limerick *youth* service

BASELINE STUDY & NEEDS ANALYSIS

OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 10-18

IN RURAL COUNTY LIMERICK

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ABBREVIATIONS

CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CSPPA	Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity Study
CYPSC	Children and Young People's Services Committee
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
ESPAD	European School Survey Project on Alcohol
HBSC	Health Behaviour in School-aged Children
JLO	Juvenile Liaison Officer
LCETB	Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
LYS	Limerick Youth Service
SPHE	Social, Personal & Health Education

FIGURES

FOREWORD

In 2018 Limerick Youth Service finalised our new Strategic Plan, which is the guide for our work up to 2021. Our Strategic plan sets out the key aims for our work, which places young people at the centre of all that we do, values young people, volunteers and staff, embraces learning, creativity and innovation and respects equality, inclusion and diversity. This baseline study and needs analysis of young people aged 10-18 years in rural County Limerick reflects our strategic priorities; meeting our commitment to high quality and responsive youth work activities and demonstrating our respect for evidence and research informed services and supports.

This study is relevant in addressing the gaps in information available on the profile and needs of young people in rural County Limerick. We are hearing what young people have to say about accessing services and supports in rural locations, stress, supportive relationships and the creation of spaces to express their views.

These findings tell us that that while young people in rural County Limerick are doing very well, there exists areas of concern with respect to health, learning and development, safety, economic security and opportunity and being connected, respected and contributing to their world.

This report further highlights the experiences of marginalised and excluded young people in rural County Limerick including LGBTQ young people and ethnic and cultural minorities. It reminds us that certain young people are not enjoying their educational experience, do not feel very well cared for at home and whose families cannot afford to provide them with everything they need to participate fully at school.

This research will now inform the collaborative planning and delivery of youth supports and programmes across rural County Limerick by LYS and local and national statutory, community and voluntary stakeholders. More importantly, it will ensure that the voice of young people living in rural County Limerick is at the heart of service provision.

Chairperson

Patrick Lynch

CEO

Fiona O Grady

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and purpose

This research was designed to provide a baseline study and needs analysis of young people aged 10-18 years in rural County Limerick so as to inform the planning of actions and service and support delivery. The key tasks required were to:

a) provide an accurate profile of young people, aged 10-18 years, in rural County Limerick;

b) identify their expressed needs, interests and concerns relevant to the five outcomes prioritised in the national policy framework for children and young people: Better Outcomes Brighter Futures 2014-2020[1] (BOBF); and

c) based on a) and b) above, consider implications for the provision of services for young people across rural County Limerick.

Methodology

This research took its guiding framework from the national policy for children and young people: Better Outcomes Brighter Futures (BOBF) (2014) and was informed by the National Strategy on Children's and Young People's Participation in Decision Making 2015 - 2020[2] .

Research activities were designed to generate information on the perspectives and lived experiences of young people across rural County Limerick, with respect to each of the five national outcomes for children and young, people as articulated in BOBF. Therefore, investigation and analysis was in accordance with the extent to which young people in rural County Limerick present as:

1. being active and healthy with positive physical and mental wellbeing

2. achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development

3. being safe and protected from harm

4. having economic security and opportunity and

5. being connected, respected and contributing to their world.

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1   Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2014) Better Outcomes Brighter Futures: The national policy framework for children and young people 2014-2020. Dublin: DCYA, accessible at https://www.dcya.gov.ie/documents/cypp_framework/BetterOutcomesBetterFutureReport.pdf

2   Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015) National Strategy on Children's and Young People's Participation in Decision Making 2015 - 2020. Dublin: DCYA, accessible at https://www.dcya.gov.ie/documents/playandrec/20150617NatStratonChildrenandYoungPeoplesParticipationinDecisionMaking2015-2020.pdf

Key Findings

Overall, findings show that young people in rural County Limerick are doing very well across all five of the national outcomes identified in BOBF. Chapters 4 through 8 in this report outline findings concerning the perspectives and experiences of young people in relation to these outcomes, highlighting areas of concern.

In the area of 'health', the research findings show that:

1 IN 3

YOUNG PEOPLE, AGED 16-18 YEARS, EXPRESS DISSATISFACTION WITH THE LEVELS OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS, CONSENT, CONTRACEPTION, SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS, ETC., AT A TIME THAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE CONSIDERING - OR ENGAGING - IN SEXUAL ACTIVITY

THE NUMBERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WOULD WISH TO ACCESS SUPPORT TO STOP, REDUCE OR AVOID MISUSE OF SUBSTANCES IS RELATIVELY HIGH AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL COUNTY LIMERICK, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO MISUSE OF ILLICIT DRUGS.

GIRLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES AS OTHER THAN MALE OR FEMALE PERCEIVE THEMSELVES AS HAVING LESS OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE REGULAR EXERCISE

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO SEEK OUT SUPPORT FROM PEERS IN TIMES OF STRESS AND LESS LIKELY TO ACCESS SUPPORT FROM PARENTS AND/ OR TEACHERS

In the area of 'learning and development', findings highlight that:

JUST UNDER

1 IN 4

YOUNG PEOPLE DOES NOT ALWAYS FIND IT EASY TO EXPLORE AND LEARN ABOUT THE THINGS THAT INTEREST THEM

ALMOST

1 IN 3

YOUNG PEOPLE NOTE THAT THEIR PARENTS/ GUARDIANS ARE NOT ALWAYS ABLE TO HELP THEM IF THEY ARE STRUGGLING WITH SCHOOL LEARNING

1 IN 3

YOUNG PEOPLE STATES THAT, TO SOME DEGREE, THEY DO NOT ENJOY THEIR SCHOOL/TRAINING CENTRE EXPERIENCE, WHILE ONE IN EIGHT HIGHLIGHTS THAT THEY DO NOT ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE AT ALL

YOUTH CLUBS

ACT AS A WELCOME COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNGER TEENS, BUT THERE APPEARS TO BE A GAP IN TERMS OF COMMUNITY-BASED PROVISION FOR OLDER TEENS.

In the area of 'economic security and opportunity', findings indicate that:

1 IN 5

YOUNG PEOPLE STATES THAT A SHORTAGE OF MONEY IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FAMILIES PREVENTS THEM FROM TAKING PART IN EDUCATION AND IN COMMUNITY EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES; ACTIVITIES THAT WOULD BE CONSIDERED THE NORM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE OF THEIR AGE

1 IN 10

YOUNG PEOPLE REPORT NOT HAVING THE RESOURCES NEEDED TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THEIR RESPECTIVE SCHOOLS/ TRAINING CENTRES

30% EXPRESS CONCERN ABOUT WHAT THEY WILL DO AFTER THEY FINISH THEIR EDUCATION, WHILE A FURTHER **28% STATES** THAT THEY SOMETIMES WORRY ABOUT THIS

ALMOST ½

OF YOUNG PEOPLE (48%) EXPRESS CONCERN ABOUT THE ADEQUACY AND TIMING OF CAREER GUIDANCE PROVISION IN EDUCATION.

In the area of 'safety', findings identify that:

1 IN 5

YOUNG PEOPLE (22%) HAS KNOWLEDGE GAPS CONCERNING SERVICES THAT THEY CAN CONTACT IF THEY DON'T FEEL SAFE AT HOME

OVER ½

OF YOUNG PEOPLE (51%) REPORT HAVING SOMETIMES BEEN TREATED BADLY BY OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCHOOL AND IN THE COMMUNITY, WHILE ONE IN THREE REPORT HAVING BEEN SOMETIMES TREATED BADLY BY TEACHERS

JUST UNDER

1 IN 3

YOUNG PEOPLE (32%) REPORT HAVING SOMETIMES BEEN TREATED BADLY ON-LINE.

OVER

1 IN 4

YOUNG PEOPLE (27%) IS NOT CLEAR OF WHO TO APPROACH IN THE COMMUNITY IF THEY FEEL UNSAFE

In the area of feeling 'connected, respected and contributing to their world', findings indicate that:

1 IN 5

YOUNG PEOPLE DOES NOT ALWAYS FEEL RESPECTED BY THEIR PARENTS/GUARDIANS OR THAT THEIR OPINION IS ALWAYS TAKEN SERIOUSLY

BULLYING & DISRESPECT

IN SCHOOL ARE CONSIDERED PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY DURING POST PRIMARY JUNIOR CYCLE

ALMOST ½

OF ALL YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDING SECOND LEVEL SCHOOL EXPRESS CONCERNS ABOUT THE EXTENT TO WHICH STUDENT COUNCILS REPRESENT THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH TEACHERS RESPECT AND TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY

OVER ½

(51%) REPORT GETTING OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER IN THE COMMUNITY WHILE

2 OUT OF 3

YOUNG PEOPLE (66%) STATE THAT THEY WOULD LIKE MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Four key themes emerged across the research findings and these are:

- Rurality
- Young people of most concern
- Increasing stress
- Being heard.

Theme 1 - Rurality

The consultative process undertaken for this research relied almost entirely on being able to engage with young people at their places of education. Engaging with young people at their place of education may be the only method of reaching young people in rural areas. working with young people outside their place of education requires access to transport, and rural transport is not adequate for this. Therefore, the delivery of youth work services and supports in educational settings, in a manner complementary to educational provision, has emerged an important area for further discussion.

Another factor relevant to the experiences of young people in rural County Limerick is 'anonymity'. Young people in rural areas are concerned about maintaining anonymity when accessing services relating to mental health, substance use, sexual health and sexual identity. Findings show that young people are keenly aware that their communities are close-knit and that they, and their families, may be unfairly judged if they are seen to seek help locally. This includes concerns about seeking help from the family GP. Considering this, it is extremely important that rural young people are made more aware of quality supports and services that they can access online, by phone, or phone messaging.

Theme 2 - Young people of most concern

The research identifies that certain groups of young people face difficulties that their mainstream peers do not. Such minority groups include LGBTQ young people, those whose parents were not born in Ireland, ethnic and cultural minorities and Traveller young people. 2.57% of survey respondents identified as other than male or female. This percentage is small, but their responses to several questions, detailed in the findings chapters, gives rise to concern for these young people.

Survey findings also remind us that there are children and young people who are not enjoying their educational experience, some who do not feel very well cared for at home and some whose families cannot afford to provide them with everything they need to participate fully at school. Such young people should also be considered minority groups. Findings suggest that service providers should focus on reaching minority groups; supporting them in their experience of 'difference'.

Theme 3 - Increasing stress

Research findings indicate that stress increases as young people get older. The increase in stress levels as young people move into exam cycles and young adulthood was palpable and expressed almost universally. And, while some stress is inevitable and necessary, the findings confirm that that young people are finding the stresses they are encountering very difficult to navigate. Identifying the multiple and evolving stressors young people face and finding strategies that help them cope, could make an enormous difference not only to their lives, but to the lives of their parents, teachers and communities. Families, schools, services and communities must acknowledge this pressing issue and engage with it. Without doubt, this would require coordinated cross-government and interagency approaches. In this context, the need for national discussion in the form of a submission to Citizens' Assembly, is a possible course of action.

Theme 4 - Being heard

The research identifies that young people are finding some conversations with parents and teachers increasingly problematic as they get older, and, that they do not feel their voice is always heard within their home, school and community. Findings show that young people struggle to communicate with their parents and teachers when trying to "offload" about difficulties they are experiencing. The research supports that adults and teenagers must find more positive ways to communicate and discuss problems. Youth work approaches are well placed to engage on this issue with young people and adults, and could consider working with parents and teachers as an honest broker to tackle this widespread issue.

Findings have shown that key to hearing young people's views is the creation of spaces for their expression. In this regard, there exists significant opportunity for investigating young people's needs and views through the existing structure of student councils. The research highlights that although student councils are widespread at second level, young people have reservations about their efficacy in identifying issues of greatest concern to them, and, by extension, the ability of student councils to implement actions that will respond to the issues arising. Youth work providers, independent from family, school, and community, skilled in creating the right conditions for young people to speak and experienced in supporting collective action for change, are ideally placed to support student councils. However, in supporting student councils, youth work providers require resources in addition to discussions between the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs concerning youth work provision in educational settings.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future service design and delivery, based on research findings, are targeted first and foremost at youth service providers. However, it is recognised that recommendations will involve a range of working arrangements, for example, direct work with young people, providing supports to parents and schools and engaging with other statutory, community and voluntary organisations across Limerick.
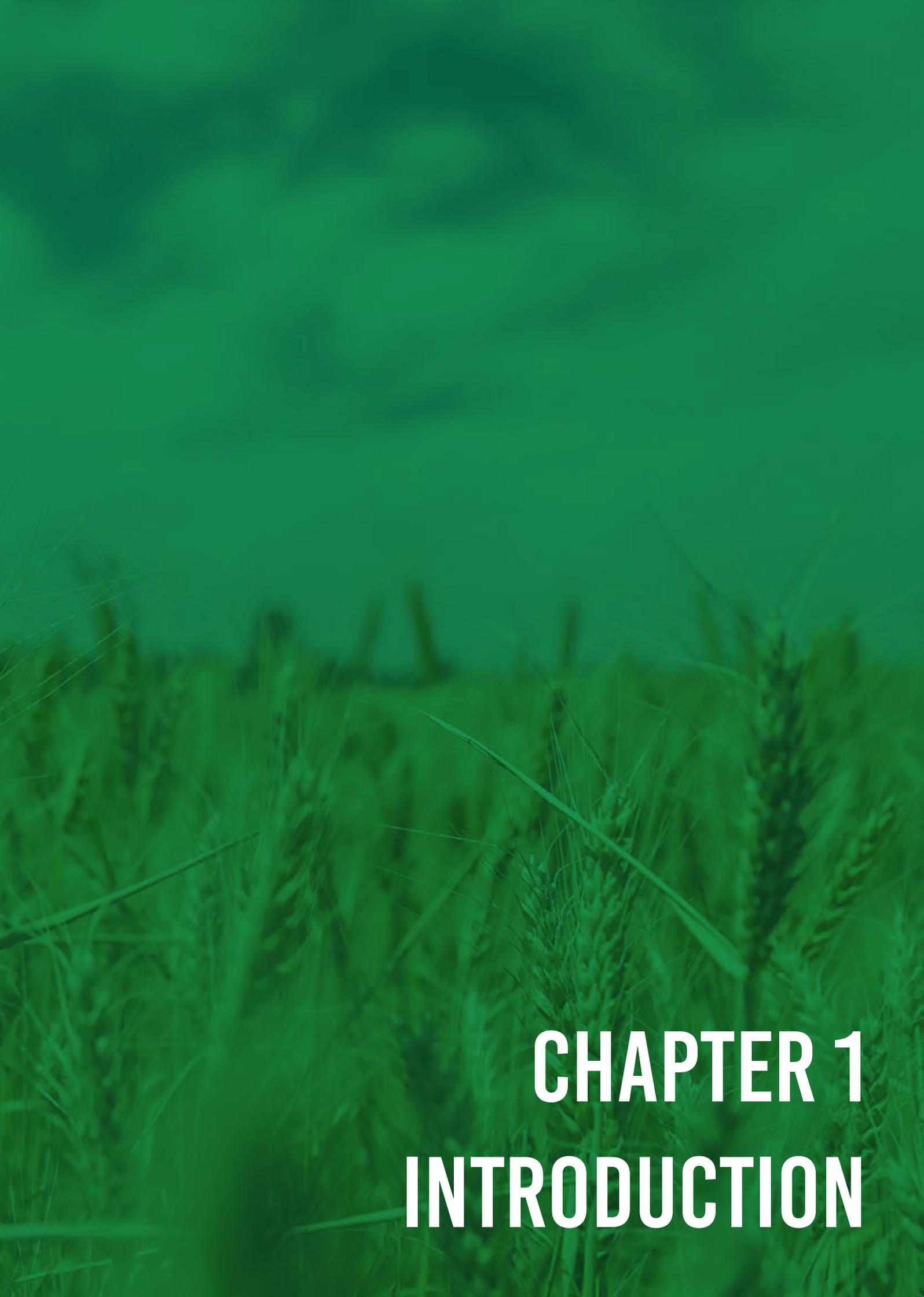
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This report presents the findings of a research study undertaken on behalf of LYS in 2018/2019. The purpose of the research was to provide a baseline study and needs analysis of young people aged 10-18 and living in rural County Limerick. Funding was received from the LEADER Programme[3] to complete this study.

1.2 Limerick Youth Service

LYS was founded in 1973 and is recognised as a leading provider of youth work, education, training and employability programmes and youth friendly spaces to young people aged 10 to 25 in Limerick City and County. LYS' mission is 'Connecting with young people and supporting them to reach their full potential' through facilitating city and countywide volunteer led Youth Clubs, Youth Cafés, Youth Projects, Limerick Comhairle na nÓg, Garda Youth Diversion Projects, Youth and Family Support Projects, International Youth Work, Youth Mental Health and the provision of a comprehensive Youth Information Service. LYS also provides second chance and further education training programmes including Leaving Cert Applied, Employability Skills, a Bakery Programme and Retail Skills for early school leavers at their Community Training Centre in Lower Glentworth St, Limerick. LYS further provides safe and accessible urban and rural youth spaces. LYS works in partnership with a number of national and regional organisations in order to deliver appropriate services and supports and to maximise outcomes for young people. These organisations include Youth Work Ireland, Tusla, LCETB, Department of Justice and Equality, Limerick City and County Council, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Department of Social Protection and the HSE, along with many voluntary and community groups.

1.3 Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

A RAC was established by LYS to monitor and evaluate research quality on an ongoing basis. The RAC comprised the following organisations, based on their extensive knowledge of - and engagement with - children and young people in County Limerick: the: Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board; Ballyhoura Development CLG and West Limerick Resources; Limerick Children and Young People's Services Committee and Limerick City and County Council (Please see Appendix 1: Research Advisory Committee).

The functions of the RAC included, to:

· Provide expertise and advice on the undertaking of research into the needs of rural young people in County Limerick

· Shape and support the development of a Terms of Reference (ToR) and specific research methodologies

· Support and manage a tendering process and the submission of a stage 2 application for funding under the LEADER programme

· Support linkages and access to information sources and means for the collection of data

· Oversee and advise the appointed researcher and monitor research outputs

· Oversee the research through to publication.

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3   The Department of Rural and Community Affairs manages the LEADER Programme for Rural Development, which supports private enterprises and community groups to improve quality of life and economic activity in rural areas. For more information, please see: https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/179274-leader-rural-development/

1.4 Research Purpose

The research was designed to provide a baseline study and needs analysis of young people aged 10-18 in rural County Limerick to inform i) the planning of actions and ii) the delivery of services and supports to young people in rural areas. The key tasks required were to:

a) provide an accurate profile of young people, aged 10-18 years, in the rural County Limerick;
b) identify their expressed needs, interests and concerns relevant to the outcomes prioritised in the national policy framework for children and young people: Better Outcomes Brighter Futures 2014-2020 (BOBF); and
c) based on a) and b) above, consider implications for the provision of services for rural young people across the county.

1.5 Research Scope and Methodology

The local authority area of Limerick is divided in to four Municipal Districts including the Metropolitan Municipal District and three remaining Municipal Districts. The Metropolitan Municipal District includes the city urban area and extends outwards towards Patrickswell to the south west and Castleconnell to the north east. The three remaining municipal districts are:

· Adare-Rathkeale in the north west of the county

· Newcastlewest in the south west of the county

· Cappamore-Kilmallock covering the east of the county

This study set out to capture the needs, interests and concerns of young people aged 10-18 years residing in rural County Limerick, which for the purpose of this research, refers to the municipal districts of: Adare-Rathkeale; Newcastlewest and Cappamore-Kilmallock.

The total population of rural County Limerick was 89,947 on Census night 2016; accounting for 46% of the total population of Limerick. Of that number, 11,272 were aged 10-18 years; comprising 12.5% of the overall rural population in Limerick. The gender breakdown among young people in rural Co. Limerick was 51% male and 49% female. Mindful that Census figures pertain to 2016, an examination of 7-15 year olds in 2016 (now aged 10-18 in 2019) suggests that the current population aged 10-18 years in rural County Limerick is 11,652 – approximately 3% higher than in 2016. Future youth population patterns will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 2 to follow.

A key research principle was the active involvement and voice of young people in the research process. This is reflected in the youth and community development methodology employed; described in more detail in Chapter 3 to follow Research design took its guiding framework from the national policy for children and young people: Better Outcomes Brighter Futures (2014). This framework prioritises the following outcome areas for all children and young people under the age of 25 years: health and wellbeing; learning and development; safety and security; economic security and opportunity, and connection and contribution to their community.

1.6 Report Outline

The remainder of this research report is presented as follows:

Chapter 2 presents a summary profile of young people living the rural County Limerick

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology employed

Chapters 4 through 8 outlines research findings

Chapter 10 presents a series of overarching conclusions and recommendations.
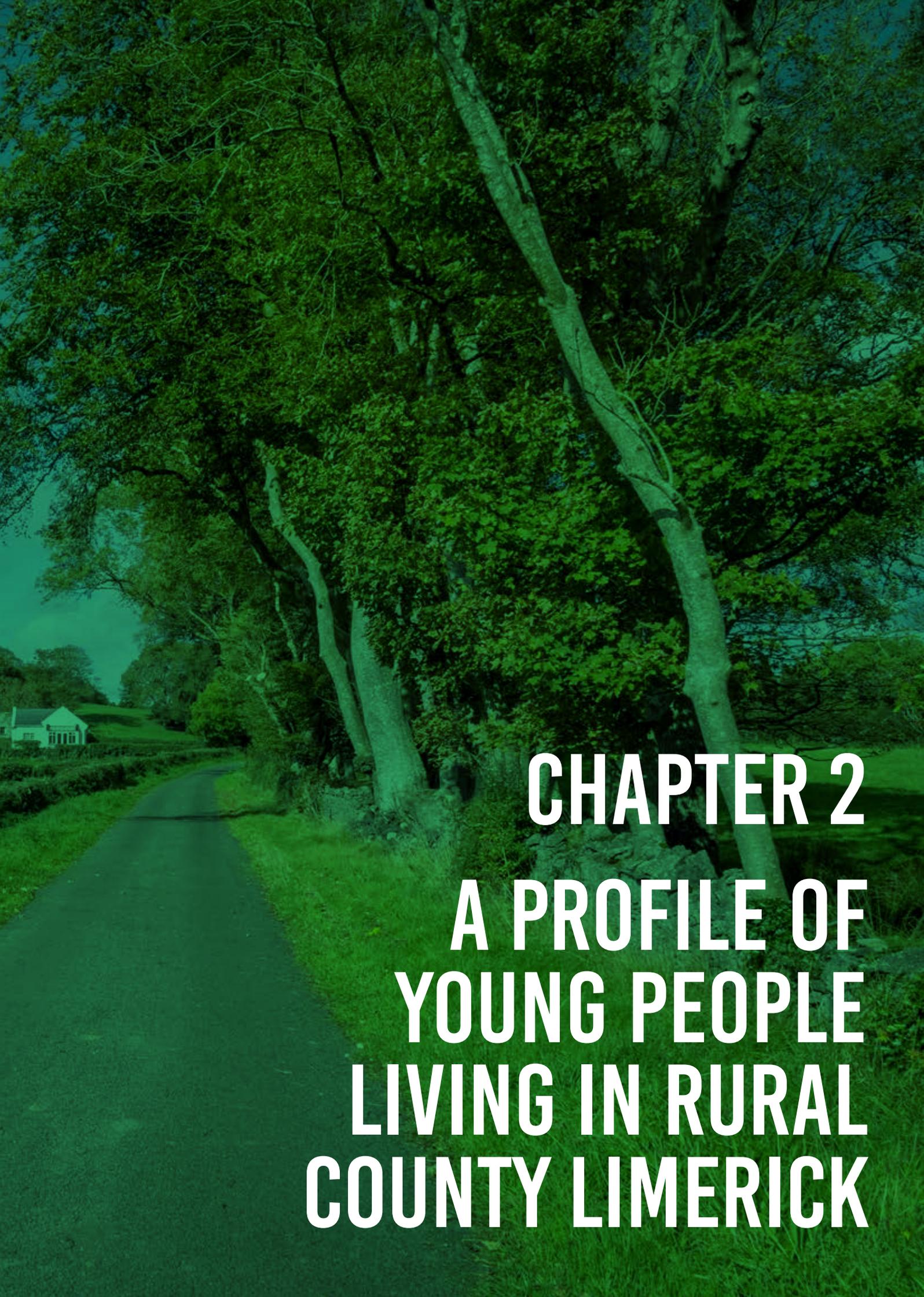
CHAPTER 2

A PROFILE OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN RURAL COUNTY LIMERICK

2. A PROFILE OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN RURAL COUNTY LIMERICK

The purpose of Chapter 2 is to present a short profile of young people living in rural County Limerick[4]. It will begin by clarifying area boundaries and then provides a summary examination of population, gender, deprivation and disadvantage, unemployment, mothers parenting alone and ethnicity.

2.1 Area Boundaries of Rural County Limerick

As previously stated, rural County Limerick, for the purpose of this study, is defined as encompassing the Municipal Districts of: Adare – Rathkeale; Newcastle West and Cappamore – Kilmallock; shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Area Boundaries of Rural County Limerick (Source: Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013)

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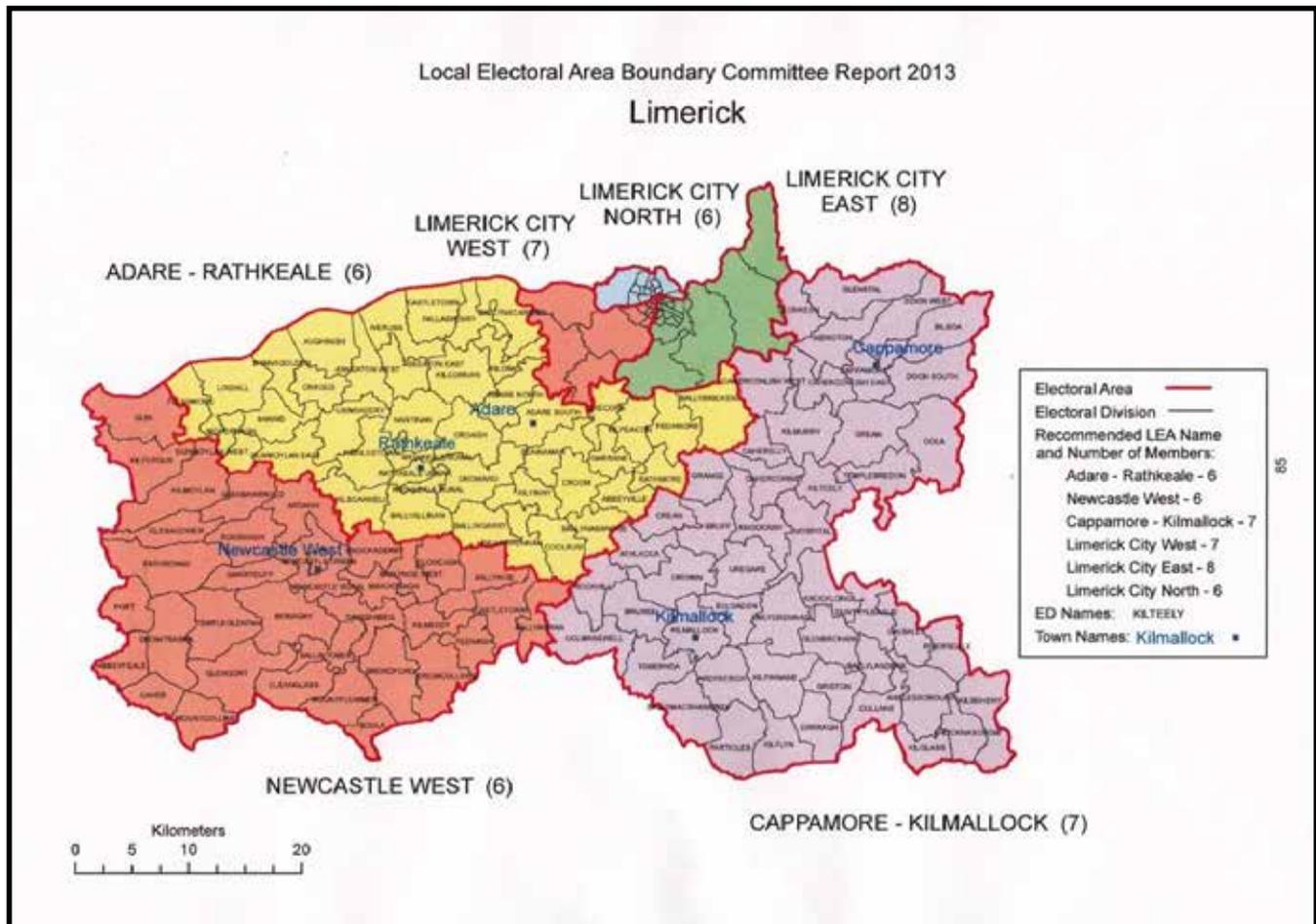
4   A more detailed document was produced containing demographic data by Electoral Division throughout rural County Limerick and can be requested from LYS.

2.2 Population: Distribution, Age Profile and Future Patterns

2016 Census figures indicate that the total population of Limerick, rural and metropolitan, was 194,899 on census night.

THE TOTAL POPULATION OF RURAL COUNTY LIMERICK WAS
89,947
46% OF THE TOTAL POPULATION (RURAL AND METROPOLITAN)

THE POPULATION AGED **0-18 YEARS** IN RURAL COUNTY LIMERICK WAS
24,159
27% OF THE TOTAL RURAL POPULATION

THE POPULATION AGED **10-18** YEARS WAS
11,272
12.5% OF THE TOTAL RURAL POPULATION

THE POPULATION AGED **UNDER 15** (0-14 YEARS) WAS
19,222
21% OF THE TOTAL RURAL POPULATION

THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN EACH AGE COHORT IS
1,272
(I.E. 1,272 10 YEAR OLDS, 1,272 11 YEAR OLDS ETC.)

IN **2016**, THE NUMBER OF **7-YEAR OLDS** (BECOMING 10 YEARS OLD IN 2019) IN RURAL COUNTY LIMERICK WAS **1,401** (749 MALE AND 625 FEMALE). THIS SUGGESTS THAT, AS OF **2019**, THE CURRENT POPULATION AGED **10-18 YEARS** IN RURAL COUNTY LIMERICK WILL BE **11,652,** APPROXIMATELY 3% HIGHER THAN 2016 CENSUS FIGURES.

Figure 2: Number of children and young people by age in 2016 in rural Co. Limerick
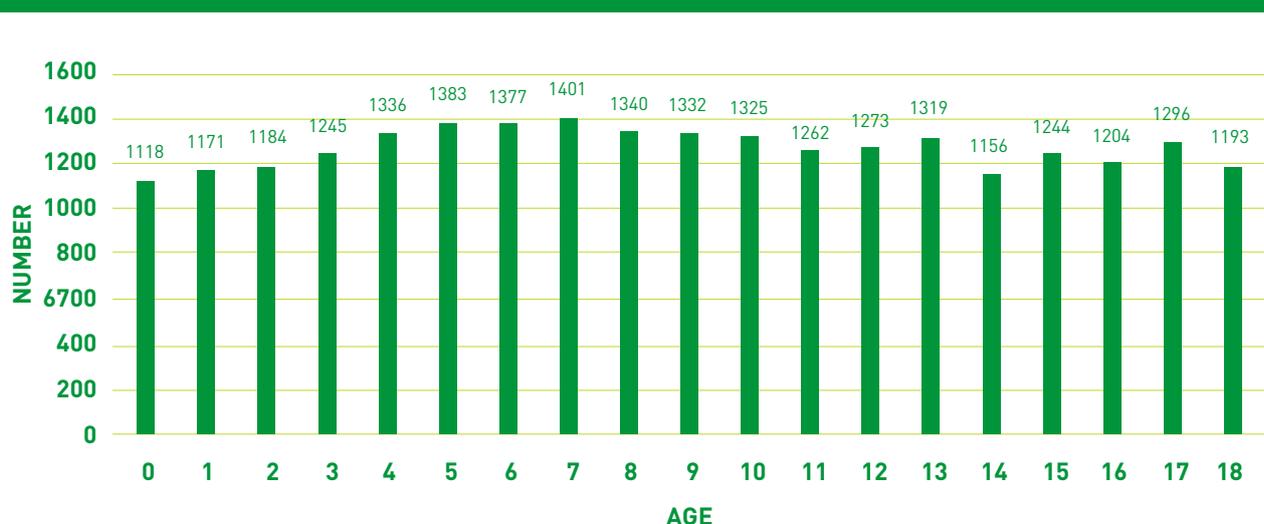
2.3 Gender

There are slightly more male than female young people living in rural County Limerick. The total number of young people 10-18 years old in 2016 was 11,272: 5,802 are Male and 5,470 are Female.

2.4 Deprivation and Disadvantage

The Pobal HP Deprivation Index[5] is used in Ireland to identify levels of disadvantage and deprivation on a scale of; Extremely Disadvantaged; Very Disadvantaged; Disadvantaged; Marginally below Average; Marginally above Average; Affluent; Very Affluent and Extremely Affluent.

In rural County Limerick, at Electoral Division (ED)[6] level, the Deprivation Index indicates the following:

- There are no 'very disadvantaged' or 'extremely disadvantaged' EDs in rural County Limerick.
- Rathkeale Urban is the only ED in rural County Limerick that is 'disadvantaged'
- There are no 'very affluent' EDs in rural County Limerick
- Kilfinny (central Limerick) is the only 'affluent' ED in rural County Limerick
- There are many EDs in rural County Limerick that are 'marginally below average'. In general, these are to the west and east of the County
- There are four EDs that are 'marginally below average' in the central region of rural County, Limerick, these are: Rathkeale Rural, Croom, Patrickswell and Fedamore

At Small Area (SA)[7] level, there are seven SAs that are 'very disadvantaged' in rural County Limerick. They are located in the following EDs: Abbeyfeale; Bruff; Cappamore; Newcastle Urban x 2 and Rathkeale Urban x 2. There are two SAs that are 'extremely disadvantaged in rural County Limerick in Abbeyfeale and Rathkeale Urban.

2.5 Unemployment

In addition to the above, data from Census 2016 indicates that highest numbers of people who had lost or given up a previous job in 2016 in rural County Limerick were in the eastern side of the County. Specific EDs outside that area and of most concern are: Newcastle West Urban and Rural; Abbeyfeale; Rathkeale Urban and Kilmallock.

5 This index identifies three dimensions of affluence/disadvantage: Demographic Profile, Social Class Composition and Labour Market Situation as a measure of affluence/deprivation. See https://www.pobal.ie/app/uploads/2018/06/The-2016-Pobal-HP-Deprivation-Index-Introduction-07.pdf for more detail.
6 EDs are the smallest legally defined administrative areas in the State.
7 SAs are areas of population, located within EDs, comprising between 50 and 200 dwellings.
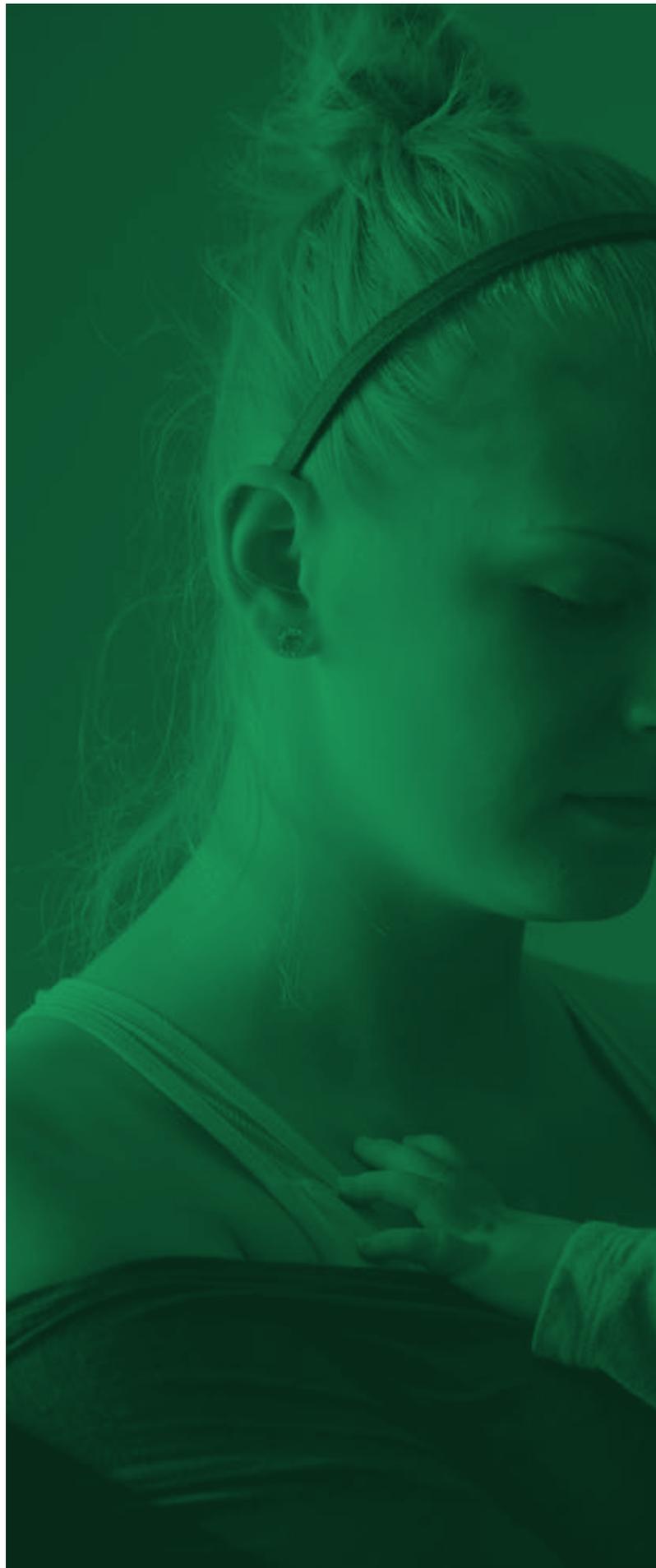
2.6 Mothers Parenting Alone

In rural County Limerick the areas with the highest population of mothers parenting alone are Newcastle West, Rathkeale, Croom and Kilmallock.

2.7 Ethnicity and Language

Census 2016 indicates that:

- The areas with the highest population of Traveller households in rural County Limerick are: Askeaton, Kilmallock, Newcastle West and Rathkeale

- There isn't a substantial population of black or black Irish ethnic communities living in rural County Limerick. The area with the most significant black or black Irish population is Newcastle West

- There isn't a substantial population of Asian or Asian Irish ethnic communities living in rural County Limerick. The area with the most significant Asian or Asian Irish population is Newcastle West

- Newcastle West and Kilmallock contain the highest numbers of people who rated their ability to speak English as 'not well' or 'not at all'.
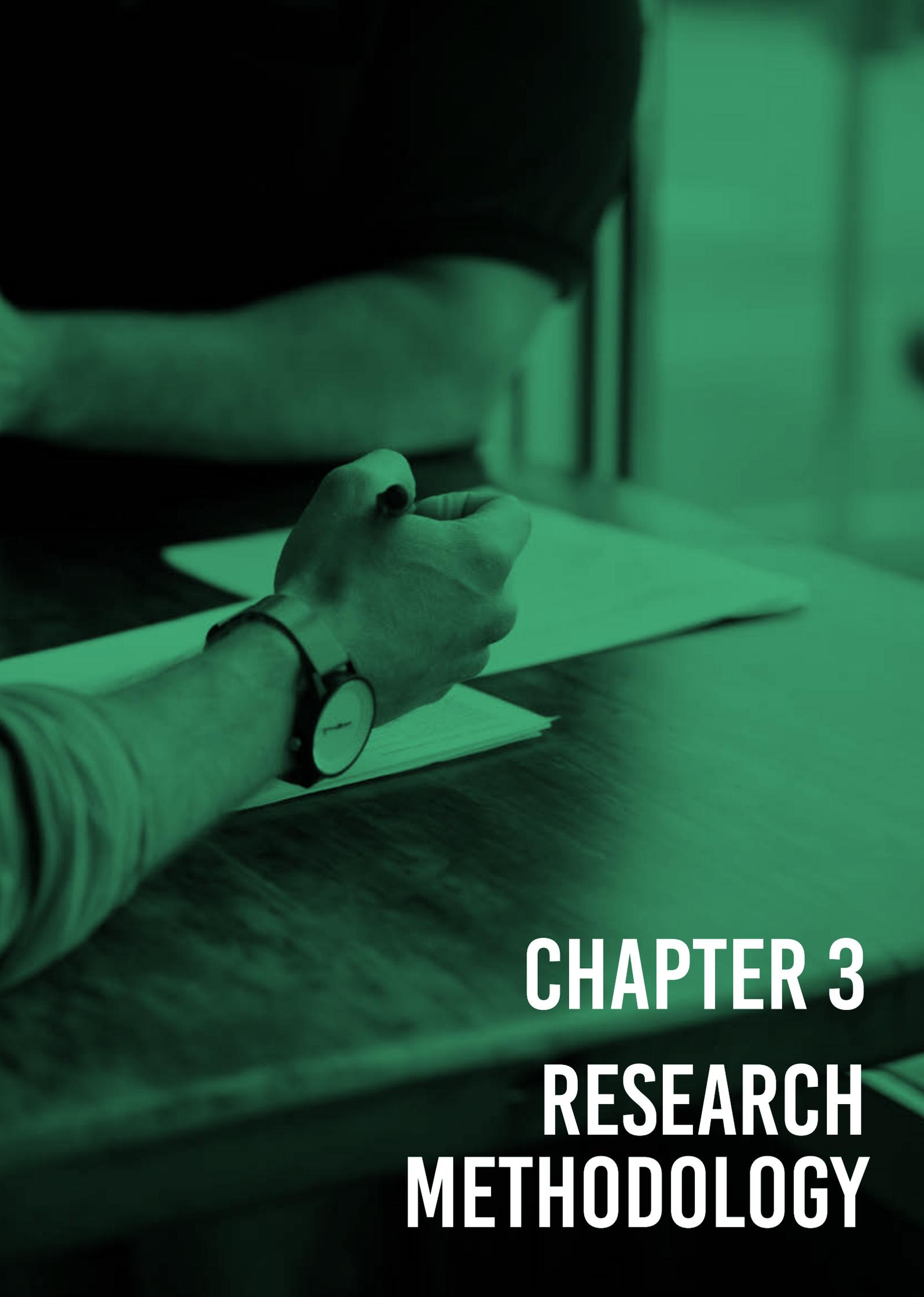
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the methodology employed. It will clarify the research stages, as outlined in Terms of Reference, and describe the associated research methods.

3.2 Terms of Reference (TORs)

The TORs stressed the importance of a three-staged research approach as follows:

· Stage 1: designed to collate secondary data relevant to the production of a profile report of young people living in rural County Limerick;

· Stage 2: designed to capture primary qualitative and quantitative data through consultations with young people and the administration of a survey

· Stage 3: designed to analyse findings and discuss conclusions.

3.3 Research Methods

This section will present the methods used in alignment with the research stages.

3.3.1 Stage 1: Collation of Secondary Data

Statistical data was desk researched from a variety of secondary sources, analysed and collated so as to produce a demographic, socio-economic profile report of young people in rural County Limerick.

3.3.2 STAGE 2: PRIMARY DATA – CONSULTATIONS

Stage 2 involved the generation of primary data through qualitative youth consultations with 263 young people, aged 10-18 years, across rural County Limerick and through the administration of a survey to 505 young people aged 10-18 years across rural County Limerick. The young people were engaged through primary and post-primary schools, Youthreach/Community Training Centres and Youth Groups (Please see Appendix 2: Consultation Participants.) Participating primary and post primary schools were randomly selected with attention paid to geographic coverage, school size and socio-economic factors. The inclusion of schools registered as disadvantaged under the DEIS programme[8] and of Youthreach/Community Training Centres addressed socio-economic differences. Participating youth groups were engaged through RAC and LYS contacts.

With respect to consultations, the following is a breakdown of the consultations held with:

122
YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 10-12 YEARS ATTENDING 6TH CLASS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

69
YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 12 -14 YEARS ATTENDING 2ND YEAR IN POST PRIMARY SCHOOL

19
YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15 - 18 ATTENDING YOUTHREACH/ COMMUNITY TRAINING CENTRES

53
YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15 -17 YEARS ATTENDING 5TH YEAR IN POST PRIMARY SCHOOL

8 The action programme of the Department of Education and Skills focused on overcoming the educational barriers facing children and young people living in areas of disadvantage

Age- appropriate consultation methodologies prioritised the active involvement and voice of young people in the research process as prioritised in Consultations with 6th class primary school pupils and 2nd year post primary pupils presented an engaging story using 'Process Drama' techniques. Process Drama is a dynamic teaching and consultation methodology in which the facilitator and participants work together to create an imaginary dramatic world and work within that world to explore themes and issues, not for a separate audience, but for the benefit of the participants themselves. The story presented a scenario where Daniel, a boy of the same age as participants, was moving with his family from his home in Uganda to live in their community and start attending their school. The participants were invited to share their knowledge of life in their community and to give advice to Daniel so that he could settle in smoothly.

The topics on which the participants were asked to share knowledge and give advice were derived from the BOBF framework. This approach stimulated enthusiastic participation by the children and young people who found it easy to speak about issues affecting them when they were offering advice to someone their own age whom they hadn't met. Focus group consultations were held with 5th year post primary pupils. 'Process Drama' was less suited to this age-group. The BOBF outcomes were also used to guide this discussion.

3.3.2 STAGE 2: PRIMARY DATA – SURVEYS

Stage 2 also involved quantitative data collection in the form of a survey, administered to 505 young people aged 10 -18 years, living in rural County Limerick. (Please see Appendix 3: Survey). The qualitative data generated previously, through consultations, informed the development of the survey statements. Prior to its administration, the survey was piloted with:

· 15 6th class pupils aged 10-12 years
· 11 2nd year post primary pupils aged 13-14 years
· 12 5th year post-primary pupils aged 16 – 17 years, and
· young people attending a Foroige supported Youth Group in Croom, County Limerick.

Their feedback and suggestions for improvements were adopted where possible.

The finalised survey contained 78 questions and took between 10 and 20 minutes for respondents to complete. The survey was administered, in both online and paper format, by primary and post primary schools, Youthreach/Community Training Centres and Youth Groups. 505 young people, aged 10-18 years, attending primary school (24% of respondents), post primary school (73% of respondents), Youthreach/Community Training Centres (3% of respondents) and Youth Groups completed the survey.

The following figures present survey respondent's gender, age group and place of education.

Figure: Gender of Respondents

- Other 3%
- Male 39%
- Female 58%
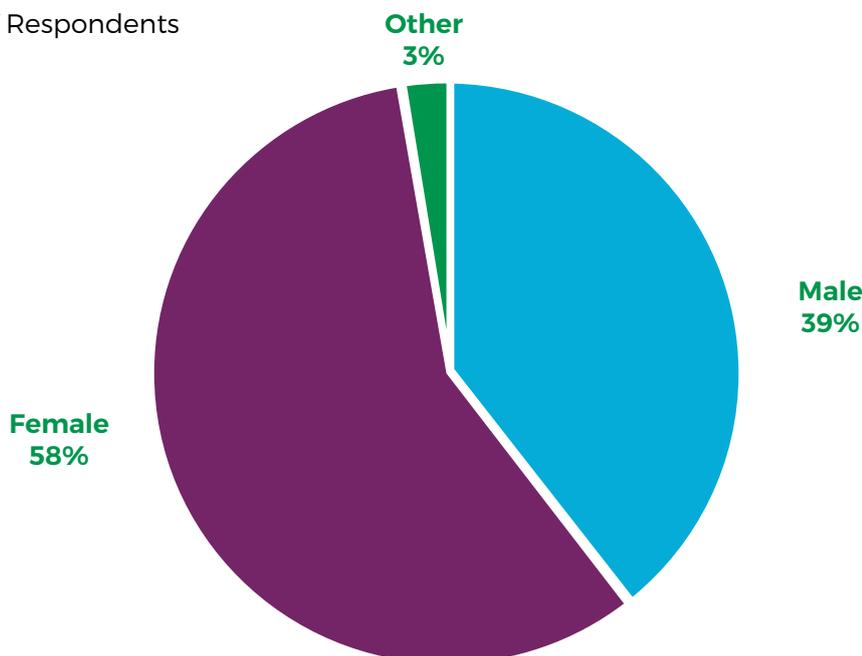
Figure 4: Survey Respondents by Age Group

■ 11-12 years ■ 13-15 years ■ 16-18 years
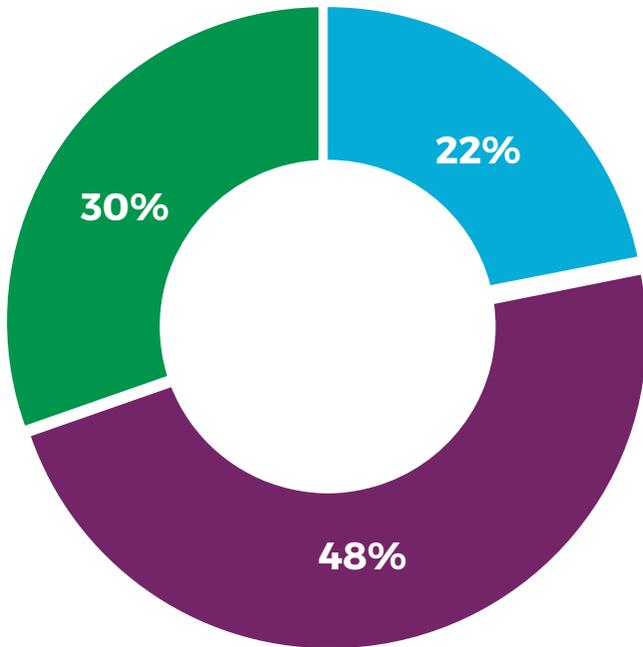
Figure 5: Respondents by Place of Education

■ Primary
■ Secondary
■ Youthreach / Community Training Centre
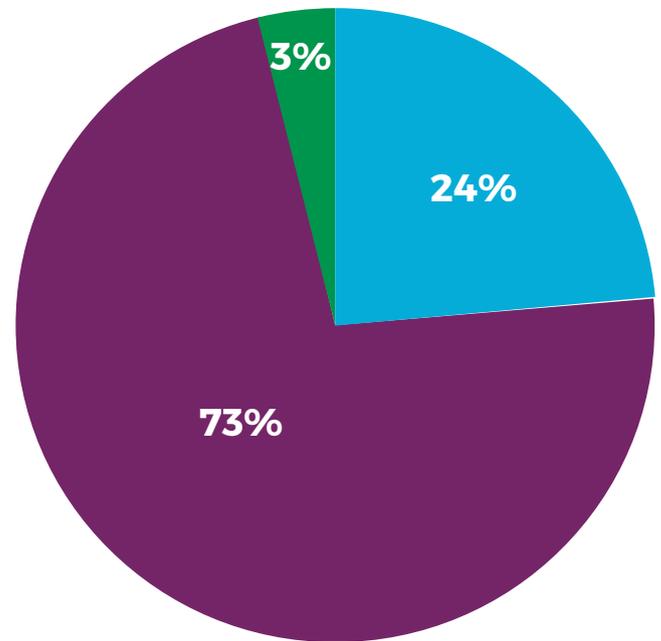
3.3.3: Stage 3 – Analysis

In line with the BOBF framework, the data generated was analysed according to the extent to which young people in rural County Limerick present as:

1. BOBF 1: Active and healthy with physical and mental wellbeing, considers young people's knowledge, understanding and experience of physical, mental and sexual health and substance misuse, as well as examining their knowledge and experience of related supports and services

2. BOBF 2: Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development, offers similar analysis of young people's knowledge, understanding and experience in the context of their learning and development – both from the perspective of social and emotional wellbeing and from the perspective of engagement and attainment in learning (formal and informal)

3. BOBF 3: Safe and protected from harm, examines young people's knowledge, understanding and experience of safety and stability in their home, school and community contexts while also engaging with young people's knowledge and experience of related supports and services

4. BOBF 4: Have economic security and opportunity, focuses on young people's experiences of economic security and the implications of finance on their home, school and community experiences. This chapter also explores young people's plans and pathways for future career, and their knowledge and experience of services and supports available

5. BOBF 5: Connected, respected and contributing to their world, examines the extent to which young people in County Limerick feel connected to - and respected in - their home, school and community environments. It also offers analysis on young people's interest levels in – and experiences of - contributing to their communities.

Key themes were then drawn from the BOBF analytical framework and discussed further in conclusions. These themes were: Rurality; Young people of most concern; Increasing stress and Being heard.

In keeping the BOBF framework, recommendations designed to inform future services for young people in rural County Limerick were considered under the headings of the six practice or transformational goals:

- Goal 1: Support parents
- Goal 2: Earlier intervention and prevention
- Goal 3: Listen to and involve children and young people
- Goal 4: Ensure quality services
- Goal 5: Support effective transitions
- Goal 6: Cross-Government and interagency collaboration and coordination

Recommendations for future service design and delivery are targeted first and foremost at providers of youth services but it is recognised that recommendations will involve a range of working arrangements such as direct work with young people; providing supports to parents; supporting schools and engaging with statutory, community and voluntary organisations across County Limerick.

3.4 Research Ethics

This research was committed to ensuring the highest level of research ethics in its engagement with young people. Central to this commitment was the research team's adherence to principles of:

- informed consent by both participating young people, their parents and their schools/training centres
- voluntary participation of young people in all research activities
- privacy, confidentiality and anonymity
- avoidance, prevention and minimisation of harm
- age and culturally appropriate research methodologies.

Consent from parents was sought and secured for all consultations and survey administration with young people (Please See Appendix 4: Parental Consent Form). The participants themselves were advised before all consultations and survey completion that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the process at any time. Consent was sought after participants were fully informed as to the purpose of the research and

what would happen to the information provided. Procedures for recording consultations were also agreed with participants prior to commencement. Only issues of relevance to the research objectives were explored and the anonymity of all participants has been protected in the presentation of this document. The survey was anonymous to ensure that participating young people/educational institutions could not be identified. Consultation responses were further anonymised to also ensure that participating young people/educational institution could not be identified.

3.5 Methodology - Strengths and Limitations

There were a number of clear methodological strengths and limitations to this study. The most obvious strength was a commitment to facilitating the voice of young people in rural County Limerick and to ensuring their engagement as primary informants. The adoption of a research approach that consulted widely with young people of varying ages and backgrounds across rural County Limerick has allowed for the unfiltered expression of their views and experiences on matters that affect them and has given expression to the principle articulated in BOBF that young people should be listened to and involved in matters that affect them. Similarly, the methodologies used in engaging directly with young people were age appropriate and engaged the creativity of young people, particularly those from 6th Class and 2nd Year. The use of Process Drama in particular allowed young people to explore, consider and discuss complex issues about growing up in County Limerick while, at the same time, allowing them to have fun.

The inability of the study to offer analysis according to geographic location may be regarded as a limitation. Given the reliance on schools in facilitating direct engagement with young people, planning conversations between the researchers and the RAC initially considered inviting survey respondents to identify the exact educational setting they were attending. However, this option was considered as having the potential to compromise respondent anonymity and therefore was not pursued further. Further conversations at RAC level also grappled with the difficulty of defining geographical boundaries that would be relevant to young people and appropriate to the analysis of the study. Therefore, it was decided to assume that the issues raised by young people were consistent across the three municipal districts and to omit questions pertaining to geographic location. This research is therefore unable to offer comparative analysis on key issues and concerns according to location.
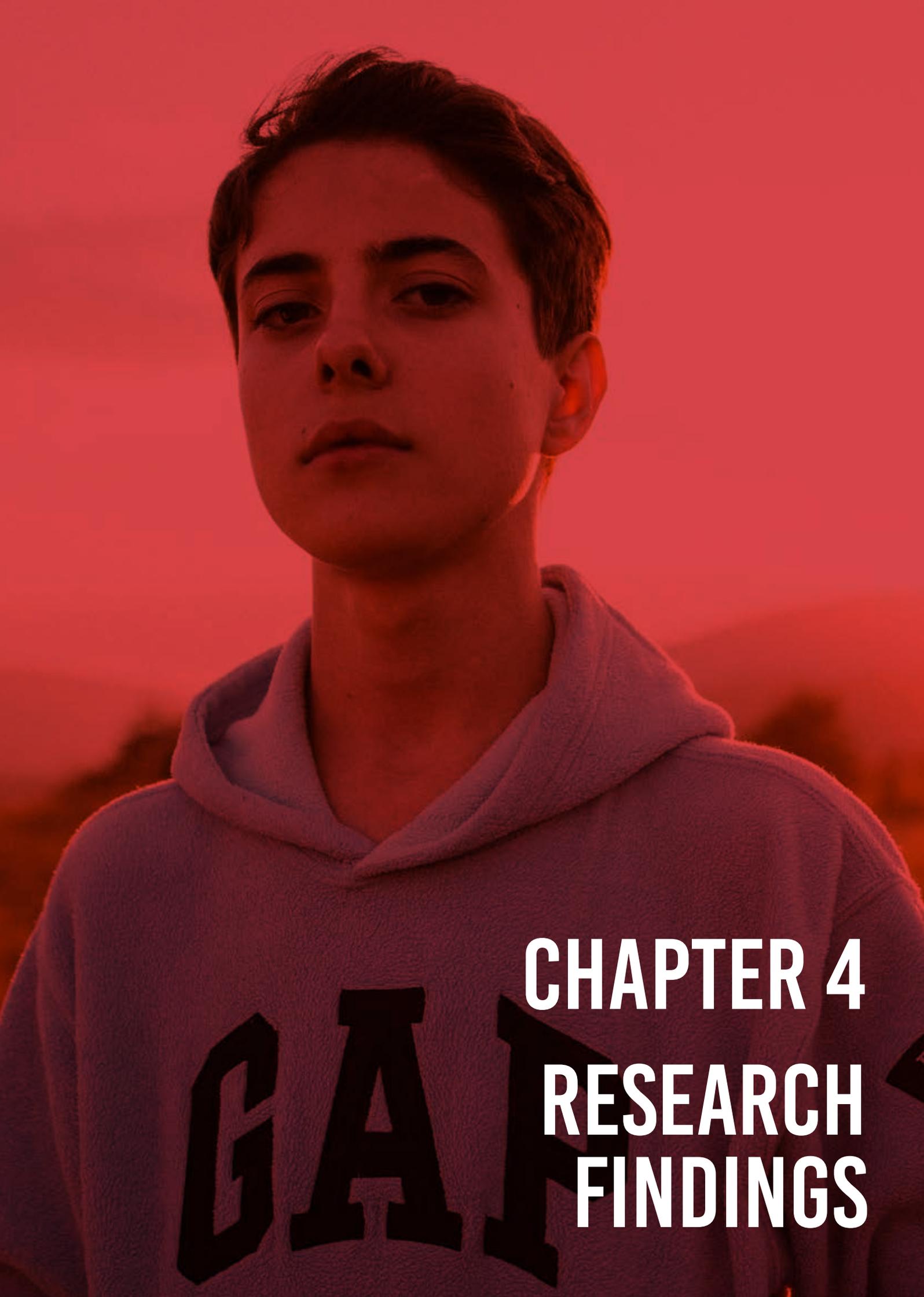
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE
ACTIVE AND HEALTHY
WITH POSITIVE PHYSICAL
AND MENTAL WELL BEING

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Chapters 4 through 8 will present findings in line with the 5 national outcomes as stated in the BOBF framework.

4.2 Findings BOBF Outcome 1: Young People are Active and Healthy with positive Physical and Mental Well Being

Research findings indicate that, generally, young people in rural County Limerick are active and healthy with positive physical and mental wellbeing. Survey findings show that most young people (87%) report their general health as good. This is supported by additional survey findings with respect to physical and mental health; sexual health and sexuality and substance use, outlined as follows.

4.2.1 Physical Health

75% SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN HALF[9] STATE THAT, THROUGH THEIR EDUCATION, THEY LEARN ABOUT GOOD PHYSICAL HEALTH CHOICES

84% MOST (84%) FEEL CARED FOR BY THEIR FAMILIES WHEN THEY ARE PHYSICALLY UNWELL

81% MOST (81%) BELIEVE THAT THEY GET ENOUGH OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE REGULAR EXERCISE.

4.2.2 Mental Health

82% MOST (82%) REPORT BEING SATISFIED WITH THEIR LIVES GROWING UP IN RURAL COUNTY LIMERICK[10]. SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN HALF (68%) REPORT FINDING IT EASY TO MAKE FRIENDS

79% MOST (79%) FEEL SUPPORTED BY FRIENDS IN TIMES OF STRESS OR UNHAPPINESS.

60% MORE THAN HALF (60%) CLAIM TO KNOW ABOUT SUPPORT SERVICES THAT CAN ASSIST THEM IF FEELING UNHAPPY OR STRESSED

69% SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN HALF (69%) STATE THAT THEY LEARN ABOUT GOOD MENTAL HEALTH CHOICES THROUGH THEIR EDUCATION

VERY FEW **(15%)** ARE OR HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH A YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE.

4.2.3 Sexual Health and Sexuality

68% SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN HALF (68%) BELIEVE THEY GET ENOUGH INFORMATION ON SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS, CONSENT, CONTRACEPTION, SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

4.2.4 Substance Use

78% MOST (78%) STATE THAT THEY GET ENOUGH INFORMATION ON RISKS OF SMOKING, DRINKING ALCOHOL AND TAKING DRUGS.

9 Throughout the findings chapters, a range of terms are used to qualify the perspectives and experiences of young people in relation to the above outcomes, specifically perspectives and experiences articulated through the research survey. For ease of understanding, these terms are:
Almost all: referring to situations whereby 91% or more of survey respondents endorsed a statement presented in the rural youth survey; Most: referring to situations whereby between 76% and 90% of respondents endorsed a survey statement; Significantly more than half: referring to situations whereby between 66% and 75% of respondents endorsed a survey statement; Over half: 51 – 65%; Half: 50%; Less than half: 26 – 49%; Very few: between 11 and 25%; and Almost none: referring to situations whereby 10% or less of survey respondents endorsed a statement presented in the rural youth survey.

10 This is significantly higher than reported in other national studies. For example, Gavin et al (2015) highlighted that 47% of 10-17 years olds in Ireland reported feeling very happy with their life at the time of that particular study

4.3 Concerns

While findings present a very favourable overall picture of the health of young people in rural County Limerick, findings also identify areas of concern with respect to physical and mental health, sexual health and sexuality and substance use, outlined as follows.

4.3.1 Physical Health

While most young people believe that they get enough opportunity to take regular exercise, survey findings show that girls and young people identifying themselves as other than male or female, perceive themselves as having less opportunity to take regular exercise. For example, survey data indicates that, whereas 86% of male respondents state that they get enough opportunity to take regular exercise, 77% of female respondents and 73% of respondents, identifying as other than male or female, make a similar claim[11]. Please see Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: I get enough opportunity to take regular exercise: % of respondents by Gender

	Male	Female	Other
■ Yes	86%	77%	73%
■ No	2%	7%	18%
■ Sometimes	12%	16%	9%
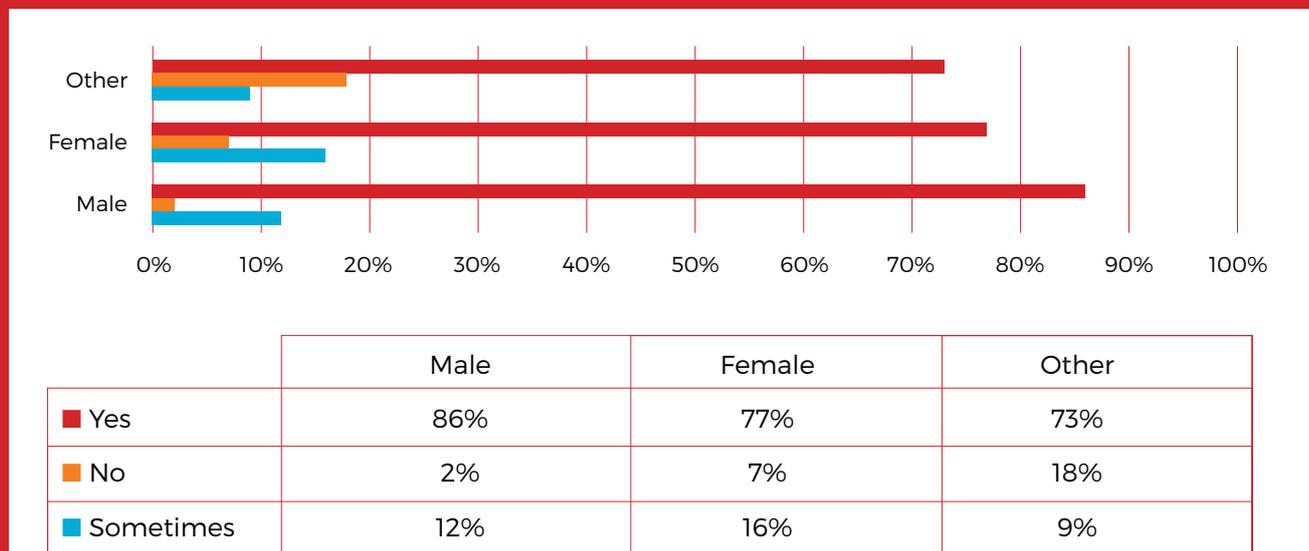
Similarly, survey findings show that boys in County Limerick are considerably more likely to play on a sports team than girls. 70% of male s respondents reports playing on a sports team compared to 56% of female respondents. These findings were further supported in consultations. Survey data demonstrates that over half of young people (75%) believe that, through their education, they learn about positive physical choices. While this finding is positive in its own right, it does indicate that one in four respondents feel, to some extent, that they do not learn adequately about good physical health choices. Please see Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Through my education I learn about good physical health choices: % of survey responses

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Sometimes
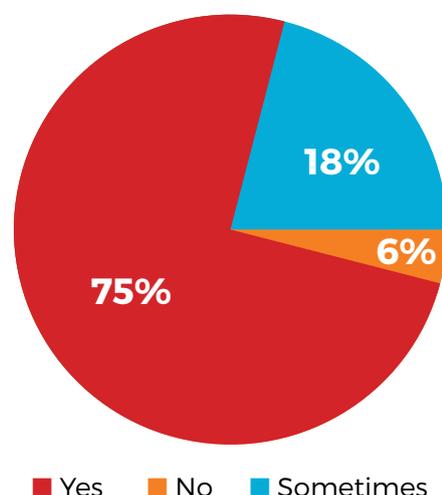
11 This finding corresponds with findings from national studies (e.g. Gavin et al, 2015) which indicate that male children, younger children, and children from higher social classes are more likely to engage in higher levels of physical activity than their female, older or less advantaged peers.

4.3.2 Mental Health

15% of survey respondents (n=71) are or have been in contact with a Youth Mental Health Service. Over half of those reporting having used a mental health service, are aged between 13-15 years. Please see Figure 8 below:

Figure 8: Respondents that report having accessed a mental health service by age

- ■ 16-18 years ■ 13-15 years ■ 11-12 years
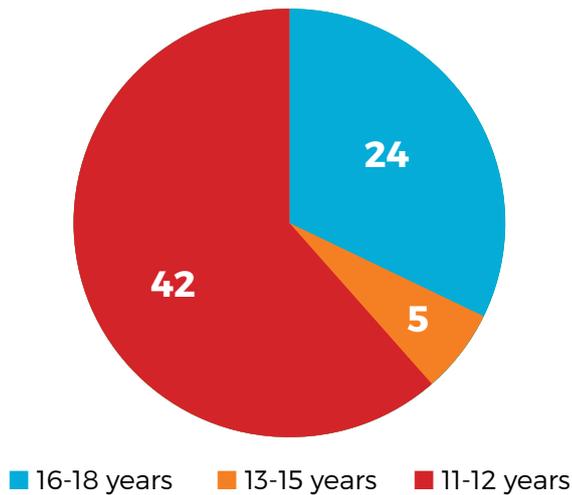
Survey findings show that almost one in three young people believes that they do not learn adequately about positive mental health choices through their education. Survey findings also indicate that a considerable number of young people have inadequate knowledge of services that could support them if they are unhappy or stressed. One in five respondents highlight that they do not know about support services while one in five also notes that they have only some knowledge of support services. Knowledge of support services is lower among older youth, illustrated in Figure 9 below.

One group of older teens, who participated in consultations, demonstrated considerable awareness of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and a number of young people in this same consultation had direct experience of CAMHS. Anger management was a primary reason for referral. Most of these young people described their experience of mental health services as frustrating and commented on what they believed was the limited impact from their time with the service.

While most young people (79%) seek out support from friends in times of stress or unhappiness, rural young people are considerably less likely to seek out support from their parents, and are even less likely to seek out support from staff in their schools or training centres. Therefore, support in times of stress appears to come more from peers than from supportive adults, illustrated in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: Support from Peers and Adults in Times of Stress

- ■ If I feel unhappy or stressed, I am supported by friends
- ■ I find it easy to talk to my parent(s)/guardian(s) when I am feeling stressed or unhappy
- ■ If I feel unhappy or stressed at school/training centre, I feel comfortable getting support from staff
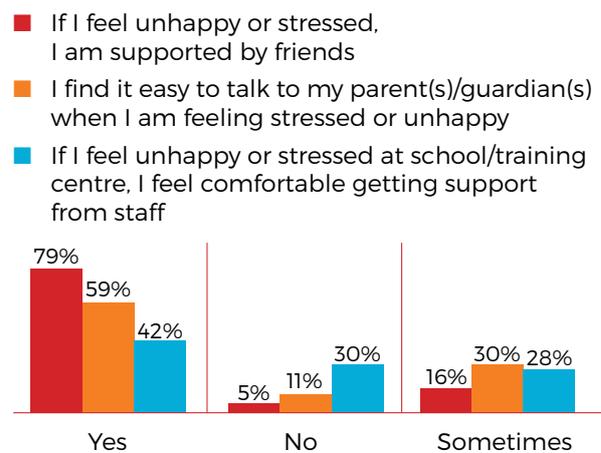
Figure 9: If I feel unhappy or stressed, I know what services are available to support me: % Survey responses by Age

	All Respondents	11-12 years	13-15 years	16-18 years
■ Yes	60%	68%	60%	52%
■ No	20%	14%	20%	25%
■ Sometimes	20%	18%	20%	23%
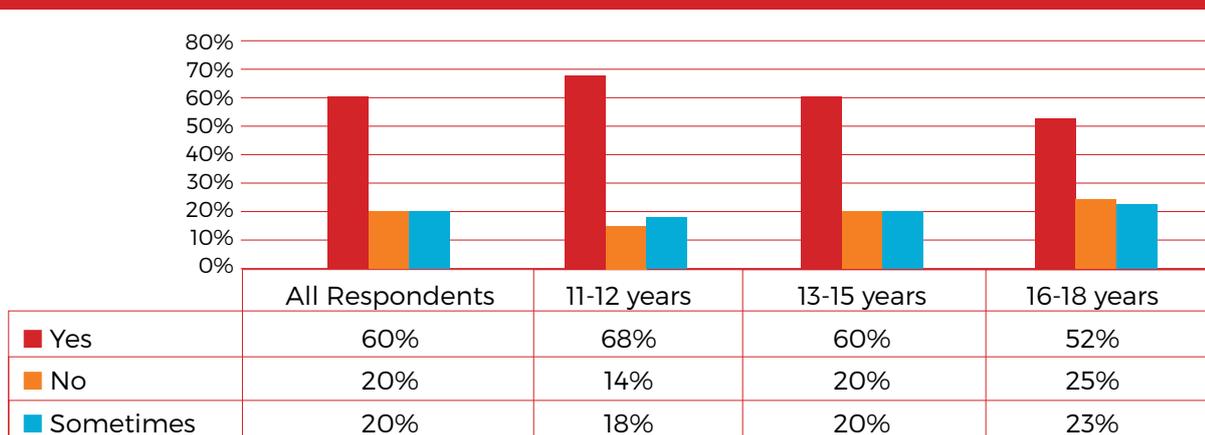
Consultations highlight that young people struggle to communicate with supportive adults in times of stress largely because of the manner in which those supportive adults respond to their expressed needs. In a consultation with one group of 2nd year students, for example, participants outlined that parents' approaches to engaging with teenagers were frequently too intense and more akin to interrogation than support. It was suggested:

"We just want to offload and be heard, for our parents to give comfort, not necessarily give advice."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 2nd Year Students).

Conversations with older teens also indicated that parents and teachers could get too involved in stressful situations:

"They interrogate you, they can make you feel worse when you just want to offload. Sometimes it would be better if they offered an activity, like a walk or a puck around, and just chat with you while you'd be doing something."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students)

Older teens also described the challenges of seeking out support from teachers during stressful periods. Comments included:

"Teachers don't want to identify or hear about problems because then they become part of it and are obliged to sort it out."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students)

While Guidance Counsellors in schools were well thought of by young people, they were frequently considered too busy with other things and accessing their support was considered too visible in a school setting:

"If you go to the Counsellor it just lets everybody know you have a problem."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students)

One out of three young people surveyed states that they experience some difficulty making friends. Ease/Difficulty of making friends appears to be slightly more challenging for girls and young people identifying as other, than it does for boys, as illustrated in Figure 11 below.

Figure 11: I make friends easily: % of survey respondents by Gender
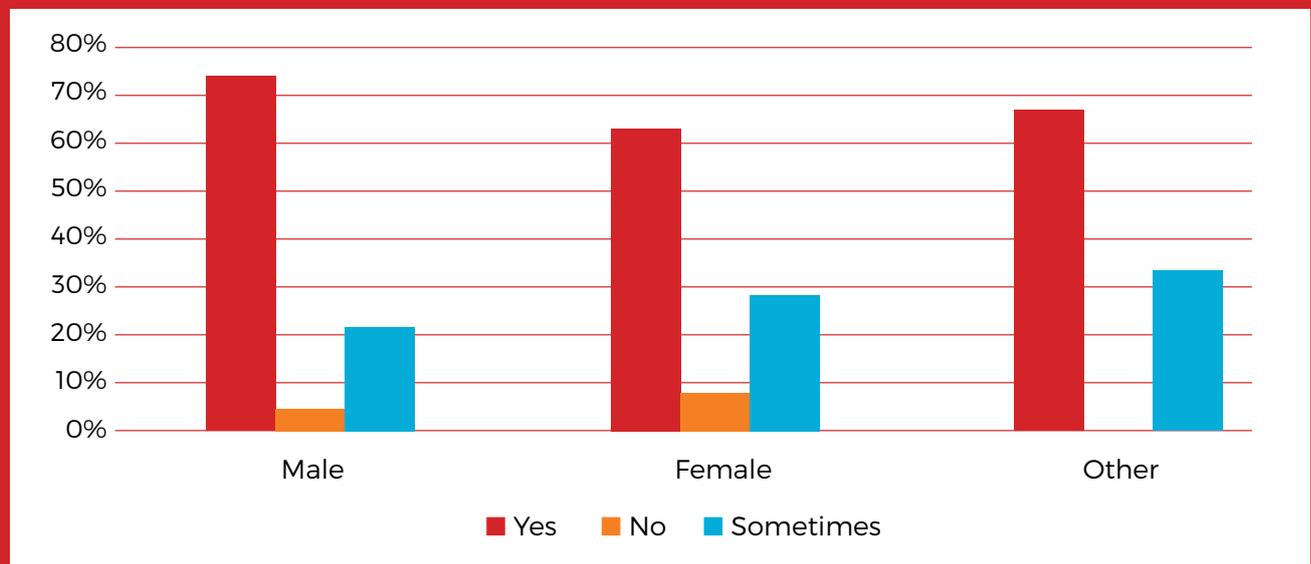
Ease of making friends wasn't explored in detail during consultations, however, young people's experience of bullying by peers was addressed. While reference was made to bullying by 6th class students in primary school, it wasn't highlighted as a significant concern. This perspective was echoed in consultations with 2nd Year students.

One group of 5th year students suggested that bullying tended to be a bigger issue in Junior Cycle[12]. As one male student commented:

"It's mostly a case of 1st years coming from different primary schools who don't know each other and they can start to bully."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students)

Younger research participants are more likely to report satisfaction in nearly all health indicators – physical and mental, than their older counterparts as shown in Figure 12. For example:

98% of 11-12 year olds report that their general health is good compared to 84% of 13-15 year olds and 84% of 16-18 year olds

94% of 11-12 year olds report being satisfied with their life growing up in County Limerick compared to 82% of 13-15 year olds and 74% of 16-18 year olds

69% of 11-12 year olds report that they find it easy to talk to their parents in times of stress or unhappiness compared to 57% of 13-15 year olds and 54% of 16-18 year olds

84% of 11-12 year olds report accessing support from friends in times of stress and unhappiness compared to 80% of 13-15 year olds and 73% of 16-18 year olds.

This suggests that health stress increases in the lives of young people as they enter their later teens and was further supported in consultations. For example, a consultation with a group of 5th year students, highlighted the busy-ness of participants' lives, the high workload in school and exam pressures. While most of this consultation group still participated in sports, participants noted that it was more difficult to do so as they struggled to fit sports and physical activity into their study schedule.

One suggestion included:

"A class period for just hanging out would be great. Every moment is filled, there's no break."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students)

The young people in question commented on feeling tired while also commenting on how difficult it can be for older teens to discuss problems. As two participants in the group noted:

"You think you're the only one experiencing it, or you'll be judged as different – put people off you."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students)

"We want to be there for each other, but you can find support conversations awkward."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students)

That said, the group was aware of mechanisms for coping with stress citing, among others, getting sleep, writing about difficulties, taking chill-out time alone, going outdoors, listen to music, etc.

12 The issue of bullying is addressed in greater detail in Chapter 8.

Survey findings indicate that respondents identifying themselves as other than male or female are less likely to report satisfaction than their male or female counterparts in nearly all health indicators, particularly those pertaining to mental health. Though few in number (n=13 or 2.5% of all survey respondents), findings identify that, proportionally, this group of young people experience particular health challenges as identified in Figure 13 and illustrated by the following findings:

67% identifying themselves as other than male or female, state that their general health is good compared to 91% of male and 85% of female respondents

45% identifying themselves as other than male or female, feel supported by friends when stressed or unhappy compared to 77% of male and 82% of female respondents

75% identifying themselves as other than male or female, express satisfaction with life growing up in rural County Limerick compared to 83% of male respondents and 82% of female

67% identifying themselves as other than male or female, feel cared for by their families when physically unwell compared to 84% of male and 85% of female respondents.

Figure 13: Comparison of Health Indicators by Gender
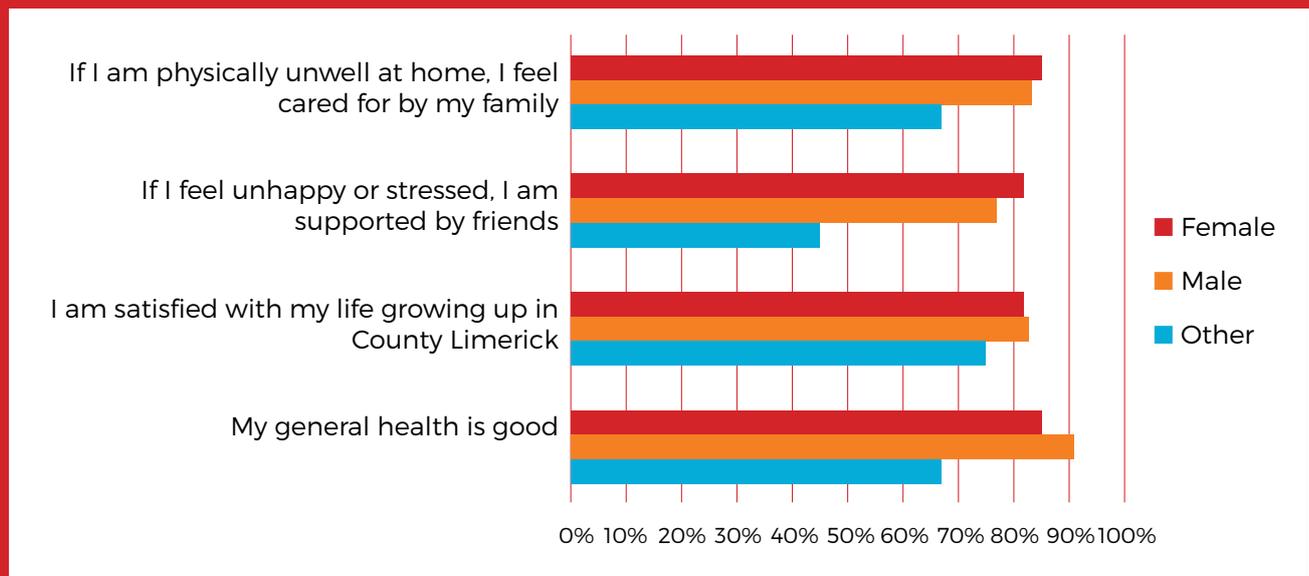
4.3.3 Sexual Health

Four out of ten survey respondents believes that, to some extent, they do not get enough information on sexual relationships, consent, contraception and sexually transmitted infections. Satisfaction with sex education appears highest among the 13-15 age category (72%) and lower among 11-12 year olds (62%) and older teens (66%). The fact that one in three young people aged 16-18 years expresses dissatisfaction with the levels of information on sexual relationships, consent, contraception and sexually transmitted infections is a concern, mindful in particular that this is the time that young people are most likely to be considering - or engaging - in sexual activity. Similarly, it is important to note that, compared to 73% of males and 68% of females, only 60% of young people identifying as other than male or female state they get enough information.

Consultations with young people in one primary school indicated that some young people in this group would like more information on sexual relationships. A similar discussion with a group of 5th year post primary students also raised some notable issues in this regard. Participants noted that they had completed some basic sex education in 1st year Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE). They had also experienced some discussion on teenage pregnancy in junior cycle and while they were to cover contraception in senior cycle, there is no SPHE subject in the senior years. As one female student in the group noted:

"We should have more info on contraception and STDs."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students)

Most participants in this consultation highlighted that they would not be comfortable going to a local GP for contraception:

"It would be easier to go into the city to talk to someone we don't know about sexual health or contraception."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students)

Similarly, participants acknowledged that they did not know where to go for support in the case of an unplanned pregnancy and highlighted the need for "more information and discussion on this so a girl who becomes pregnant wouldn't feel horrible." It was noted that any girl becoming pregnant would face a lot of judgement from both peers and teachers:

"People would be looking at you and talking about you. It's not fair, they wouldn't know the full story behind the girl's pregnancy."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students)

A consultation with another group of 5th year students indicated that there were not enough supports for LGBTQI students. Some support was provided by the Guidance Counsellor in this school. However, it was noted that LGBTQI teens were more likely to access out of school support services in Limerick city. The young people in question preferred the anonymity, but highlighted that infrequent public transport was a problem.

4.3.4 Substance Use

Survey findings highlight that interest in accessing support to stop, reduce or avoid misuse of substances is relatively high among 13 -15 year olds, particularly with regard to misuse of illicit drugs with the following points illustrated in Figure 14.

INTEREST IN SUPPORT TO STOP, REDUCE OR AVOID USING ANY OF THE NAMED SUBSTANCES PEAKS AMONG THE 13-15 YEAR OLD AGE GROUP

OVER **HALF** OF 11-12 YEAR OLDS ARE INTERESTED IN ACCESSING SUPPORT IN RELATION TO ALL SUBSTANCES

INTEREST IN ACCESSING SUPPORT TO STOP, REDUCE OR AVOID TAKING ALCOHOL IS LOWER AMONG ALL AGE GROUPS COMPARED TO INTEREST IN SUPPORT CONCERNING SMOKING/VAPING AND/OR OTHER DRUGS

COMPARED TO 13-15 YEAR OLDS, INTEREST IN SUPPORT WITH REGARD TO SMOKING/VAPING AND DRINKING ALCOHOL REDUCES AMONG 16-18 YEAR OLDS WHILE INTEREST IN SUPPORT WITH REGARD TO OTHER DRUGS REMAINS AT SIMILAR LEVELS.

While this does not suggest that there are large numbers of young people actually smoking, drinking or taking other drugs, interest in support around substances is reasonably high among youth in the county[13].

Figure 14: Percentage of respondents by age who would like help to stop, reduce or avoid smoking/vaping, alcohol, other drugs

	11-12 years	13-15 years	16-18 years
Smoking/Vaping	62%	74%	59%
Alcohol	56%	67%	53%
Other Drugs	66%	79%	75%
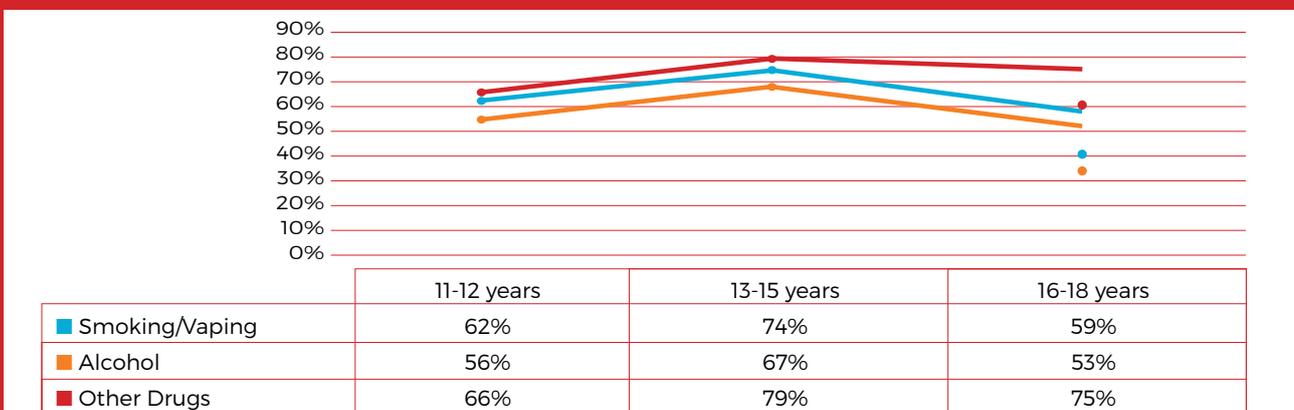
Consultations with 2nd and 5th year students highlight that drugs were "easily available" in their respective communities. It was also suggested that taking drugs could start as young as 13 or 14 years, though more likely from the age of 16 or 17.

13 Data from national and international studies (Keane et al 2017; Gavin et al 2015; European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs, 2016) suggest that efforts to prevent or reduce smoking, alcohol consumption and the use of drugs by children and young people in Ireland have been reasonably successful and that these efforts need to be sustained universally.

ACHIEVING FULL
POTENTIAL IN ALL
AREAS OF LEARNING
AND DEVELOPMENT

FINDINGS BOBF 2: ACHIEVING FULL POTENTIAL IN ALL AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Research findings indicate that, generally, young people in rural County Limerick feel that they are learning and developing well. 76% of survey respondents find it easy to learn about the things that interest them. Similar survey findings are presented under the headings of home, school and community:

5.0.1 Home

85% state that they feel supported by their families to be the person they want to be

70% state that, if struggling with school learning, their parent(s)/guardian(s) are able to help them.

5.0.2 School

OVER
HALF (65%) STATE THAT THEY ENJOY THEIR SCHOOL/TRAINING CENTRE EXPERIENCE

SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN
HALF (74%) FEEL SUPPORTED BY THEIR SCHOOL OR CENTRE TO BE THE PERSON THEY WANT TO BE

SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN
HALF (67%) STATE THAT THEIR TEACHERS HELP THEM IF THEY ARE STRUGGLING WITH LEARNING IN SCHOOL OR TRAINING CENTRE

MOST 77% CARE ABOUT GETTING GOOD GRADES IN SCHOOL OR THEIR TRAINING CENTRE. HOWEVER, JUST OVER HALF (56%) EXPRESS SATISFACTION WITH THEIR ACTUAL GRADES ATTAINED IN SCHOOL OR TRAINING CENTRE

5.0.3 Community

9% Almost none (9%) is or has been involved with the Juvenile Liaison Officer or with a Garda Youth Diversion Project in their respective communities.

5.1 Concerns

Despite the positive general picture of young people's learning and development presented above, findings also highlight concerns. Just under one in four (24%) survey respondents disagrees, to some extent, with the statement that they find it easy to explore and learn about the things that interest them. Of most significant concern are young people:

· attending second level schools compared to their primary and training centre peers
· aged 16-18 years compared to 11-12 and 13-15 year olds and
· identifying as female compared to young people identifying as male or other.

Please see figure 15 >

5.1.1 Home

15% of survey respondents report feeling, to some extent, unsupported by their families to be the person they want to be. Though few in number, compared to their peers in formal education, survey respondents attending Youthreach/Community Training Centres are somewhat more likely to feel under-supported by their families to be the person they want to be. Similarly, mid and late teen survey respondents are also more likely to feel under-supported by their families in comparison to their younger counterparts:

· whereas 93% of primary school-attending and 83% of secondary school-attending survey respondents highlight that they feel supported by their families to be the person they want to be, this applies to just under 78% of respondents attending Youthreach/Community Training Centres; and
· whereas 91% of 11-12 year olds highlight that they feel supported by their families to be the person they want to be, this applies to 85% of 13-15 year olds and 82% of 16-18 year olds.

Figure 15: I find it easy to explore and learn all about the things that interest me: % responses by educational provision; age and gender

Concerns are outlined further with respect to home, school and community.
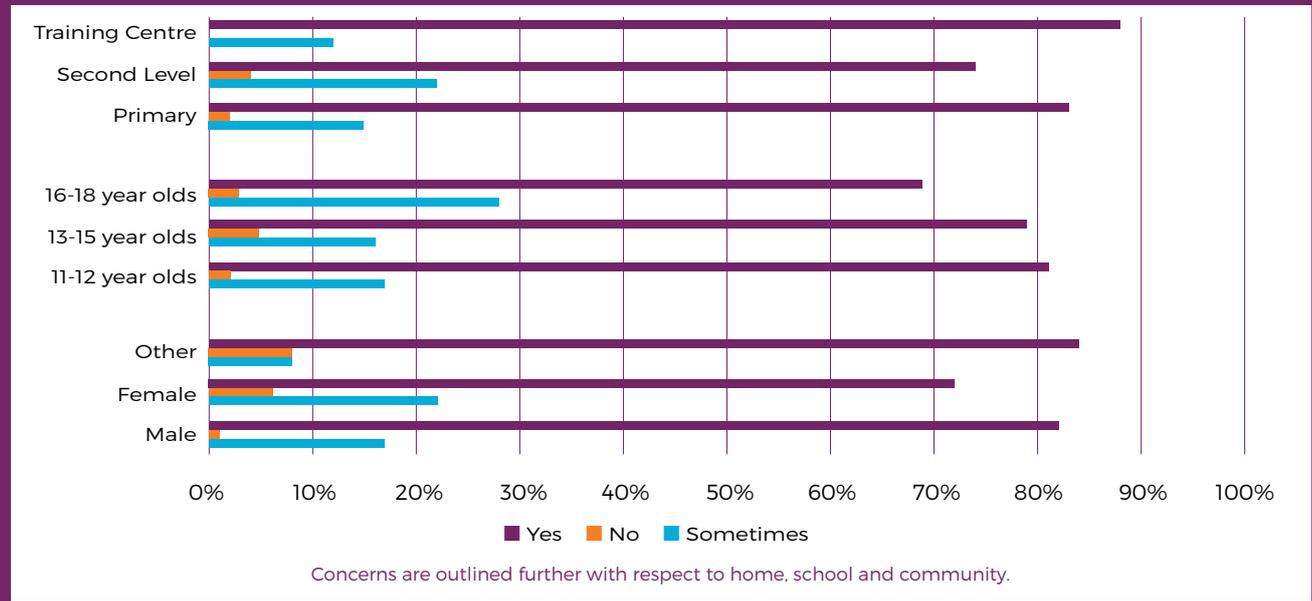
Figure 16: Respondents who feel supported by their family to be the person they want to be: % by age and educational provision
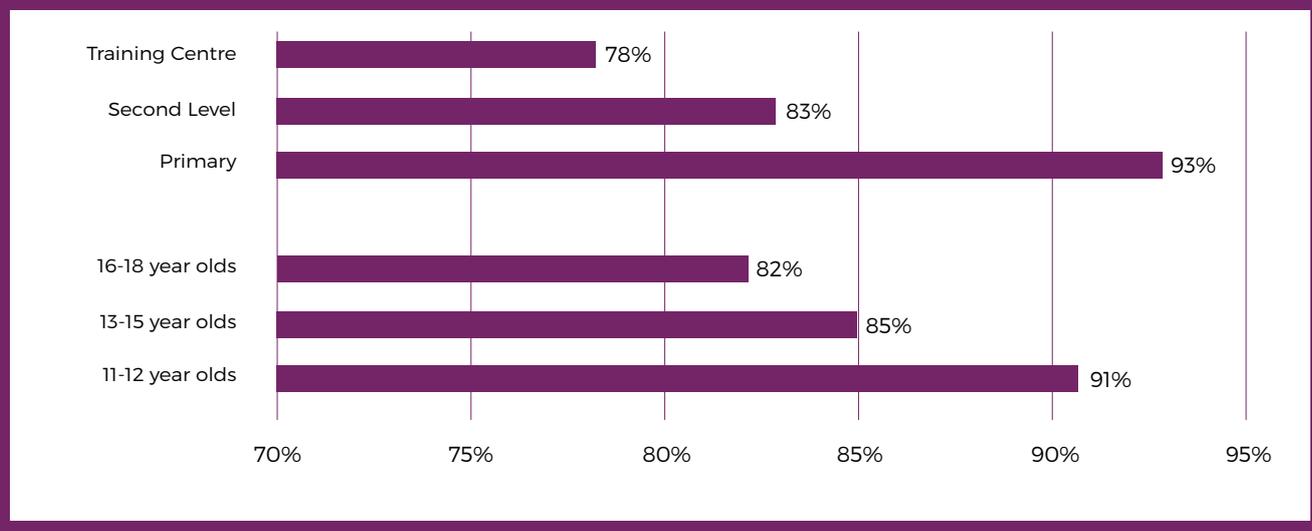
In further exploring the extent to which young people feel supported by their family to be the person they want to be, consultations highlight concerns that parents were too influential in the decision about which secondary school that young people would attend.

Almost one in three survey respondents indicate that their parents/ guardians are not always able to help them if they are struggling with school learning. This is predominantly an issue for survey respondents attending second level schools and for older teens, as highlighted in the following survey findings:

- 60% attending secondary schools note that their parents are able to support them if they were struggling with school learning compared to 83% attending primary school and 88% attending Youthreach/Community Training Centres

- 59% of 16-18 year olds state that their parents are able to support them if they are struggling with school learning compared to 85% of 11-12 year olds and 70% of 13-15 year olds.

Female respondents and respondents identifying themselves as other than male or female highlight greater concerns than their male peers on this matter, illustrated in Figure 17 below. Whereas 75% of male survey respondents claim that their parents are able to support them if they were struggling with school learning, this applies to 61% of female respondents and 58% of respondents identifying themselves as other than male or female. It has not been possible to explore the gender aspects of this matter within the confines of this research. However, this is a matter that warrants further investigation.

Figure 17: Parental capacity to support school learning: % by gender
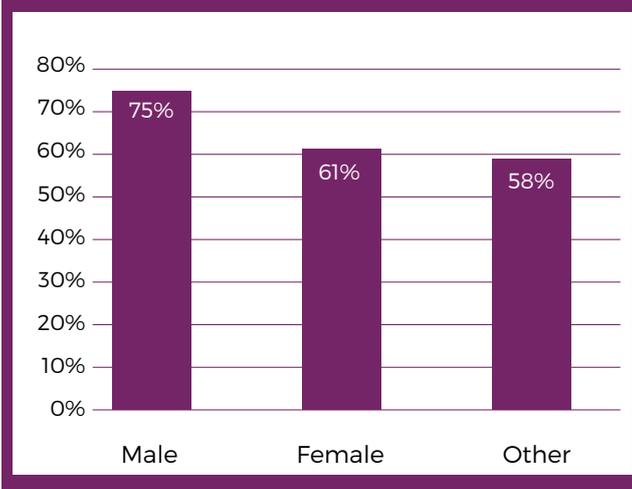
5.1.2 School

Survey findings illustrate that one in three respondents state that, to some degree, they do not enjoy their school/training centre experience, while one in eight highlights that they do not enjoy the experience at all. Older teen respondents are less likely to enjoy their educational experience while mid-teens state the highest levels of enjoyment according to age. Young people identifying as other than male or female also express higher levels of dissatisfaction than their male or female counterparts. Interestingly, respondents attending Youthreach/ Community Training Centres report higher levels of satisfaction with their educational experience compared to primary and second level students, illustrated in Figure 18 below:

Consultations highlight concerns about the transition from primary to post primary level in addition to challenges for young people around commuting from rural County Limerick to the first year of 3rd level education, resulting in higher levels of isolation in the early stages of their third level experience.

Just over one in four survey respondents asserts that, to some degree, they do not feel supported by their respective schools/training centres to be the person they want to be. One in ten states clearly that they do not experience this support at all, illustrated in Figure 19 below.

Older teens express this concern to higher levels than their mid-teen and younger counterparts. Though few in absolute numbers, one in four respondents identifying as other than male or female states that they do not feel supported at all by their school or training centre to be the person they want to be and young people attending secondary schools are more likely to feel unsupported in this regard than their peers in primary and training centre settings.

One in three survey respondents express concerns that, if struggling with learning in school or in their training centre, they do not receive adequate support from teachers. One in twelve (8%) claims

Figure 18: I enjoy my school/training centre experience: % of respondents by educational setting, age and gender

	Male	Female	Other		11-12 year olds	13-15 year olds	16-18 year olds		Primary	Second Level	Training Centre
Sometimes	24%	22%	25%		24%	20%	27%		27%	23%	16%
No	11%	13%	17%		11%	12%	13%		10%	13%	6%
Yes	65%	65%	58%		65%	68%	60%		63%	64%	78%
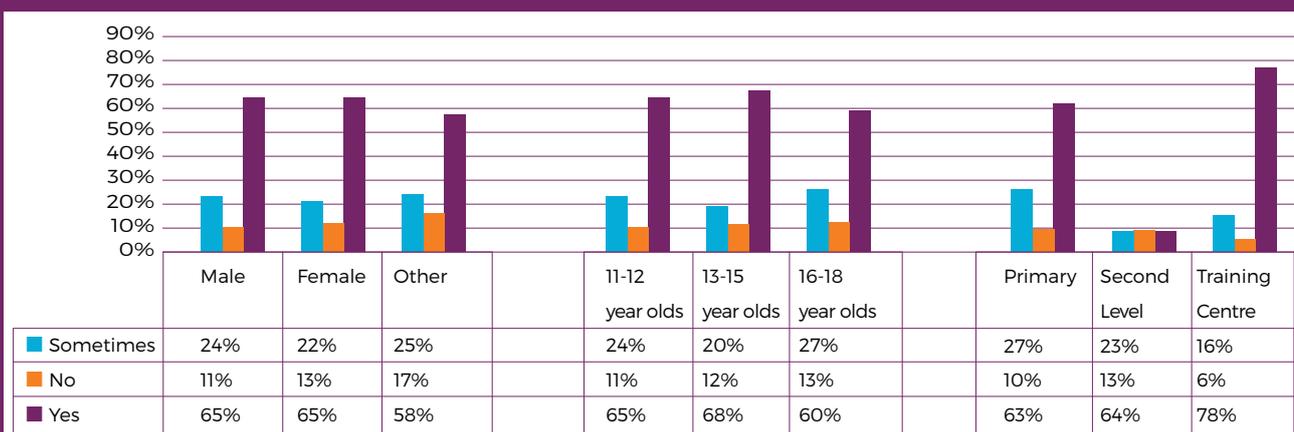
Figure 19: I feel supported by my school or centre to be the person I want to be: % of respondents by age, gender and educational provision
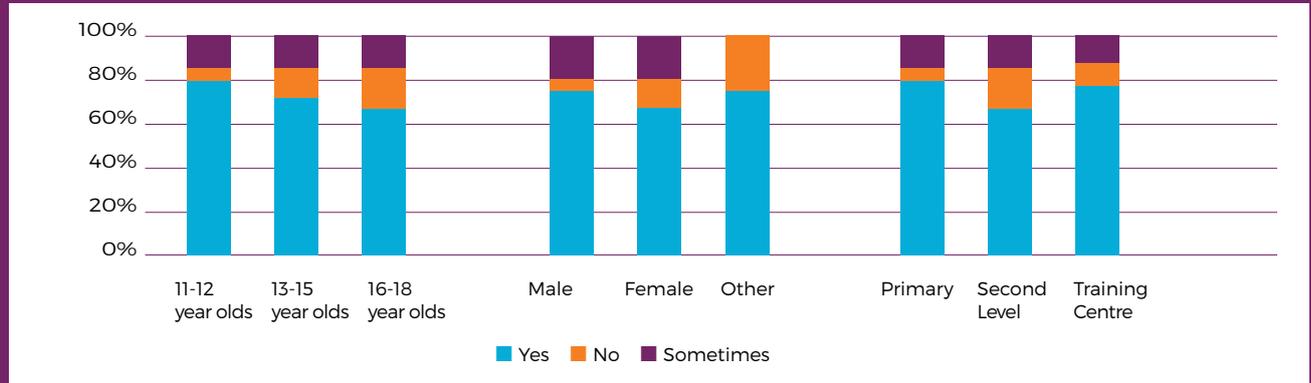
not to receive any support while one in four (25%) suggests that support from teachers is sometimes unavailable. The following respondents report noticeably higher levels of under-support from their teachers, as illustrated in Figure 20

· aged between 13 and 18 years;

· identifying as female and as other than male or female; and

· attending second level schools

Figure 20: If I am struggling with learning in school or training centre, my teachers help:% of respondents according to age, gender and educational provision
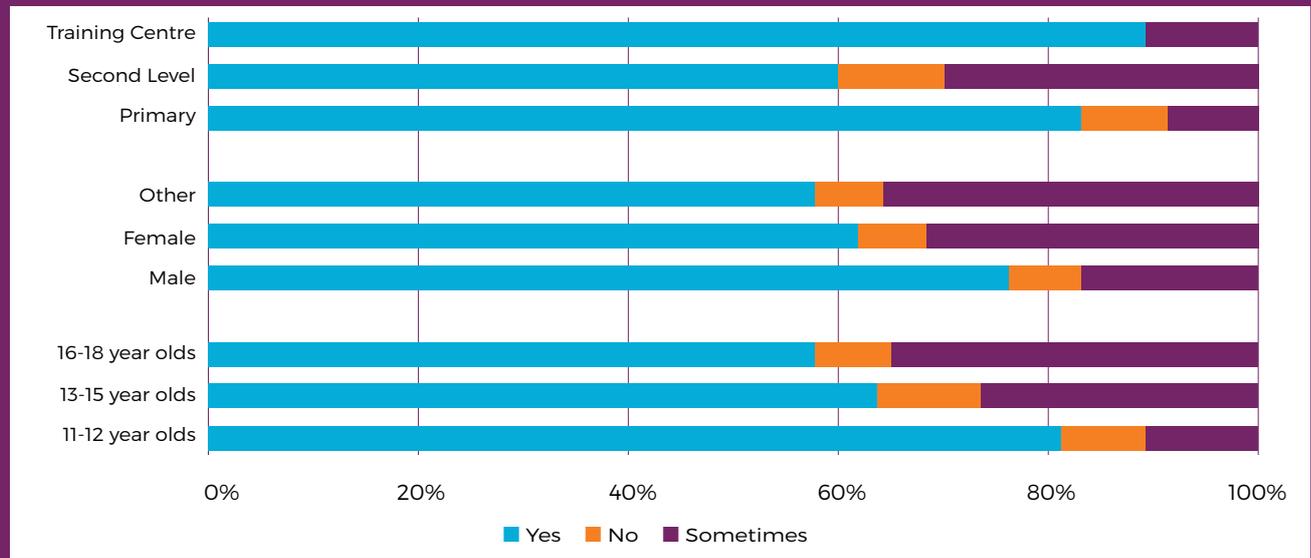
Consultations highlight additional support requirements from teachers and/or institutions around respectful relationships, practical learning and homework supports:

"Teachers should be sensitive about when and where they talk to students."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 2nd Year Students);

"It's not helpful to stereotype younger children with their older siblings."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 2nd Year Students);

"School isn't for everyone."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 2nd Year Students);

"more hands-on learning, like more science experiments, crafts, cooking, growing."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 6th Class Students);

" chill out space at school that we can choose to go to when we want to.

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 6th Class Students);

"We want homework done before we go home."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 6th Class Students);

"expensive and sometimes doesn't offer assistance – just supervised study space."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students).

5.1.3 Community

Less than half (35%) of survey respondents are members of a youth club. Under half of survey respondents aged 11-12 years (41%) and 13-15 years (45%) state that they are members of a youth club. This applies to 16% of 16-18 year olds. Consultations highlight that while participation in youth clubs is a welcome community-based learning and development opportunity for younger teens, there exists a gap in terms of community-based provision for older teens:

"Youth Club is mostly for 1st and 2nd years – maybe up to 4th year, people opt out after that. It's not a rule, but it's the norm."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students);

Why?
"There is not enough leaders. And activities get repetitive."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students);

What activities would work?
"Just hanging out. Pool table, darts, play station, small gym, but mainly what's needed is a warm

room to hang out in."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students).

At all ages, young people noted that it could be difficult to find activities in the community that weren't sports based. Consultations with older teens highlight a lack of public transport into towns or the city as limiting their access to social activities, such as cinema, and to services that they would prefer to access anonymously. In response to the survey question: 'Public transport allows me to get where I need to go in County Limerick', 54% stated Yes, 22% stated No and 24% stated Sometimes indicating that 46% or almost half of respondents do not feel that transport is adequate in allowing them to get where they need to. 53% of 11-12 years answered yes; 57% of 13-15 years answered yes and 48% of 16-18 years answered Yes, highlighting that 16-18 year olds are least satisfied with the adequacy of public transport.

As noted earlier, less than one in ten survey respondents (n=41) indicates that they are or have been involved with either the JLO or the GYDP. Though few in actual number, just under half (44%) of respondents attending Youthreach/ Community Training Centres identifies involvement. The largest number of participants in these programmes are male (n=25) though, proportionally, young people identifying as other than male or female (17%) have higher levels of engagement than their male (14%) or female (6%) peers. Involvement in both schemes peaks in the teenage years, particularly in the 13-15 age category, illustrated in Figure 21:

Figure 21: Involvement with the JLO or Garda Youth Diversion Project: Breakdown by Age
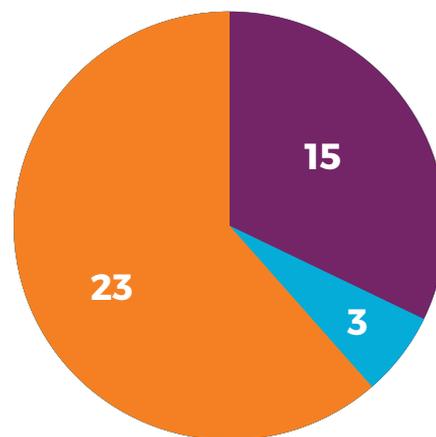
■ 16-18 years   ■ 13-15 years   ■ 11-12 years

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE
SAFE AND PROTECTED
FROM HARM

FINDINGS BOBF 3: YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SAFE AND PROTECTED FROM HARM

The research indicates that, generally, young people in rural County Limerick feel safe in their homes, their schools and in their communities as evidenced in the following survey responses:

6.0.1 Home

93% Almost all (93%) report feeling safe in their homes

78% Most (78%) are aware of services they can contact if they don't feel safe at home.

6.0.2 School

81% Most (81%) report feeling safe in their school/training centre.
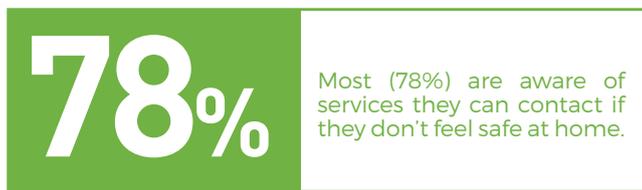
6.0.3 Community

ALMOST ALL ARE ON THE INTERNET OR SOCIAL MEDIA DAILY (ONLY 2% REPORT NOT USING THE INTERNET/SOCIAL MEDIA) AND OVER HALF GO ON THE INTERNET/SOCIAL MEDIA ON AVERAGE FOR MORE THAN TWO HOURS DAILY. SEE FIGURE 22 BELOW FOR DETAILS

SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN

HALF (72%) STATE THAT THEY WOULD KNOW WHO TO GO TO IN THEIR COMMUNITY FOR SUPPORT IF THEY EVER FELT UNSAFE

MOST 76% STATE THAT THEY FEEL SAFE IN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES

ALMOST ALL (98%) STATE THAT THEY ARE AWARE OF POSSIBLE DANGERS WHEN USING THE INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA.

Figure 22: Average number of hours daily on social media: % of respondents
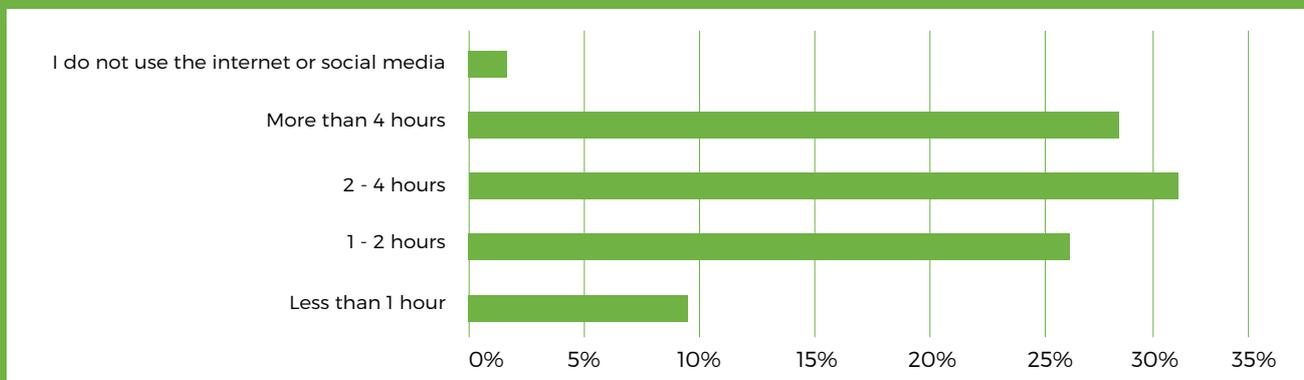
6.1 Concerns

As before, though the overall safety picture of young people in rural County Limerick is extremely positive, areas of concern with respect to home, school and community do emerge.

6.1.1 Home

While almost all survey respondents (93%) report feeling safe in their homes, 16% (n=75) report having been sometimes treated badly at home. Though few in number, survey findings suggests that young people identifying as other than male or female, along with young people participating in Youthreach/Community Training Centres, have proportionally greater experiences of mistreatment at home than their peers. Feelings of being treated badly at home increase as young people age. Figure 23 below illusrates the following findings:

- while 20% of male respondents and 11% of female respondents report having been sometimes treated badly in their homes, 55% of young people identifying themselves as other than male or female make this statement

- 33% attending Youthreach/Community Training Centres report having been soemtimes treated badly at home compared to 18% attending second level schools and 7% attending primary.

Figure 23: I have sometimes been treated badly at home: % of respondents by age, gender and educational provision

	Male	Female	Other		11-12 year olds	13-15 year olds	16-18 year olds		Primary	Second Level	Training Centre
Yes	20%	11%	55%		7%	18%	20%		7%	18%	33%
No	80%	89%	45%		93%	82%	80%		93%	92%	67%
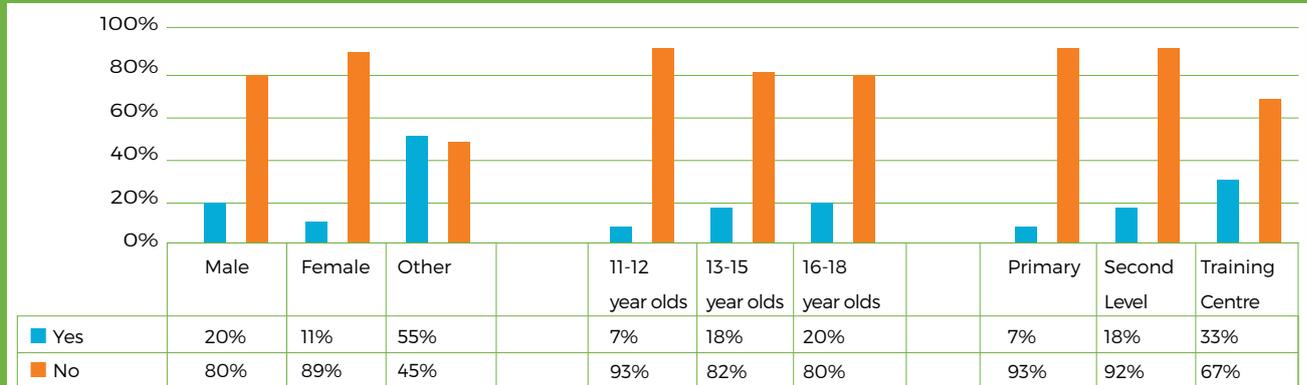
One in five survey respondents (22%) has knowledge gaps concerning services they can contact if they don't feel safe at home. Knowledge of support services appears highest among those reporting higher levels of poor treatment at home, namely among young people identifying as other than male or female and among young people participating in Youthreach/Community Training Centres. As demonstrated in Figure 24 below, survey findings highlight that knowledge of services is higher among younger children and mid teens, with knowledge gaps higher among older teens.

Figure 24: I know of services I can contact if I don't feel safe at home: % of respondents by age

6.1.2 School

While most survey respondents report feeling safe, it is important to note that just under one in five respondents does not always feel safe in their respective educational settings. 14% of respondents state that they only sometimes feel safe in school while a further 5% claim not to feel safe in school. One in three respondents report having been sometimes treated badly by teachers. Respondent's experiences of being treated badly by teachers are more common among mid and late teens compared to 11-12 year olds and among young people attending secondary school and Youthreach/Community Training Centres. Older respondents are twice as likely to report having experienced poor treatment from teachers as their younger, primary school-attending peers, reflected in the survey finding that 38% of 13-15 year olds and 39% of 16-18 year olds report having been sometimes treated badly by teachers compared to 18% of 11-12 year olds. Survey findings indicate a notable difference between genders in their experiences at school with 37% of male respondents and 30% of female respondents reporting that they have sometimes been treated badly by teachers. In stark contrast, 75% of respondents identifying themselves as other report poor treatment by teachers. Please see Figure 25.

Figure 25: I have sometimes been treated badly by my teacher(s): % of respondents by age, gender and educational provision

Just over half of survey respondents (51%) report having sometimes been treated badly by other young people[14]

59% OF RESPONDENTS AGED 13-15 YEARS REPORT HAVING SOMETIMES BEEN TREATED BADLY BY PEERS COMPARED TO 38% OF 11-12 YEAR OLDS AND 48% OF 16-18 YEAR OLDS

55% OF SECONDARY SCHOOL RESPONDENTS AND 56% OF YOUTHREACH/ COMMUNITY TRAINING CENTRES RESPONDENTS REPORT THIS EXPERIENCE COMPARED TO 37% IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

58% OF RESPONDENTS IDENTIFYING AS OTHER THAN MALE OR FEMALE REPORT NEGATIVE TREATMENT BY PEERS COMPARED TO 51% OF MALE AND FEMALE RESPONDENTS.

Survey findings regarding the extent to which young people report treating their teachers and peers badly indicate that less than one in five respondents state that they have sometimes treated teachers badly. Figure 27 illustrates the following:

• Respondents participating in Youthreach/ Community Training Centres (61%) and respondents identifying as other than male or female (67%), report higher levels of treating teachers badly. A higher proportion of 16-18 year olds (35%) also report treating teachers badly compared to their younger counterparts (e.g. 14% of 11-12 year olds).

• Respondents identifying themselves as other than male or female also report higher levels of mistreatment of other young people than their male or female peers as illustrated below in Figure 27. Whereas 29% of all respondents report sometimes treating peers badly, twice as many young people identifying as other than male or female report doing so (58%) compared to 37% of male and 23% of female respondents.

14 This issue, particularly as it pertains to bullying, is addressed in further detail in Chapter 8 below.

Figure 26: I have sometimes been treated badly by other young people: % of respondents by age, gender and educational provision
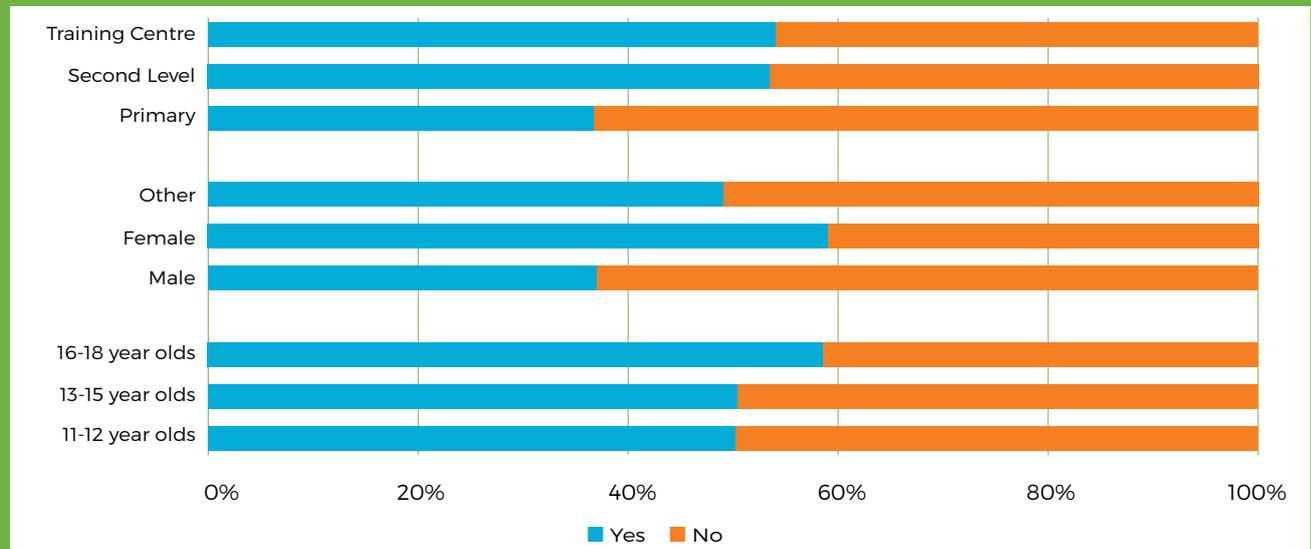
Figure 27: I have sometimes treated other young people badly: % respondents by gender

Figure 28: I feel safe in my community: % of responses
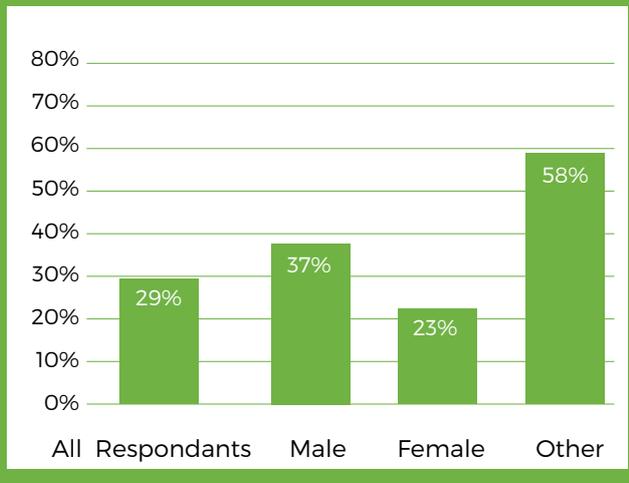
Concerns regarding the mistreatment by - and of peers - should be viewed not only in the context of relationships in school/training centre but also in the context of peer relationships in community.

6.1.3 Community

Almost one in four survey respondents does not, to some extent, feel safe in their community, illustrated in Figure 28. 3% of survey respondents report not feeling safe in community while a further 21% highlight that they sometimes do not feel safe.

Girls and respondents identifying as other express slightly higher levels of concern regarding safety in the community than male respondents. Whereas 80% of male survey respondents note that they feel safe in community, this applies to 73% of female respondents and 75% of respondents identifying as other than male or female. 13-15 year old respondents are slightly more likely to feel unsafe in community than younger or older cohorts. Consultations highlight concerns with traffic speed, drivers who have consumed alcohol and "messers outside pubs", while access to drugs was highlighted as a concern in consultations amongst mid-teens. Consultations including older teens of non-Irish parents also described some experience of racist comments, while also feeling that racism was reducing.

In light of the above, it is a matter of concern that over one in four (27%) survey respondents is not clear of who to approach in community if they feel unsafe. There are a number of relevant survey findings in this regard:

- 16-18 year old respondents report having considerably lower knowledge of who to go to than their younger counterparts. Whereas 83% of 11-12 year olds stated that they would know where to go, this applied to 61% of 16-18 year olds, highlighting that one in three older teens would not know whom to approach in their community in times of danger

- Survey respondents attending secondary school (67%) and Youthreach/Community Training Centres (69%) report having less awareness of whom to approach in times of danger compared to their primary school counterparts (83%)

- Respondents identifying as other than male or female demonstrate lower awareness than male or female respondents. While 80% of male respondents and 68% of female respondents know who to approach in times of danger, 58% of respondents identifying as other report knowing the same.

Figure 29: If I ever felt unsafe I would know who in my community to go to for support: % of respondents by age, educational provision and gender

	11-12 year olds	13-15 year olds	16-18 year olds		Primary	Second Level	Training Centre		Male	Female	Other
No	17%	26%	39%		17%	33%	31%		20%	32%	42%
Yes	83%	74%	61%		83%	67%	69%		80%	68%	58%
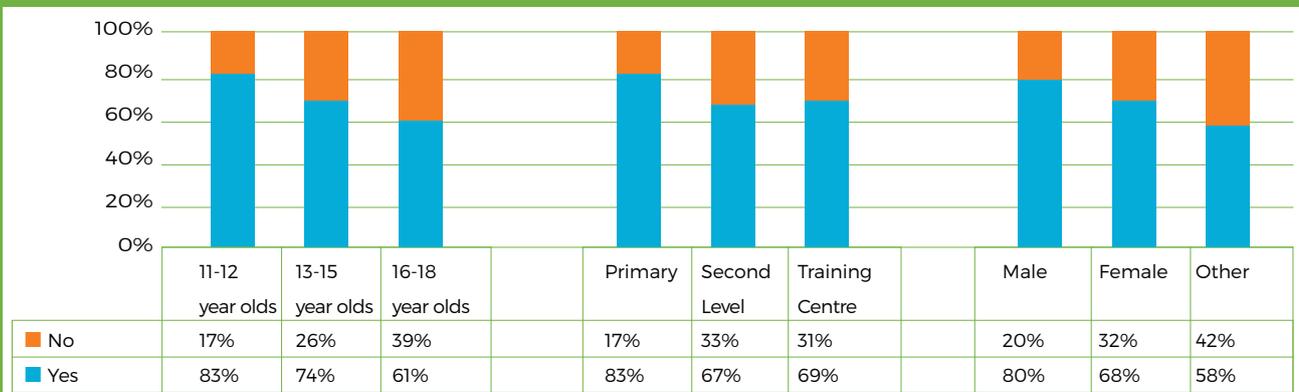
Encouragingly, 98% of survey respondents state that they are aware of possible dangers when using the internet and social media. That said, just under one in three young people (32%) reports having sometimes been treated badly on-line. Please see Figure 30 below.

Survey findings indicate that mid and older teens report higher incidences of maltreatment on-line than young people aged 11-12 years. This finding is also borne out in an analysis of this indicator by educational provision with young people attending secondary school and, in particular, Youthreach/ Community Training Centres, reporting higher levels of maltreatment than young people in primary school. Experiences of mistreatment on-line are reported as slightly higher for girls than boys and respondents identifying themselves as other than male or female.

Figure 30: I have sometimes been treated badly on social media: % of respondents by age, educational provision and gender
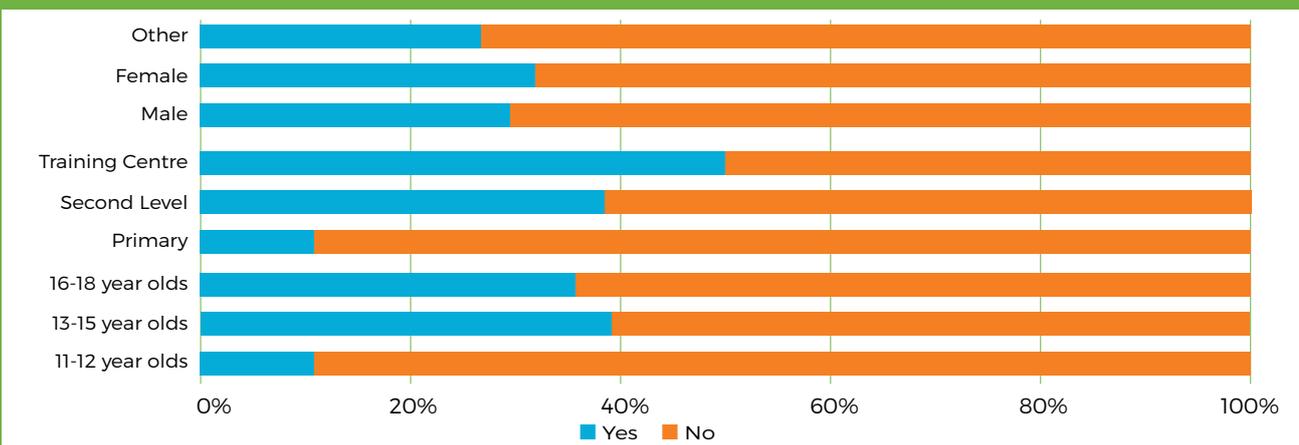
YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE
ECONOMIC SECURITY
AND OPPORTUNITY

FINDINGS BOBF 4: YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE ECONOMIC SECURITY AND OPPORTUNITY

Survey findings concerning the extent to which young people in rural County Limerick have economic security and opportunity are presented under the headings resources and career.

7.0.1 Resources

- Almost all (92%) state that they have adequate resources to participate fully in their education.

- Most (80%) state that there are adequate resources in their families to facilitate their participation in extracurricular activities – both within their educational settings and in their communities.

7.0.2 Career

- Most respondents feel supported to go for the career that they want, most notably by their families (85%) and, to a lesser extent (75%), by their schools/training centres.

7.1 Concerns

Concerns regarding economic security and opportunity are also presented under resources and future career.

7.1.1 Resources

While most survey respondents report having all the things they need to participate fully in education, just under one in ten respondents (n=31) report not having these resources, all of whom – with the exception of three individuals – are second level students. Survey findings indicate that approximately one in five young people states that a shortage of money in their respective families prevents them from taking part in extracurricular activities in education and in community, activities that would be considered the norm for young people of their ages. The vast majority of these young people are in their mid and late teens. For example, whereas 8% of 11-12 year old respondents report that a shortage of money in their family prevents them from taking part in extra activities at school, for example school trips and after-school study, this applies to 21% of 13-15 year old respondents and 20% of 16-18 year olds. With respect to out-of-school activities, proportionally, respondents attending Youthreach/Community Training Centres are more likely to be affected by shortages of money in their families, outlined in Figure 31 below.

Figure 31: Shortage of money in family preventing access to out-of-school activities in community: % of respondents by educational setting
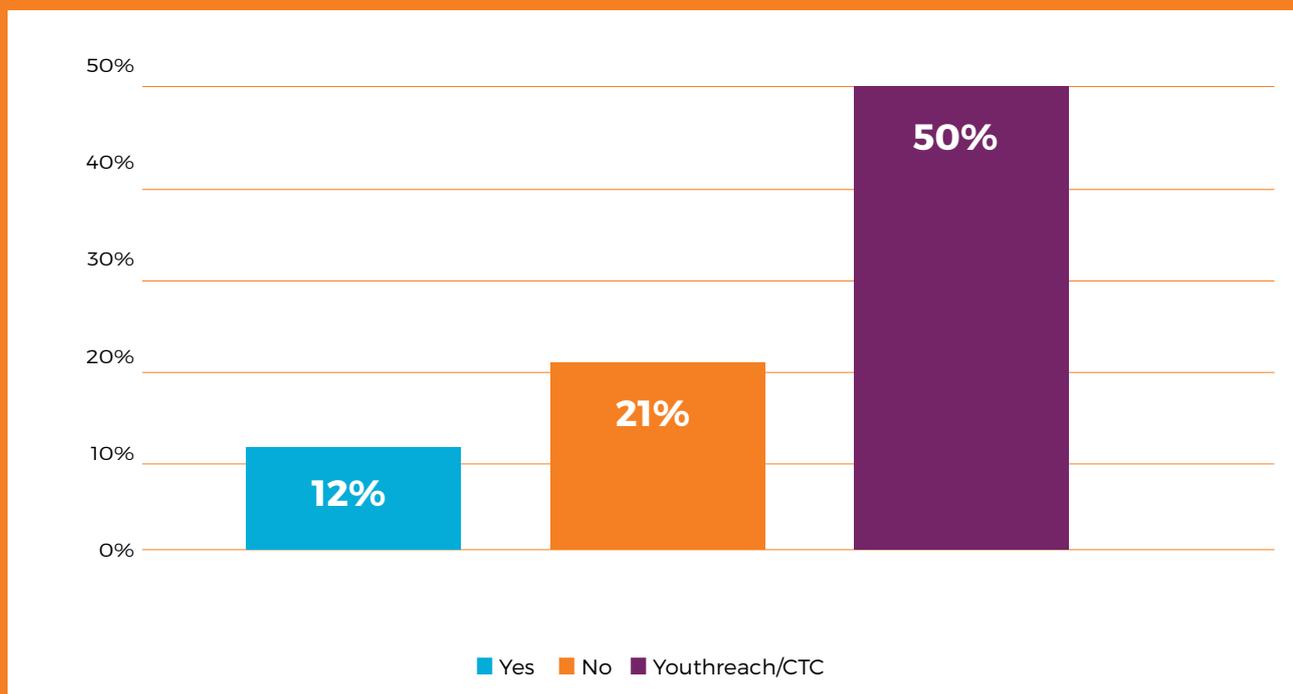
While services may not be in a position to financially support young people's access to out-of-school activities, older teens spoke positively about part-time work during consultations:

"It gives you an idea of what work is about."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students);

"You have your own money."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students).

One group of older teens also suggested, in a consultation, that a school programme would support students to get summer work – or work experience – as part of the Leaving Certificate programme. Consultations also highlighted that some young people are concerned about the high cost of accommodation that will face them while attending college or when ultimately moving out of home.

7.1.2 Career

30% of survey respondents express concern about what they will do after they finish their education. A further 28% state that they sometimes worry about this. Therefore, over half of respondents express some concerns about their future career and economic wellbeing. Concern regarding future career is greatest among mid and late teens. 61% of 13-15 year old respondents and 67% of 16-18 year old respondents express concerns in this regard. Respondents attending second level schools also reveal higher concerns with 64% either worried, or sometimes worried, about what they will do after finishing their education. This contrasts with 40% of primary school respondents and 50% of respondents attending Youthreach/Community Training Centres, illustrated in Figure 32.

Figure 32: I am worried about what I will do after I finish my education: % of respondents by age and educational setting
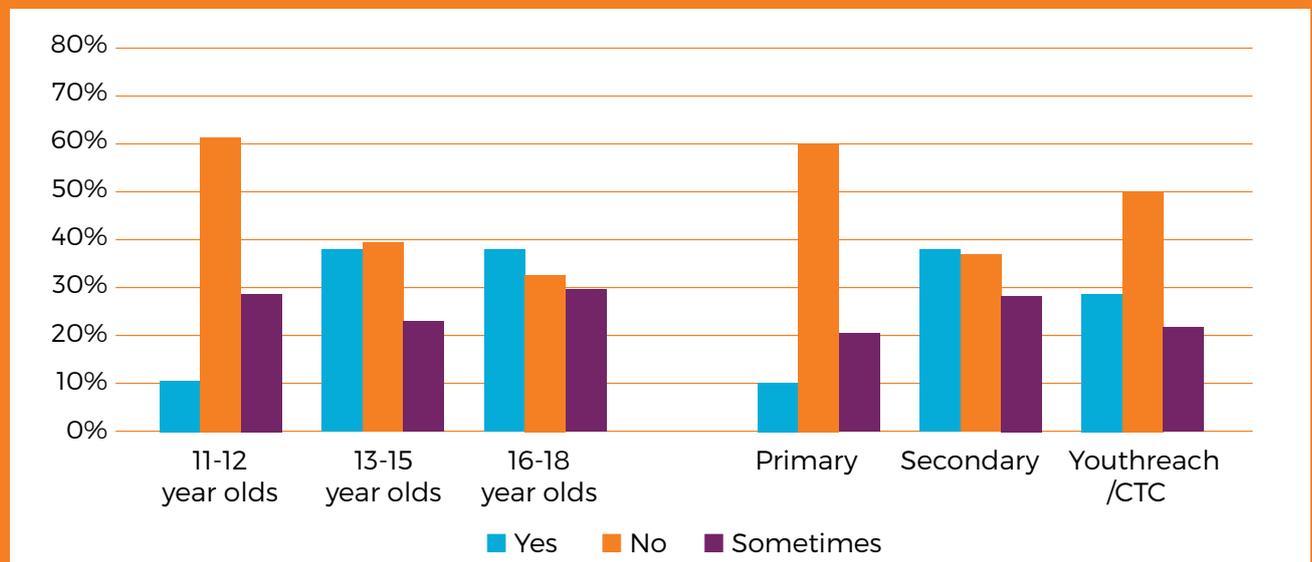
15% of respondents, to some degree, do not feel supported by their family to go for the career that they want. While 85% of male and female respondents feel supported by family to go for the career that they want, 75% of those identifying themselves as other than male or female feel such support. Similarly, a lower proportion of respondents attending Youthreach/Community

Training Centres feel supported by family in their choice of career compared to young people in other educational provision. Please see Figure 33.

Similarly, one in four respondents feel inadequately supported by their school/training centre to pursue their career of choice. While approximately three out of every four males and

females feel supported by their school or training centre to go for the career that they want, this applies to only 42% of respondents identifying themselves as other. In-school support for young people's career choices also appears to diminish with age as illustrated in Figure 34.

Figure 33: I feel fully supported by my family to go for the career that I want: % of responses by gender and educational setting
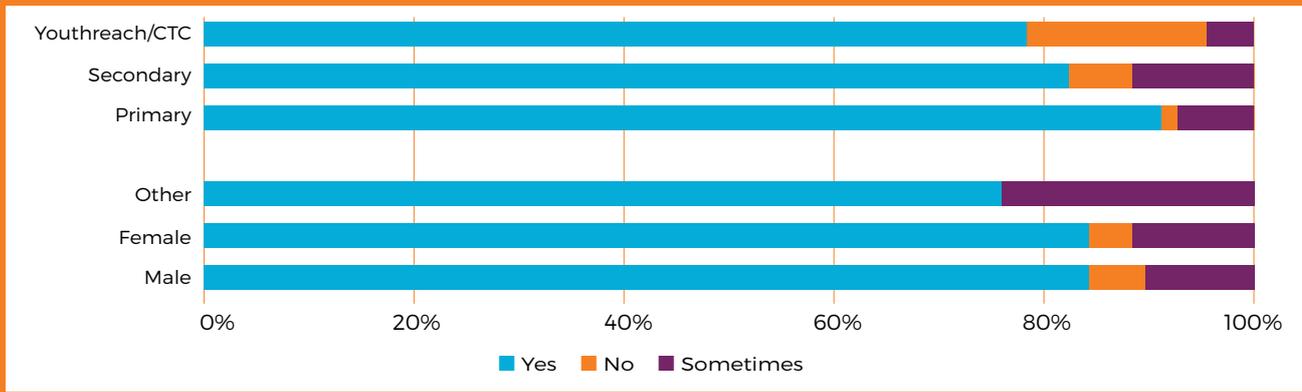
Figure 34: I feel fully supported by my school/training centre to go for the career that I want

	Male	Female	Other		11-12 year olds	13-15 year olds	16-18 year olds
Yes	78%	74%	42%		82%	74%	70%
No	9%	10%	42%		10%	9%	12%
Sometimes	14%	16%	16%		8%	17%	18%
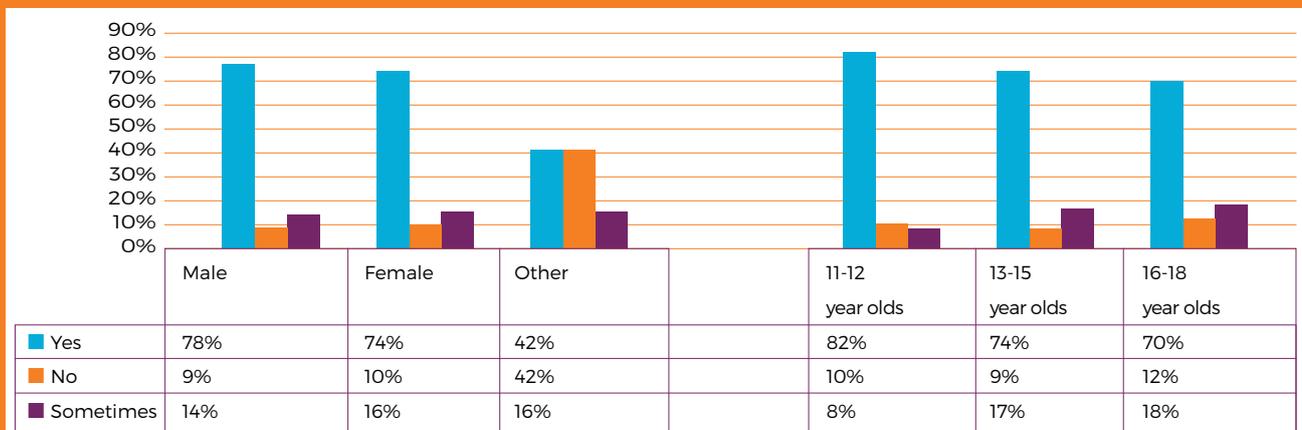
Young people express considerable concern throughout the research in relation to both the adequacy and timing of Career Guidance provision in education, demonstrated in the following survey findings:

- Almost half (48%) express concern about the adequacy and timing of Career Guidance in their education
- Concerns regarding the inadequacy and late timing of Career Guidance appears to be a bigger issue for female respondents and respondents identifying as other, compared to male respondents. These concerns also appear to be greater for older teens compared to their younger peers. Please see Figures 35 and 36.

Figure 35: I receive enough Career Guidance: % of responses by gender and age
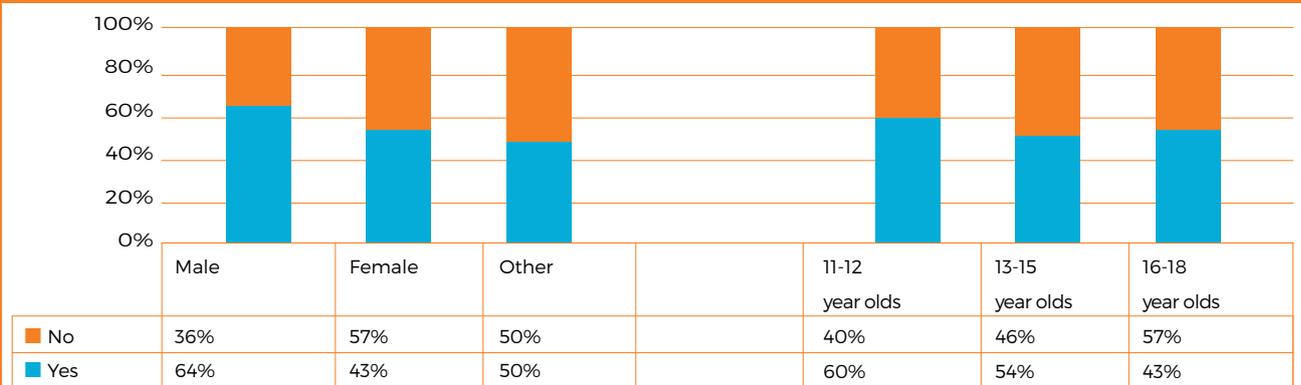
	Male	Female	Other		11-12 year olds	13-15 year olds	16-18 year olds
No	36%	57%	50%		40%	46%	57%
Yes	64%	43%	50%		60%	54%	43%

Figure 25: I have sometimes been treated badly by my teacher(s): % of respondents by age, gender and educational provision

	Male	Female	Other		11-12 year olds	13-15 year olds	16-18 year olds
No	40%	54%	58%		40%	44%	59%
Yes	60%	46%	42%		60%	56%	41%
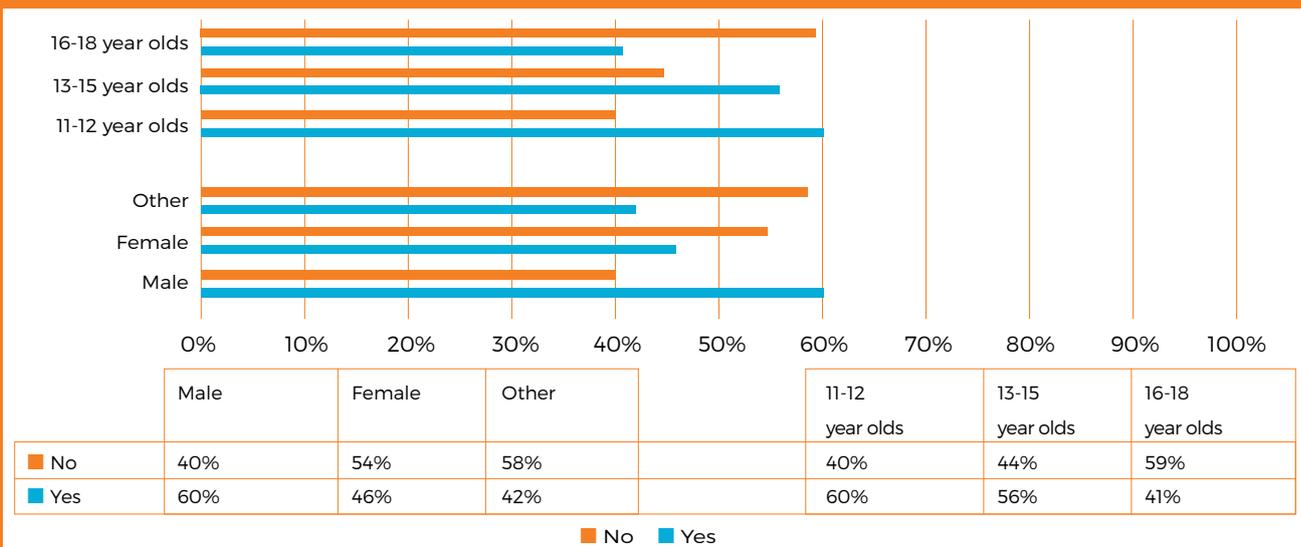
Consultations, particularly those with 5th Year student groups, also highlight the need for more and more appropriately timed Career Guidance, one to one sessions and better awareness and links with 3rd level:

"Career guidance is helpful, but there should be more of it and earlier - before choosing subjects for Junior Cert, so we don't close off options."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students);

"We need one-to-one career guidance, not just in class. People can feel uneasy discussing their future in a group."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students);

"We'd like more information on the college experience, more campus visits" and *"workshops in schools given by third level education providers."*

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students);

"Career guidance is not keeping up with changes in the jobs market, there are new courses available and changes in points."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students).

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CONNECTED, RESPECTED AND CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR WORLD

BOBF 5: YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CONNECTED, RESPECTED AND CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR WORLD[15]

Research findings suggest that, generally, young people are connected and respected in their homes, educational settings and communities with moderate opportunities for contribution to their world. The following survey findings indicate this under the headings home, school/training centre and community.

8.0.1 Home

· Most (80%) feel respected by their parent(s)/ guardian(s) while almost all (92%) feel that they respect their parent(s)/guardian(s).

8.0.2 School/Training Centre

· Significantly more than half (66%) feel respected by their fellow students

· Significantly more than half (70%) feel respected by their teachers

· Most claim that they respect their fellow students (86%) and their teachers (85%)

· Less than half of primary schools in County Limerick have a student council. In contrast, almost all secondary schools operate a student council.

8.0.3 Community

· Significantly more than half (67%) feel connected to the communities in which they live

· Significantly more than half (73%) feel respected by adults in their communities while over half (58%) feel listened to by adults in those communities

· Almost all (90%) state that they show respect to adults in their communities

· Just over half (53%) get the opportunity to volunteer in their communities and significantly more than half (66%) would like more opportunities to volunteer.

8.1 Concerns

Concerns are described in terms of young people feeling connected, respected and making a contribution at home, in school/training centre and within the community.

8.1.1 Home

Survey findings indicate that one in five young people does not always feel respected by their parents/guardians or that their opinion is always taken seriously. 5% of respondents suggest that they are not respected while a further 15% indicate that they are sometimes not respected or taken seriously by their parents or guardians. Feeling respected by parents/guardians reduces as young people age, illustrated in Figure 37 below. Considerably fewer middle and older teens state that they feel respected by parents/guardians compared to their 11-12 year old counterparts. Accordingly, young people attending second level schools report higher levels of parental disrespect.

Figure 37: I feel respected by my parent(s)/ guardian(s) and that my opinion is taken seriously: % of respondents by Age
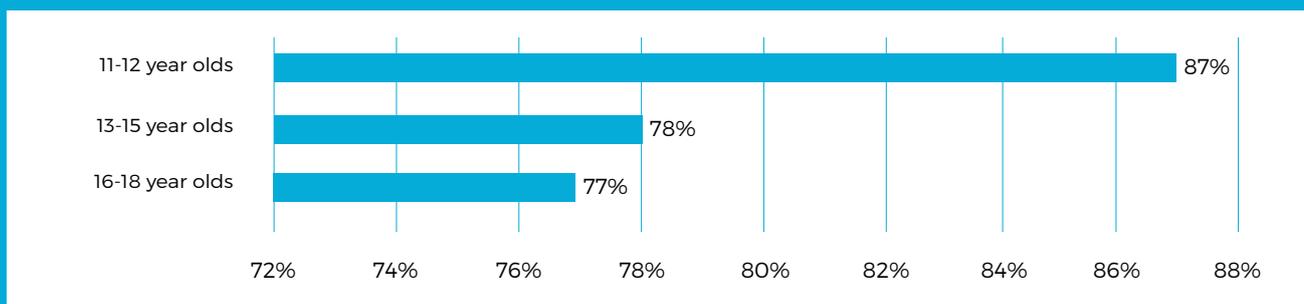
14 This issue, particularly as it pertains to bullying, is addressed in further detail in Chapter 8 below.

Respondents identifying themselves as other than male or female are more likely to feel disrespected by parents and guardians and not taken as seriously as their male or female peers as outlined in Figure 38 below.

**Figure 38: I feel respected by my parent(s)/ guardian(s)
and that my opinion is taken seriously: % of respondents by Gender**
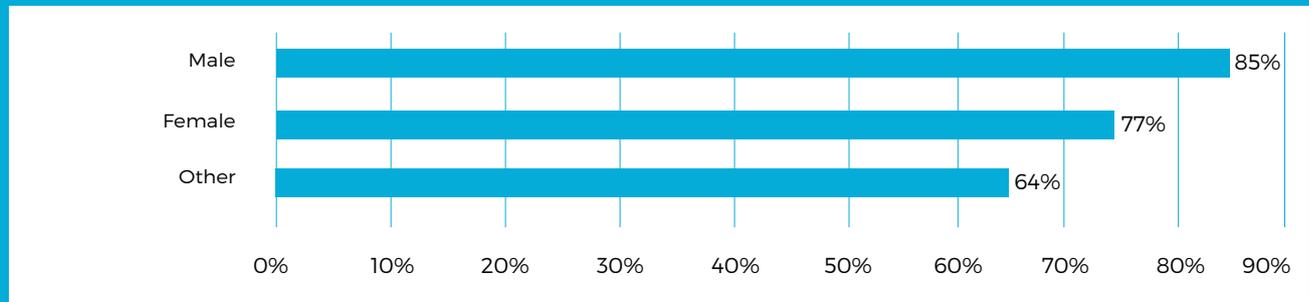
Older teens and respondents identifying as other than male or female are more likely to show disrespect to their parents/guardians, evidenced in the following survey findings:

· Whereas in excess of 90% of 11-12 and 13-15 year olds state that they respect their parents/guardians, this applies to 73% of 17-18 year old respondents

· Equally, while in excess of 90% of male and female respondents report respecting their parents/guardians, this applies to 73% of young people identifying themselves as other than male or female.

8.1.2 School/Training Centre

Over half of survey respondents state that they feel respected by fellow students and teachers with 5% feeling disrespected by fellow students and a further 29% feeling sometimes disrespected. 7%

feel disrespected by their teachers and a further 23% feeling sometimes disrespected. In terms of peer respect, survey findings show that:

· Approximately one in every three 13-15 year olds and one in three 16-18 year old respondents feels – to some extent - disrespected by fellow students in their respective schools/training centres

· Almost four out of ten female respondents (38%) and respondents identifying as other than male or female (37%) feels – to some extent - disrespected by fellow students while this applies to 29% of male respondents

· Respondents attending secondary schools report higher levels of disrespect from peers (37%) than their counterparts in primary education (24%) and in Youthreach/Community Training Centres (22%). Please see Figure 39 below.

**Figure 39: I feel respected by my fellow students:
% of respondents by age, gender and educational setting**
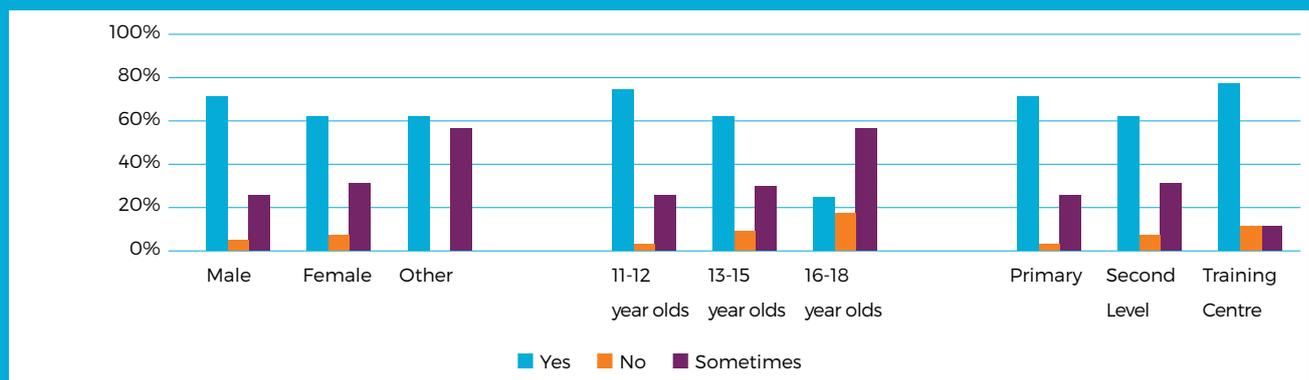
Approximately one in eight survey respondents (14%) indicates that they don't always show respect to their fellow students. Survey data suggest that mid and later teens are more likely to disrespect their peers than young people aged 11-12 years as represented in Figure 40 below.

Similarly, respondents identifying themselves as other than male or female are much more likely to disrespect fellow students than their male or female peers.

Figure 40: I respect my fellow students: % of respondents by gender
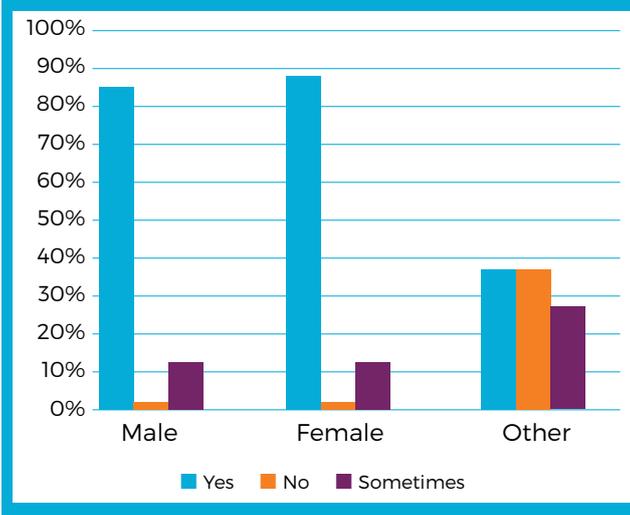
Consultations highlight that bullying and disrespect were considered a problem particularly during Post Primary Junior Cycle. It was suggested that as young people got to know each other and became more mature, disrespecting one another

became less of an issue. While disrespect in the context of gender was not discussed in detail during consultations, in one discussion with a 5th year group, it was suggested that advertising and body image is more of a concern for girls:

"Boys don't worry so much about appearance. Girls judge girls more than boys judge boys. Girls are influenced by advertising and body image. They are more inclined to jealousy and pride in their appearance and judge other girls according to image."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students)

The same group of students also suggested that girls were more likely to get involved in negative on-line behaviour.

In terms of respect and teachers, almost one in three survey respondents (30%) indicated that they feel disrespected, or sometimes disrespected, by their teachers. In terms of educational provision, secondary school students report lower levels of respect (65% feel respected) compared to their peers in primary (83%) and in Youthreach/Community Training Centres (78%). Accordingly, respondents aged 13-15 years (65% feel respected) and aged 16-18 years (67%) report feeling respected by teachers compared to 84% aged 11-12 years.

Of particular concern, reflected in Figure 41 below, is the survey finding that only 30% of young people identifying themselves as other than male or female feel consistently respected by their teachers. This compares to 75% of male and 68% of female respondents.


Figure 41: I feel respected by my teachers: % of respondents by Gender

	Male	Female	Other
Yes	75%	68%	30%
No	5%	7%	20%
Sometimes	20%	25%	50%
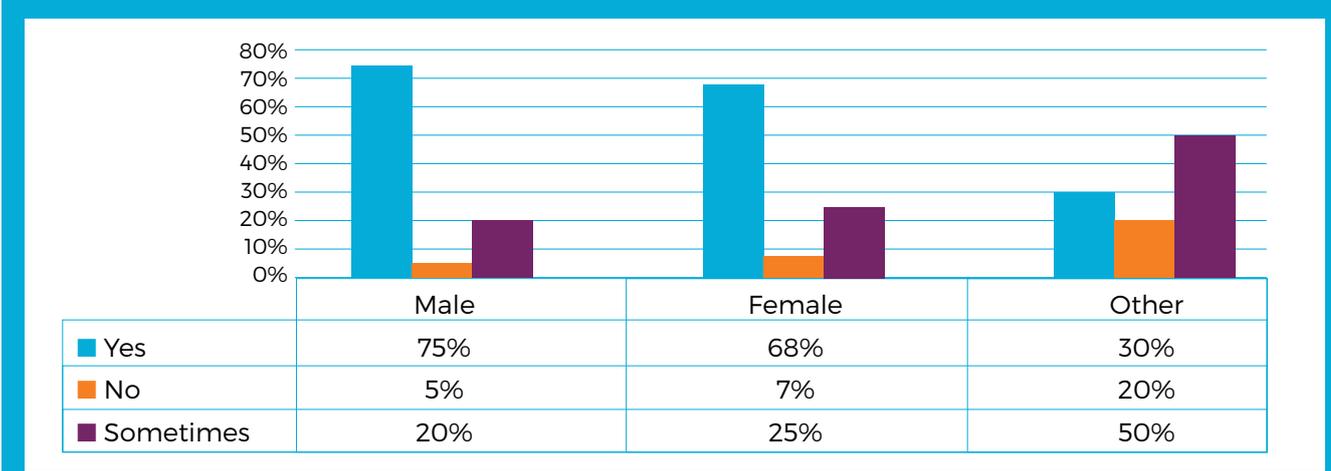
Consultations with young people attending post primary schools highlighted examples of when, where and how young people perceive disrespect from teachers including an emphasis on results over well-being; treated as children and an over-emphasis on rules. Some 5th year students explained that they couldn't ask teachers for assistance for fear of being made to feel "small".

"Teachers care more about our results than our wellbeing."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 2nd Year Students);

"You're expected to act like an adult in school, but you get treated like a child."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students);

"You're expected to know what you want to do for the rest of your life, but you have to raise your hand and ask to go to the toilet."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students);

"School focus a lot on rules and uniforms and less on our learning. Rules should help with schoolwork, otherwise they're unnecessary."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students).

15% of survey respondents identified that they do not always respect their teachers. Survey findings indicate that respect shown to teachers reduces as young people age and progress through the education system. Whereas 91% of 11-12 year olds state that they consistently respect their teachers, this applies to 82% of respondents aged 16-18 years. Correspondingly, respect for teachers is lower among secondary school students and Youthreach/Community Training Centre respondents. Though few in actual numbers, the proportion of respondents identifying as other than male or female who report respecting their teachers is considerably lower than their male or female peers. Whereas 80% of male respondents and 89% of female respondents state that they respect their teachers, this applies to only 36% of young people identifying as other.

Survey findings highlight that almost half of all young people attending second level school express concerns about the extent to which student councils represent the needs of young people, and the extent to which teachers respect and take them seriously. Only 54% of respondents attending second level schools state that they believe that the student councils in their respective schools represent the needs of young people while only 56% refer to teachers respecting the councils and taking them seriously. Consultations identify similar findings. For example a discussion with a 5th year group of students suggested that student councils could be: "told what actions to do by teachers, rather than supported to consult with students." Similarly, one participant noted that students were: "not bringing the real issues to the council", while others felt that student councils could be more important, effective and representative. However, a similar discussion with a 2nd year group of students presented a very different outlook. Participants in this discussion indicated that Student Councils were valued, describing how student councils and youth groups were the only places they were really heard.

8.1.3 Community

Findings show that young people generally feel respected in their communities. However, one in ten survey respondents does not feel connected to their community and a further 23% sometimes feels connected to community. Three out every four 11-12 year olds (78%) feel connected to their communities, this applies to six out of ten 16-18 year old respondents (60%). Respondents identifying as other than male or female (55%) and female respondents (62%) experience less connection to community than male respondents (76%). Respondents attending primary school report higher levels of connection than their counterparts in second level and Youthreach/Community Training Centres.

Figure 42 below illustrates findings pertaining to community connection.

Figure 42: I feel connected to the community I live in:
% of respondents by age, gender and educational setting
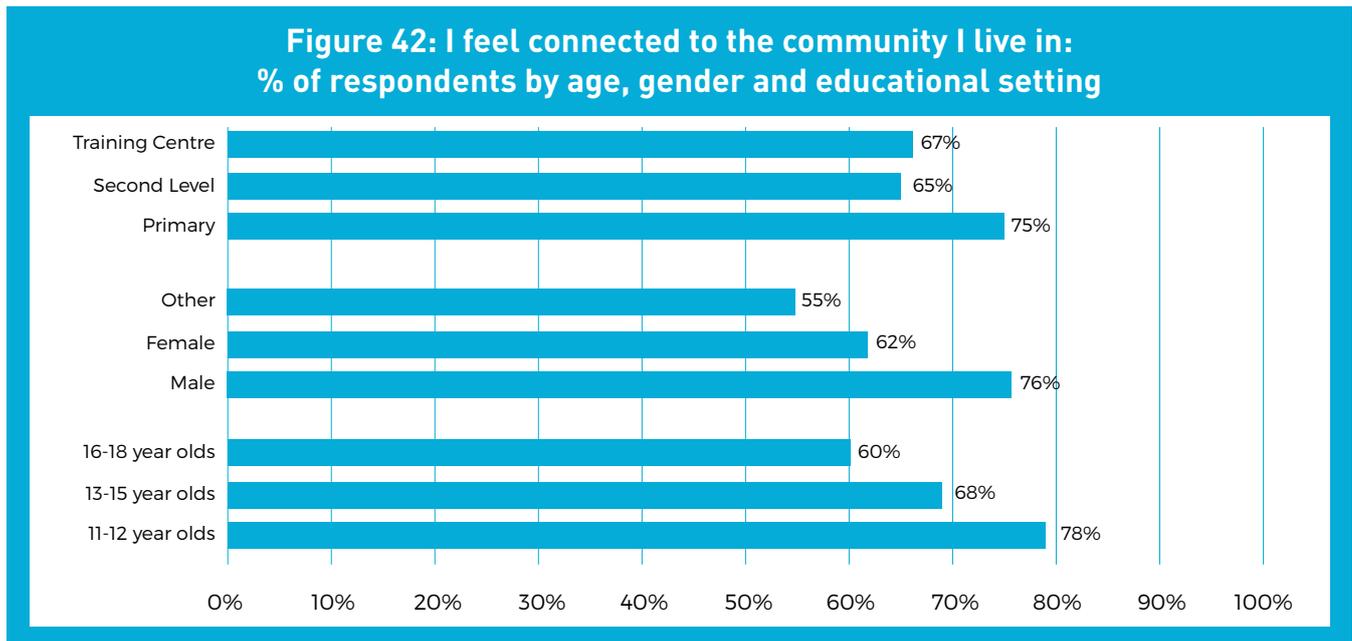
One in four survey respondents (27%) does not always feel respected by adults in their community and one in three (32%) does not always feel listened to by adults in their community. Whereas 83% of 11-12 year olds feels respected by adults in their community, this applies to 67% of 16-18 year olds. Survey findings also show that the feeling of being listened to by adults in community reduces with age. While 63% of 11-12 year olds feel listened to by adults in community, this falls to 54% among 16-18 year olds.

Fewer survey respondents identifying as other than male or female and female respondents (70% for each) report feeling respected by adults in their community compared to male respondents (78%). Similarly, fewer respondents identifying as other (56%) and female respondents (55%) report feeling listened to be adults when compared with their male peers (61%). Respondents attending primary school report higher levels of respect from adults than their counterparts in second level and Youthreach/Community Training Centres while also feeling more listened to be adults than second level and Youthreach/Community Training Centre respondents.

Figure 43: Respected by and listened to be adults in community:
% of respondents by age, gender and educational setting

■ Respected by adults in community   ■ Listened to by adults
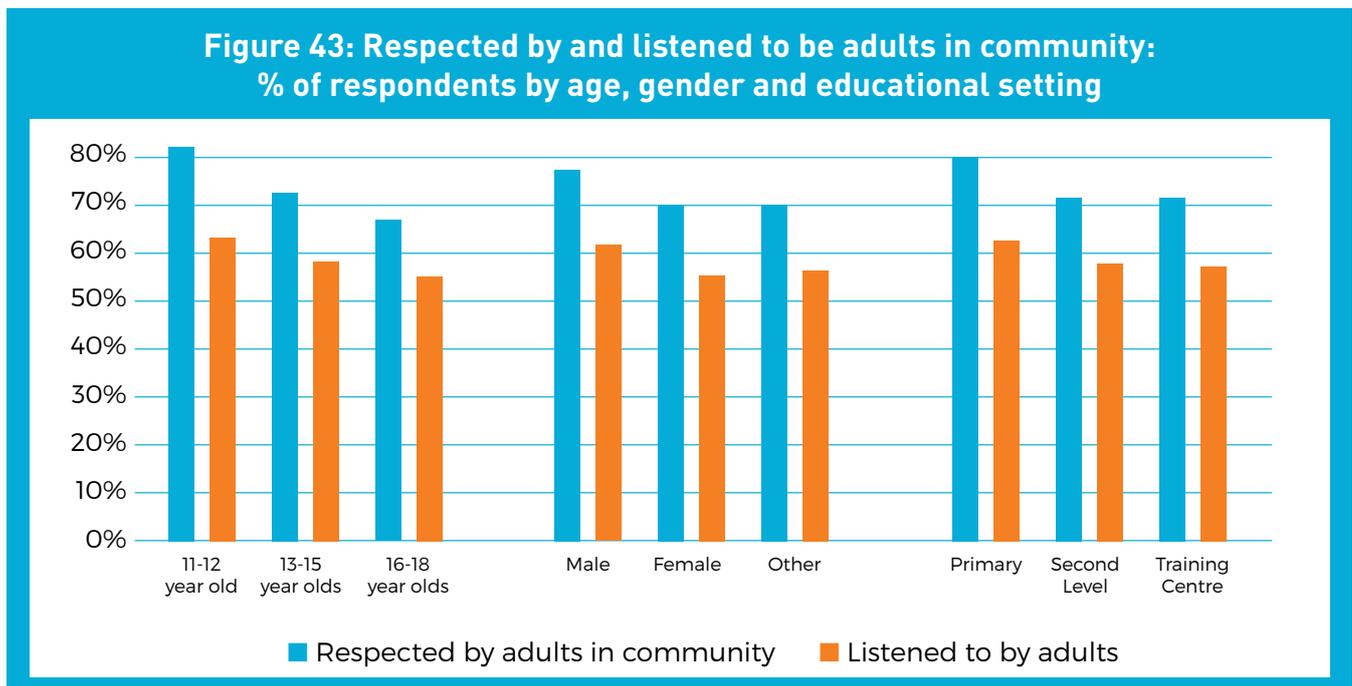
Consultations highlight that living as a young person in rural communities can be extremely challenging, particularly in light of rural community pressure:

"Living rurally can be difficult as everyone knows everyone – if you get into difficulty, it gets out. That also puts pressure on parents who are worried about the family name and what people think of them."
(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 5th Year Students)

Consultations further identify how young people have felt disrespected in their communities. One group of primary school students, for example, referred to times in which they had been ignored in shops or in which adults were served before them even though they were ahead of those adults in the queue. A group of 2nd year students commented on younger people being "left out" in the community and being: "labelled as troublemakers, lazy and irresponsible."

"Adults don't take us seriously. They think we're all thugs because a few are."
(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 2nd Year Students).

In consultations with Youthreach/Community Training Centres, young people spoke very directly of feeling disrespected in their communities:

"If you dress a certain way and smoke you're a scumbag. You're not respected. You're looked down on."
(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of Youthreach/Community Training Centre Participants);

"If you do one thing wrong it follows you forever. People know who you are."
(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of Youthreach/Community Training Centre Participants);

"There are good people and snobby people who look down on you."
(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of Youthreach/Community Training Centre Participants);

In consultations with P Youthreach/Community Training Centres, participants spoke particularly of

disrespect experienced from the Gardaí. Some of those participants had previously been in trouble with the law and a number spoke of what they perceived as ongoing harassment:

"They'll harass you if you've been in trouble but never help you if you need help."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of Youthreach/Community Training Centre Participants)

One in ten survey respondents (n=47) identify that they do not always show respect to adults in the community. Though few in number, respondents identifying as other than male or female, attending Youthreach/Community Training Centres and mid and older teens report being more likely to disrespect adults in their community.

Just over half (53%) of survey respondents report getting opportunities to volunteer in their community. Almost one in four young people (23%) states that they do not get opportunity to volunteer while a further one in four (24%) suggests that they sometimes get opportunities to volunteer. Significantly, two out of three respondents (66%) state that they would like more opportunities to volunteer in their communities, though interest in greater opportunities for volunteering reduces somewhat as young people age as illustrated below in Figure 44[16].

Figure 44: Interest in opportunities to volunteer: % by age

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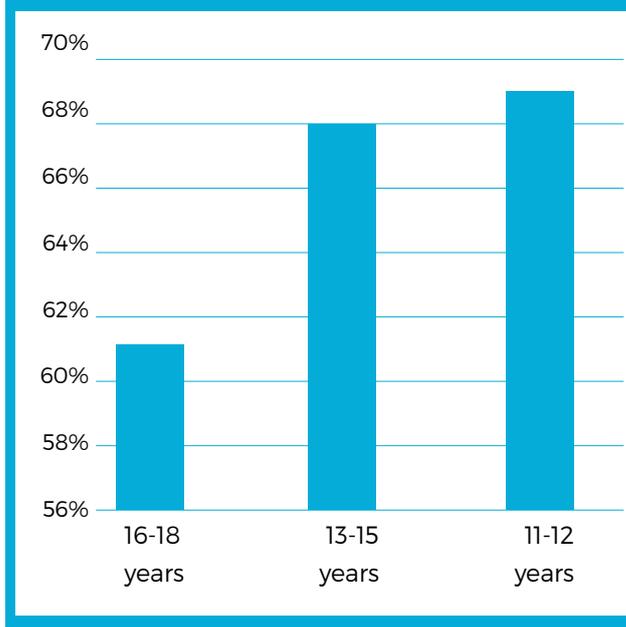
16 By extension, young people in primary school report higher levels of interest in volunteering than their peers in other forms of educational provision.

Similarly interest in volunteering opportunities is higher among female respondents (70%) than male and young people identifying as other than male or female (60% for both).

Consultations support survey findings. A consultation with one group of primary school pupils, for example, highlighted that they had volunteered in clean-up/litter picking and church services while others had also been involved in local fundraising efforts. The students expressed a keen interest in volunteering but highlighted that few opportunities came their way to volunteer. While happy to have volunteered in the fundraising project, the group of students expressed disappointment at the lack of update from adults on the progress of their fundraising. As one young person in the group noted:

"Adults assume they're right about everything."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 6th Class Students)

This feeling of not being taken seriously was endorsed by a group of 2nd year students who also expressed interest in more opportunities to volunteer:

"We are often treated like kids. Adults tell us 'you're young, you don't know' and yet they want us to behave like adults."

(Statement from Focus Group Discussion with a Group of 2nd Year Students)
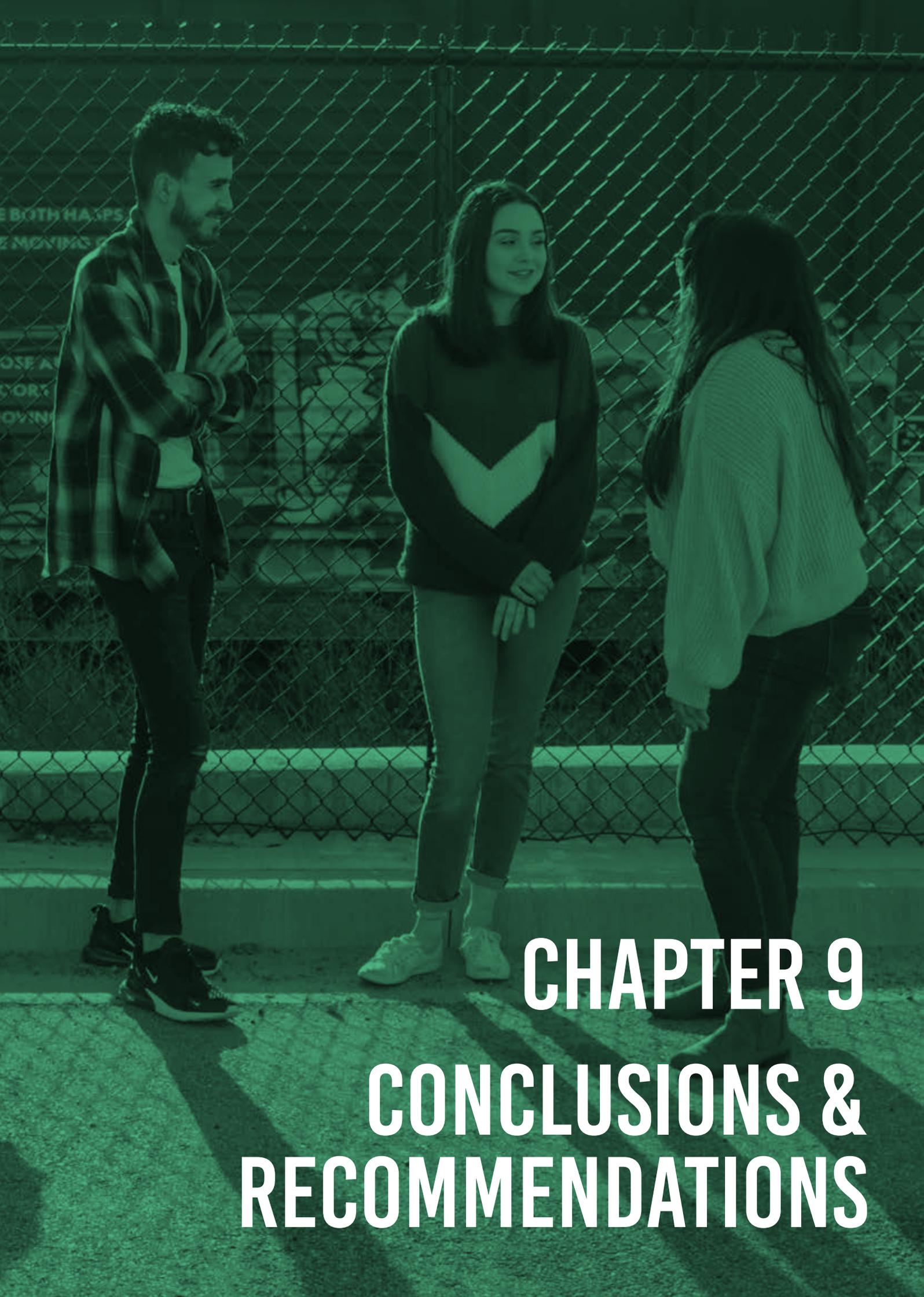
CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, this research study has found that young people in rural County Limerick are doing very well across all five of the national outcomes in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures. However, it has also highlighted areas of concern and identified recommendations to improve services for young people. Four key themes emerged across the research: Rurality; Young people of most concern; Increasing stress and Being heard

CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Rurality

Engaging with young people at their place of education may be the only method of reaching young people in rural areas as working with them outside their place of education requires access to transport, and rural transport is not adequate for this. Therefore, the delivery of youth work services and supports in educational settings, in a manner complementary to educational provision, is an important area for further discussion.

Another factor relevant to the experiences of young people in rural County Limerick is 'anonymity'. Young people in rural areas are concerned about maintaining anonymity when accessing services relating to mental health, substance use, sexual health and sexual identity. It is extremely important that rural young people are made more aware of quality supports and services that they can access online, by phone, or phone messaging.

9.2 Young people of most concern

Service providers must focus on reaching minority groups and supporting them in their experience of 'difference'. There are many experiences of difference, each will need different support. Minority groups emerging in the research are: LGBTQI young people; those identifying as other than male or female; those whose parents were not born in Ireland; ethnic and cultural minorities including Travellers; those not enjoying their educational experience; those who do not feel very well cared for at home and those whose families cannot afford to provide them with everything they need to participate fully at school.

9.3 Increasing stress

Findings show that stress increases as young people get older. Identifying the multiple and evolving stressors young people face and finding strategies that help them cope, could make an enormous difference not only to their lives, but to the lives of their parents, teachers and communities. Families, schools, services and communities must acknowledge this pressing issue and engage with it.

9.4 Being heard

The research identifies that young people struggle to communicate with their parents and teachers when they're trying to "offload" about difficulties they are experiencing. Accordingly, adults and teenagers must find more positive ways to communicate and discuss problems. This will inevitably require supports for both adults and young people to manage conversations in ways that will yield better results. Youth work approaches are well placed to engage young people, parents and teachers as an honest broker to tackle this widespread issue.

Key to hearing young people's views is the creation of spaces for their expression. There is significant opportunity for young to articulate their needs and views through the existing structure of student councils, but they need support. Youth work providers are ideally placed to support student councils but would need to be resourced in addition to discussions between the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs concerning youth work provision in educational settings. Student councils could be excellent pathways to investigating the issues highlighted in the research including career guidance, intimate relationships / sexual health and contraception / gender identity, substance misuse and gendered experiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9.5 Recommendations

Recommendations are presented under each of the 5 national outcome areas including: physical and mental health; learning and development; safety; economic opportunity and connected, respected and contributing to their world. The most pertinent BOBF Transformational Goal(s) including: Support parents; Earlier intervention and prevention; Listen to and involve children and young people; Ensure quality services; Support effective transitions and cross-Government and interagency collaboration must inform the delivery of any recommendation. In addition, coordination by some, or all, of government departments and their related agencies: including the Department of Children and Youth Affairs; Department of Health; Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport is necessary.

9.5.1 Outcome 1: Physical and Mental Health:

- The opportunity to take regular exercise is felt to be lower by females and those identifying as other than male or female than it is by males. In a similar vein, participation in team sport by females is considerably lower than by males. Findings also show that there are fewer team sports for girls to participate in. Further investigation to identify remedial actions is required

- Further investigation is required around the provision of information about good physical health choices to young people

- The reasons behind higher levels of access to mental health services by 13-15 year olds, than their younger or older counterparts, must be investigated and their experiences evaluated

- Greater communication regarding mental health services and supports, in consultation with young people, is needed

- Evaluate experiences of young people engaging with mental health support services, particularly the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

- Support parents and teens in enabling effective conversations

- Consult young people about how best schools, particularly school counsellors, could provide effective and anonymous mental health supports

- Advance personal development supports that explore the different experiences of boys, girls and those identifying as other with respect to difficulties in making friends

- Supports for coping with stress must be enhanced for students, teachers and parents. The experiences of 'being different' by LGBTQI young people (and minority ethnic groups) must be investigated, with respect to their experience of stress, in order to identify actions that support these young people

- Information on sexual relationships needs to continue into 5th and 6th year when SPHE has ceased. Where information exists, for example, online, its availability needs to be better communicated. Information on how to access contraception when a young person is uncomfortable going to their family GP, on sexual health and on dealing with unplanned pregnancy is also relevant

- More sexual health information and support is needed for LGBTQI young people and support services need to address the difficulties rural young people face in accessing support services located only in cities

- Supports are desired by young people from 6th class on (and perhaps earlier) on how to avoid, reduce or stop: Smoking / vaping; Alcohol and Drugs.

9.5.2 Outcome 2: Learning and Development

- Consult further with young people to find out what they want to learn about but feel they can't

- The reasons that young people feel, to some extent, unsupported by their families must be investigated further to be understood and responded to

- Provide parents/guardians with routes to solutions for their children around struggling with school, for example another family member, a neighbour, asking their child if a friend in school could help. It would also be interesting to investigate why young women and those identifying as other than male or female feel their parents are less able to provide support when they're struggling with school learning

- The reasons for young people not enjoying school at all should be investigated and remedies identified

- The reasons that young people do not feel supported by their school/training centre to be the person they want to be, should be investigated to establish the ways in which these young people feel they are not supported in order to respond effectively

- Learning supports provided by teachers, particularly for older teens, girls and those identifying as other than male or female should be investigated in order to identify any remedial actions.

- Further consultations are required with young people to identify and develop practical solutions to community-based provision for older teens including hang-out spaces.

9.5.3 Safe and Protected from Harm

- Investigate the experiences of young people, particularly those identifying as other than male or female and those attending Youthreach/Community Training Centres, around not feeling safe/being treated badly at home to identify meaningful support actions and promote relevant support services

- Services supporting children's safety in the home should be better promoted, particularly amongst older teens

- Investigate the experiences of young people, particularly those identifying as other than male or female, around being treated badly by teacher(s) and as it increases with age, to identify meaningful support actions and promote relevant support services

- Investigate the experiences of young people, particularly those in their mid-teens and those identifying as other than male or female, around being treated badly by other young people, in order to establish responses and supports

- Investigate the situations in which young people, particularly those in Youthreach/Community Training Centres and those identifying as other than male or female, find themselves treating teachers badly in order to establish causes and design supports

- Investigate situations in which young people do not feel safe in their community, for example with respect to drunk driving, alcohol consumption, access to drugs and experiences of racist comments, to establish where they should report different concerns and seek support

- Continued discussion with young people and parents about staying safe and how to manage bad experiences on-line.

9.5.4 Economic Security and Opportunity

- Schools are best placed to consult with parents and identify ways to reduce financial pressures, for example low cost uniforms, books/tablets, after-school study and school outings

- The potential for part-time work, with particular regard to young people in Youthreach/ Community Training Centres and older teens, to contribute to academic course work in addition to funding out-of-school activities could be explored

- Services need to respond to young people's concerns around parent and school/training centre influence on career choice and the adequacy and timing of Career Guidance

9.5.5 Connected, Respected and Contributing

- The situations in which young people, particularly as they get older and those who identify as other than male or female, feel disrespected by parents/guardians should be investigated in order to identify supports for young people and their parents/guardians

- The experiences of young people, with a focus on young people identifying as other than male or female, who feel disrespected by fellow students and by teachers must be investigated further to identify and establish supports that would reduce these incidences. This would include situations of young people treating peers and/or teachers with disrespect.

- There is a need to redesign the way in which student councils are supported to discover the issues that matter most to young people and how student councils communicate these issues to relevant parties (peers, teachers, parents, community)

- Young people's connection with their community could be strengthened. This is an issue that could be explored by student councils and Youthreach/Community Training Centres if they were supported to do this

- In relation to the respect shown to young people by adults in their community, concerns could be explored by student councils and Youthreach/Community Training Centres, if they were supported to do this. Concerns regarding young people showing respect to adults in their community could also be explored in this process

- Services could support community councils, tidy towns and village groups to invite young people to engage and so volunteer in their community, particularly younger cohorts. This support should assist groups to listen to young people and give feedback. Child protection policies and procedures may be a barrier to the inclusion of young people in established community groups; youth provision organisations are ideally placed to advise and support in this

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Research Advisory Committee Members

1. Jacqueline Dwane, Cora Foley and Martin Duhig, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB).

2. Amanda Slattery, Ballyhoura Development CLG.

3. Adrienne O'Connell, West Limerick Resources.

4. David Studer, Limerick Children and Young People's Services Committee.

5. Eileen Humphries, Limerick City and County Council Social Development Directorate.

Appendix 2: Consultation Participants

Participating Primary Schools

- Athea - Athea National School
- Ballylanders - Ballylanders National School
- Bruff - Scoil Dean Cussen
- Croom - Croom National School
- Murroe - Scoil Mhuire National School
- Pallaskenry - Scoil Mhuire National School
- Tineteriffe - Tineteriffe National School

Participating Post-Primary Schools

- Abbeyfeale - Colásite Íde agus Iosef
- Kilfinane - Scoil Pól
- Kilmallock - Coláiste Iósaef Community College
- Newcastle West - Desmond College
- Rathkeale - Coláiste na Trócaire

Participating Youth Reach /Community Training Centre

- Hospital Youthreach/Community Training Centres
- Shanagolden Youthreach/Community Training Centres

LIMERICK YOUTH SERVICE
YOUNG PERSON'S SURVEY, RURAL COUNTY LIMERICK

Thank you for taking part in this study of young people across rural County Limerick.

Throughout November and December of last year, researchers for Limerick Youth Service met with young people throughout rural County Limerick. We asked young people for their opinions and experiences on subjects such as health, learning, safety, economic security and their connection to community. The young people we met gave us a lot of information and now we want to check if that information is relevant to other young people across the county. That's why we are asking you to fill in this survey.

The statements and questions below ask about your life experience on the topics listed above. This is your chance to let organisations in the County know what young people are concerned about in relation to each of the topics covered.

This study is completely voluntary, so you can skip any questions you don't want to answer, or you can stop completing the survey at any time.

If the study is to be useful and if you choose to begin the survey, it is important that you answer each question as honestly as possible. Your answers will be completely confidential.

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THE SURVEY.

Also please respect the privacy of others and look only at your own survey.

Other young people have said this questionnaire is interesting and that they enjoy filling it out. We hope you do too.

Please be patient if you feel some questions or statements don't apply to you. But we need to ask everybody the same questions.

Please remember this is not a test so there are no right or wrong answers. The whole survey should take no longer than 15-20 minutes to complete.

All questions should be answered by selecting only one of the answers.

Thank you for being an important part of this project.

PERSONAL PROFILE

This section just wants to know a little bit about you without knowing exactly who you are.

1. I am: ☐ Male   ☐ Female   ☐ Other

2. I am aged:
    ☐ 11 or 12 years
    ☐ 13 to 15 years
    ☐ 16 to 18 years

3. I am:
    ☐ In Primary School
    ☐ In Secondary School
    ☐ In Youthreach/Community Training Centres
       or Community Training Centre
    ☐ Not in Education or Training

HEALTH

4. My general health is good
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

5. I am satisfied with my life growing up in
    County Limerick
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

6. If I am physically unwell at home,
    I feel cared for by my family
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

7. I find it easy to talk to my parent(s)/guardian(s)
   when I am feeling stressed or unhappy
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

8. I get enough opportunity to take regular exercise
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

9. Through my education I learn about
   good physical health choices
   ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

10. Through my education I learn about good
    mental health choices
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

11. If I feel unhappy or stressed at school/training
    centre, I feel comfortable getting support from
    staff
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

12. I play on a sports team in my school or
    community
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

13. There are good recreation facilities in my
    community
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

14. I am a member of a youth club in my community
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

15. I make friends easily
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

16. If I feel unhappy or stressed, I am supported by
    friends
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

17. If I feel unhappy or stressed, I know what services
    are available to support me
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

18. I find it easy to explore and learn all about the things that interest me
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

19. I care about getting good grades in school or training centre
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

20. If I am struggling with school learning, my parent(s)/guardian(s) are able to help me
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

21. I feel supported by my family to be the person I want to be
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

22. I get enough information on sexual relationships, consent, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, etc
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

23. I enjoy my school/training centre experience
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

24. If I am struggling with learning in school or training centre, my teachers help
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

25. I am satisfied with my grades in school or training centre
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

26. I feel supported by my school or centre to be the person I want to be
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

27. I get enough information on risks of smoking, drinking alcohol and taking drugs
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

28. On average, how much time do you spend on homework after school each day
☐ Less than 1 hour
☐ Between 1 and 2 hours
☐ More than 2 hours
☐ Doesn't apply to me

SAFETY

29. I feel safe at home
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

30. I have sometimes been treated badly at home
☐ Yes   ☐ No

31. I know of services I can contact if I don't feel safe at home
☐ Yes   ☐ No

32. I feel safe at school
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

33. I have sometimes been treated badly by my teacher(s)
☐ Yes   ☐ No

34. I have sometimes been treated badly by other young people
☐ Yes   ☐ No

35. I have sometimes treated other young people badly
☐ Yes   ☐ No

36. I have sometimes treated teachers badly
☐ Yes ☐ No

37. I feel safe in my community
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

38. If I ever felt unsafe, I would know who in my community to go to for support
☐ Yes ☐ No

39. On average, how many hours a day do you use the internet or social media?
☐ Less than 1 hour
☐ 1 to 2 hours
☐ 2 to 4 hours
☐ More than 4 hours
☐ I do not use the internet or social media

40. I am aware of possible dangers when using the internet and social media
☐ Yes ☐ No

41. I have sometimes been treated badly on social media
☐ Yes ☐ No

ECONOMIC SECURITY

42. I have all the things I need to allow me to participate fully in school or Youthreach/Community Training Centres or CTC, e.g. books, pens, uniform, lunch, etc.
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

43. Sometimes a shortage of money in my family prevents me from taking part in extra activities at school, e.g. school trips, after-school study, etc.
☐ Yes ☐ No

44. Sometimes a shortage of money in my family prevents me from taking part in out-of-school activities in my community, e.g. sports, dance and music classes, youth clubs, etc.
☐ Yes ☐ No

45. I am worried about what I will do after I finish my education
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

46. I feel fully supported by my family to go for the career that I want
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

47. I feel fully supported by my school/training centre to go for the career that I want
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

48. I receive enough Career Guidance
☐ Yes ☐ No

49. I receive Career Guidance early enough in my education to help with my subject choices
☐ Yes ☐ No

50. Have you ever had a part-time job?
☐ Yes ☐ No

51. If you answered yes to the previous question, what age were you when you got your first part-time job?
☐ 12 years or under
☐ 13 - 15 years
☐ 16 - 18 years

CONNECTED, RESPECTED, CONTRIBUTING

52. I feel respected by my parent(s)/ guardian(s) and that my opinion is taken seriously
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

53. I feel respected by my siblings and that my opinion is taken seriously
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes
    ☐ Doesn't apply to me

54. I respect my parent(s)/guardian(s)
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

55. I respect my sibling(s)
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes
    ☐ Doesn't apply to me

56. I feel respected by my fellow students
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes
    ☐ I am not in education or training

57. I feel respected by my teachers
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes
    ☐ I am not in education or training

58. I respect my fellow students
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes
    ☐ I am not in education or training

59. I respect my teachers
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes
    ☐ I am not in education or training

60. There is a student council in my school/training centre
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No
    ☐ I am not in education or training

61. The student council represents the needs of students well
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes
    ☐ Doesn't apply to me

62. Teachers respect the student council and take it seriously
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes
    ☐ Doesn't apply to me

63. I feel connected to the community I live in
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

64. I feel respected by adults in my community
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

65. I feel listened to by adults in my community
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

66. I show respect to adults in my community
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

67. I get opportunities to volunteer in my community
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

68. I would like more opportunities to volunteer in my community
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

SERVICES

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Your feedback is really valued.

69. I have been, or am, in contact with a youth mental health service
☐ Yes   ☐ No

70. If yes, that service has supported me well
☐ Yes   ☐ No

71. I have been or am involved with Tusla (Child and Family Agency)
☐ Yes   ☐ No

72. If yes, Tusla services have supported me well
☐ Yes   ☐ No

73. I have been, or am, involved with the Juvenile Liaison Officer or the Garda Youth Diversion Project
☐ Yes   ☐ No

74. If yes, these services have supported me well
☐ Yes   ☐ No

75. Public transport allows me to get where I need to go in County Limerick
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Sometimes

76. I would like help to stop, reduce or avoid smoking/vaping
☐ Yes   ☐ No

77. I would like help to stop, reduce or avoid drinking alcohol
☐ Yes   ☐ No

78. I would like help to stop, reduce or avoid taking other drugs
☐ Yes   ☐ No

Appendix 4: Parental Consent Form

Date:

TO THE PARENT/GUARDIAN OF _____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are undertaking a research project on behalf of Limerick Youth Service into the needs, interests and concerns of rural young people in Co. Limerick. As part of that research process we will be conducting discussions with groups of 2nd and 5th Years in a number of second level schools across the County.

The Principal of (name of school) has agreed to let us to hold some of these discussions in the school and your child has volunteered to take part in one of the discussions.

We will be exploring one of the following themes with the young people – they are all part of the State's policy on children and young people:

· Life satisfaction and youth mental health

· Engagement and attainment in learning (formal and informal)

· Safety

· Poverty and social exclusion

· Young people's rights and responsibilities under law

· Physical health and positive health choices

· Social and Emotional Wellbeing

· Pathways to economic participation and independent living

· Civic, social and environmental engagement

Both Sue and Neil will co-facilitate the discussions. We are both experienced researchers and have considerable expertise in working with young people. We can confirm that we have been Garda Vetted by Limerick Youth Service.

We plan to explore these topics in a creative way using drama. This will allow students – including your child - to express their views in a creative manner while also allowing them to have fun in the process. We commit to ensuring that your child will be fully informed on what they are being asked to take part in and why. S/He will also be invited to participate in the process in a voluntary capacity; no student will be forced to take part in any activity. All opinions expressed through the research will be treated with anonymity and confidentiality. The final reports emerging from this research will in no way identify any school or student. Similarly, we will demonstrate the highest level of sensitivity in all dealings with the young people.

If you have any further queries on the process, please don't hesitate to contact either of us: Sue (086 855 6611), Neil (085 724 8053). Otherwise, if you are happy for your child to take part in the research, we would ask that you would sign the consent form overleaf and return it to _____ in the school by _____ (date).

With thanks,

Sue Targett
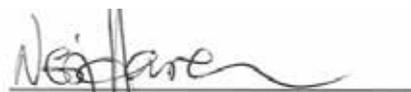
Neil Haran

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I, _____,

parent/guardian of _____,

consent for _____ to take part in the research project being undertaken to research the needs of rural young people in County Limerick on behalf of Limerick Youth Service.

I understand why _____ is being asked to take part in the research. I have enough information on what will happen during the research discussion and on the type of issues that will be covered.

I know that, should I have any queries or concerns about the meeting, I can make contact with the school principal and/or either of the researchers.

Signed: _____ (parent/guardian)

Date: _____

BASELINE STUDY & NEEDS ANALYSIS

OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 10-18

IN RURAL COUNTY LIMERICK