



## Acknowledgements

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Minister Frank Feighan on his visit to Galway to see Disability Federation of Irelands "Independent Living Skills" which was funded through Round 3 of the Healthy Ireland Fund

## Table of Contents

Foreword.....	2
Healthy Ireland Framework.....	3
Profile of County Galway.....	9
Analysis and Consultation.....	15
Vision and Equality Statement.....	21
Healthy County Galway Objectives.....	23
<b>Objective 1:</b> Collaboration and Communication.....	24
<b>Objective 2:</b> Mental Health and Social Wellbeing.....	26
<b>Objective 3:</b> Physical Activity.....	28
<b>Objective 4:</b> Spaces and Places for Health and Wellbeing.....	30
<b>Objective 5:</b> Healthy Lifestyle Choices.....	32
Implementation.....	34

# Foreword

## Cllr. Noel Thomas, Chairperson of Galway County Local Community Development Committee

As Chairperson of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), I welcome the Healthy County Galway Plan, which creates a strategic framework to support the promotion of health and wellbeing in individuals and communities across County Galway.

In accordance with the national objectives of Healthy Ireland, this Plan aims to increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life, reduce inequalities, and protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing. This is not the task of any one agency and therefore, working in collaboration is one of the cross-cutting themes of this Plan. One of the primary purposes of the LCDC is to promote greater integration in the planning and delivery of local and community development services and interventions, and the Covid-19 pandemic has shown the importance of key stakeholders working together to deliver supports, funding, and initiatives to help people to keep safe and well during the ongoing pandemic.

It is particularly relevant that our Healthy County Galway Plan is being developed as we live through one of the biggest threats to health & wellbeing in our lifetimes – the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing health inequalities, brought to the fore other underlying societal issues, and created a range of health & wellbeing challenges across all ages and abilities. Despite this, there are positive learnings which can also be taken from the lifestyle changes and interventions which have been delivered to date, which we should seek to embed in moving to life beyond Covid-19.

As this Plan is for the period 2022-2025, the LCDC will seek to identify and prioritise health and wellbeing actions which will enable individuals and communities across our County to live with and beyond Covid-19.

I am delighted to be able to endorse this Plan and Galway LCDC will work with all key stakeholders to bring energy and commitment to achieving the ambitions and objectives set out in it.

## Jim Cullen, Chief Executive, Galway County Council

I welcome the adoption and publication of this 3-year Healthy County Galway Plan developed by Galway County Local Community Development Committee and the Healthy County Galway team. The plan demonstrates Galway County Council's and the wider stakeholders continued support to implement the Healthy Ireland Framework at local level and to strive to improve the health and wellbeing of all in County Galway.

Galway County Council, through a number of instruments including the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) and County Development Plan is committed to working with our partners to shape the broad and sustainable development of the County. This plan focuses on addressing challenges and barriers, making the most of local assets and identifying synergies and connections between existing networks, policies and plans. It also encourages people from all backgrounds and of all ages and abilities to become more active by participating in events and programmes delivered by partners, groups and agencies. By working together, we can build an environment that supports individuals, families and communities to lead healthier lifestyles.

I would like to thank the members of Galway County LCDC and Galway County Council for their full support in this very important plan. I extend congratulations and thanks to the members of the Healthy County Galway team for all their work in bringing this plan together. I am confident that the implementation of this plan will make a great difference to the citizens of County Galway.

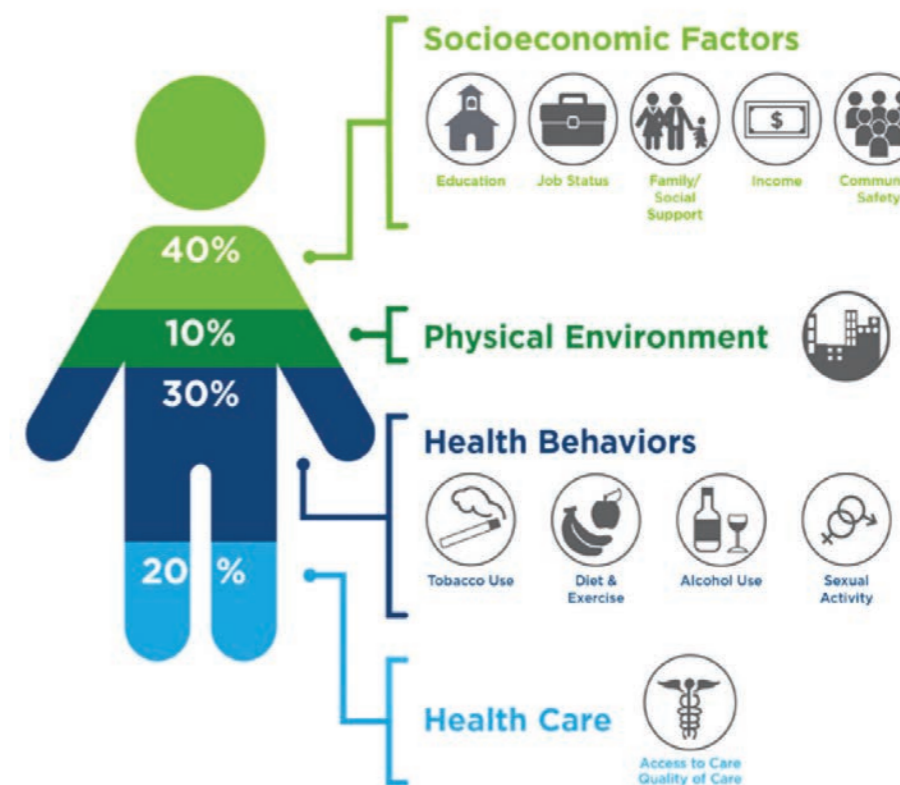
# Healthy Ireland Framework

Healthy Ireland is a Government-led initiative which aims to create an Irish society where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health, and where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society.

Healthy Ireland has come about because of concerns that the current health status of people living in Ireland including lifestyle trends and health inequalities is leading us towards a future that is dangerously unhealthy, and very likely unaffordable. The many risks to the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland include some which are obvious: issues such as obesity, mental health, smoking, alcohol and drugs. Healthy Ireland seeks to provide people and communities with accurate information on how to improve their health and wellbeing and seeks to empower and motivate them by making the healthy choice the easier choice.

We also now know that there are many factors that influence a person's health and wellbeing, such as their education level, income, housing, and work conditions which are determined by social, environmental, and economic policies beyond the direct responsibility of the health sector. This understanding calls for a partnership approach in all the actions Healthy Ireland is taking to achieve a healthier Ireland. The health sector alone cannot address these problems – we must collectively change our approach.

## What Goes Into Your Health?



Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems (October 2014)

## International and National Policy Framework

The “Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025” is the government’s plan to improve the health and wellbeing of the nation, and has the following vision and goals:



The Department of Health, through Pobal, administer the Healthy Ireland Fund (HIF), to deliver health and wellbeing priorities at a local level, and the specific objectives of this Fund are:

- To raise awareness of, and support for, Healthy Ireland through the funding of community-based and national health promotion activities.
- To facilitate and resource cross-sectoral and partnership approaches that promote health and wellbeing.
- To add value to existing health promotion initiatives through the provision of Healthy Ireland resources.
- To support and implement actions which will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the most disadvantaged groups and areas and those experiencing significant health inequalities.

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** is an internationally binding agreement on the rights of children and young people under 18 years of age. Article 31 of the Convention recognises the right of the child to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. This places an onus on policy makers to encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activities.

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD)** is an internationally binding agreement on the rights of People with Disabilities and requires changes to ensure that the physical environment is not a barrier to enabling People with Disabilities being active members of society. In this regard, Article 9 requires States to take appropriate measures to ensure that people with disabilities can access, on an equal basis with others, the physical environment, transportation and other facilities and

services open or provided to the public in urban or rural areas, by the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility. Article 19 recognises the equal right of all people with disabilities to live in the community in a place of residence of their choice on an equal basis with others, and Article 30 recognises the right to participate to the fullest extent possible in community and cultural life and have access to mainstream sporting and recreational activities.

For the past 10 years, the **World Health Organization** has been initiating leadership on how countries should plan for the rapidly ageing demographic that is being experienced across the world. In 2019, following a decade of work in this area, Ireland (under the auspices of the Age Friendly Ireland Programme) became the first country in the world, recognised by the World Health Organization, where all 31 local authorities are fully committed to, and are implementing, an Age Friendly Programme. While this is a wonderful testament to how we value and respect our older population, it must be backed up by interventions which create a supportive built environment. Creating age-friendly environments is one of the most important public health responses to population ageing because they can ensure older people age safely in a place that is right for them, are free from poverty, can continue to develop personally, and can contribute to their communities while retaining autonomy and health (Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health 2016-2020).

In September 2015, the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** were adopted by all 193 Member States of the United Nations. The SDGs aim to deliver a more sustainable, prosperous and peaceful future for the entire world, and sets out a framework for how to achieve this by 2030. This framework is made up of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which address the social, economic and environmental requirements for a sustainable future.

The SDGs represent a global agenda, but they are equally important and relevant to our own daily lives here in Galway County. Together with ending global poverty and combating harmful climate change, the SDGs also aim to make our towns and cities cleaner and safer, to ensure people have access to jobs, to promote better health and education for all, and to end all forms of inequality including gender inequality and discrimination.

This Healthy Galway County plan contributes to the implementation of SDGs at the local level.



## National Thematic Framework:

To demonstrate that health and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility, relevant national plans have been assigned to 6 priority themes under the Healthy Ireland Fund (Round 3). This thematic framework also provides direction for the delivery of Healthy Ireland and strengthens the collaborative and partnership approach across overlapping themes at local level.

### Physical Activity

- **Get Ireland Active – National Physical Activity Plan** which aims to increase physical activity levels across the entire population thereby improving everyone's health and wellbeing.
- **National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027** which aims to engage every citizen regularly in some form of sport or physical activity irrespective of their age, economic or social circumstances, ethnic background, or their physical capabilities.

### Mental Health

- **Stronger Together: The HSE Mental Health Promotion Plan 2022-2027** provides a range of actions to promote positive mental health across the whole population.
- **Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone (2020)** provides a roadmap for mental health services for the whole population, with a particular focus on promotion, prevention and early intervention, service access, coordination and continuity of care, social inclusion and accountability and continuous improvement.
- **Connecting for Life: Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2024** sets out a vision where fewer lives are lost through suicide, and where communities and individuals are empowered to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

### Nutrition

- **A Healthy Weight for Ireland – Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016-2025** which aims to address the growing public health issue of obesity and overweight.

### Sexual Health

- **The National Sexual Health Strategy** is Ireland's first national framework for sexual health and wellbeing and addresses a wide spectrum of sexual health services.

### Tobacco and Alcohol

- **Tobacco Free Ireland Policy and Implementation Plan 2018-2021** which set a target for Ireland to be tobacco free by 2025, i.e., with a smoking prevalence rate of less than 5%.
- **Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery: A health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025** outlines the government's intent to address the harm caused by substance misuse in Ireland.

### Spaces and Places for Wellbeing

- **The National Planning Framework: Project Ireland 2040** which provides the blueprint for future development across the country.

- **Strategy for the future development of National and Regional Greenways** which sets out the process for the planning and construction of greenways.
- **Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025** which is the Government's blueprint for a post COVID-19 recovery and development of rural Ireland.
- **RIAI Town and Village Toolkit** which is a practice guide containing a set of principles and objectives under 6 themes aimed at creating places for people in place-making.
- **The National Positive Ageing Strategy** which plans for an 'age friendly' country, setting out what needs to be done to make Ireland a good place to grow old.
- **Our Public Libraries: Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities** which is a strategy to improve access, use and visibility of public libraries.
- **The National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021** which sets out our commitments to protect nature and biodiversity throughout our rural and urban spaces.

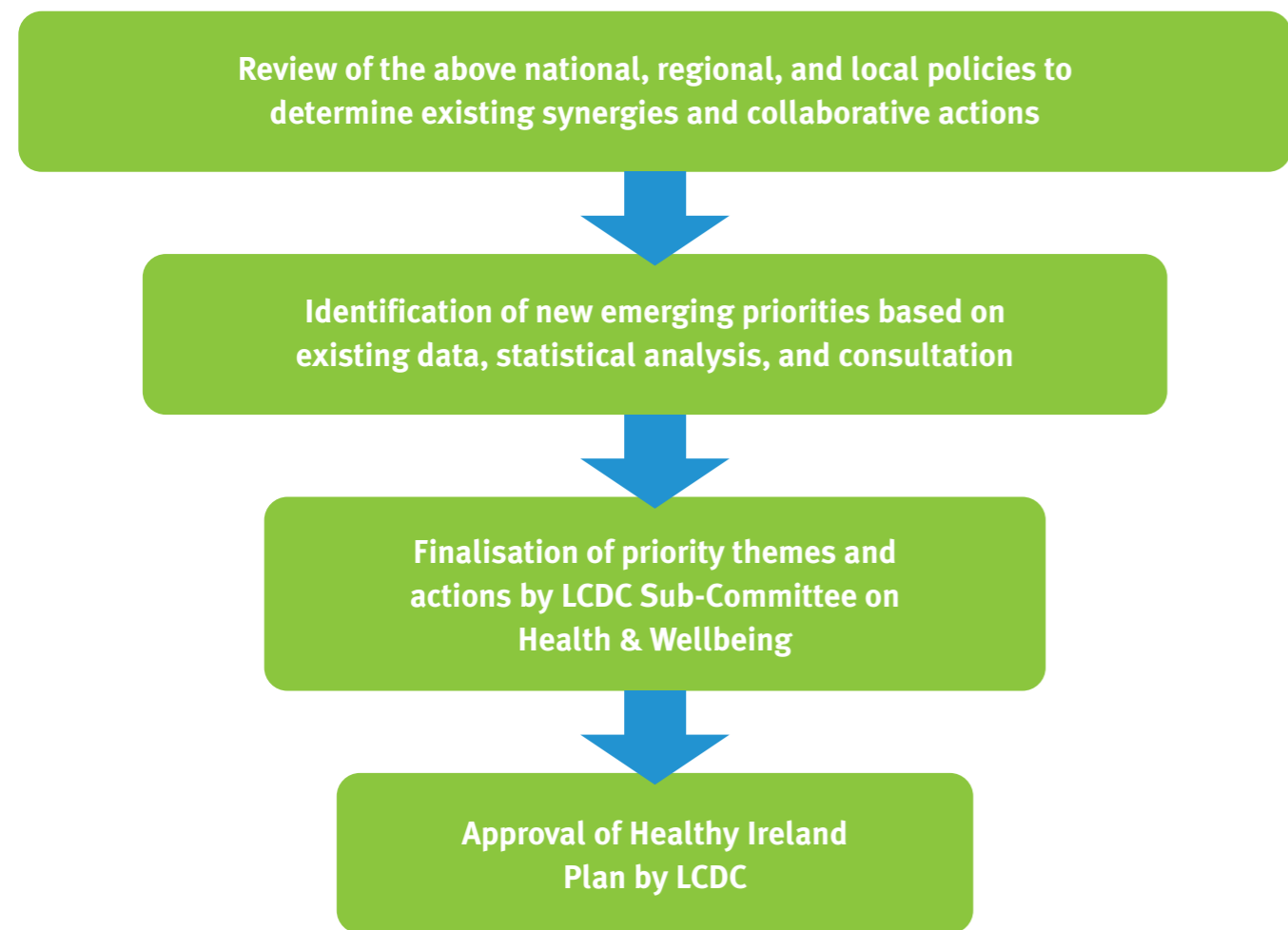
## Regional and Local Policy Framework:

Regional and local plans take their direction from the national policy and legislative framework and essentially provide the backdrop for all developments – economic, social, physical and cultural – in our County. The key policies which include actions impacting on people's health and wellbeing include:

- **The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy** which aims to create a sustainable and competitive region that supports the health and wellbeing of people and places, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for all.
- **The Galway County Development Plan** which sets out the overall land use strategy, policy and objectives for the planning and sustainable development of the County.
- **The Galway County Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)** which is the plan to promote economic, local and community development throughout the County, with Health and Wellbeing being a priority theme in the current LECP.
- **The Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) Plan** which is the plan to achieve better outcomes for children and young people at local level.
- **The HSE Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan Community Healthcare West** which is the local implementation plan of the HSE Health Services National Implementation Plan
- **Connecting for Life: Galway, Mayo, Roscommon** which is the local action plan for the reduction of suicide in the western region.
- **Galway Sports Partnership Strategic Plan** which is the local plan to increase levels of participation in sport, recreation and physical activity.
- **Culture and Creativity Strategy 2018 – 2022** which is the local plan to improve individual and community wellbeing through interaction with culture, arts and libraries.
- **Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan** which provides for a series of actions to conserve, enhance and raise awareness of Galway's rich biodiversity and maximise the contribution it makes to the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of the County.
- **Galway Public Libraries Development Plan** which is a plan for the library network to respond to the needs of our diverse communities in an inclusive way.

The range of policies that have potential to impact a person's health and wellbeing are many and varied and only serve to highlight the point that health and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility. Taking positive steps to look after our own health and wellbeing is something that rests with each individual but creating the environment and programmes that nurture and facilitate these steps is something that resides with policy and decision-makers.

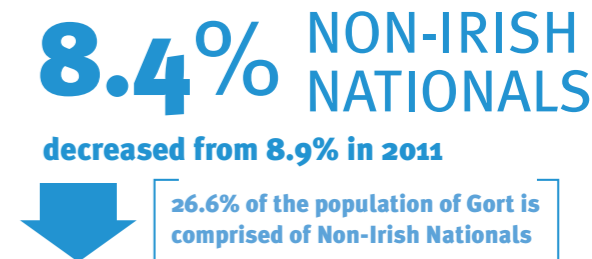
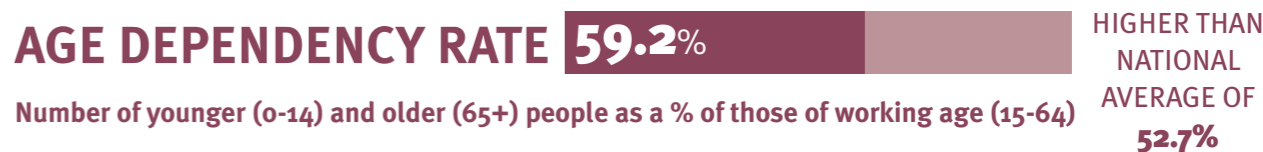
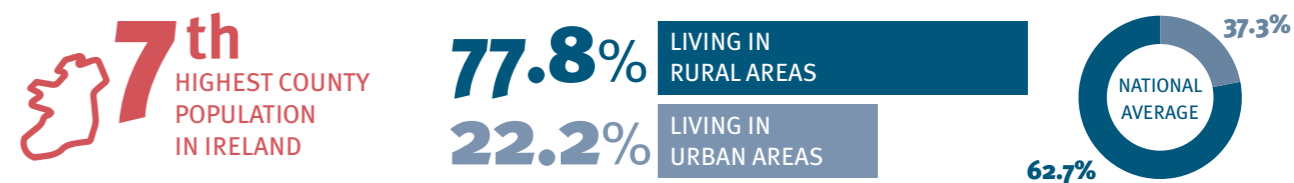
The development of this Healthy Galway County Plan follows the Healthy Ireland partnership approach which takes a whole-of-society approach to improving health and wellbeing and the quality of people's lives. This involved the following phased approach:



Profile of County Galway

## Population Profile

All statistics are based on CSO 2016 unless otherwise stated



## Employment Profile

**75,116**  
AT WORK

**9,938**  
UNEMPLOYED

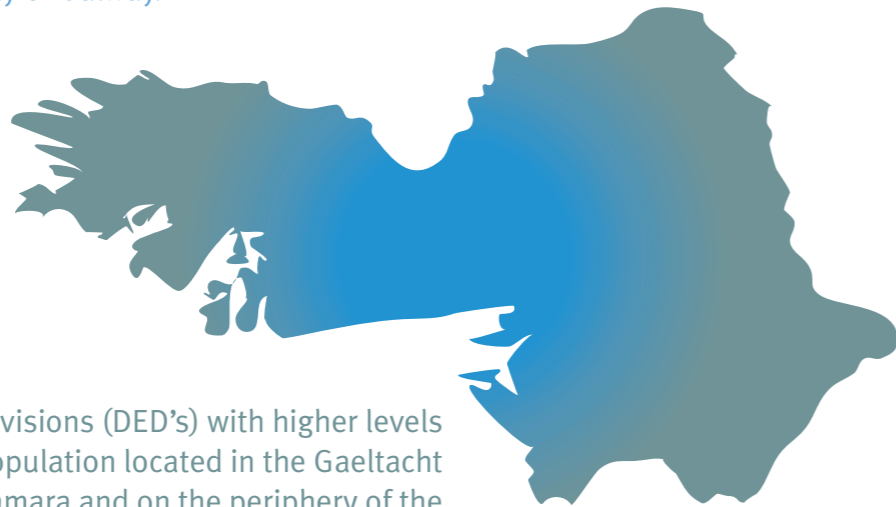
**14,877**  
STUDENTS

**20,569**  
RETIRED

**8.2%** PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

SEMI-SKILLED & UNSKILLED **15.2%**

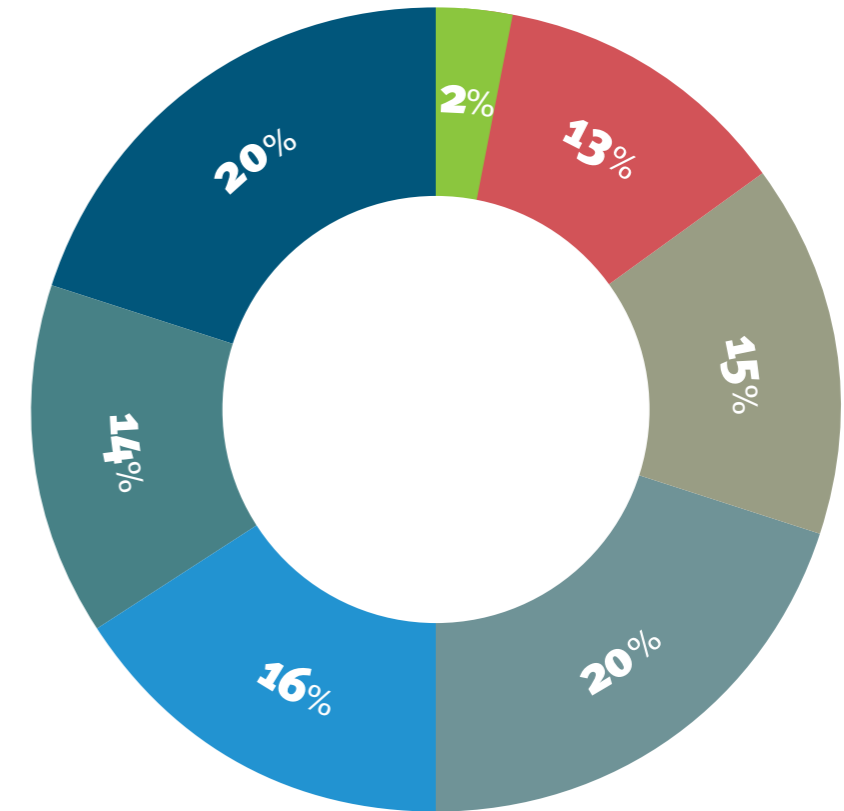
District Electoral Divisions (DED's) with the higher proportion of people that fall into the **'Professional Workers'** category are found closest to and surrounding the City of Galway.



District Electoral Divisions (DED's) with higher levels of **'Unskilled'** population located in the Gaeltacht areas of South Conamara and on the periphery of the County in all directions.

## Education Profile

Population Aged 15 and Over by Levels of Education in County Galway in 2016



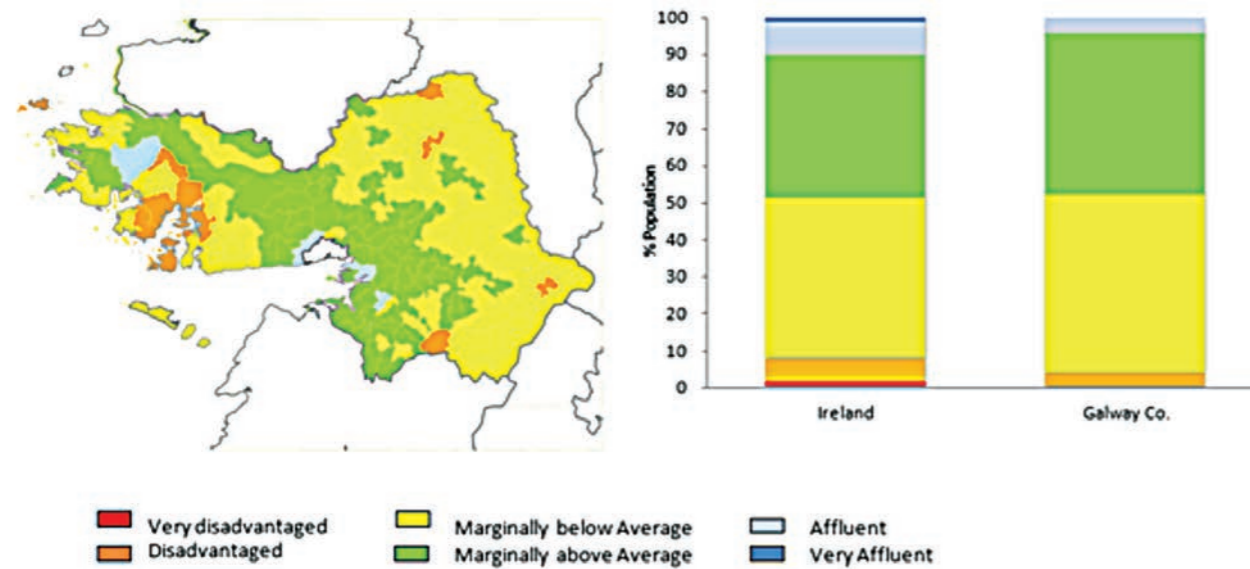
- No Formal Education
- Primary Education
- Lower Secondary
- Upper Secondary
- Technical Qualification or Apprenticeship
- Higher Certificate, Diploma or Ordinary Degree
- Honours Degree or Above

# Affluence and Deprivation Profile

The Pobal HP Deprivation Index is a series of maps which measures the relative affluence or disadvantage of geographic areas in Ireland using the data compiled from Census 2016.

## Affluence and Deprivation Profile by Electoral District:

The following map and table show the relative levels of affluence & deprivation and the underlying census data, for County Galway. The map indicates an arc of disadvantage around the periphery of the County - the further the distance from Galway City or the core of the County the greater the levels of disadvantage. The table demonstrates the actual affluence/deprivation rating for each Electoral Area, and some of the underlying data on education and employment which affects these ratings.



Category of Affluence/Deprivation across Electoral Areas and the percentage of population in each category of Affluence/Deprivation compared to national levels

Local Electoral Area	Pobal HP Relative Deprivation Score	Education		Employment		Unemployment	
		To Primary Level Only %	To Third Level %	Professional / Skilled %	Semi/Low Skilled %	Male %	Female %
Athenry - Oranmore	6.1	10.0	43.6	43.9	15.3	8.5	7.7
Loughrea	1.9	13.9	35.7	39.3	18.2	11.0	10.0
Conamara	-1.2	17.1	38.0	37.9	19.5	17.5	11.3
Tuam	-1.8	15.4	29.3	32.1	20.0	13.2	10.7
Ballinasloe	-3.6	17.2	27.6	32.6	20.9	15.6	13.1

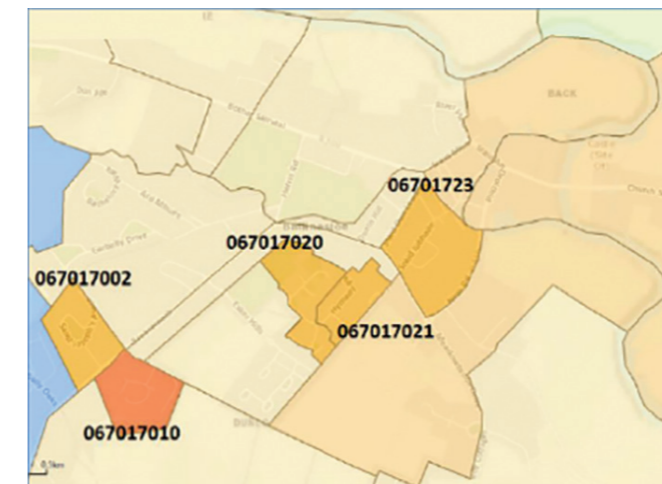
Score of Affluence/Deprivation per Electoral Area and some of the underlying statistics

## Affluence and Deprivation Profile by Small Area:

The following table shows the highest levels of deprivation and the underlying census data, for small areas – the lowest geographical level for which data from the Census of Population is released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). These are particularly relevant as they impact the distribution of resources for funding programmes such as SICAP (Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme), Schools under the DEIS Scheme, and associated targeted supports.

Small Areas	Pobal HP Relative Deprivation Score	Education		Unemployment	
		To Primary Level Only %	To Third Level %	Male %	Female %
<b>BALLINASLOE URBAN</b> St. Grellans Tce, St. Theresa's Pk, St Annes Pk	-30.93	49	2	79	70
<b>BALLINASLOE URBAN</b> Curragh Park	-28.75	35	5	60	57
<b>TUAM URBAN</b> Tirboy, St. Enda's Ave, Liam Mellows	-26.43	41	8	63	47
<b>TURLOUGH</b> Cill Bhreacáin, Snámh Bó	-26.00	47	9	45	35
<b>TUAM RURAL</b> Parkmore	-25.62	33	8	57	42
<b>GORT</b> Crowe Street	-23.64	30	7	44	33
<b>BALLINASLOE URBAN</b> Hymany Park	-23.13	40	6	52	58
<b>BALLINASLOE URBAN</b> St. Josephs Park	-22.33	42	8	36	23
<b>TUAM RURAL</b> Dublin Road Estate	-22.21	30	10	56	32
<b>BALLINASLOE URBAN</b> St. Michaels Park	-21.31	37	17	58	38

Highest Scores of Deprivation per Small Areas and some of the underlying statistics



Small Area 067017010 (St. Grellan's Terrace, St. Theresa's Pk and St. Anne's Pk) is categorised as 'Extremely Disadvantaged' on the 2016 HP Deprivation Index. Of the 18,641 Small Areas referenced on the 2016 HP Deprivation Index, it is the most disadvantaged in Connaght and the 22nd most disadvantaged in Ireland. A further 4 Small Areas within the Ballinasloe Urban ED have been categorised as 'Very Disadvantaged'. In total, these areas account for a third of all Small Areas categorised as 'Extremely Disadvantaged' or 'Very Disadvantaged' in the combined City and County.



A number of key objectives have emerged based on our analysis of existing plans and consultations with a large range of stakeholders. In all our ongoing communications and surveys with the Community Response Forum, other committee structures and all sectors of our communities, mental health and social wellbeing emerged as the priority area for this Healthy County Galway Plan. It should be noted that while this theme will be central to the plan, there are many linkages across the thematic areas and actions targeted physical activity, classes and clubs around healthy eating, and linking people with nature, will all have positive impacts on mental health and social wellbeing.

The following pages analyse existing plans and the range of consultations which have taken place with stakeholders under each of the emerging objectives.

### Collaboration and Communication

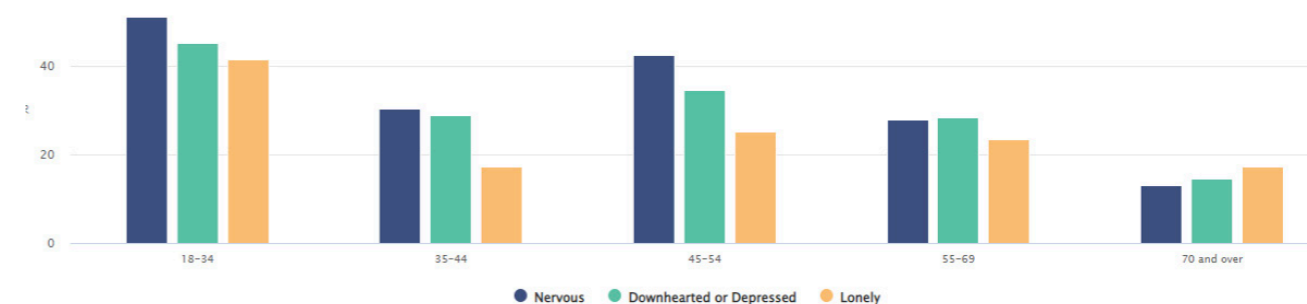
- One of the key learnings from Covid-19 must be how public agencies, community and voluntary organisations and a wide range of stakeholders figured out how to work better together for the greater good. This was evident throughout the Community Response Forum, the Community Call and the Keep Well Campaign which had a common goal of reaching and assisting the most isolated and disadvantaged in our communities. In a survey of Community Response Forum Members, one of the respondents suggested that it was important to “acknowledge how well the Forum is working with various organisations partnering and coming together creatively to deliver what is needed”.
- Another key learning from the Community Call is that it is at community level that real change happens. Community-based responses have been key during the pandemic and Galway County was fortunate to have almost 2,000 volunteers sign up to the Community Call through their clubs, groups, or as individuals, which is evidence of the truly amazing community spirit we are lucky to have in our County. It is important to build on the connections and networks established at local level and support self-sustaining programmes to enable all ages and abilities to participate in mainstream community activities.
- A pre-existing health inequality which came to the fore during the pandemic is digital poverty. Community Response Forum members highlighted the difficulty in getting information to older people who were not online, resulting in multiple contact mechanisms and initiatives being designed to ensure equal access to information. SICAP has highlighted the need to address this through upskilling programmes particularly for older people, improve access to digital devices, and improving digital infrastructure and the use of Broadband Community Points (BCP's) for social and wellbeing initiatives.
- Ukrainian Refugee Crisis: the adoption of this plan has coincided with the Department of Rural and Community Development coordinating the humanitarian response to welcome people fleeing the war in Ukraine and seeking protection in Ireland. At local level, collaboration will be required to coordinate efforts to deliver accommodation, welfare, education, health and social supports with associated communication of information both to the people who have directly suffered during this crisis, and to those who are endeavouring to support them during this time.

### Mental Health and Social Wellbeing:

- Social isolation and loneliness is emerging as a key health challenge as people who experience loneliness have a poorer overall quality of life and physical and mental health. In the survey of Community Response Forum Members, apart from the need to access practical supports such as shopping, pharmacy runs and meals, social isolation was highlighted as a significant issue during the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions such as cocooning. This was primarily due to factors such as living alone, living in geographically isolated areas, however, respondents mentioned cases of “extreme isolation felt by individuals despite living in built-up areas”. The Forum Members felt that social isolation and loneliness

was a pre-existing situation which was highlighted by the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. Our Older Peoples Council Members highlighted the fear of re-engaging with social activities, therefore, our efforts going forward must be to enable those who were participating in community activities to re-engage safely and promote additional groups, activities and open days to enable additional people to engage at community level.

- At national level, CSO data shows that the number of people who felt lonely all or most of the time doubled between April and November 2020 from 6.8% to 13.7% with younger people (18-34 yrs) most likely to feel lonely all or most of the time, with one in four feeling this way, showing that they were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.



CSO: Social Impact of COVID-19 by Age Group: April 2020

- Evidence to date shows that the combined effect of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions is that approximately 1 in every 5 in the general population in Ireland has significantly increased psychological distress (e.g., anxiety, depression). Risk factors include being female and living alone. (Department of Psychiatry, Trinity College Dublin 2021)
- Rates of significant psychological distress among healthcare workers are approximately double those in the general population (Department of Psychiatry, Trinity College Dublin 2021)
- Galway County Comhairle na nÓg is a Youth Council for young people aged 12-17 years living or in education in County Galway, and is the voice of young people on services, policies, and other issues which affect them in their local area. In November 2020, they conducted a countywide survey of all second-level schools entitled “Understanding the Mental Health of Young People in County Galway”. Some of the pertinent findings which arose from this survey were:
  - 59% of young people believe there is still a stigma surrounding mental health.
  - 53% of young people were unaware of mental health services in their local area.
  - 19% of young people rated their mental health as poor or very poor.

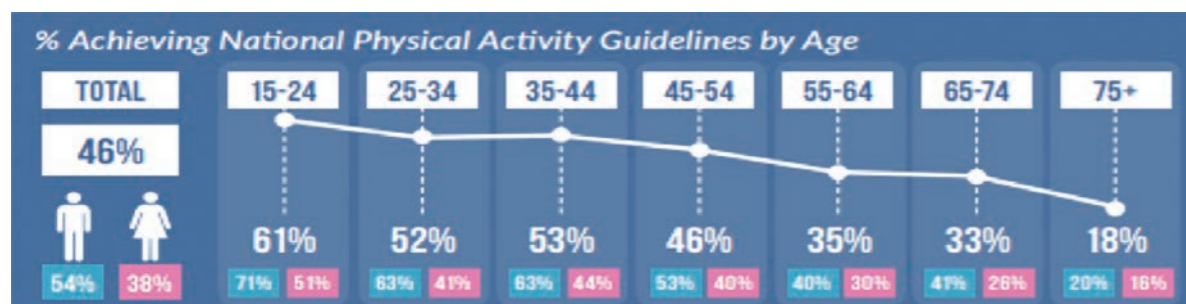
Arising from this analysis, the Comhairle Members undertook a radio advertising campaign around mental health and made presentations to Galway County LCDC and Galway CYPSC. In these presentations, the Comhairle Members outlined their vision for increased communications and education on mental health in schools and community settings, increased mental health services for youth including through the Irish Language, and promotion and awareness of these mental health services and supports.

- 56% of teenagers reported that COVID-19 has impacted negatively on their mental health
- 60% reported feeling more lonely
- 33% reported engaging in self-harm once or more

Planet Youth County Galway Report 2020

## Physical Activity and Spaces & Places for Wellbeing:

- A Healthy Ireland Survey in 2019 found that 46% of adults are achieving the National Physical Activity Guidelines (54% of men, 38% of women), however, achievement of the minimum level of physical activity declines with age (see figure below). This is particularly prevalent as by 2051, over 1 in 4 people (26% of population) will be over the age of 65 so efforts to address this decline and the negative physical impacts of ‘cocooning’ are now essential.



- There has been minimal change in the percentage of children doing regular exercise over the last 2 decades; 52.6% in 1998 – 52.1% in 2018 (Health Behaviours in School Aged Children Report by NUIG 2021). The Irish Heart Foundation stress that creating healthy habits from an early age where they become the norm is one of the most effective ways of protecting the future health of children and young people. This highlights the importance of educating parents, schools, service providers and agencies on the importance of active play and creating informal and formal play spaces – a Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) respondent highlighted the importance of “creating a variety of play spaces throughout the public realm to implement children’s ‘right to roam’ and ensure they could interact with a range of natural and diverse landscapes”. This has also been highlighted in consultations for the CYPSC Plan where a respondent highlighted that “parents of young children want more safe places for children to play”.
- An issue consistently highlighted by young people and other stakeholders is the lack of leisure/recreation options for young people if they are not interested in sport and the need for more informal and formal spaces to ‘hang out’ with friends. The Comhairle na nÓg Survey highlighted a general lack of awareness about youth supports available in local areas which indicates a need for collating information on all youth clubs and activities and harnessing the potential of these venues as spaces and places for improving the social wellbeing of young people. Another issue raised was the difficulty in sourcing separate facilities for these spaces – in this regard, the draft County Development Plan supports a multi-agency approach to the provision of youth facilities such as Youth Clubs, Youth Cafes and encourages their integration into multi-purpose community facilities. The plan also proposes the improvement of public playgrounds to allow for recreational areas for youth and older people in areas of greatest need.
- The Planet Youth Report for County Galway in 2020 states that ‘Teenagers that report hanging out in the streets regularly are 6 times more likely to use cannabis. It’s important that teens have access to organised sports and other constructive leisure activities to reduce their substance abuse’.
- Accessibility issues are a major concern for the Galway Disability Forum – their submission to the Joint Committee on Disability Matters in 2021 states that ‘greater physical accessibility will enable People with Disabilities to live on their own and move freely’ and we need to work towards ‘ensuring that People with Disabilities are included in mainstream spaces such as regular sporting clubs, rather than having separate clubs which keeps them segregated’. This feedback is reflected in public consultation for the CYPSC Plan where a respondent stated that “parents of children with disabilities want more support for community-led and peer-led initiatives aimed at improving health and wellbeing.

- The Submission by the Galway County PPN’s Disability Forum to the Joint Committee on Disability Matters also stated that “for many people with disabilities and their family carers, the provision of public transport could be characterised as patchy, irregular, and not serving the needs of the community as a whole. It requires increased services such as evening or night-time services to combat rural isolation and loneliness, and more accessible services such as wheelchair accessible mini-buses and a shuttle service to transport hubs such as train stations. In addition, the Forum would like to highlight the frequent misuse of disabled parking spaces by the general public”.
- Research carried out for the *Environmental Protection Agency’s Connecting with Nature for Health and Wellbeing* found that people strongly agreed that nature should be accessible to all but highlighted that it was not available to everyone equally. A national survey of People with Disabilities and their respective organisations highlighted 4 primary community recreation areas for improved accessibility in accordance with the *Great Outdoors: A Guide for Accessibility* – trails & greenways, beaches, public parks and waterways. At a local level, Galway Disability Forum are currently conducting a local survey for People with Disabilities and their Disability Organisations to determine priorities for accessibility to nature and recreation at a local level.
- Census 2016 data shows that self-propelled modes of travel to primary school (walking/cycling) had fallen by half from 49.5% of students in 1986 to 25% in 2016. Public transport had also fallen by half from 20% to 10% and the main substitute for these options has been the rise in car travel which rose from 24% to 60% over the same period. Within these figures, there were variances between Counties with primary school students in County Galway the most likely to travel to school by car (73% of students) and one of the least likely to walk to school (10% of students). These findings highlight the importance of introducing Smarter Travel options through the Safe Routes to School and Active Travel funding schemes which will have a multitude of health and wellbeing, economic and environmental benefits.

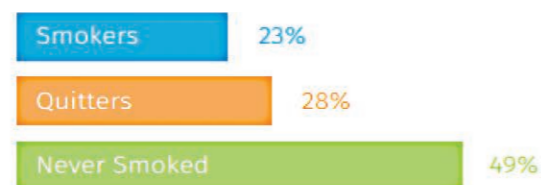
## Healthy Lifestyle Choices:

- Nationally 56% of adults are classified as overweight– the corresponding proportion in the west region of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon is 53%. Ireland has the second highest rate of obesity in the EU with 26% of Irish adults classified as obese in 2019 well ahead of the EU average of 16% - the highest rate of obesity in Ireland was recorded in the 65–74-year-old cohort (CSO 2019). Ireland is on course to become the most obese country in Europe by 2030 – 89% of Irish men are set to be overweight while obesity rates for women are set to soar from 23% to 57%. While the rates of childhood obesity are levelling off, 12% of 3-year-olds in lower socio-economic groups are obese compared to 4% in better-off, better-educated groups (WHO 2021). The LCDC Members described these statistics as shocking and they highlighted the need for targeted programmes particularly for older people, and the need to educate parents to add value to programmes within schools and tackle the associated issue of the easy access to convenience foods for school-going children.
- Alcohol consumption in 2019 was 19% higher than the stated aim of the Irish Government to reduce per capita consumption to 9.1 litres by 2020. On average, Irish people aged 15 and over drank 10.8 litres of pure alcohol which corresponds to 40 bottles of vodka, 113 bottles of wine or 436 pints of beer. More than half (52.3%) of all drinkers are classified as hazardous drinkers as per the WHO Screening Tool and this was more common among men (70%) than women (34%), particularly young men with 78% of 25-34 year old males (and 65% of all 15-24 year olds) meeting the criteria for hazardous drinking. There are an average of 3 alcohol related deaths in Ireland each day. (Health Research Board 2021). These alarming statistics highlight Ireland’s unhealthy relationship to alcohol and the additional costs imposed on the healthcare system (estimated societal costs of alcohol across healthcare, criminal justice and social protection measures could be as high as €3.7 billion annually). The introduction of minimum unit pricing in January 2022 will not in itself be the “silver bullet” and must be accompanied by public health

messaging, campaigns, and evidence-based programmes and initiatives. The linkages across the Healthy Ireland thematic areas is reflected in the Comhairle na nÓg consultations which have highlighted that due to the lack of social spaces for young people, many “end up centring their social interactions around going to the pub or drinking” and there is a “toxic drinking culture”. This view also lends support for the Planet Youth evidence-based model which prevents children and adolescents from initiating alcohol and drug use through the provision of structured leisure activities and other early intervention responses at community level.

- National interventions to reduce Tobacco use, such as the ban on smoking in workplaces in 2004, made Ireland a world leader in this area. Smoking rates among the general population have fallen from 33% in 1998 to 27% in 2002 to 23% in 2018 and there are now more quitters than smokers in Ireland. However positive these statistics, there are still considerable healthcare costs associated with smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke, in addition to the issue of littering due to cigarette-ends which is highlighted by Tidy Towns Groups as a significant problem. In particular, drilling into the statistics indicates higher rates of smoking among those living in disadvantaged areas, those between the ages of 25-35 and most of the reduction in smokers being female rather than male. This highlights the need for continued supports and programmes at community level in conjunction with initiatives to denormalise smoking for children and young people by designation of more public spaces, playgrounds and school premises as smoke-free.

There are now more  
Quitters than Smokers  
in Ireland



### Current Smoking Prevalence

- Males 24%, Females 21%
- Highest among those aged 25-34 years
- 864,000 current smokers in Ireland
- 1,050,000 ex-smokers in Ireland

### Products Used:

- 75% manufactured cigarettes
- 24% roll-your-own cigarettes
- 6% currently use e-cigarettes

Who are more likely  
to smoke?

**SINGLE** (not in a relationship)  
**MALE**  
**YOUNG**  
**K**  
**UNEMPLOYED**  
**ROUTINE JOB**

Adult Smoking in Ireland: a special analysis of the Healthy Ireland Survey and *The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) 2018*

## Vision and Equality Statement

### Vision:

The vision for a Healthy Galway County is 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.

### Values:

The following set of values will underpin the work of the organisations delivering the Healthy Galway County Plan:

- **Non-Discrimination and Equality:** we commit to supporting people who face the greatest barriers to realising their citizenship and human rights.
- **Inclusion:** we value a sense of belonging, community, interdependence, collective responsibility and diversity.
- **Dignity:** we value and respect relationships of care and love, human worth, and the absence of inhumane and degrading treatment, harassment or discrimination.
- **Respect:** we build respect and trust by valuing the contribution of everyone involved in the delivery of this plan.
- **Participation:** we recognise all citizens rights to personal autonomy and self-determination. We are committed to hearing and learning from all perspectives.

### Cross-Cutting Themes:

The following cross-cutting themes have been applied in identifying actions across all the thematic areas of Healthy Ireland:

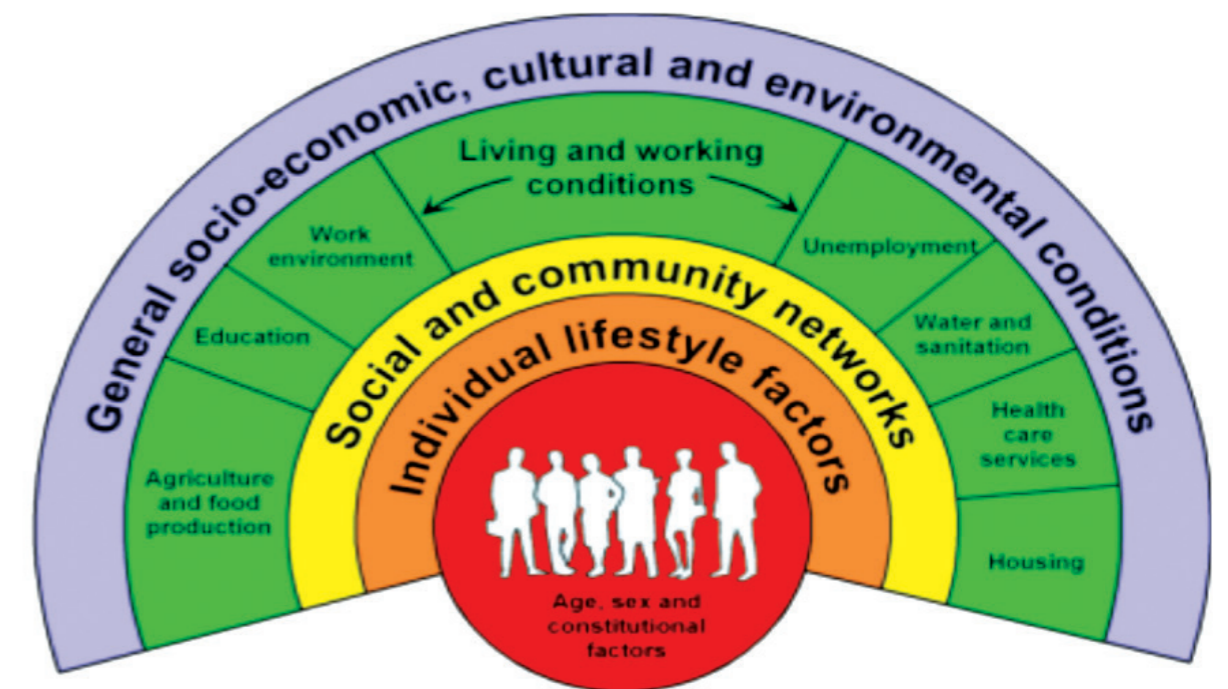
- **Collaboration** – developing partnerships of agencies and communities
- **Community-based** – delivering change at community level
- **Inclusive** – focused on involving people in mainstream community life
- **Green** – recognising the importance of nature and green spaces for health
- **Sustainable** – ensuring all programmes are self-sustaining



Connemara Greenway

# Healthy County Galway Objectives and Actions

<b>Objective 1:</b> Collaboration and Communications .....	24
<b>Objective 2:</b> Mental Health and Social Wellbeing .....	26
<b>Objective 3:</b> Physical Activity .....	28
<b>Objective 4:</b> Spaces and Places for Wellbeing .....	30
<b>Objective 5:</b> Healthy Lifestyle Choices .....	32



Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991

# Objective 1: Collaboration and Communications

### Goal:

To provide clear signposting to information and raise awareness of the Healthy Galway County brand through collaborative partnerships

### Desired Outcomes:

- ✓ Increased awareness of Healthy Ireland
- ✓ Increased awareness of Healthy Behaviours
- ✓ Improvement in overall Health Status indicators

	Action	Inputs	Outputs/KPI
1.1	Promote collaborative working and optimise existing and potential funding sources to meet identified needs	HIF Coordinator, Health and Wellbeing Sub-Committee, LCDC, CYPSC	Efficient allocation of resources and sharing of information
1.2	Develop the positioning of the Healthy Galway Website & Healthy Ireland at your Library as trusted sources of information and signposting to evidence-based health data and wellbeing programmes in our communities	HIF Coordinator, Health and Wellbeing Sub-Committee	Website/Webpage in place and updated, No. of followers on Social Media, No. of Healthy Ireland at your Library Events
1.3	Develop local communications and engagement campaigns to increase the direct delivery of specific health and wellbeing messaging to targeted populations groups	HIF Coordinator, Health and Wellbeing Sub-Committee	Health & Wellbeing Events to engage communities
1.4	Develop a mechanism where Healthy Galway success stories are captured and used to drive increased demand for local programmes and behaviour change	HIF Coordinator, Health and Wellbeing Sub-Committee	Increased awareness of Healthy Galway brand and programmes
1.5	Develop mechanisms whereby information and advice on services and campaigns is available to marginalised communities	SICAP	Production of Plain English Leaflets, etc. and distribution / Translation of key information



Community Health and Wellbeing Information Day

Follow the 8 daily exercises overleaf, then tick the boxes below when each session is completed. Please complete all 8 exercises twice daily (AM and PM).

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4				
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
MON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TUES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WED	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
THURS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FRI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SAT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DESIGNED BY: THE HEALTHY IRELAND FUND SUPPORTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

Logos for 'hi', 'pobal', and 'Riada na hÉireann' are visible.

Logos for 'HSE', 'Curat Náisiúnta', 'Comhairle Faoilteoirí Ríoga', and 'Comhairle Chleas na hÉireann' are visible.

- Stay Active
- Stay Connected
- Switch Off
- Eat Well

**Healthy Ireland at your Library**

The Healthy Ireland at Your Library service is available in all local libraries across the country

# Objective 2: Mental Health and Social Wellbeing

**Goal:**

To combat social isolation and loneliness and promote positive mental health at all stages of life.

**Desired Outcomes:**

- ✓ Increased awareness of mental health and reduced stigma
- ✓ Clear signposting to mental health supports and services
- ✓ Decrease in suicide rate
- ✓ Increased life satisfaction of adults
- ✓ Increased life satisfaction of children and young people

Action	Inputs	Outputs/KPI
2.1 Conduct an audit of existing non-sporting activities for all ages and abilities to identify gaps and pilot Open Days at community level to encourage participation and volunteerism	GCC, PPN – all LCDC partners funding programmes	Directory of Community Activities and mapped locations in place
2.2 Leverage national mental health and stigma reduction campaigns and evidence-based programmes by supporting local community and voluntary groups to inform and encourage participation at local level	HSE, H&W Sub-Committee, Community & Voluntary Groups	No. of campaigns and programmes supported
2.3 Support the implementation of the Connecting for Life Suicide Prevention Action Plan, including providing access to suicide prevention education and training programmes	HSE, LCDC, PPN, CNN, OPC, other Connecting for Life partners	No. of education and training programmes, reduction in suicide rate
2.4 Implement initiatives around the Five Ways to Wellbeing and support other targeted initiatives to improve mental health such as social prescribing, social farming, and independent living initiatives	H&W Sub-Committee - HIF	No. of initiatives funded
2.5 Support early intervention programmes and measures to support youth mental health by increasing youth mental health services and increasing the provision of safe youth spaces and recreation opportunities at local level	HSE, Tusla, CYPSC, LCDC, CNN – HIF, CEP, LEADER	Increased services and facilities for young people
2.6 Provide clear signposting to mental health supports and services through a variety of methods to increase awareness and visibility and promote effective mental health messaging in relation to help-seeking	H&W Sub-Committee	Online and physical information provided



Social Farming participants at Ower Equestrian Centre



Minister Frank Feighan launching Mental Health Ireland, Galway Sports Partnership and Healthy Galway Health and Wellbeing Boards



# Objective 3: Physical Activity

### Goal:

To make physical activity the norm by improving access and opportunities for all ages and abilities to participate at community level.

### Desired Outcomes:

- ✓ Increased awareness of the benefits of physical activity
- ✓ Increase in programmes for target groups
- ✓ Increase in physical activity levels across wider community
- ✓ Directory of Physical Activity Programmes in place
- ✓ Improved accessibility to facilities and sharing of facilities

	Action	Inputs	Outputs/KPI
3.1	Conduct an audit of existing sports and physical activity programmes to identify gaps	GSP, PPN, Sports Clubs, Community Groups	Directory of Sporting Programmes and mapped locations in place
3.2	Provide a range of targeted physical activity programmes to increase participation across all ages and ensure these are self-sustaining by providing leader training	GSP – Sport Ireland Funded Programmes	National KPI
3.3	Work with the Sports Development Officer to identify locations for Sports Equipment Libraries to promote participation by older people or other under-represented groups	GSP, GCC, PPN, OPC – HIF	No. of programmes and equipment libraries
3.4	Work with the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer, Disability Organisations, and communities to increase opportunities for People with Disabilities to participate in physical activities, sports, and other community activities	GCC, GSP, PPN, Disability Organisations – DPAF	No. of initiatives funded
3.5	Build capacity of sporting facilities to improve and share multi-use facilities for the benefit of their local community	GSP, PPN – Sports Capital Programme	Capacity-building events held



Healthy County Galway and Galway Sports Partnership funded Marathon Kids



Ballinasloe Community Activator Pole Group



Nature for Health walking programme in Coole Park

# Objective 4: Spaces and Places for Wellbeing

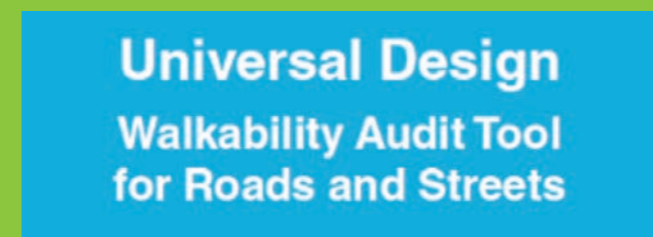
**Goal:**

To improve the physical environment in which people are born, grow, live, play, work, and age.

**Desired Outcomes:**

- ✓ Increased awareness of the links between nature and health
- ✓ No. of Walkability Audits and Access Audits
- ✓ No. of Community Gardens and Community Green Flags
- ✓ No. of Men’s and Women’s Shed in county

	Action	Inputs	Outputs/KPI
4.1	Conduct an audit of green spaces and build on the success of the “Hidden Gems” initiative to support these spaces and places as venues for family friendly activities and wellbeing initiatives	GCC, PPN, GSP, SICAP	Directory of Community Gardens/Orchards, Sensory Gardens, Allotments, etc., in place
4.2	Support the establishment and development of additional Community & School Gardens/Orchards, Allotments, Sensory Areas and other biodiverse outdoor spaces to increase connections between nature and health	GCC, PPN, Tidy Towns Network, SICAP	No. of Green Spaces for Health and Wellbeing
4.3	Support the establishment and development of Men’s and Women’s Sheds as spaces and places for wellbeing initiatives	GCC, PPN, HSE	No. of Sheds
4.4	Support Access Audits and Walkability Audits on the built environment, libraries, and community recreation areas to identify accessibility improvements	GCC, OPC, Disability Forum – DPAF, CEP, HIF	No. of initiatives
4.5	Promote Active Travel and Smarter Travel Initiatives at workplaces and educational facilities	GSP, GCC, Schools, Employers	Increased awareness and leveraging of national initiatives
4.6	Develop a Play & Recreation Policy Statement which underpins the right to play and pilot the provision of informal play spaces in the natural environment	LCDC, CYPSC, GCCC, GSP, PPN – HIF, National Play Day	Increased access to informal play spaces
4.7	Promote the benefits of active play through increased training for childcare services and communities	CYPSC, GCCC	Increased awareness



# Objective 5: Healthy Lifestyle Choices

**Goal:**

To support individuals and communities to make healthy lifestyle and behaviour choices to protect them from harm.

**Desired Outcomes:**

- ✓ No. of Healthy Eating Programmes and Facilities
- ✓ Reduction in rates of alcohol misuse
- ✓ Reduction in smoking rates

	Action	Inputs	Outputs/KPI
5.1	Promote healthy eating choices by supporting the implementation and delivery of evidence-based nutrition programmes such as Healthy Food Made Easy in community facilities for disadvantaged groups / small areas	H&W Sub-Committee – SICAP, HIF	No. of HFME Courses delivered
5.2	Promote the self-sustainability of nutrition programmes by supporting the development of Community Kitchens, Lunch Clubs, Healthy Eating and Acting Living programmes, etc.	H&W Sub-Committee – SICAP, HIF	No. of programmes developed
5.3	Support the implementation of the HSE Breastfeeding Policy through awareness campaigns, support groups and programmes	HSE, CYPSC, PHN's, Parent & Toddler Groups	No. of programmes developed
5.4	Promote evidence-based sexual education and training programmes and supports throughout the County	HSE, Tusla, PHNs, Other Voluntary Stakeholders	No. of initiatives
5.5	Work in collaboration to support the implementation of the HSE's Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco Campaigns and educational programmes to prevent and reduce harm	H&W Sub-Committee, WRDAT	No. of campaigns
5.6	Support the roll-out of initiatives to de-normalise smoking, e.g., Tobacco Free Playgrounds, Schools Gates, Not Around Us Campaign, etc.	H&W Sub-Committee	No. of initiatives
5.7	Support the roll-out of the Planet Youth Initiative as an evidence-based primary prevention approach to reduce alcohol and drug use among young people	Planet Youth Working Group, H&W Sub-Committee	Increased parental knowledge and structured leisure activities for youth



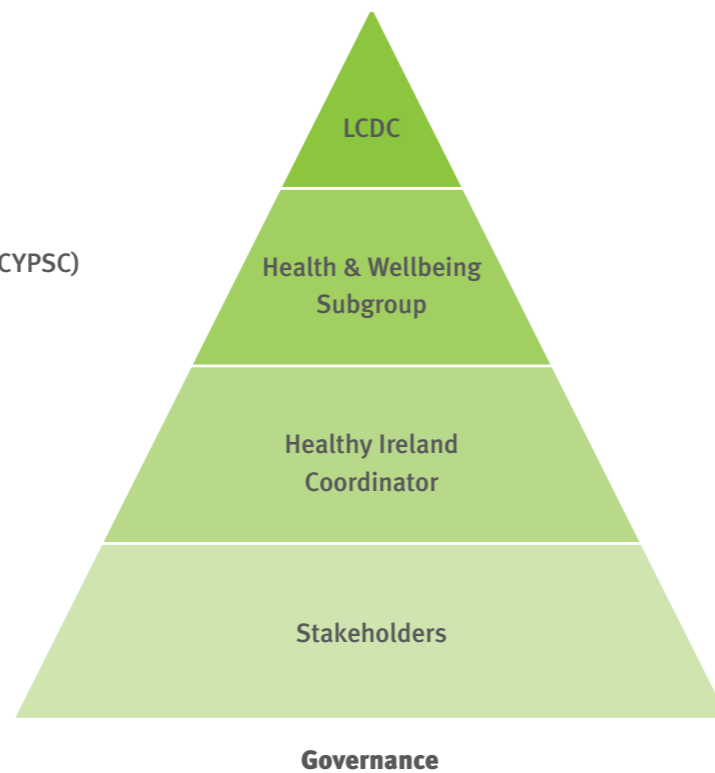
# Implementation

The Galway County LCDC is responsible for developing, coordinating, and implementing a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. The LCDC has a significant role to play in the development and implementation of the Healthy County Galway Strategy to promote and enhance the health and wellbeing of people in Galway County.

Healthy Galway County was established in September 2018 and is delivered through the Health and Wellbeing Subgroup which is made up of an inter-agency partnership from a cross section of key stakeholders. This Sub-Group will have primary responsibility for the implementation of this Healthy County Galway Plan and to identify additional resources which will leverage the initiatives delivered under the plan. The Sub-Group will meet regularly to monitor the implementation of the plan and will carry out an annual review of the actions and outcomes contained in the plan.

## Health and Wellbeing Subgroup

- Galway County Council
- HSE LCDC Representative
- Children and Young Peoples Services Committee (CYPSC)
- HSE Health Promotion
- HSE Resource Office for Suicide Prevention
- Galway Sports Partnership
- Galway Library Service
- SICAP Programme Implementer







*The Healthy Ireland Fund supported by the Department of Health  
and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth*



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



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