carlow Integration Forum
- Tusla Child and Family Partnership, Prevention and Family Support structures including the Carlow and Kilkenny Child and Family Support Networks (CFSN's)
- Teen Parent Support Programme National Inter-Project Committees
- County Carlow Public Participation Network (PPN) and Local Community and Development Committee (LCDC)
- Aontas Community Education Meetings
- 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 Sub-Groups
- Irish Traveller Movement Committees and Pavee Point
- Comhairle na nOg
- Traveller Mental Health Advisory Group
- St. Luke's Traveller Forum and the St. Luke's Patient Partnership Forum
- The Plots Community Garden Committee
- Carlow Social Inclusion Forum Carlow Suicide prevention Planning Group and the Consultation Working Group,

Additional Services based in St Catherine's

- **Carlow Citizen Information Service**

Citizens Information is a voluntary organisation serving the people of Carlow since May 1983, 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.

Our Funders

