

# Social Inclusion Division and Health Service Executive

## Joint Initiative on Community Participation in Primary Health Care



INFORMATION ON FUNDED PROJECTS

**May 2010**

Photograph reproduced with the kind permission of the Blakestown Community Development Project and Mountview Family Resource Centre

## What is primary health care?

Primary health care includes a range of services designed to keep people well. It incorporates the promotion of health and screening for disease, assessment, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation, as well as personal social services. People can access primary health care by self-referral. Primary health care has a strong emphasis on working with communities and individuals to improve their health and social well-being. Disadvantaged communities and groups, who are more likely to have poorer health status than others, frequently have a greater need for primary care services.

## Primary Care Teams

Primary Care Teams or PCTS are teams that delivery a range of primary care services that keep people well in their own communities. Teams can include, GPs, Nurses, Health Care Assistants, Home Helps, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers and Speech and Language Therapists. The Health Service Executive is current developing 530 teams which should cover 95% of the population.

## Community Participation

The participation of communities and groups who experience poverty and social exclusion is essential to the development of primary health care services in order to shape these services and make them relevant to those with the greatest need.

Public policy recognises that communities should be centrally involved in shaping primary care services. The *National Strategy for Service User Involvement in the Irish Health Service* (DOHC/HSE, May 2008) has prioritised the participation of 'socially excluded groups and those whose voices are seldom heard'.

# Community Participation in Primary Care Joint Initiative

The Social Inclusion Division of the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs and the HSE developed a Joint Initiative to support the involvement of disadvantaged communities and groups in the development of primary health care services at local level. The Joint Initiative aimed to support and test models of community participation in primary care with a view to informing national policy and practice.

Nineteen projects were funded. They were located in community development projects, local development companies, family resource centres and community and voluntary fora and worked with a range of health service staff and primary care practitioners.

Key activities supported under the Initiative included:

- Developing and supporting community representative infrastructure, including community health fora, to feed into PCTs/ Primary Care Networks.
- Conducting community needs assessments.
- Developing joint plans between the HSE and community groups to support community participation in PCTs and Primary Care Networks using participative methodologies.
- Training and support for PCTs on community participation.

## Formative Evaluation

A formative evaluation of the Joint Initiative was conducted by Dr. Jane Pillinger between June 2009 and April 2010. The main aim of the evaluation was to recommend approaches for the HSE to adopt in relation to community participation in the development and ongoing work of PCTs. Details of the evaluation are available at [www.hse.ie/eng/services/ysys/SUI/Library/participation](http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/ysys/SUI/Library/participation)

## Technical Support

The Community Action Network (CAN) was contracted in June 2009 to provide technical support to the funded projects. The support included training in innovative participative techniques and methodologies to involve people experiencing poverty; working in partnership with other agencies to achieve common goals and training on the social model of health and primary care.

## On line forum

The HSE supported an online forum accessible to the projects on [www.hseland.ie](http://www.hseland.ie).

## Networking

A number of networking events were held and projects and their partners were invited. At these events projects had opportunities to share learning and meet other project participants.

# Funded Projects

## Westmeath Community Development Ltd

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There are five teams in the local PCT network, four of which are based in Athlone and the fifth in Moate. The Project has developed a Community Health Forum after significant community consultations. Two representatives from the Forum, and two alternate representatives, have been elected to be represented on the Primary Care Network.

## North West Roscommon Community Development Project

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Roscommon has six PCTs and the community participation project was established with the Ballaghaderreen PCT, which was formed in 2008. Community participation in health was also a new area of activity for Ballaghaderreen Community Development Project.

The Project is now working to determine its representative structures, including terms of reference, scope of activity and how it will engage with the PCT in Ballaghaderreen. It has supported the development of a Community Health Forum and a joint action plan.

## Mayo Intercultural Action

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The project is based in Ballina, a town with a large population of migrants, including programme refugees from Burma. A Migrant Community Health Forum was established, building on the evidence based from Mayo Intercultural Action's (2006) research *Building a Diverse Mayo*. Training and support was provided by the project to build the capacity of the community health forum.

A toolkit was also developed on community participation, community development principles and practice, and cultural competence. This provided a resource base to raise awareness for PCT members and community groups.

## Paul Partnership

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PAUL Partnership, HSE, RAPID and community representatives in Moyross, Ballyanty, Kileely and Thomondgate developed a participation process to inform sustainable health service planning and achieve positive health outcomes for these areas.

A training resource was designed and delivered to primary care staff and community representatives to build capacity for community engagement. A local Health Forum is being developed with representatives of the local community and the PCT. The Health Forum will aim to ensure that there is ongoing and sustainable community participation in the PCT.

## Leitrim Development Company

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The Project was established between South Leitrim PCT and South Leitrim Development Company. The PCT covers, Mohill, Carrigallen and Ballinamore. There is a population of approximately 11,000 people, which is rurally dispersed. South Leitrim PCT was launched in December 2008, and is one of eleven PCTs in Sligo–Leitrim.

An external facilitator supported the consultations for the Community Needs Assessment and the development of the Community Health Forum. A future goal identified by the project partners includes the development of a County-wide Community Health Forum to cover the eleven teams in Sligo/Leitrim. The County Forum would form the basis of representation on the HSE Local Implementation Group.

## Equal Access Community Development Project<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Equal Access CDPs work on community participation in primary care has been absorbed into the Dodder Valley Partnership

The Project builds on the experience of community participation in health from the Fettercairn Building Healthy Communities Project.

Four PCTs have been established in Tallaght West and were launched in November 2009. Four of the five communities that are covered by the Tallaght West Health and Social Care Network are designated RAPID areas. Social workers and community workers in the four teams have engaged effectively with the project and have helped to raise the profile of community involvement.

## Fatima Regeneration Board

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Rialto is an area with a tradition of work in tackling health inequalities and involves the Regeneration Board and local Community Health Development Workers employed by Fatima Groups United and Dolphin House Community Development Association in Rialto, Fatima and Dolphins Barn. The Rialto Community Health Forum has three representatives sitting on the Primary Care Management Team.

The Project organised a series of monthly workshop event, these were delivered jointly between the local community groups and PCT staff and were very successful.

A community launch event was also organised jointly by the HSE and the local community to launch the Rialto PCT and a guide to local services: *What's out there? A profile of health and wellbeing groups and services in the Dublin South Inner City Area.*

## **Blakestown Community Development Project and Mountview Family Resource Centre** (joint application)

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The Blakestown Community Development Project and the Mountview Family Resource Centre pooled their resources as their geographic communities fit with the PCT area. Local residents and groups in the area participated in a six-week training programme run by the Community Action Network (CAN).

The training was interactive, creative and participatory. It was received positively and formed the basis of the local community consultations.

The Project is continuing discussions with the HSE Transformation Development Officer (TDO) with a view to working towards community participation on PCTs. The training of volunteers in the local community has been crucial to planning for this participation. An Action Plan for the Blakestown and Mountview area has also been drawn up to further develop the project in 2010 and 2011.

### **Corduff Community Development Project and Blanchardstown Greater Development Project (joint application)**

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The Project has brought together two community development projects to build relationships between the PCTs and the local community. The Project builds on research and ground work carried out as part of the *Building Healthy Communities* Programme and a number of local consultations carried out in Corduff and Mulhuddart.

The Project has developed a model for community participation to develop and support four local Health Action Groups. These Groups are the Fora from which community representatives are selected to represent the community on the PCTs. A joint training programme has been developed and run for both community and PCT representatives.

## Monaghan Community Forum

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Monaghan Voluntary and Community Forum is the main partner in the project. The Forum provides a platform for 350 groups in the County, and operates on a thematic basis. Two PCTs have been established in North Monaghan, which will have a base in one of the HSE hospitals in the area.

The original project aim to develop a ‘planning for real’ process of community consultation had to be revised in the light of the fixed location of the PCT in the hospital. This was not a structure that the community was able to engage with and therefore the focus of the project shifted to a consultation exercise with a range of disadvantaged groups and communities.

## Bere Island Projects Group

**Project Contract:** John Walsh, Community Centre, Bere Island, Co Cork.



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The last 50 years has shown how vulnerable island communities are, with many isolated islands suffering from depopulation, low income, lack of social and recreational services, isolation and social exclusion. The Cork islands have experienced a drop in overall population over the last twenty years.

The three representative organisations covering the seven inhabited islands off West Cork developed their proposal in collaboration with the HSE. The organisations include two community development projects and a representative cooperative organisation. The Project set up a Steering Group with representatives from the Islands and the HSE. The Group has engaged in community consultation and joint training.

## Wolfe Tone Community Health Project

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The Project builds on the work of the Wexford Community Health Project, which had been supported by the Community Development Project and builds on the projects participation in the Building Healthy Communities Programme.

The aim of Wexford Community Health Project has been to bring together a group of community representatives from the RAPID areas to participate in training, carry out a needs analysis in each area to inform local health plans. It is envisaged that these plans will form the basis for community input into the PCT for Wexford.

There are currently two virtual teams in Gorey and North Wexford, and in Wexford Town. The project will be seeking representation on the Wexford Town PCT when it is fully established.

## Finglas South Community Development Project

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This Project is a collaboration between the Community Development Project, St Helena's Family Resource Centre, Tolka Area Partnership, Finglas East Regional Network (of local community organisations) and the HSE. The Finglas area has extensive existing forums and this led the Project to consider what kind of infrastructure would best suit primary care.

Five PCTs are in the process of being established in Finglas. It is planned that the five PCTs in the catchment area will form a Community Participation Working Group, and that each PCT will have two representatives on the Community Participation Working Group.

## **Pavee Point**

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Pavee Point is a partnership of Travellers and settled people to improve the lives of Travellers, of which health has been a key priority area. Primary care is particularly relevant to Traveller health and poor access to primary care services has been documented by Pavee Point.

Pavee Point has established a specific pilot project with PCTs in the Wicklow area to develop a model for engagement between PCTs and the Traveller community. The Project has also developed awareness raising resources on Traveller participation for PCTs.

## Lifford Clonleigh Resource Centre

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The initial pilot Project took place in Lifford-Castlefinn, a Community Development Project in a rural area of low population density. This received support from the HSE and the Building Healthy Communities Programme and was a Primary Care Pilot Implementation Project. It is widely regarded as being a model for other projects.

This Project has built on this work and supports a Community Participation Advisory Group (CPAG), whose membership is drawn from local Community Health Forums, Community Development Projects, and HSE representatives.

The following four PCTs have participated in the process: Lifford-Castlefinn, Ballyshannon-Bundoran, Finn Valley and the Lagan Valley. Four Community Health Forums have also been established and are coordinated through the Community Participation Advisory Group.

## Iorras le Cheile

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Iorras Le Chéile, a Community Development Project, based in Belmullet, Co Mayo, was established in 2003 and has been working on a range of health related issues from a human rights perspective. A particular focus has been given to mental health in the area.

Erris PCT was one of the HSE's original national primary care pilot projects in 2002. The promotion of positive mental health has been identified as an important area for primary care. A working group was set up to promote positive mental health in the area and peer-led support groups have been established, as well as projects on women's participation in decision-making, domestic violence, and drug and alcohol addiction amongst young people.

## Offaly Local Development Company

**Project Contact:** Steve O'Donohue, Offaly Local Development Company (OLDC), Crank House, Banagher, Co Offaly.



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The Project builds on successful ground work carried out by the Offaly Local Development Company as part of the Building Healthy Communities initiative.

The Project has been developed as a partnership between Offaly Local Development Company and the South Offaly PCTs, and has representation from a broad range of agencies. This has enabled the Project to engage on issues relating to the broader determinants of health.

Consultations with local disadvantaged rural communities were previously carried out in targeted communities to assess health needs and promote participation. The publication *The West Offaly Way* set out the findings and makes a series of recommendations. The initial ground work also established an awareness and expertise of community consultations in addressing rural isolation and health inequalities.

## **Follain Community Health Project**

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The Follain Community Health Project grew out of a wider women's network in Waterford. The Project has worked closely with local community organisations, including three CDPs in Waterford. The Project decided to focus specifically on the relocation of primary health care services to the Waterford Health Park.

This Project sought to raise awareness of these changes to counteract potential fears and misunderstandings within disadvantaged communities about changes in service delivery, location, and how they will impact on service users from communities experiencing disadvantage.

## South Tipperary Community Forum

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Nine PCTs are being established in South Tipperary. There is one however that is well-established PCT (Cashel), with a further three being established in the Clonmel area.

The South Tipperary Community and Voluntary Forum was established in 2000 to represent the community and voluntary sector on South Tipperary County Council. It is the community partner in the project and has liaised closely with community projects in the County.

Within this Project a priority was given to developing training and support for PCTs and to build links between the community and the Teams. The Project drew on a range of resources and consultations that have been carried out in the area, including the Social Inclusion Profile carried out as part of the Cohesion process in South Tipperary in 2008.

# Table 1: Summary of project activities

Lead community partner	Community Participation Steering Group	Community consultations	Community needs analysis	
<b>HSE West</b>				
NW Roscommon CDP, Ballaghaderreen	✓	✓		
Mayo Intercultural Action, Castlebar	✓	✓	✓	
Leitrim Development Company, Co Leitrim	✓	✓	✓	
Iorras le Cheile, Belmullet, Co Mayo	✓	✓		
Paul Partnership, Limerick City	✓	✓	✓	
Lifford-Clonleigh Resource Centre, Donegal	✓	✓	✓*	
<b>HSE South</b>				
West Cork Island Projects Group, Bantry	✓	✓	✓**	
Wolfe Tone CDP, Wexford	✓	✓		
Follain Community Health Project, Waterford	✓	✓		
South Tipperary Community Forum, Clonmel	✓	✓	✓	
<b>HSE Dublin Mid-Leinster</b>				
Westmeath Community Development Ltd, Athlone	✓	✓		
Equal Access CDP, Tallaght, Co Dublin	✓	✓	✓	
Fatima Regeneration Board, Dublin	✓	✓	✓*	
Offaly Local Development Company, Banagher	✓	✓	✓	
<b>HSE Dublin North-East</b>				
Blakestown CDP/Mountview FRC, Blanchardstown	✓	✓	✓	
Corduff CDP / Blanchardstown CDP, Blanchardstown	✓	✓	✓*	
Monaghan Community Forum, Monaghan	✓	✓		
Finglas South CDP, Finglas, Dublin	✓	✓		
Pavee Point, Dublin	✓	✓		

\* Community needs analysis carried out prior to the project

\*\* Community Health Needs Assessment was carried out in 2004; this is to be updated in 2010

	Joint training	Community participation training for PCT members	Training for community reps	Community Health Forum	Sustainability built into project
	✓		✓	✓	✓
			✓	✓	✓
	✓		✓	✓	✓
			✓	✓	✓
	✓		✓	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	✓		✓		✓
			✓		✓
			✓		✓
	✓			✓	✓
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			✓	✓	✓
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			✓		✓
	✓			✓	✓
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			✓		✓
			✓		✓

