



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

**Compiled by the
Healthy Offaly Team**



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Background to Healthy Offaly

National context

Healthy Ireland, the government framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland over the coming generation was launched in March 2013.

Healthy Ireland sets out a wide framework of actions that will be undertaken by Government Departments, public sector organisations, businesses, communities and individuals to improve health and wellbeing and reduce the risks posed to future generations.

The vision is...

“A Healthy Ireland, where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone’s responsibility”.

The framework describes four high-level goals and 64 actions that will work together to achieve the goals: -

1. Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life
2. Reduce health inequalities
3. Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing
4. Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland

Updated key themes for round 3 of the Healthy Offaly Fund include: -

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| i. Overweight and Obesity | iv. Alcohol & Drugs |
| ii. Mental health | v. Sexual health |
| iii. Smoking | vi. Spaces & Places for Health & Wellbeing |

Local context

In May 2018, the Healthy Offaly Strategic Plan was adopted by the Offaly Local Development Committee and Offaly County Council; and on the 14th June 2018, the Healthy Offaly Plan was officially launched.

To oversee the implementation of the Health Offaly Plan, a Healthy Offaly Team (HOT) was established. HOT is an amalgam of the Building Healthy Communities group (an Offaly Local Development Company (OLDC) initiative) and the Healthy Offaly working group (established by Offaly Local and Community Development Committee (Offaly LCDC) in 2017). HOT adopted an inter-agency model of operation using community development approaches to work directly with local communities to implement actions that address the determinants of health in their communities. The team has the following joint operational focus areas: -

- implementation of the Healthy Offaly strategy 2018 – 2020
- improve and support positive mental health and suicide awareness in communities in Offaly
- facilitate communities to develop positive responses and plans to emerging community issues; and develop their own capacity, skills and ability to respond to these issues
- support parents in county Offaly

An annual work plan is approved by the Offaly LCDC. On approval, HOT coordinates applications for to secure Healthy Ireland funding to implement the actions outlined in the annual work plan. Furthermore, HOT monitors the implementation of these actions, and makes bi annual progress reports to Offaly LCDC; as well as submitting an annual report to the December meeting of the Offaly LCDC.

Healthy Offaly projects 2020

The Healthy Offaly team continued to oversee delivery of the Healthy Offaly plan. Key actions delivered during 2020 included:

- *Fit class* – a targeted physical activity intervention in up to 10 primary schools in the mid, north and west Offaly area; the programme is supported by a Fit Class coordinator, resources and an end of year (June) testing programme. Coordinated by Offaly Sports Partnership, 65% (45) of the 70 primary schools in Offaly expressed interest in the Fit Class programme across the two-year academic period from September 2019 to June 2021. Covid-19 lockdowns in 2020 affected the in school delivery of the programme but the Healthy Ireland Fit Class coordinator, along with staff of Offaly Sports Partnership and Offaly sporting stars developed a range of online physical activity challenges (15 challenges in total) for children, young people, adults and families. Over 19,000 people viewed the challenges on Facebook and Twitter; while over 1,700 people viewed the challenges on Instagram. The South Offaly Sports Hub also supported 10 schools to avail of a blended learning approach to a winter fitness programme in quarter 4 2020.
- *Building Healthier Communities with a focus on rural Offaly* – much of the year 1 programme activities had to be deferred due to Covid-19; with funding reallocated to support the delivery of meals on wheels supports across 15 communities coordinated from two community kitchens (Kilcormac and Shinrone) under the “Grow your own and Healthy eating” action



- *Grow your own & Healthy eating* – three community gardens (Bracknagh, Edenderry and Moneygall) were supported to purchase equipment and materials to maintain their community gardens, a welcome distraction which proved to be particularly important

following the imposition of Covid19 restrictions in quarters 2 and 3 of 2020. Additionally, each community garden supported the development and dissemination of grow it yourself salad boxes for older adults in their communities

- *Eco spaces as places of health and wellbeing* – year 1 activities were originally designed to support canal and greenway communities to develop and deliver outdoor recreational activities around their canal and/or greenway; however, Covid19 restrictions resulted in the lead partner (Offaly Local Development Company) developing and piloting a “communities together yet apart” programme, which was then delivered in 38 housing estates across Offaly. The programme focused on hosting weekly social get togethers while maintaining social distance in the identified housing estates.
- *Community mental health supports* – four activities were due to be delivered as part of the community mental health supports programme; however only two activities were delivered given the ongoing health crisis: -
 - i. Two Family Resource Centres (Arden View, Tullamore; and Clara) were supported to roll out mental health wellness programmes and crisis intervention counselling for disadvantaged families
 - ii. Offaly Sports Partnership was supported to deliver one to one physical activity supports for 50 people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities including those experiencing mental health difficulties.
- *Community Mental Health: Small Grants Scheme* – Healthy Ireland Offaly ran a community mental health fund small grants scheme in quarters 3 and 4 of 2020. 15 applications were received and 13 projects were supported. The total spend on the scheme was €30,000. Projects supported among others include delivery of subsidised Counselling Session, Family Resource Centre Play Programmes, and Christmas Care Pack deliveries.



- *Community engagement* – five activities were due to be delivered as part of the community engagement action. Covid19 restrictions necessitated amendments to the proposed activities and the following were delivered: -
 - i. Healthy Ireland Offaly web pages were established on various partner websites including Offaly County Council, Offaly Sports Partnership, etc. For all things Healthy Offaly, check out <https://www.offaly.ie/eng/Services/Community-Culture/Healthy-Ireland/>

Home > Services > Community & Culture > Healthy Ireland



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- ii. Offaly Sports Partnership delivered Offaly’s Longest Day project, a 21-day physical activity challenge, in June. Over 800 people signed up for the challenge with over 250 people completing the challenge



- iii. Offaly Local Development Company, as a precursor to the establishment of the Offaly Healthy Homes project, delivered care packs to older and vulnerable members of communities in Offaly.
- iv. Offaly Age Friendly and the Offaly Public Participation Network published and disseminated Healthy Ireland branded magazines, “connecting the faithful” to over 400 older adults living in Offaly fortnightly; and a community support magazine to families from disadvantaged backgrounds in the County.

Conclusion

Delivery of the Healthy Ireland Offaly plan has been facilitated via funding from the Healthy Ireland Fund in 2020 to the value of €169,050. The funding is administered nationally by Pobal.

In Quarter 4 of 2020, Healthy Ireland Offaly also secured €67,225 in funding on behalf of Offaly County Council under the Healthy Ireland / Sláinte Care Community Resilience Fund. A programme of work has been submitted to Pobal for approval. It is anticipated that the actions under this fund in addition to the outstanding year 2 actions under the Healthy Ireland Fund strand 1, round 3 will be delivered throughout 2021 taking cognizance of all necessary Covid19 guidelines.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Healthy Offaly team (HOT)

- Sarah Kennedy, Offaly Local Development Company (Chair)
- Dermot Egan, Healthy Offaly Coordinator, Offaly County Council
- Clodagh Armitage, Health Services Executive (HSE)
- Josephine Rigney, HSE Resource Officer for suicide prevention in Laois and Offaly
- Gillian Cunningham, Laois / Offaly Education & Training Board (LOETB)
- Áine Brummell, Offaly County Childcare Committee
- Brian Pey, Offaly County Council
- Sarah Mc Cann / Martina Needham, Offaly Libraries
- Ann Dillon, Offaly Local Community Development Committee (Offaly LCDC)
- Bridie Costello Hynes, Offaly Public Participation Network
- Eamonn Henry, Offaly Sports Partnership
- Olivia Murphy, Offaly Sports Partnership