

Limerick County Council / Limerick County Development Board
Social Inclusion Measures Information April 2004

1. Limerick County Council's experience and involvement in anti-poverty activity to-date

The primary anti-poverty activities of Limerick County Council include:

- Local Authority Housing Provision - Houses for renting, Shared Ownership Housing, Voluntary Housing and Affordable Housing and also Housing Loans
 - A Housing Needs Assessment was undertaken in 2002 – the number of persons deemed to be in need of housing at 30.09.2003 was 1007
 - “A Guide to the provision of Voluntary Housing in County Limerick” was published in 2002

- Improvements to existing Local Authority Housing
- Pre-tenancy training and estate management support
- The Housing Strategic Policy Committee formulates and develops policies with a strong social inclusion focus
- Disabled Persons Grants / Essential Repairs Grants
- Differential Rent Scheme - Poverty proofed to ensure that no particular group/individual families pay more than 18% of their income on rent.
- Poverty proofing i.e. assessment of rent

- Traveller Specific Support Services/Accommodation
- The Housing Strategic Policy Committee discusses all relevant Housing issues including the Traveller Accommodation Plan.
- The Implementation of the 5-year Traveller Accommodation Programme is ongoing – in 2002 25 families were offered accommodation and 20 families were offered Halting Site accommodation in Rathkeale.
- The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee meets regularly to discuss issues ranging from transient site provision, programme review, allocation of accommodation and family support/estate management.
- A Homeless Forum has been set up and a Homeless Strategy adopted. A Community Welfare Officer and Outreach/Resettlement Worker have been appointed in association with the MWHB to work with the Homeless.
- Funding of accommodation for the homeless

- There is a nil fee in respect of applications for a Provisional/Full Driving Licence where the applicant is 70 years or more.

- Active participation in local development initiatives such as area based community groups, LEADER groups e.g. Ballyhoura Ltd. and West Limerick Resources, Rural Transport Initiative.

- Participation in interagency initiatives which have developed from the work of the County Development Board for example, the Croom Partnership Initiative

2. Limerick County Council is a Member of the Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network

The aim of the Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network is to promote and support the development of a strong anti-poverty focus within a reformed system of Local Government. Participation in the Learning Network benefits members and staff through the enhancement of understanding and capacity to integrate an increased social inclusion dimension to the range of services provided by the Council. The Combat Poverty Agency has conducted anti-poverty training with the Senior Management Team and other officials throughout the various directorates.

3. Limerick County Development Board

The County Limerick Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development was launched in April 2002. Social inclusion is embedded in its two themes, Balanced Geographic Development and Quality of Life. All 34 CDB's drafted strategies in the context of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (the main aims of which are to reduce consistent poverty and social exclusion).

What is Social Exclusion

Partnership 2000 defines social exclusion as cumulative marginalisation from:

- production (unemployment)
- consumption (poverty),
- social networks (community, family and neighbours),
- decision making (participation)
- and from an adequate quality of life.

Creating a more inclusive society by alleviating social exclusion, poverty and deprivation is one of the major challenges facing Ireland over the course of the National Development Plan (NDP) (2000-2006).

- The CDB's play a key role in co-ordinating the local delivery of services. Nationally, 38 target groups are funded through 40 measures and nine Operational Programmes of the NDP. Social Inclusion is one of four key Objectives of the NDP 2000-2006
- The Limerick Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) Action Group is a sub-committee of the CDB, and its role is to co-ordinate the delivery of social inclusion measures at local level. Co-ordination is necessary to:
 - Provide more effective responses to the needs of those in our community who are socially excluded or who are experiencing barriers to their full participation in society,
 - Avoid gaps in service provision
 - Avoid duplication of response
 - Ensure maximum synergy and value for money
- The Limerick SIM Action Group has re-categorised the 38 target groups into 16 Target Groups as set out below:
 - Adult Learners
 - Children & Youth at Risk
 - Community Development
 - Disadvantaged Families
 - Early School Leaving
 - Ex-prisoners
 - Farmers
 - Marginalised Men

- Marginalised Women
- Older People
- People with Disabilities
- Refugees & Asylum Seekers
- Substance Abusers
- The Homeless
- The Unemployed
- Travelling Community

There are 22 members on the SIM Sub-Committee:

State Agencies: MWHB (2),
Co. Limerick VEC,
D/SFA,
Teagasc,
FAS,
An Garda Siochana,
Probation and Welfare Services
Comhairle,
Regional Office Department of Education and Science
Limerick County Council (3),
Limerick County Library

Local Development Agencies:
Co. Limerick Childcare Committee,
West Limerick Resources Ltd.
Ballyhoura Development Ltd.,
Mid-West Community Development Support Agency

Social Partners: ICMSA,
ICTU,
Community and Voluntary Sector

Local Government: Local Councillor

The SIM Sub-Committee is focusing on 3 Target Groups and drafting Integrated Target Group Plans as follows:

1. The Travelling Community

The Plan for this target group began by firstly identifying the existing programmes/services available in County Limerick for the travelling community. A gap in service provision in the area of Askeaton was identified and in discussion with the Travellers Group in Askeaton, a plan targeting different age groups was agreed. The agencies on the sub-committee are directly involved in implementing the plan. Other actions include improving information delivery to travellers and equality training for staff of state agencies

2. People with Disabilities

With 10% of the population of Ireland living with a disability, it is likely that at least 12,000 people within Limerick live with a disability. This sub-committee is working on actions regarding information provision for people with disabilities and their carers and also implementing the Barcelona Declaration which was adopted by Limerick County Council. The Barcelona Declaration involves facilitating Limerick County Council in creating a more inclusive society and an accessible environment for people with disabilities and the Council will be conducting a consultation process to develop a plan to implement the Barcelona Declaration.

3. *Geographic area - Croom Partnership Initiative*

Croom was selected as an area of particular disadvantage and an interagency sub-committee was set up to consider how to address the issues faced in the delivery of services and supports in the area. The community council was also invited onto this committee and after consultation with the community and voluntary groups in the area, where many issues effecting their quality of life were highlighted, an action plan aimed at improving service delivery has been drafted and will be launched in May. Key areas covered include community facilities, community activities for the young and older people and estate management.

3. *Comhairle na n-Og*

Limerick County Development Board also hosts an annual Comhairle na n-Og or Youth Council as part of the National Children's Strategy. Issues affecting young people today are chosen by the young people and discussed. Four representatives are elected at the Comhairle to attend the national Dail na n-Og. The Minister for Children, Mr. Brian Lenihan reports to the Cabinet Committee on Children on the issues raised at the Dail.

4. *County Limerick Community and Voluntary Forum*

The Community & Enterprise Section of Limerick County Council is also actively involved in developing supports for the community and voluntary sector through its involvement with the Community Forum at local, area and county level.

5. *County Limerick Childcare Committee*

A representative of Limerick County Development Board sits on the County Limerick Childcare Committee. The main aim of this Committee is to support the development of quality childcare services (0-12years) in Co. Limerick. It is an Equality Measure initiative aimed at allowing parents, particularly women, to return to education, training and employment. The Committees mission statement is "*To promote the development of a coordinated, integrated, inclusive, strategic approach to the delivery of accessible, affordable, culturally appropriate, high quality childcare services that meet the overall developmental needs of children whilst supporting parents/guardians*".

6. *SIM Actions under Limerick County Development Board Strategy 2002 – 2012 Implementation Plan 2003 - 2004*

PROPOSED BALANCED GEOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS		
ACTION	LEAD AGENCY / SUPPORT	ACTION GROUP
Further development of post-primary education facilities in rural locations	VEC / Partners in Education	SIM
Further development of the post-primary e-learning initiative	Colaiste Chiarain, Croom / DELL	SIM
Further development of Colaiste Mhuire, Askeaton	VEC / School Interests	SIM

PROPOSED QUALITY OF LIFE ACTIONS		
ACTION	LEAD AGENCY / SUPPORT	ACTION GROUP
Implement the Croom Interagency Committee Action Plan	SIM Group / Croom Interagency Committee	SIM
Prepare and implement actions of the integrated services plan for people with Disabilities	Comhairle / SIM Group	SIM
Implement the first phase of the Barcelona Declaration Guidelines relating to access for people with disabilities	Limk.Co.Co.	SIM
Prepare and implement actions of the integrated services plan for Travellers	Limk.Co.Co. / MWHB / SIM Group	SIM
Support new and existing providers to increase childcare places through provision of information, advice and training.	CLCC	SIM

Raise awareness of childcare issues among childcare providers, potential childcare providers and parents in Co. Limerick through information provision, networking and training.	CLCC	SIM
Implementation of the Cois Abhainn Primary Care Team in the Glin catchment area	MWHB	SIM
Expansion of Back To Education Initiative in a number of Locations	VEC / WLR/ BD	SIM
Development of a Lifelong Learning Strategy for County Limerick	VEC / Adult Learning Board	SIM
Development of a Co-ordinated Youth Strategy for County Limerick	VEC / Youth Affairs Sub Committee	SIM
Enhancement of psychological support at post-primary level	VEC / Partners in Education	SIM
Pilot an initiative to address educational disadvantage at post-primary level	VEC / WLR	SIM
Further develop Community Education Provision	VEC / WLR / BD / Voluntary Community Groups	SIM
Expand provision of Workplace Literacy	VEC / Adult Literacy Referral Network	SIM
Further develop Family Learning Initiatives	VEC / Adult Literacy Referral Network	SIM