

# Co. Wicklow Strategy for Inter -Agency Co-operation in the Delivery of Services and Supports to Travellers



## June 2007





# **Co. Wicklow Strategy for Inter –Agency Co-operation in the Delivery of Services and Supports to Travellers**

## **2007**

Foreword –	Cathaoirleach, Cllr. Joe Behan
Chapter One –	Context to the Co. Wicklow Traveller Interagency Strategy
Chapter Two –	Profile of the Traveller Community in Co. Wicklow
Chapter Three –	Consultation Phase with Service Delivery Agencies and Travellers in Co. Wicklow
Chapter Four –	Strategic Objectives & Action Plan



# Foreword

Since the summer of 2006, a huge effort has been invested in the development of a Traveller Interagency Strategy for Co. Wicklow.

As Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council during 2006/07, and as Chairperson of the Traveller Interagency Group for Co. Wicklow, I was very happy to lend any support I could to this work. Having witnessed at first hand, the commitment of all involved, the willingness to share information and expertise and the combined desire to respond to the needs of Travellers in the county, I have great hopes for this Strategy.



I particularly welcome this Strategy, in terms of the framework it provides for improving service delivery to Travellers in Co. Wicklow. Key objectives of the Strategy include:

- Enhancing an understanding of Traveller culture amongst service providers in Co. Wicklow
- Improving Traveller Health
- Enhancing relations between the Traveller Community and An Garda Siochana
- Improving the living conditions and quality of life for Travellers in Co. Wicklow
- Increasing access to and participation in a broad range of Education & Training initiatives
- Increasing participation in the Labour Market

Travellers are an indigenous minority who have been part of Irish and Wicklow society for centuries. It is my hope and wish that this Strategy will significantly contribute to a greater understanding of Traveller culture and identity by policy-makers and service deliverers in Co. Wicklow. In my new capacity as a Dail Deputy for Co. Wicklow, I will continue to support the rollout of this Strategy and I wish all involved every success in it's implementation.

Joe Behan T. D  
June 2007



# CHAPTER ONE

## CONTEXT TO THE CO. WICKLOW TRAVELLER INTERAGENCY STRATEGY

### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THIS STRATEGY

In terms of strategically positioning the work of Wicklow's Traveller Interagency Group, the starting point can be located in the Wicklow CDB Strategy 'Outlook', published in 2002. Within the Social Inclusion Section of 'Outlook', Action 10 refers to 'Ensuring that in terms of service delivery, specific emphasis is placed on the needs of a number of targeted groups in Co. Wicklow as a means of addressing equality of opportunity'. Specific reference is made within this action to the needs of Traveller clients accessing services in Co. Wicklow.

In 2005, the SIM (Social Inclusion Measures group of Wicklow CDB), supported by Wicklow County Council's Social Inclusion Unit, produced a Poverty Profile of Co. Wicklow. This report profiled a number of target groups most at risk of experiencing poverty in Co. Wicklow and the research identified Travellers as one of the key target groups requiring a range of interventions.

In 2006, Wicklow County Council was one of two Local Authorities nationally (Laois being the other LA) who successfully applied to the Combat Poverty Agency for funding to develop a local Anti-Poverty Strategy. The development of the Co. Wicklow Local Anti-Poverty Strategy (LAPS) has involved:

- identifying the needs of groups most at risk of experiencing poverty in Co. Wicklow
- developing the most appropriate responses to the issues raised in a partnership approach between the target groups and service providers

As such, given that the needs of Travellers in Co. Wicklow has featured strongly in the Wicklow LAPS process, we have been able to use the Traveller LAPS consultation process to inform the development of this Traveller Interagency Strategy for Co. Wicklow. It is worth noting that apart from LAPS, this Strategy is informed by existing and ongoing development work being undertaken by a range of organisations supporting Travellers in Co. Wicklow.

### 1.2 NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT TO THIS STRATEGY

In 2003, a High Level Group on Traveller issues was established under the aegis of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Social Inclusion, chaired by An Taoiseach. The aim of this High Level Group was to find ways of securing better outcomes for Travellers and improve the use of the considerable resources which are allocated across Government Departments for Traveller specific measures. The report of the High Level Group was published in 2006

This report details the learning from two Traveller pilot projects, in Clare and South Dublin which tested some different approaches to interagency cooperation and used County and City Development Board (CDB) structures as a focus for their work. During 2005 further pilot projects were initiated by Minister of State Frank Fahey, T.D., in the County and City areas of Cork, Limerick, Galway, Waterford and County Offaly.

This report stressed emphasised the High Level Group's view that interagency cooperation is an important way for statutory bodies to enhance service delivery, and identified this as a priority issue. As such, the report recommended that all counties and cities develop a strategic plan to implement a coordinated interagency approach and that the structure of the County and City Development Boards would be used to facilitate the development of the plans and to oversee their implementation.





In this context, it was envisaged that this work be carried out by the Social Inclusion Measures (SIM) groups of CDBs nationally.

Circular LG 12/06, released in April '06, therefore requested all County and City Development Boards not involved in the pilot phase, to initiate the process of developing strategic plans, drawing together all relevant agencies and organisations in each county. The action plans developed from this strategic work were to identify relevant lead agencies, include specific timeframes for the delivery of actions as well as appropriate arrangements for coordination. All completed strategic plans were required to be endorsed by the relevant CDB.

At a national level, the monitoring of the ongoing implementation of the High Level report (which now represents Government policy on the role of State bodies in delivering services and supports to the Traveller Community, will be carried out by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, which has a coordinating role in relation to policy on Travellers.

### **1.3 THE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THIS STRATEGY IN CO. WICKLOW**

In May 2006, Circular 12/06: Interagency Co-operation in the Delivery of Services and Supports to the Traveller Community, was brought to the attention of the Social Inclusion Measures group of Wicklow CDB. This Circular named SIM groups nationally as having key responsibility for developing a response to it's requirements and as a result, several representatives on SIM indicated their interest in being involved in any further work in this area.

With the support of Wicklow CDB, additional representatives from other organisations / individuals involved in supporting Travellers in Co. Wicklow were approached and in June '06, Wicklow CDB's Traveller

Interagency group was established. It was agreed from the outset to facilitate the Traveller Interagency group within the framework of the SIM group to allow fluidity of membership between both groups and to avoid duplication of meetings. Additionally, it was agreed that:

- Two members of the Traveller Community be invited to participate on this Traveller Interagency Group.
- That the Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council be invited to participate on this Traveller Interagency Group.
- That this Interagency group would provide regular update to both the SIM group and the Board of Wicklow CDB as well as to Wicklow County Council's Housing SPC and Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.

In terms of developing a Traveller Interagency Strategy for Co. Wicklow, the Interagency Group has closely followed the learning emanating from the pilot Local Authorities involved in the initial rollout of Circular 12/06. In particular, the Wicklow group has participated on a study trip to South County Dublin to view some of the projects undertaken there and hear at first hand, the experiences of all involved.



# CHAPTER TWO

## PROFILE OF THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY IN CO. WICKLOW

### 2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

In terms of the 2002 Census, very little data regarding the Traveller Community is presented at County level.<sup>1</sup> As such, much of the Census data relates mainly to the national picture. Given this situation, this section is supplemented by statistics provided by local Traveller development agencies within Co. Wicklow with a remit for working with members of the Traveller Community within the county.

In the 2002 Census, Travellers were, for the first time, asked to self-identify in terms of their ethnicity by answering the question - Are you a member of the Irish Traveller community?

According to Census 2002:

- There are 23,681 Travellers nationally, accounting for 0.6% of the population
- Only 3.3% of the Traveller population are over 65 years compared to 11.1% of the general population
- 63% of Travellers are under 25 years compared to 37% of the general population
- 42% of Travellers are under 15 years compared to 21% of the general population
- The average age for Travellers is 18 years compared to a national figure of 32 years

<sup>1</sup> The results of the 2006 Census in relation to the Traveller Community are not due for release until Autumn 2007.

**TABLE 1: POPULATION STATISTICS FOR CO. WICKLOW:**

	CSO Stats 2002
Number of Travellers in Co. Wicklow	567
Number of Traveller families in Co. Wicklow	103

*Source: Census of Population 2002 Vol. 8 Irish Traveller Community*

The vast majority of the families associated with Co. Wicklow are related to families in South Dublin and Co. Wexford. This has implications in terms of travel and the exercise of their nomadic traditions. In terms of a regional analysis, the following table indicates the numbers of Traveller families living in counties adjoining Co. Wicklow:

**TABLE 2: IRISH TRAVELLERS CLASSIFIED BY SEX AND AREA**

Area	Persons	Male	Female	Travellers per 1,000 total population
Wicklow	567	291	276	4.9
Kildare	413	200	213	2.5
Meath	710	354	356	5.3
Wexford	1,124	537	587	9.6
State	23,681	11,708	11,973	6.0
Dublin	5,696	2,786	2,190	5.1

*Source: Census of Population 2002 Vol. 8 Irish Traveller Community*

Whilst the 2006 Census results have not yet been released at a county level, the following demographic data has been extracted from the Wicklow Travellers Group Strategic Plan 2007-2009.



**TABLE 3: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

Total number of Travellers in Co. Wicklow.	737
Total number of Traveller Families in Co. Wicklow	185
Total number of adult Travellers over 18 years in Co. Wicklow	393
Total number of Traveller children in Co. Wicklow	344

*Source: Wicklow Travellers Group Strategic Plan 2007 – 2009*

It is worth noting that whilst there are a small number of Traveller families in West Wicklow, the majority of Traveller families are located on the east coast of Co. Wicklow, with the majority living in Bray. According to recent figures provided by the Bray Travellers Community Development Group – whose geographic remit extends north of Bray to Shankill, Co. Dublin and south of Bray to Kilcoole – there are currently 306 members of the Traveller Community based in the Bray area, this represents 41.5 percent of all the Traveller Community in the county.

## 2.2 EMPLOYMENT

Census 2002 identifies a labour force of 7,401 persons within the national Travelling Community, of which 2,257 are at work. Of those who stated the type of work they did, the highest percentages were in manufacturing, construction, wholesale/retail trade, health and social work. The following table details rates of employment amongst members of the Traveller Community at a national level:

**TABLE 4: IRISH TRAVELLERS AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER, CLASSIFIED BY LABOUR FORCE, EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE**

	Labour Force							Total not in Labour Force	Labour Force Participation Rate
	Total Aged 15 years and over	Total in Labour Force	Employer or own account worker	Employee	Assisting Relative	Looking for first job	Unemployed		
Persons	13,680	7,401	255	1,979	23	823	4,321	6,279	54.1%
Male	6,620	4,751	235	1,019	10	518	2,969	1,869	71.8%
Female	7,060	2,650	20	960	13	305	1,352	4,410	37.5%

*Source: Census 2002, Vol.8 Irish Traveller Community*





From the above table, we can see that the principal economic status labour force participation rate for male Travellers is 71.8%. This is slightly higher than the national rate for males collectively which is 69.9%. The labour force participation rate for female Travellers at 37.5%, is however, considerably lower than the national rate for females collectively which stands at 47.0%.

According to the ILO (International Labour Organisation) measure of unemployment, the unemployment rate for members of the Traveller community is 39.2%. A gender breakdown of the unemployment rate reveals that for male Travellers, the rate is 45.1% whilst for female Travellers, it is 30.5%.

Whilst no CSO data is available at a county level, the following information was taken from recent information submitted by the Wicklow Travellers Community Development Group:

### **TABLE 5: LOCAL EMPLOYMENT FIGURES**

#### **Statistics taken from Wicklow Traveller's Group Strategic Plan 2007 - 2009**

Single Traveller Males in Full Time Employment	1
Single Traveller Males in Part Time Employment	0
Single Traveller Females in Full Time Employment	1
Married Traveller Men in Full Time Employment	1
Married Traveller Females in Full Time Employment	3
Married Traveller Females in Part Time Employment	10
Total No. of Wicklow Travellers in Employment	16

Table 5 figures indicate that there are only sixteen Travellers in full-time or part – time employment in Co. Wicklow. As such, significant emphasis needs to be placed on encouraging Travellers to participate in mainstream employment and to provide opportunities for them to do so.

### **2.3 ACCOMMODATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS OF TRAVELLERS IN CO. WICKLOW**

At the end of 2004 the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government evaluated existing Traveller accommodation. The results of this evaluation are summarised in Table 6.



**TABLE 6. TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION, 2004**

Tenants in permanent accommodation provided by or with the assistance of local authorities	4,528
Tenants in private rented accommodation	486
Own accommodation from own resources	464
Basic Service Bays or sharing accommodation	912
Living in unauthorized sites	601
Total	6,991

The number of families living on unauthorised sites is declining. In 2002 more than 900 families were living on unauthorised sites. On the other hand, the number living in basic service bays or in shared accommodation has increased from 698 in 2002 to 912 in 2004. One in five Traveller families are living in basic service bays, sharing accommodation, or on unauthorised sites. The quality of accommodation varies greatly, and for those living on unauthorised sites (601 families) there is the constant threat of eviction without notice under section 10 of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act (1998) and the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (2002). As a result, many Travellers are living in conditions that are unacceptable with regard to their general well-being and specifically their education. Poor accommodation militates against their being able to participate in a meaningful and productive manner in the education and labour systems.

The Traveller Accommodation Act 1998 requires Local Authorities in consultation with Travellers and the general public to prepare and adopt a five year construction programme to meet the existing and projected Traveller accommodation needs in their respective areas.

Wicklow County Council adopted the first Traveller Accommodation Programme 2000-2004 in February 2000. This was reviewed in 2002 and the Council is currently operating according to the Traveller Accommodation Plan 2005 - 2008

This Plan addresses the accommodation needs of existing roadside families as well as prospective needs and includes for the provision of the following types of accommodation:

- Standard housing
- Single site house / halt
- Permanent Halting Sites
- Transient Halting Sites – There are currently no such sites in Co. Wicklow
- Group Housing Schemes
- Loan Scheme for Purchase of Caravans – some twenty families have been assisted under this scheme since 2001



Under the 2000-2004 Programme, Wicklow County Council accommodated Travellers in various types of accommodation including standard housing, halting sites and temporary/emergency sites. However there still remains a sizeable number of Travellers illegally encamped on the roadside – often without basic services such as running water, refuse collection and sanitary facilities. Under its 2005-2008 Traveller Accommodation Programme, Wicklow County Council aims to provide eighty two units of accommodation (current need is estimated at 58 units of accommodation and the projected future need is estimated to be at least 24 units). The current needs assessment for the programme showed that there were twenty-one families living without basic facilities, of these fifteen were in the County Council area and six in the Town Council areas.

The Wicklow Traveller Group Strategic Plan 2007 – 2009, states that there are twenty three Traveller families living in roadside conditions in Co. Wicklow and that a further twenty families are living in overcrowded conditions. The strategic plan shows that there is a substantial amount of work that needs to be done to address the accommodation needs of the Traveller Community in the county.

**TABLE 7. LIVING CIRCUMSTANCES OF TRAVELLER FAMILIES IN CO. WICKLOW**

Families on the roadside	23
Families in overcrowded conditions	20
Official Halting Site units in need of refurbishment	10
Official Halting Site units	13
Social Housing	103
Private house	2
Private rented house	14
Total	185

*Source: Wicklow Traveller Group Strategic plan 2007*

## 2.4 EDUCATION STATISTICS

A key education statistic highlighted by the National Traveller Education Officer in 2003 was the fact that just 40% (1,608) of all Traveller children of post-primary age attended mainstream post primary schools in the 2002/2003 academic year. Additionally, whilst the national retention rate for pupils collectively to Junior Cert level is 94.3%, for Traveller pupils, the rate is currently only 51%. (Source – Pavee Point Education Fact Sheet taken from [www.paveepoint.ie](http://www.paveepoint.ie))



Results from the 2002 Census reveal the following picture regarding educational attainment:

**TABLE 8: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR IRISH TRAVELLERS AGED 15 YEARS AND OVER**

Sex	TotalWhose full-time Education has ceased	Not Stated	Highest Level of Education Completed				Third Level	
			Primary (incl. No formal education)	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary		Non – Degree	Degree or Higher
Persons	11,035	1,565	7,491	1,444	338		81	116
Male	5,423	772	3,786	632	138		33	62
Female	5,612	793	3,705	812	200		48	54

*Source: Census 2002, Vol.8 Irish Traveller Community*

Some key points emerging from Table 8 include:

- 39.4 % of Travellers whose full time education had ceased, had left before the age of fifteen. This compares to the rate of 13.0% for the country's total population in this category.
- Approximately 67.9 % of the Travellers highest level of education completed was primary education, only 1.8 % had a third level qualification compared to approximately 30% national population who had a third level qualification.

In 2005 at a national level there were 47 Traveller pre-schools and in addition some Traveller children attend community child-care facilities and Early Start pre-schools.

In 1980 the visiting teacher service for Travellers was established and by 1995 there were eleven VTST posts. This has since increased to forty visiting teacher posts in 2005. The visiting teachers are based around the country and in 04/05 worked with approximately eight thousand Traveler children and their parents. The service seeks to provide opportunities for Traveller parents, their children and the schools to engage in a process of development that maximizes participation and attainment levels and promotes an intercultural education for all. For the academic year 04/05 there were 523 resource teachers for Travellers in primary schools. The transfer rate for Travellers to the post-primary level was 85 percent in 2004. There were approximately 1,850 Traveller pupils in mainstream post primary schools out of a possible 4,000. This is 46 percent of all Traveller pupils of post – primary age.



**TABLE 9: ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF TRAVELLER PUPILS IN MAINSTREAM POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS BY SCHOOL CLASS 2004/ 2005**

Area/Level	Male	Female	Total
First Year	303	368	671
Second Year	253	303	556
Third Year	151	206	357
Transition year or fourth year	14	30	44
Fifth Year	47	98	145
Sixth Year	25	47	72
Total	793	1,052	1,845

*Source: Department of Education and Science, Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy.*

One of the main problems for Traveller pupils is the high dropout rate from post- primary education with the majority leaving before completing the junior cycle. In terms of the 2002 Census, education data from members of the Traveller Community is not presented at a county level. Informal educational data from both the Bray & Wicklow Traveller Groups in Tables 10 & 11 reveals the following participation rates:

**TABLE 10. PARTICIPATION RATES IN GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF WICKLOW TRAVELLER GROUP 2004**

Wicklow Town & Environs Educational Statistics				
Area	Level	Male	Female	Total
Wicklow town	Primary	21	8	29
Rathnew	Primary	2	0	2
Arklow	Primary	4	2	6
Wicklow town	Secondary	0	5	5
Total		27	15	42

*Source: Wicklow Travellers Group*





**TABLE 11. PARTICIPATION RATES IN GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF BRAY TRAVELLERS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

<b>Bray Town &amp; Environs Educational Statistics 2007</b>				
Area	Level	Male	Female	Total
Bray	Primary	52	51	103
Environs	Primary	10	3	13
Bray	Secondary	13	20	33
Environs	Secondary	2	1	3
Total		77	75	152

*Source: Bray Travellers Community Development Group*

In terms of Pre- School at a national level in 2005 there were 47 pre-schools supported through 98% funding of tuition and transport costs. In Wicklow there is one Traveller pre-school and one Traveller specific primary school - St. Kieran's in Bray.

At post primary level an ex-quota allocation of 1.5 teaching hours per week is allowed per Traveller child enrolled and additional fulltime equivalent teachers are appointed as a result. At a national level in 2005 there were forty visiting teachers for Travellers who encompass all levels of education. The service aims to provide opportunities for Traveller parents, their children and schools to engage in a process of development that maximizes participation and attainment levels and promotes an intercultural education for all. There is one visiting teacher for County Wicklow based in Roundwood.

Senior Traveller Training Centres provide a programme of general education, vocational training and work experience for around 981 Travellers annually. There are two Senior Traveller Training Centres in Wicklow, one in Bray (St. Kieran's) and one in Wicklow town.

## 2.5 HEALTH STATISTICS

Traveller health is significantly worse than the health of those in the settled community. As Travellers are a distinct cultural group Travellers have distinctive health needs and require special consideration within the health service.

Recent data such as the National Traveller Health Strategy shows:

- The infant mortality rate for Travellers is 18.1/1000 live births compared to a national figure of 7.4/1000 live births.
- At birth, male Travellers can expect to live 9.9 years less than settled men
- At birth, female Travellers can expect to live 11.9 years less than settled women.
- Male Travellers have over twice the risk of dying in a given year than settled males and for female Travellers the risk is more than 3 times.
- The Sudden Infant Death Syndrome rate among Traveller families in 2002 was more than 3.5 times the national figure (2.2 vs. 0.6 per 1000 live births)

*(Source – Pavee Point Health Fact Sheet taken from [www.paveepoint.ie](http://www.paveepoint.ie))*

In 2002, the National Traveller Health Strategy 2002-2005 (NTHS) was launched with a budget of €9 million. It notes the following specific factors influencing Traveller health:

**Living Conditions** – The poor conditions in which many Travellers live is an important factor. The NTHS states one in four Travellers has no piped water or electricity.

**Racism and Discrimination** – According to the NTHS, 17% of Travellers have difficulty in registering with a GP and in many areas it was found that only a small number of GPs provided services to Travellers.



**Health Promotion** – Lack of education and training materials that are relevant and meaningful to Travellers has contributed to a low uptake of health services by Travellers.

A Traveller Health Policy Unit now exists at Departmental level along with the National Traveller Health Advisory Committee (NTHS). As part of the NTHS an All Ireland Traveller Health Status and Needs Assessment Study commenced in **2005**. At a regional level Traveller Health Units are now operational and ‘Primary Health Care for Traveller Projects’ exist at a local level.

In a Wicklow context, there is currently very little data regarding Traveller health within the county. A Traveller Health initiative has been launched in County Wicklow involving the Bray and Wicklow Travellers Community Development Projects in partnership with the Health Service Executive. This project involves the employment of a Traveller Primary Health Care Co-ordinator and over the course of this programme it is intended to recruit and train twelve Traveller women as Community Health Workers for the county.

The LEAP project based in Bray has also been involved in a number of Traveller health initiatives and observations made include:

- the health status of the Traveller men engaged in the LEAP project is very low
- over 50% of the 107 men engaged on the programme in 2006 are on disability related allowances.
- During 2004/05/06, 7 of the men on the BTEI courses are on a methadone treatment programme.
- There is a lot of problematic alcohol and drug use among the men. Among those using drugs or on methadone there are problems with feet and hand sores, ulceration, and we have had one man having to have his finger amputated.

- Three men on the programme are profoundly deaf. Even where deafness is not apparent in their families there is a definite speech difficulty.
- Suicide and depression with young males in the Traveller community is far higher than in the settled community.
- Some men will never engage at a formal level and experience chronic isolation which outlines the importance of continued outreach and the social interaction.

Amongst the supports offered by LEAP to address the above issues, include

- Specialist one-to-one literacy provision
- Makaton sign language and symbols course provided
- Listening programme provided for those with auditory processing difficulties
- Provision of a social and educational mix of modules – from photography to safe pass to carpentry skills
- Big breakfast club and other social activities to build trust and bring the men out of social isolation.
- Transport to Social Mornings and Transport to Methadone Clinic – without which the men could not engage in either
- Need to support Self Advocacy is on the LEAP agenda for Sep – Dec 2007

## **2.6 AUDIT OF ORGANISATIONS DELIVERING SUPPORTS/ SERVICES TO TRAVELLERS IN CO. WICKLOW**

The following tables detail the range of organisations involved in supporting Travellers in Co. Wicklow. Table 12 focuses on the staffing resources of the organisations listed whilst Tables 13 & 14 detail the various services / programmes / supports offered.



**TABLE 12 SUMMARY OF DEDICATED WORKERS FOR TRAVELLERS IN CO. WICKLOW**

Agency	Wicklow County Council (WCC)	Health Service Executive (HSE)	Department of Education and Science (DES)	Co. Wicklow VEC	Bray Travellers Group	Wicklow Travellers Group	LEAP	Wicklow Primary Health Care Project	Shuttle Knit (Community Services Project)
Staffing	One Social Worker	One Designated Public Health Nurse	One Visiting Teacher for Travellers  6 Resource Teachers for Travellers in primary schools in Co. Wicklow  Staff in St. Kieran's Primary School, Bray (Traveller only primary school)	Director of the Senior Traveller Training Centre in Wicklow town  Also nine whole time equivalent teaching posts attached to this Centre  Employment Advocate for Travellers (position funded by FAS)  Also St. Kieran's Senior Traveller Training Centre in Bray – County Dublin VEC	Core Staff of Seven incl:  Project Manager (full time)  Administrator (part-time)  Outreach & Development Worker (funded by LDTF)  Outreach Worker (funded by LDTF)  Womens Programme Manager (funded by FAS)  Two CE Workers (funded by FÁS)	Core Staff of Three incl:  Community Development Co-ordinator  Administrator  Community Youth Worker	LEAP Co-ordinator	Primary Health Care Co-ordinator  12 participants	Project Manager  Four staff

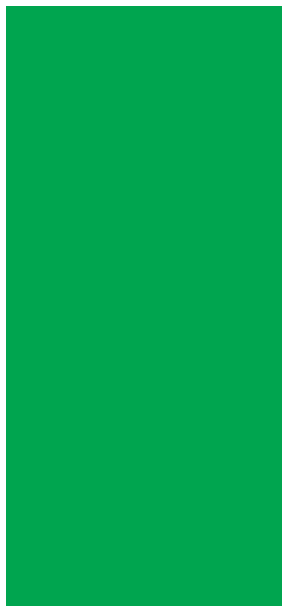


**TABLE 13 SUMMARY OF SERVICES / PROGRAMMES DELIVERED TO TRAVELLERS IN CO. WICKLOW BY STATUTORY SECTOR**

Statutory Agencies	Wicklow County Council (WCC)	Dept of Education & Science	Co. Wicklow V.E.C.	Gardaí	Probation and Welfare Service
Service	<p>WCC provide the following housing options to the Travelling Community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Traveller Specific</li> <li>*Accommodation</li> <li>*Rented Social Housing;</li> <li>*Caravan Loans</li> <li>*Private Ownership</li> <li>*Private Rented Accommodation</li> <li>*Tenant Purchase;</li> <li>*Shared Ownership;</li> <li>*Improvement works to cater for disabled members of the family or additional persons.</li> </ul> <p>WCC also manages and maintains Traveller specific accommodation. Maintenance includes cleansing of the sites, refuse collection, provision of skips, pest control, repairs, painting and decorating and site security e.g. erection of fences and barriers.</p> <p>WCC promotes responsible Estate Management, this service is co-ordinated by the Social Worker.</p> <p>WCC employs a designated Social Worker with responsibility for the social needs of Co. Wicklow's Travellers as well as acting as a liaison between WCC and the Traveller Community.</p> <p>WCC staff also support Travellers in standard housing and those living by the roadside.</p>	<p><b>Visiting Teacher for Travellers:</b></p> <p>This service seeks to provide opportunities for Traveller parents, their children and schools to engage in a process of development that maximises participation and attainment levels and promotes intercultural education for all. The day to day work of the Visiting Teacher Service includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison with families</li> <li>• Liaison with schools and boards of management (primary and post primary)</li> <li>• Liaison with Department of Education and Science</li> <li>• Liaison with other agencies</li> </ul> <p>The Dept. of Education &amp; Science supports the following specific initiatives in Wicklow:</p> <p><b>Primary Education</b></p> <p>The role of the Resource Teacher for Travellers (RTT) is to support and optimise teaching and learning opportunities for Traveller pupils and to provide learning support to those Traveller pupils with identified supplementary learning needs. The Resource Teacher works in close consultation and co-operation with the class teacher and other support personnel. The Department's "Learning Support Guidelines" specify that the Resource Teacher works wherever possible as part of a Learning Support Team. is</p>	<p>The role of the Co. Wicklow VEC is to create an environment where Travellers have real opportunities to become independent life long learners, and in turn, contribute to the development of their communities.</p> <p>Co. Wicklow VEC supports the following specific initiatives in relation to Traveller Education &amp; Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Senior Traveller Training Centre, Wicklow Town</li> </ul> <p>Bray Travellers Community Development Group – Women's Programme – Basic Education, Community Education and BTEI programmes</p> <p>Bray Refuge – Community Education Programme</p> <p>LEAP project for Traveller men</p> <p>Traveller Primary Health Care Initiative, Newcastle – Basic Education Programme</p> <p>Pre-school Project, Holy Rosary NS, Wicklow Town</p> <p>*Also St. Kieron's STTC in Bray but under auspices of County Dublin VEC</p>	<p>The aim of the Gardaí is to achieve the highest attainable level of personal protection, community commitment and state security for the citizens of Co. Wicklow</p> <p>Youth Diversion Programmes targeting youths critically at risk</p>	<p>The Probation and Welfare Service does not provide any Traveller specific services. However the service works with Travellers through Supervision of Travellers in Probation Bonds; Supervision of Travellers in Community Service; Working with Travellers who are serving prison sentences</p>



**TABLE 13 SUMMARY OF SERVICES / PROGRAMMES DELIVERED TO TRAVELLERS IN CO. WICKLOW BY STATUTORY SECTOR  
CONT'D**



In order to qualify for an RTT, a school must have a minimum of 14 Traveller pupils enrolled. A RTT can be shared between two schools.

**Capitation (primary level)**

A special additional enhanced capitation payment is payable to primary schools in respect of Traveller pupils who have the services of a Resource Teacher for Travellers (either shared or full-time). The rate is ?296 for a pupil under 12 years and ?495 for a pupil over 12 years. The purpose of this additional capitation is to enhance the Traveller pupils' learning and participation in school and to purchase books, materials and teaching aids for use with the Traveller pupils.





**TABLE 13 CONT'D SUMMARY OF SERVICES / PROGRAMMES DELIVERED TO TRAVELLERS IN CO. WICKLOW BY STATUTORY**

SECTOR			
Statutory Agencies Service	Social Welfare	FÁS	Health Service Executive
	<p>The Department of Social and Family Affairs responds to individual's needs depending on their particular circumstances, (e.g. unemployment, illness, old age, etc.) The Department funds programmes to support families and to encourage individuals to participate in the workforce. This funding can be aimed at programmes designed to tackle needs identified in the Travelling Community.</p>	<p>The principal functions of FÁS as laid down by the Labour Services Act 1987 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training and re-training</li> <li>Designated Apprenticeships</li> <li>Recruitment Services</li> <li>Employment Programmes</li> <li>Placement and Guidance Service</li> <li>Assistance to Community Groups</li> <li>Advice for people returning to Ireland and those seeking employment elsewhere in the EU</li> </ul> <p>FÁS has statutory responsibility for the organisation and control of apprenticeship training in the designated apprenticeship occupations. It also has responsibility for vocational training and employment of people with a disability.</p>	<p>The purpose of the HSE is to maintain and improve the health, welfare and quality of life of the community through the provision of appropriate and timely health and personal social services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiatives have been developed to compliment mainstream service provision where needs have been identified to promote access to services.</li> <li>• Appointment of Designated staff such as Co-Ordinator of Traveller Health, Designated Public Health Nurse, Community Development Workers and a Family Support Worker</li> <li>• Development of appropriate programmes that are responsive to the needs of Travellers including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding of Peer led initiatives</li> <li>- Traveller Cultural Awareness/Sensitivity Training Programme</li> <li>- Establishment of active partnerships</li> <li>- Developing a system of health data gathering on uptake and access to health services by Travellers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



**TABLE 14 - SUMMARY OF SUPPORTS / PROGRAMMES DELIVERED TO TRAVELLERS IN CO. WICKLOW BY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SECTOR**

Local Development Sector Service	Bray & Wicklow Traveller Community Development Groups (CDPs)	Bray Partnership
	<p>The aim of both CDPs is the empowerment and participation of Travellers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of education and training projects which are administrated in a culturally appropriate manner;</li> <li>• To lobby and campaign for Traveller rights;</li> <li>• To actively oppose discrimination;</li> <li>• To research issues, develop ideas and produce reports and documentation.</li> </ul> <p>Programmes –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Employment:</li> <li>• Accommodation: to improve the living conditions and accommodation of Travellers in each CDP's respective area</li> <li>• Women's Development: working with Traveller Women one to one and in support groups to improve the quality of life of Traveller Women and their families;</li> <li>• Men's Development</li> <li>• Youth Programme</li> <li>• Drugs Education: the promotion, design and delivery of Drugs Awareness and Education Programme for Travellers</li> <li>• Peer Led Community Health Service: Training Traveller women to work as Health Care Workers to deliver health information support and advice to their peers</li> </ul>	<p>Bray Partnership works with disadvantaged communities and communities of interest. It assists such communities to develop their organisational and epresentational capacities and to participate fully in local policy and decision making-structures. It helps develop and sustain partnership-based linkages between public and statutory agencies and community organisations in the pursuit of social inclusion and improved quality of life for the most marginalized people and neighbourhoods in Bray.</p> <p>Responding to Traveller needs falls squarely within Bray Partnership's operational remit and, as a distinct community of interest, the Traveller community has representation on the Board of Bray Partnership The range of services has included community development supports, education and training, measures around equality and assistance with access to progression options through the Bray Partnership Local Employment Service Network</p> <p>Specific projects supported by Bray Partnership from a Traveller perspective over the years includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education supports to programmes such as BEOIRS,</li> <li>• Mentoring programmes for young Travellers incl Traveller Homework Club</li> <li>• LEAP</li> <li>• TENT</li> </ul>



# CHAPTER THREE

## LAPS CONSULTATION PHASE WITH SERVICE DELIVERY AGENCIES & THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY IN CO. WICKLOW

### 3.1 BACKGROUND & PROCESS

As outlined in Chapter 1, the objective of producing an Interagency Action Plan for Traveller services in Co. Wicklow comes in response both to a specific directive from the Department of the Taoiseach as well as a desire to adopt a more cohesive approach to Traveller needs locally. In terms of the process for developing this Strategy, the SIM / Traveller Interagency Group for Co. Wicklow has met on a bi-monthly basis since the summer of '06 and consists of the following membership:

#### Table Membership of Co. Wicklow Traveller Interagency Group

Joe Behan	Cathaoirleach	Wicklow County Council
Peter Brennan	Manager & Chair of SIM	Bray Partnership
Josephine Roche	HSE	HSE – East Coast Area
Brenda Delaney	Community Education Facilitator	Co Wicklow VEC
Eamonn McCann	Manager	Wicklow Travellers Group
Jim O'Brien	Manager	Bray Travellers Group
Isobel O'Duffy	Manager	Wicklow Working Together Ltd
Patricia Reilly	Social Inclusion Officer	Wicklow County Council
Seadna Mac Seoin	Regional Manager	Dept. of Social & Family Affairs
Jeremy Kynaston	Co. Childcare Co-ordinator	Wicklow County Childcare Committee
Mary Carney	Regional Manager	Department Education & Science
Anne Byrne	Visiting Teacher for Travellers	Department Education & Science
Michael Nicholson	Director of Services	Housing Section, Wicklow County Council
Theresa O'Brien	AO	Housing Section, Wicklow County Council
Noelle Ringwoord	Outreach Support	Co. Wicklow Library Service
Ann Byrne	Manager	Arklow Community Enterprise
Justin Parkes	Social Inclusion Manager	HSE – South West Area
Caroline Burrell	Councillor	Bray Town Council
Mary Rose Walker	Social Worker	Housing Section, Wicklow County Council
Brenda Duff	Public Health Nurse	Traveller Primary Health Care Project – Wicklow
Minnie Connors	Assist. Co-ordinator	Traveller Primary Health Care Project – Wicklow
Pauline Long	Co-ordinator	LEAP Traveller Men's Project, Bray
Michael Ormonde	Assistant Manager Community Services	FÁS
Andy O'Brien	Sergeant	Garda Siochana, Bray



### CO. WICKLOW LOCAL ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY (LAPS):

As part of the LAPS process, in 2006, a number of Traveller focus group meetings were organised to consider a LAPS questionnaire. This questionnaire focused on how Travellers were experiencing service delivery in relation to Health, Education, Housing, Social Welfare and Policing.

The Bray Travellers' Community Development Project organized consultation sessions in Bray. County Wicklow Traveller Primary Health Care project carried out the consultation with the Community Health Workers. Wicklow Travellers' Group facilitated consultation sessions in the Wicklow Senior Traveller Training Centre with the participants on the training programme as well as Travellers employed with Shuttle Knit and with the management committee of Wicklow Travellers Group. The local development company ACE in Arklow also conducted some consultation sessions with Travellers as part of the LAPS process.

Additionally, the LEAP project in Bray, with the support of Bray Partnership consulted with LEAP participants – a sample of 15 men were interviewed with an age spread ranging from 22yrs-67yrs.

The responses from all of the groups, the relevant information from the workshops and other observations that resulted from focus groups, workshops or informal meetings were collated and provided to Wicklow County Council as part of the LAPS process

Following on from this approach, all issues which arose at these sessions were submitted to the appropriate state agency for consideration. Representatives and/or facilitators from the Traveller consultation sessions also met with representatives from the statutory agencies to explore possible solutions/actions to the key issues that arose. Feed-back in relation to these issues is ongoing between the Traveller representatives, the SIM Group, the Traveller Interagency Group, the Housing SPC, the Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee and Wicklow CDB.

There was general agreement that the **key process outcomes of LAPS from a Traveller perspective** should:

- Incorporate achievable targets and actions enabling tangible results to be produced;
- Incorporate Traveller views;
- Seek to strengthen the self-representation of the local Traveller community;
- Be framed in response to Traveller values and culture;
- Be based on good communication and continuity of contact and provision.



### 3. KEY ISSUES RAISED DURING LAPS CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH TRAVELLERS IN CO. WICKLOW RESPONSES:

The following section draws together some of the key points made by both members of the Traveller community and representatives from the various service providers and highlights strategic issues requiring a response. There are seven thematic areas focusing on Communications, Health, Policing, Accommodation, Education/Training, and Labour / Employment

Theme 1: COMMUNICATION WITH STATUTORY AGENCIES – THEMES EMERGING FROM LAPS CONSULTATION PROCESS	
Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use	Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses
<p>It was reported by both Travellers, and acknowledged by a number of agency representatives, that <b>lack of trust</b> between the Traveller community and most statutory agencies, poor lines of <b>communication</b> and perceived <b>lack of transparency</b> in relation to statutory agencies represent significant barriers</p> <p>.</p> <p>Agencies agreed that the lack of <b>external recognition of Traveller values</b> and the perception that statutory actors do not recognise and respect the cultural imperatives of the Traveller is a barrier to any meaningful interaction and problem-solving (e.g. horses, nomadic life-style)</p> <p>Travellers consulted reported that <b>cultural awareness training</b> had been very helpful in dealings with statutory staff who had received it.</p> <p>It was reported by Travellers consulted that dissatisfaction with statutory agencies tends to increase the <b>sense of discrimination</b> felt by Traveller community.</p>	<p><b>Information gaps and lack of clarity in key areas was mentioned in several discussions</b></p> <p><b>Trust, communication, transparency and perceived equality of treatment are vital and should be pronounced where possible.</b></p> <p><b>The manner in which information is presented is important - especially the need to take into account possible literacy difficulties.</b></p> <p><b>Agencies recognised that there is a need to explore ways in which support can be given for Travellers to represent themselves and assert their needs and values</b></p>





## Theme 2: HEALTH ISSUES RAISED BY TRAVELLERS DURING CO. WICKLOW LAPS PROCESS

### Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use

Broad welcome and support for the Traveller Primary Health Care Project based in Newcastle - identified as a very positive model of interagency action. Further roll out of this programme to other parts of the county not currently covered, was sought by Travellers consulted

Many of the Travellers consulted cited access to information as an obstacle to accessing necessary health care.

A significant demand already exists for the services of the Public Health Nurse assigned to work with Travellers in Wicklow – many Travellers requested an expansion of this service

Several requests that front-line staff involved in health service delivery should receive customerrelations training which would develop their understanding of Traveller issues. (Literacy awareness training was mentioned in particular).

### Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses

**Limited data on Traveller Health in Co. Wicklow County Council**

**Full implementation of the National Traveller Health Strategy at the local level. Issues requiring particular attention include:**

Drug misuse  
Mental health issues  
Violence against women  
Suicide and Bereavement

**More emphasis on culturally sensitive Health Promotion within the Traveller Community as well as the provision of accessible information**

**Continued support for the Traveller Primary Health Care Project in Newcastle**

**Increased participation by men in the existing Traveller Primary Health Care Project based in Newcastle**

**Awareness raising amongst frontline staff within Health sector re. Traveller Culture**

**Improved provision of Accessible Information**



**Theme 3:**  
**POLICING ISSUES RAISED BY TRAVELLERS DURING CO. WICKOW LAPS PROCESS**

**Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use**

**Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses**

Some positive examples of interaction between the Gardai and members of the Traveller community were identified but it was felt by many Travellers consulted that a number of Traveller Culture awareness raising sessions would be useful from a Wicklow policing context.

Several requests that more programmes be put in place which would develop more positive links between the Gardai and young Travellers.

Some Travellers consulted expressed concern that parents were not always immediately notified when young Travellers were taken into custody.

Widespread demand for an increase in the number of Community Guards (request made by every target group involved in the LAPS consultation process)

**Awareness raising within Policing sector re. Traveller Culture**

**Need to build on positive experiences where they exist between individual Guards and members of the Traveller community**

**Need for more Community Gardai**



## Theme 4: ACCOMMODATION & ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES RAISED BY TRAVELLERS DURING CO. WICKOW LAPS PROCESS

### Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use

Elements of Wicklow County Council's Traveller Accommodation Plan 2005-2008 were viewed positively but many Travellers consulted expressed their dissatisfaction with the process employed re the development of halting sites in Co. Wicklow. The majority of Travellers consulted identified the process as being too slow and too subject to political interference – many Travellers expressed their disappointment with both the behaviour of and language used by a minority of Councillors in Co. Wicklow.

Clearer and more readily available info needed on the housing application process. Request that dedicated personnel be assigned to responding to applicant queries with accurate and up-to-date information rather than having to go through various council staff to a get response/help. Also requests for improved system re. acknowledgement and receipt of housing applications. Many of the Travellers consulted were also unclear about how the Local Authority's Points System worked

REPAIRS – major issues regarding the long delays in the maintenance and repairs/alteration service. Several requests for a system of appointment cards which lets the tenant know in advance the date and time of the pending repair. Also requests for a receipt system for acknowledging and recording repairs. Also several requests for an independent check when work is done to see if it is up to standard. Several requests also that Housing complaints be processed and dealt with in a more comprehensive and transparent fashion Poor living conditions were reported on some halting sites, including lack of a reliable supply of hot water as well as drainage and sewage problems. Specific problems with dampness and plumbing problems were cited at the Silver Bridge halting site in Bray

Several requests were made for an increase in the number of social workers employed by Wicklow Local Authorities - currently one social worker employed by Wicklow County Council to work throughout county

Some Travellers reported a lack of space on some halting sites making it difficult for children to play, for caravans to turn etc.

### Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses

**For most of the Travellers consulted, quality of accommodation and living conditions was the biggest issue.**

**Difficulties communicating with service providers**

**From perspective of the Local Authority, one of the most difficult issues is the scarcity of available sites suitable for permanent, quality accommodation for Travellers as well as the difficulties encountered in developing these sites once identified.**

**Investigate ways in which greater progress could be made by the Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee**

**Improved provision of accessible information**

**Awareness raising amongst frontline staff within Local Authority sector re. Traveller Culture**



<p><b>Theme 5:</b>  <b>EDUCATIONAL /TRAINING ISSUES RAISED BY TRAVELLER CHILDREN /YOUNG PEOPLE /ADULTS DURING CO. WICKOW LAPS PROCESS</b></p>	
---	--

Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use	Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses
<p><b>In the classroom....</b></p> <p>Traveller consulted felt strongly that there was a need for more time to be spent with young Travellers in the classroom</p> <p>Some Traveller students reported that they currently feel ignored by teachers or were ignored by them in the past.</p> <p>Request that Traveller students be provided with extra classes, increased one-to-one mentoring hours, more liaison teachers.</p> <p>A number of Traveller parents commenting on the fact that some of their children who have participated in the education system still cannot read and write</p> <p>Several requests for the provision of more homework clubs for Travellers</p> <p>Significant demand that an action plan be put in place to tackle the widespread bullying which Travellers are facing in the classroom</p> <p>Annoyance expressed about practice at some schools whereby Traveller children given photocopied sheets of paper rather than proper textbooks.</p> <p>A number of Travellers consulted called for a review of the practice in some schools where Traveller children are automatically put into remedial classes</p> <p>Adult Education.....</p> <p>Ensure courses are provided near to where Travellers live or else transportation must be provided/subsidised.</p>	<p><b>Second-level retention</b></p> <p><b>Transition from primary to post-primary school.</b></p> <p><b>Low levels of literacy.</b></p> <p><b>Transport.</b></p> <p><b>Bullying</b></p> <p><b>Childcare</b></p> <p><b>Awareness raising within Education sector re. Traveller Culture</b></p> <p><b>Difficulties experienced in making progression from Education into Employment</b></p> <p><b>Greater supports needed for young Travellers from youth service perspective</b></p> <p><b>Learning disabilities especially amongst Traveller men incl. Auditory processing problems, dyslexia, deafness etc</b></p>



**Theme 5:**  
**EDUCATIONAL /TRAINING ISSUES RAISED BY TRAVELLER CHILDREN /YOUNG PEOPLE /ADULTS DURING CO. WICKOW LAPS  
PROCESS ...CONT'D**

Childcare a significant issue – demand for provision of increased numbers of childcare places for Traveller children, at course locations/sites of education

Put additional courses and programmes in place to overcome the low literacy levels among the Traveller community.

Additional education courses requested by Traveller men include; landscaping, furniture-making, wagon-making, horse-keeping, welding, woodwork, reading/writing/communication, computers, Traveller culture, photography, career advice.

Concern also expressed re. difficulties encountered in moving from education courses into employment

Traveller Culture.....

Significant demand for roll out of comprehensive awareness raising programme for teachers on 'Traveller Culture'





## Theme 6: EMPLOYMENT ISSUES RAISED DURING CO. WICKOW LAPS PROCESS t

### Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use

The same concerns were expressed by Traveller CE participants as has been expressed by settled community participants, notably that three years was not an appropriate time frame to achieve job readiness, especially when participants had literacy and numeracy difficulties.

The need for childcare and pre-school support to enable women to access employment was noted by many Travellers consulted

Many Traveller men expressed frustration with difficulties encountered in accessing mainstream employment. eg many young Traveller men who wished to pursue apprenticeships did not have the skills required to access these opportunities. Many Traveller men consulted experiencing multiple disadvantages eg: mental health, bereavement/suicide, low literacy, education and job-skill levels and discrimination by employers. This was also affecting links with labour market programmes

### Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses

**Limited employment opportunities for Travellers on the open labour market.**

**Strong demand for work opportunities within the Traveller environment.**

**Childcare and pre-school care are issues for Traveller women wishing to access employment.**

**Improved access to apprenticeships**



**Theme 7:**  
**SOCIAL WELFARE ISSUES RAISED DURING CO. WICKOW LAPS PROCESS**

**Reported Tendencies & Trends in Service Use**

Accessible information on Social Welfare entitlements was sought by many of the Travellers consulted. For many of the local development agencies working with Travellers, enquiries about Social Welfare entitlements and payments placed a significant demand on staff time

Training for front-line staff in the social welfare sector to ensure that they are empathic towards the needs and experiences of Travellers was mentioned repeatedly by those consulted. Anti-racism, equality and cultural diversity training were mentioned in particular. Many Travellers also referred to experiencing communication difficulties with Social Welfare staff as well as the need for greater privacy when dealing with staff in various Social Welfare offices.

There were several requests that local Social Welfare offices should work more closely with Traveller organisations in order to develop good practice models of service delivery.

During the consultations, many Travellers referred to specific problems being experienced in keeping appointments with the Social Welfare service due to literacy difficulties.

Specific issues also raised by Travellers returning to education / employment in terms of subsequent negative impact on their primary / secondary benefits – acting as a disincentive for many Travellers seeking further education / employment opportunities

**Key Issues Informing Strategic Responses**

**Awareness raising amongst frontline staff within Social Welfare sector re. Traveller Culture**

**Improved provision of accessible information from Social Welfare offices re. rights & entitlements**



## CHAPTER FOUR

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES & ACTION PLAN

The LAPS consultation process with Travellers in Co. Wicklow concluded in October '06. Building on this process, the Traveller Interagency Group began to develop an integrated response to the ranges of issues raised both during the LAPS process and through other consultation processes.

In March '07, a facilitated workshop was held which brought together members of the Interagency group and Travellers to discuss the draft Strategy and get feedback on the draft actions produced to date under the following thematic areas:

**Strategic Objective 1:** Improve Lines of Communication and Enhance Appreciation for Traveller Culture

**Strategic Objective 2:** Improve Traveller Health

**Strategic Objective 3:** Enhance Relations between the Traveller Community and An Garda Síochána

**Strategic Objective 4:** Improve Accommodation & Environmental Conditions

**Strategic Objective 5:** Increase Access & Participation in Education & Training

**Strategic Objective 6:** Increase Participation in the Labour Market

Specifically, this workshop sought to identify:

- which actions could be resourced from existing resources available to organizations (both financial and human resources)
- which actions required additional resources
- consideration of which action to be selected as the priority action to be submitted to Pobal under the 2007 Traveller Interagency Funding Scheme

Following the incorporation of feedback from this workshop, the Traveller Interagency Strategy and Action Plan were considered by Wicklow County Development Board at its meeting on March 26, 2007 where it was agreed to endorse both the Strategy, and the Action Plan for 2007.

Subsequently, the Co. Wicklow Traveller Interagency group submitted a funding application to the 2007 Traveller Interagency Funding Scheme to employ a Tenancy Sustainment / Accommodation Worker for the county – an decision is pending on this application.

The Traveller Interagency Strategy for Co. Wicklow, was launched on Monday 11 June 2007, by the Cathaoirleach of Wicklow County Council, Cllr. Anne Ferris, at a reception in County Buildings.



# ACTION PLAN FOR 2007

## Acronyms:

**WCDB** – Wicklow County Development Board

**DEHLG** - Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government

**LA** - Local Authority

**WCC** – Wicklow County Council

**SIM** - Social Inclusion Measures

**SPC** - Strategic Policy Committee

**VEC** - Vocational Education Committee

**LEAP** Traveller Men's Project (Local Education for Adult Progression of Traveller Men), based in Bray

**TENT** (Traveller Employment Network Training) – Community Services Project based in Bray

**DSFA** - Department of Social & Family Affairs

**LAPS** - Local Anti Poverty Strategy

**HSE** - Health Service Executive



## **Traveller Inter –Agency Strategy for County Wicklow**

# **2007 ACTION PLAN**

### **MONITORING & IMPLEMENTATION**

In terms of implementing and monitoring the Traveller Interagency Action Plan for Co. Wicklow in 2007, all lead have agreed the following:

- To nominate a staff member to liaise with the Project Vision administrator (Wicklow CDB's performance management system) in Wicklow County Council. The Lead Agency will be responsible for preparing progress reports for consideration at both SIM/Traveller Interagency Group (six weekly meetings) and at Wicklow CDB meetings (quarterly) per annum.
- To highlight, using Project Vision, examples of good practice regarding inter-agency co-operation as well as identifying blockages to service delivery where they occur
- All CDB member organizations to proof their annual work programmes against both the CDB strategy 'Outlook', the Co. Wicklow LAPS, and the Co. Wicklow Traveller Interagency Strategy and Action Plan

### **ACRONYMS PERTAINING TO BUDGETS INDICATE THE FOLLOWING:**

EOB = Existing Operational Budgets will fund this action

AB = Additional Budget being sourced for this action



Strategic Objective 1:				Improve Lines of Communication and Enhance Appreciation for Traveller Culture		
Rationale:				The LAPS consultation process underlined the need to incorporate and enhance an understanding of Traveller culture in all aspects of service delivery by public, statutory and local development agencies.		
1.1	Required Outcome	Target 2007	Issues to be addressed	Lead agency/agencies and key players required	Action stems from	Budget
	<p>Ensure frontline staff of all Key Service Delivery Agencies Receive Cultural Awareness Training :</p> <p>Delivery of a co-ordinated programme of cultural awareness training which aims to enhance the quality of service provision to Travellers in Co. Wicklow.</p> <p>Programme to focus on: Professional Customer service Equality &amp; diversity training Anti-racism training Information Provision training of relevance to Traveller Community</p> <p>Aim of this training is to: Strengthen awareness of Traveller culture; Foster appreciation of Travellers' needs; Enhance service delivery; Increase trust and mutual respect. Create employment opportunities for Travellers to deliver cultural awareness training</p>	<p>Pilot an interagency cultural awareness training programme in either Bray or Wicklow town by end of 2007, - (based on existing HSE Cultural Awareness training module)</p> <p>Recommendation that the HSE module be piloted firstly with members of Traveller Interagency Group to test it's appropriateness and allow for modification where required.</p> <p>Specific request also for delivery of Traveller Cultural Awareness Training to GP's in Co. Wicklow as part of this action</p>	<p>Ensure that members of the Traveller community are involved in the delivery of aspects of the HSE's Cultural Awareness training module.</p> <p>That organisations release front-line staff to avail of this training</p> <p>That buy-in is secured from the senior management teams of targeted organisations to ensure maximum impact from this training</p> <p>Investigate what type of Quality Assurance Mark can be applied to this training</p> <p>Co-ordination of this action</p> <p>Building up capacity of members of Traveller Community to self advocate</p>	<p>HSE Wicklow Traveller Group Bray Traveller Group</p>	LAPS	EOB



Strategic Objective 2:			Improve Traveller Health			
<b>Rationale:</b>			<p>The LAPS consultation process underlined the fact that the influence of living conditions, social exclusion and cultural attitudes all emerged as barriers to many Travellers in Co. Wicklow accessing health care.</p> <p>In order to reduce the deficit in levels of Traveller health, service provision must be coordinated at an interagency level and must focus particularly on accommodation, environmental and cultural issues which tend to reinforce the health deficit.</p>			
	Required Outcome	Target 2007	Issues to be addressed	Lead person and key players required	Action stems from	Budget
2.1	A measurable improvement in the health of Travellers in Co. Wicklow	Development of a Traveller Health Plan for Co. Wicklow	Based on the actions of the National Traveller Health Strategy, to develop a Co. Wicklow Traveller Health Strategy	HSE: General Manager Learning & Dev Manager Social Inclusion Officer Bray and Wicklow Traveller Groups LEAP	LAPS	EOB
2.2	Mainstreaming of the funding for the Wicklow Traveller Primary Health Care Project	Ensure the mainstreaming of this funding by Dec '07	<p>Securing of funding for the development of Traveller Primary Health Care Project</p> <p>Setting up of HSE's CARE committee which will have key role in terms of supporting this project</p>	HSE Bray and Wicklow Traveller Groups	Traveller Interagency Group	AB
2.3	Promote and support the implementation of the All-Ireland Traveller Health Study in County Wicklow	Ensure Wicklow is mapped as part of this study by Dec '07	National initiative	HSE Bray and Wicklow Traveller Groups LEAP	Traveller Interagency Group	EOB





Strategic Objective 3:				Enhance Relations Between the Traveller Community and An Garda Síochána		
Rationale:				The Gardaí are committed to continuing their work towards achieving the highest attainable level of personal protection, community commitment and state security for every citizen of Co. Wicklow. Feedback from the consultations presents the Gardaí with a number of opportunities to bring about real and meaningful change in their engagement with the Traveller community.		
	Required Outcome	Target 2007	Issues to be addressed	Lead agency/agencies and key players required	Action stems from	Budget
3.1	Improve communication between all parties.	Two-way forum meetings to be put on a structured footing to facilitate dialogue between the Gardai and the Traveller community.  'Placement' of student Gardai on work experience with the Traveller Support Projects to be evaluated and if found to be beneficial, extended.	Timetabling of meetings and venues to be worked out between the main parties involved.	Chief Superintendent's Office  Bray & Wicklow Traveller CDPs and other community based organisations working with Travellers	LAPS	EOB
3.2	Development of Community Gardai role.	Explore how the role and resources of the Community Gardai Programme could be of greater benefit to Traveller communities in Co. Wicklow.	This issue needs to be studied in more detail by senior Gardai in the county with input from Traveller representative groups.	Chief Superintendent's Office Bray & Wicklow Traveller CDPs and other community based organisations working with Travellers including LEAP project	LAPS	EOB



### 3.3

Building positive links between the Gardai and young Travellers.

Garda Siochana Schools Programme – ensure that the Garda Siochana Schools Programme is operational in all schools.  
-A minimum of five visits per year to 5th class primary and 5th year secondary classes each year using the structured syllabus covering a number of topics.

Timetabling between each of the schools and the Gardai to ensure all schools receive the module at times suitable to both.

Chief Superintendent's Office

Co. Wicklow VEC  
Dept. of Education  
Bray & Wicklow  
Travellers CDPs

LAPS

EOB



Strategic Objective 4:		Improve Accommodation & Environmental Conditions				
<b>Rationale:</b>		The LAPS consultation process emphasised the critical link between improved accommodation for Travellers and better uptake of education, health and employment services. There is consensus that improvement of accommodation and environmental conditions experienced by Travellers is of paramount importance to the alleviation of many of the key difficulties experienced by Travellers. It is acknowledged that this can only be delivered through a coordinated interagency approach.				
	Required Outcome	Target 2007	Issues to be addressed	Lead person key agencies required	Action stems from:	Budget
4.1	Delivery of the Co. Wicklow Traveller Accommodation Plan 2005-2008	Specifically, that progress be made on reducing the following current numbers by end of 2007:  Families on roadside <b>23</b> Families in overcrowded conditions <b>20</b> Official Halting Site units in need of refurbishment <b>10</b>  Also that progress be made on the provision of transitional halting sites in Co. Wicklow. The current plan aims to develop 03 such sites – aim by end of '07 to have made progress on one of these three  Secure funding from the Department of Environment for refurbishment of Silverbridge Halting Site, Bray	Securing of political agreement and support for the delivery of this Plan  Decoupling/Individualisation of Travellers – how to ensure that the actions of one person or family or a small group does not adversely affect the wider community of Travellers e.g. current situation re. Silverbridge Halting Site, Bray  Improving timescales for Travellers trying to access accommodation  Provision of basic facilities for Travellers in temporary roadside accommodation including water and sanitary facilities	Housing Directorate  Elected Representatives Housing SPC, Wicklow County Council  Bray Town Council  Bray & Wicklow Traveller Groups  LEAP	LAPS	EOB



4.2.	Seek funding to employ <b>Tenancy Sustainment Worker</b> to support Travellers in Co. Wicklow from an accommodation perspective. –	Secure funding to employ a Tenancy Sustainment Worker .	Funding dependent - agreed that this project should be the action for which funding will be sought from the Traveller Interagency Strategy Fund 2007	Wicklow Local Authorities Bray & Wicklow Traveller Groups	Traveller Interagency Group	AB
4.3	Well communicated, easy-to-read information on the housing allocation process.	The publication of a housing allocations explanation booklet.	Seek to achieve highest standards in terms of the accessibility of this publication	Wicklow County Council	LAPS	EOB
4.4	Produce an official booklet for each of the Town Council areas and the Co. Council, that outlines the tenant repair obligations and the Local Authority repair obligations.  Seek resources towards the establishment of an efficient modern system of tenant sign off on repairs	Produce booklet by June 2007 (Wicklow County Council has recently produced such a booklet).  Revised list of tenant obligations in place by July and system of tenant sign off on all housing repairs in place by July 1st	Investigate whether the Council has the resources to remove some of the tenant repair obligations?  In terms of the booklet seek to achieve highest standards in terms of the accessibility of this publication	Wicklow County Council	LAPS	EOB



Strategic Objective 5:			Increase Access & Participation in Education & Training			
<b>Rationale:</b>			The LAPS consultations highlighted access and participation in education and training as central considerations which impact upon equality of opportunity for the Traveller community. Specific issues include transition from primary to post primary and retention after first year; access to educational resources such as pre-school, homework clubs and school transport – which would facilitate both transition and integration; incorporation of the family into education; cultural awareness training to teachers and practical courses which recognise Traveller culture and aid transition to employment. Particular support was also sought for supporting Travellers with learning disabilities.			
	Required Outcome	Target 2007	Issues to be addressed	Lead agency/agencies and key players required	Action stems from:	Budget
5.1	<p>A measurable improvement in levels of Traveller Educational achievement.</p> <p>Increased participation of Travellers in all levels of the education system.</p>	<p>Development of a local Travellers' Education Plan for Co. Wicklow .</p> <p>Specifically for 2007, aim to</p> <p>Develop initiative to raise awareness among adult Travellers regarding return to education opportunities in consultation with Traveller support groups</p> <p>Co-ordinate an educational needs assessment of Adult Travellers linking into existing networks such as the Primary Health Care project, the Traveller CDPs and other support groups</p> <p>Investigate potential of employing a Traveller Outreach Education Worker for Co. Wicklow to work specifically with Travellers</p>	Within the National Traveller Education Strategy, to identify how local educational bodies can work towards meeting the recommendations of the strategy in a Wicklow context.	<p>Dept. Education &amp; Science VEC (Adult Guidance Service &amp; Community Education Service)</p> <p>Schools Wicklow &amp; Bray Traveller CDPs LEAP project.</p>	LAPS	EOB + AB



5.2	Co. Wicklow VEC, the Library Service and Traveller community groups to develop a pilot family learning project in Bray to improve literacy levels among this group.	A pilot project that brings a small group of Travellers, the VEC and the Library Service together in a Literacy Programme.	The development of a specific needs-based programme through the input of all key players involved.	VEC Literacy Service  Library Outreach Service Wicklow & Bray Traveller CDPs	LAPS	AB
5.3	Increase awareness and usage of libraries by children at second level. This action to have a specific Traveller focus.	Promotion campaign in the secondary schools.	Development of a Communication Strategy between the Library Service and Wicklow's young people including young Travellers	Library Outreach Service	LAPS	EOB
5.4	An initiative in a Co. Wicklow context to raise awareness around the issue of bullying particularly at post-primary level. Specific Traveller focus to be incorporated into this action	Initiate discussions with a number of schools to identify a way forward. 2007 would be a planning phase with the aim of running an awareness programme/event in the academic year 2007/8.	Run an initiative in co-operation with the post-primary schools to add value to existing anti-bullying policies and to raise awareness of what bullying is and what parents, pupils and teachers can do about it.	VEC DES  Schools Parents Students	LAPS	EOB
5.5	Developing range of responses to needs of Travellers from a learning disability perspective – particular focus on learning disabilities experienced by Traveller men within this action	Identify range of specific learning disabilities within the Traveller community so that appropriate responses can be developed by service providers	Specific disabilities include auditory processing problems, dyslexia and deafness	DES VEC Bray & Wicklow Traveller Groups LEAP	Traveller Interagency	EOB



Strategic Objective 6:			Increase Participation in the Labour Market			
<b>Rationale:</b>			The LAPS consultation process underlined the difficulty Travellers experience accessing mainstream employment. Prominent issues identified by Travellers included perceived discrimination, lack of training, poor educational attainment, and lack of supports e.g. childcare. Moreover, there was a widespread perception that the current system fails Travellers because very few opportunities exist or are created which provide Traveller-specific employment.			
	Required Outcome	Target 2007	Issues to be addressed	Lead agency/agencies and key players required	Action stems from:	Budget
6.1	Improve progression rates of Travellers from training into employment in Co. Wicklow	<p>Survey the Training needs and wishes of Travellers and ensure that the training offered meets the needs and wishes of participants</p> <p>Develop an Apprenticeship Access programme</p> <p>Promote engagement with Employers – target IBEC and Chambers of Commerce</p> <p>Increase number of accredited training opportunities for Travellers in Co. Wicklow</p> <p>Provision of short training programmes with specific focus eg 6 – 8 week courses to include Safe Pass, Health and Safety training, , Machinery Operation etc. Target young Travellers particularly for these courses</p> <p>Revisit 2006 project which focussed on County Wicklow VEC and Wicklow County Council working in partnership to develop a supported pathway from Education to Employment for four Travellers. For clerical / admin grades, target Traveller students undertaking 2007 Leaving Cert.</p>	Involvement / participation by FAS in Traveller Interagency Group for Co. Wicklow	<b>The action requires lead agency role by FAS</b>	Traveller Interagency Group	?





6.2	<p>Ensure ongoing resourcing of four key Traveller employment initiatives in Co. Wicklow:</p> <p>Shuttleknit (Existing Community Services Project in Wicklow town)</p> <p>Wicklow Childcare (New Community Services Project in Wicklow town)</p> <p>LEAP – (Access programme for Traveller men in Bray)</p> <p>TENT - ('Traveller Employment Network Training' -new Community Services Project in Bray, providing training and employment for Traveller men in traditional Traveller crafts)</p>	<p>Ensure that the LEAP project in Bray is adequately resourced and supported to continue its pre-development work with Traveller men and by building on the achievements to date, further refine the model being developed</p> <p>Seek funding towards operational costs to support LEAP project in Bray in 2007</p> <p>Specifically, funding sought to:</p> <p>Develop key skills and practical work experience;</p> <p>Promote good relations between Travellers and potential employers;</p> <p>Facilitate access to mainstream employment opportunities.</p> <p>Contribute to sustainability of employment</p>	Sourcing funding	<p>Bray Partnership</p> <p>Bray &amp; Wicklow Traveller Groups</p>	Traveller Interagency Strategy	AB
6.3	Provision of accredited Childcare training courses for Traveller women	Invest in repeat courses of the Childcare Quality Awareness Programme organised by Wicklow County Childcare Committee (WCCC) and targeting Traveller women who are interested in pursuing employment in Childcare	Need to have Childcare training accredited so that participants can gain credits leading to an overall award that will increase their employment opportunities	Wicklow County Childcare Committee Bray & Wicklow Traveller Groups	Traveller Interagency Group	EOB
6.4	Expansion of Traveller pre-employment support provided by FAS in Co. Wicklow	Development of a joint Bray / Wicklow Community Employment programme for Travellers	Currently no FAS service to Travellers outside the Bray area	FAS DSFA Bray & Wicklow Traveller Groups LEAP	Traveller Interagency Group	?



Addressing number of Social Welfare related issues experienced by Travellers

Specific actions to include:

Provision of Literacy awareness training for frontline staff in Social Welfare offices throughout the county. Repeated examples given of Travellers missing appointments due to literacy issues resulting in cutting off of benefits.

Establishing closer linkages between Social Welfare offices and local Traveller support groups in order to develop models of good practice in terms of service delivery – suggestion that soon to be opened new Social Welfare office in Bray, could be that pilot project be developed here

Detail a number of case studies which highlight difficulties experienced by Travellers returning to education / employment. Specific problems encountered in terms of subsequent negative impact on primary / secondary benefits Investigate whether pilot project can be developed in Co. Wicklow, which would support the retention of secondary benefit on case by case basis. This requires support of DSFA at both national and local level.

DSFA  
Bray & Wicklow  
Traveller Groups  
LEAP  
Bray Partnership

Traveller Interagency  
Group

**EOB**



## **Selection of Photos taken at Traveller Interagencies Consultation Session on March 26 2007 in the Glenview Hotel, Wicklow**



## **President Mary McAleese meeting Traveller Women in Wicklow Town**



## This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

# NOTES

[illegible]

For further information on this Strategy, please contact the Office of Community & Enterprise, Wicklow County Council, County Buildings, Wicklow, Tel: 0404-20208  
Email: [dce@wicklowcoco.ie](mailto:dce@wicklowcoco.ie)  
**[www.wicklow.ie](http://www.wicklow.ie)**

## **Errors & Omissions**

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this document, the authors and publishers cannot accept any responsibility for errors or omissions contained within.

## **Photography**

Front Cover - Selection of photographs supplied by Wicklow and Bray Travellers  
Community Development projects

Print: Ruon Print, Rathnew, Co. Wicklow.

Universal Access: This document is available in a variety of formats on request.









