

# LIMERICK

# YOUTH SERVICE

# STRATEGIC PLAN

*limerick youth service*



2021  
2021  
YOUTH  
WORK  
CHANGES  
LIVES



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# SUMMARY

**This strategic plan outlines how Limerick Youth Service (LYS) aims to improve outcomes for young people aged 10-25 in Limerick City & County over the period 2018 to 2021.**

**This plan has emerged from an internal review, extensive consultations with Young People, Volunteers, Staff and Stakeholders and an analysis of relevant local and national plans and policy documents.**

**Limerick Youth Service's work is guided by 5 key themes, with a carefully considered aim and objectives for each theme.**

**Detailed operational plans are prepared for specific areas and aspects of our work, in the context of this strategic framework.**

**Over the course of the plan, aims and objectives will be monitored and reviewed to ensure their realisation.**

## **Theme 1 Inclusive & Integrated Youth Service**

### *Aim*

To further develop and promote safe, integrated and inclusive youth services for young people in Limerick City & County.

## **Theme 2 Youth Participation**

### *Aim*

To ensure that young people are actively involved and have real influence and voice in decision-making on matters affecting their lives, both directly and indirectly.

## **Theme 3 Supporting Volunteers**

### *Aim*

To attract, support and sustain active volunteers so they may positively contribute to improving the lives of young people, and to strengthen communities and civil society.

## **Theme 4 Young People achieving their potential**

### *Aim*

To empower and facilitate young people to develop personally, economically and socially to meet their needs and realise their full potential.

## **Theme 5 Enabling our Strategy**

### *Aim*

To build a strong organisation that is open to learning, responsive to change and committed to its ongoing development.

# ABOUT LIMERICK YOUTH SERVICE

Limerick Youth Service was founded in 1973 and is a provider of youth work, education, training and employability programmes and youth friendly spaces to young people aged 10 to 25 in Limerick City & County. We are a registered charity and a member of Youth Work Ireland.

Limerick Youth Service is registered as a Scheme of Incorporation by the Commissioners of Charitable Donations & Bequests in Ireland, under Section 2 of the Charities Act 1973. Limerick Youth Service is governed by a Voluntary Board which is responsible for the overall governance of the Organisation.

## OUR MISSION & VALUES

### Our Mission

‘Connecting with young people and supporting them to reach their full potential’

### Our Values

#### Young People at the Centre of all that we do

We achieve this by

- Having Young People at the heart of the design, delivery and review of our services
- Providing safe, youth friendly environments
- Delivering flexible and responsive supports to achieve the best possible outcomes
- Developing supportive relationships that foster meaningful outcomes
- Making a positive difference in the lives of young people.

#### Value Young People, Volunteers & Staff

We achieve this by

- Respecting all young people and the communities in which they live
- Promoting collaborative work practices between young people, communities, funders, staff and volunteers
- Recognising staff in a supportive environment.

#### Learning, Creativity & Innovation

We achieve this by

- Valuing learning, creativity and innovation
- Embracing connections and new ways of working
- Sharing ideas openly and learning from our experiences
- Adopting best practice, gathering data, respecting evidence and critically reflecting on our work.

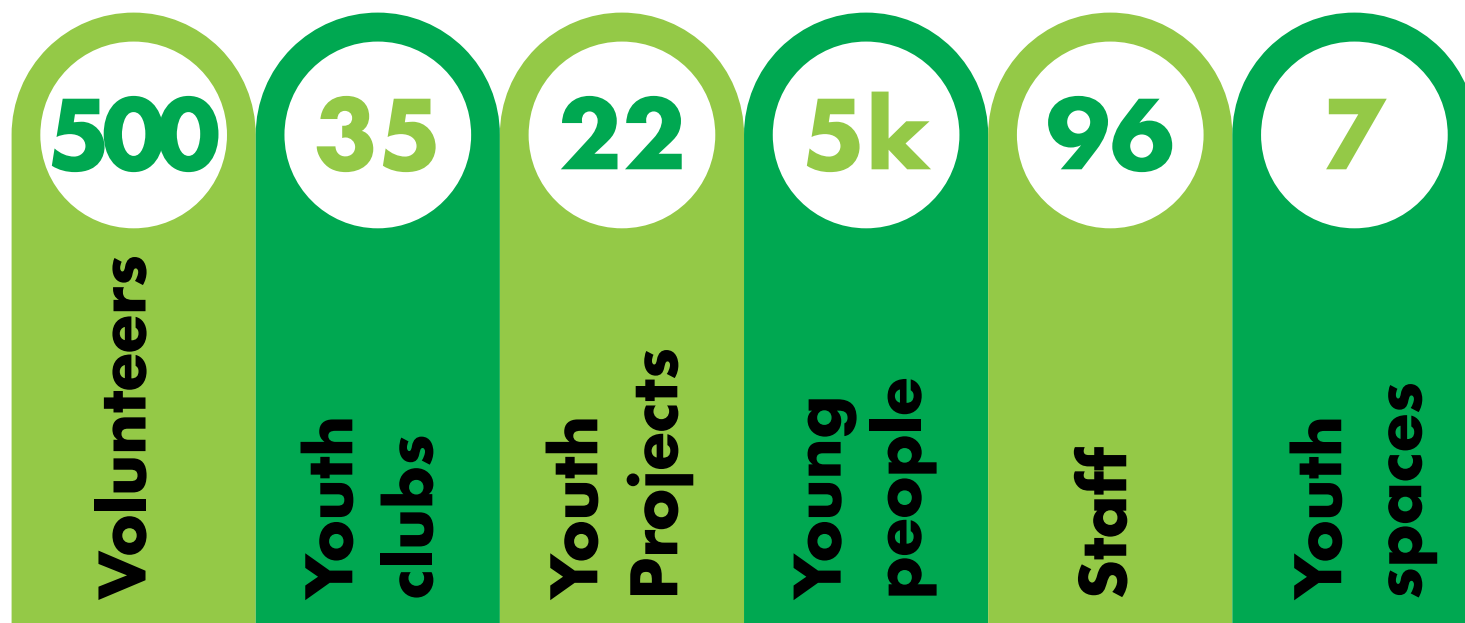
#### Equality, Inclusion & Diversity

We achieve this by

- Valuing accessible, inclusive and integrated services
- Providing an inclusive learning environment in our educational and youth work activities
- Developing & promoting policies, programmes and practices which support diversity, equality and inclusiveness.

# OUR WORK

Limerick youth service 



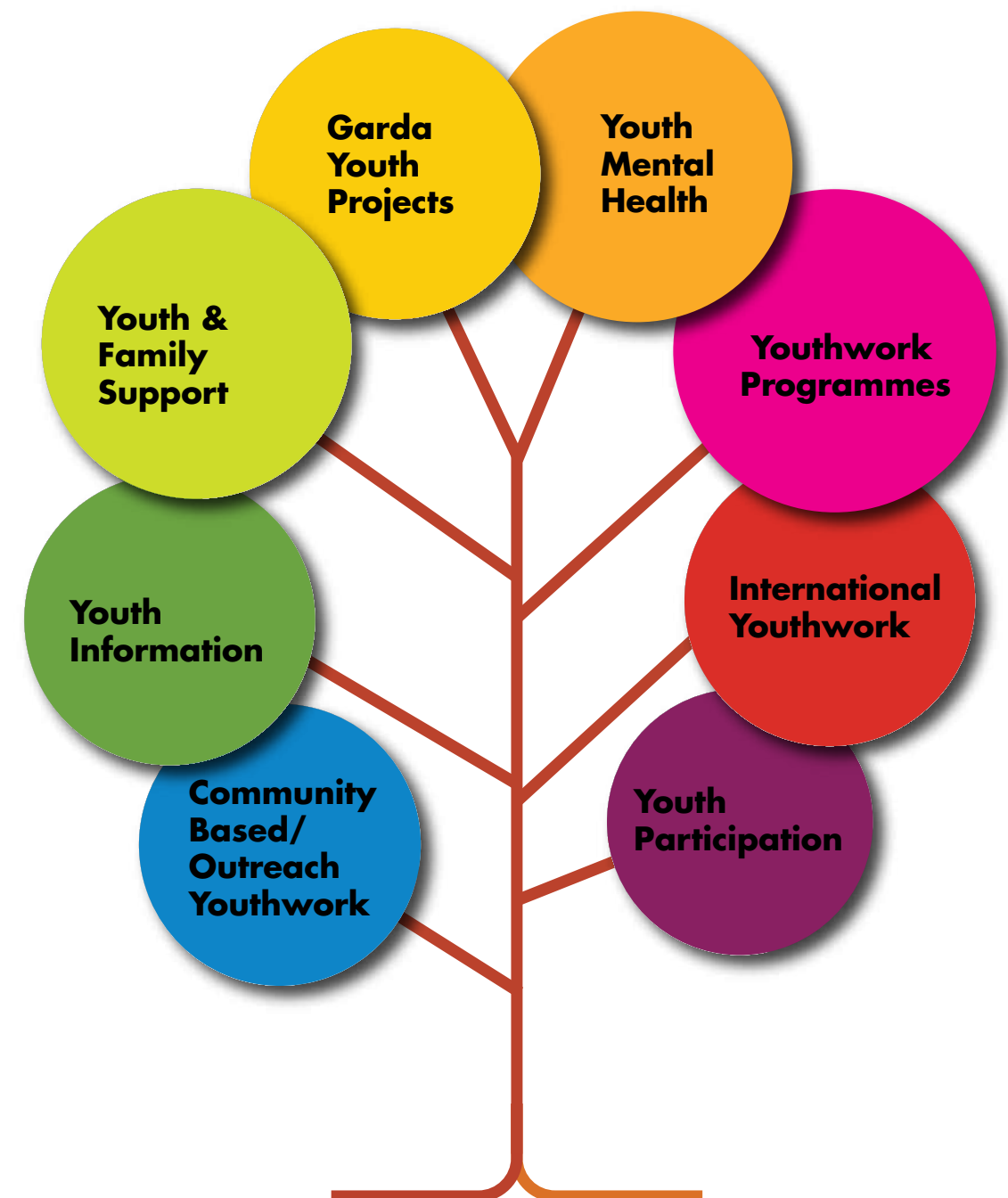
Our mission is Connecting with young people and supporting them to reach their full potential. We do this by facilitating, delivering and providing:

1. Youth work supports, services and programmes
2. Education, Training & Employability initiatives
3. Safe and accessible Youth Spaces.

## YOUTHWORK

LYS youth work programmes, services and activities are designed to improve confidence, communication, planning and problem-solving skills among young people. Our innovative programmes and activities further prioritise empathy and resilience and support the development of healthy relationships. LYS youth work supports are delivered in a developmental and holistic manner with a focus on fun and voluntary participation.

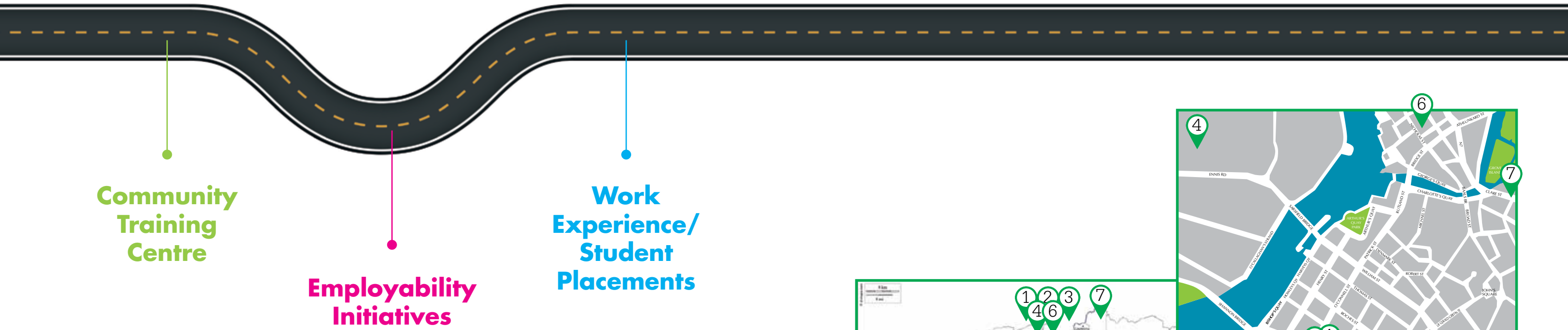
LYS delivers Youth work in Limerick City and County through:





# EDUCATION, TRAINING & EMPLOYABILITY

# YOUTH SPACES



LYS provides education, training and employability programmes and courses to young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) through our Community Training Centre, Advocacy Service, Employability Initiatives, Work Experience and Student Placements.

LYS Community Training Centre delivers a range of practical and academic programmes including catering and professional bakery, digital skills, retail skills, early childhood care and support, ESOL and Leaving Cert Applied.

Programmes are delivered in a supportive and encouraging environment by highly qualified and committed staff; equipping young people with the knowledge, attitudes and skills to progress to further education and/or employment.

LYS facilitates innovative employability programmes such as our Bike Project and Community Mapping, using an informal education approach with the intention of improving young people’s chances of engaging with the world of work and improving attitudes, motivation and behaviour.

Young People are supported in developing interpersonal skills, self-esteem, confidence, finding pathways to work and gaining practical skills and experience through the provision of work experience and work placement opportunities.



LYS services and supports are delivered within dedicated, safe, accessible and youth friendly spaces across Limerick City & County including:

- 1 Limerick Youth Service Headquarters, Lwr Glentworth St. Limerick
- 2 Community Training Centre, Lwr Glentworth St, Limerick
- 3 The Factory, Southside Youth Space, Galvone Business Park, Limerick
- 4 Northside Youth Space, Ballynanty, Limerick
- 5 Rathkeale Youth Space, Abbey Court, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick
- 6 King’s Island Youth Space, Nicholas St, Limerick
- 7 East Limerick Youth Project, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick.

Working in partnership with local communities, LYS also facilitates youth clubs and programmes in community venues and facilities across Limerick City and County including provision in more isolated rural communities.

## HOW WE DO IT?

LYS activities are underpinned by national and international thinking and practice within the field of Youth Work.

Guiding principles and methodologies include:

1

Young people are supported to engage with us as a “whole Young Person”. We provide an integrated service including: Youth work, education, training & employment and youthspace facilities.

2

In addition to a broad range of open access services and supports, LYS provide specialised services to vulnerable young people in a non-stigmatising and inclusive way.

3

LYS prioritises partnership and collaboration with relevant stakeholders in ensuring best outcomes for the young person.

4

Services are young people centred; recognising the rights of young people and holding central their active and voluntary participation.

(NOSF Resource Manual, pg. 2, 2015)

5

LYS recognises the need for youth work to address both individual and environmental factors in attaining youth outcomes.

(Socio-Ecological Model- Bronfenbrenner, 1977)

**The principles above are reflected in the youth work methods adopted including: one to one interventions; group work; structured programmes; detached youthwork; youth cafes and clubs; drop-in and one-off events.**

“ a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is: complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training; and provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations ”

Youth Work Act 2001



## Five National Outcomes Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures:

The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People (2014-2020)

# OUR ENVIRONMENT

LYS works with a wide range of national and local stakeholders within a broad policy and legislative framework as set out below:

## NATIONAL

### Youth Work Act 2001

Sets out a definition for Youth work

### Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People (2014-2020)

Priorities five key outcome areas for all children and young people under the age of 25 years:

1. Active and healthy, physical and mental well-being
2. Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development
3. Safe and protected from harm
4. Economic security and opportunity
5. Connected, respected and contributing to their world

### National Youth Strategy 2015-2020

Focuses on enhancing the contribution of current and emerging policies, programmes and services to improving national outcomes for young people aged 10-24 years

### Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes 2014

Provides an in depth scrutiny of three major funding programmes, administered by the DCYA, and targeting disadvantaged young people

### Children First Act 2015

Places elements of the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011) on a statutory footing

### National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision- Making 2015 - 2020

Sets out to ensure that children and young people will have a voice in their individual and collective everyday lives across the five national outcome areas of Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures

### The Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-19 (FET)

Aims to deliver a higher quality learning experience, leading to better outcomes for all those who engage in FET

### Connecting for Life Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020

A whole-of-society strategy to co-ordinate and focus our national effort to reduce the loss of life by suicide and to improve access, consistency and integration of services

### Healthy Ireland

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

### The EU Strategy for Youth The Europe 2020 Strategy

Focuses on the policy areas of education and training, employment and entrepreneurship; social inclusion; health and well-being; participation; volunteering; youth and the world, and creativity and culture

## LOCAL

### Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 (LCEP)

Sets out objectives and actions to guide the development of Limerick city and county up to 2021. Community based objectives include to promote quality of life for local communities across Limerick City and County, promote social equality, embrace diversity and improve social integration and community cohesion.



# OUR COMMUNITY

On a local level, a socio-economic and demographic profile of Limerick City and County (Central statistics Office (CSO), 2016; Trutz Haase Deprivation Index, 2017) reveals the following key findings:

## Population Distribution & Movements

The population of Limerick City and County is 195,175, a rise of 2.1% from 2011 (CSO, 2016). There exists a roughly equal number of males (97,340) and females (97,599).

- Considerable population increase in inner-city centre Electoral Districts (EDs) including Shannon A & B, John C (Athlunkard St./George's Quay), Dock A (Upper Henry St./Steamboat Quay) and Market (Upper Mulgrave St./Cathedral Place). Considerable increases are also apparent in outer suburban communities including Ballycummin, Ballysimon, Rebogue and Limerick South Rural and in county EDs including Caherconlish, Castleconnell, Rhebogue, Newcastlewest and Murroe
- Communities falling under the remit of the regeneration programme have experienced significant falls in population since 2011 including Galvone B (Southill), John's A (St. Mary's Park) and Ballinacurra Weston. Rathkeale, County Limerick has also experienced a population decline
- Furthermore, a focus on increasing disadvantage for regeneration communities experiencing population decline is needed.

## Age Profile & Age Dependency Rates

38,275 young people aged between 10 and 24 are living in Limerick City and County, a decline of over 1000 since the 2011 census (CSO, 2016).

- Whilst there has been a decline in populations of young people aged between 10 and 24 across the city and county, the population of secondary school pupils in Limerick City has increased by 3%
- Areas with large young populations - High Young Dependency- are apparent in suburban EDs and regeneration communities including Rhebogue, Castletroy, Raheen, Dooradoyle, Galvone B, Limerick South Rural, Abbey B, Prospect B, Ballycummin, John's A, Kileely A and Ballynanty
- In rural areas, the old age dependency ratio is higher than national average.

## Housing

- Rising homeless figures, limited & poor quality housing and high levels of private rental in Limerick City are contributing towards a generally insecure housing situation

## Households & Families

In 2016, the lone parent rate for Limerick City was particularly high at 35.5%; higher than cities including Dublin and Cork both at 34%, Waterford at 32% and Galway City at 28%.

- City rates are significantly higher than Limerick County at 15.2% and the state average of 19.9%
- One parent families are prevalent in EDs within and close to regeneration districts including St. Mary's Park, Glentworth C and Galvone B
- One-parent family households are particularly vulnerable to experiencing deprivation and disadvantage.

## Ethnicity, Nationality

The 2016 census shows that 1,659 Irish Travellers resided in Limerick an increase of 9.6% since 2011 of which 501 live in the city and suburbs.

- Nationally, the Traveller population is increasing and Limerick has the 4th highest traveller population
- Rathkeale (Rathkeale Urban ED) has an exceptionally high percentage of Traveller population, where 326 individuals or 24% of the population identify as White Irish Traveller
- 438 Travellers in Limerick City and County are between the ages of 10 & 24.

Shannon A, Dock A, the city centre and neighbouring EDs of Shannon B, Custom House, Market, and Dock B have large immigrant communities

- Further research is required to identify the socio-economic and demographic profile of immigrant communities residing within Limerick city centre EDs.

## Unemployment

The number of people unemployed in Limerick City and County, having lost or given up a previous job or looking for their first regular job, stood at approximately 14.4% in 2016, down from 21% in 2011. This compares to a national rate of 12.9%, down from 19% in 2011.

- 17 of the 38 EDs in Limerick City are identified as unemployment blackspots including John's A Galvone B, Ballynanty, Abbey C and Prospect B
- Rathkeale, Co. Limerick is also identified as an unemployment blackspot
- Though falling, levels of youth unemployment in Limerick remain above national averages.

## Education

Though the percentage of the population with primary education only in Limerick City fell from 19.7% in 2011 to 17.5% in 2016, it remains higher than state and county averages.

- Though junior and leaving certificate retention rates are increasing, Limerick City rates remain lower than county and state level
- Higher education attainment, though increasing, also remains lower than county and state averages
- Poor educational attainment is apparent in regeneration and surrounding EDs.

## Affluence & Deprivation

- The Relative Index Score for Limerick City is -6.3, considerably lower than the national average score of .6, which is closer to the county score of .8
- New Small Areas (SAs) of relative disadvantage are apparent across Limerick County including Rathkeale, Askeaton, Abbeyfeale, Patrickswell, parts of Newcastlewest (NCW), parts of Castleconnell, Ballysimon, Cappamore and Bruff
- Social inequality more obvious in the city – this inequality has remained unchanged with regeneration EDS amongst the most disadvantaged in the country.

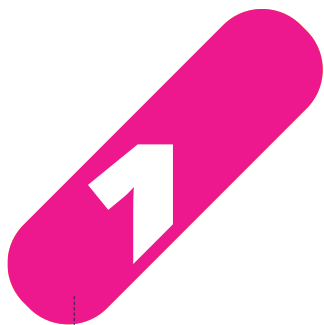
# OUR JOURNEY TO A NEW PLAN

## STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

We developed this strategic plan following a review of our work and an extensive consultation with young people, volunteers, staff members, funders, partners and collaborators.

- **23** Focus Groups were completed with over **200** young people across the Limerick City & County
- Survey undertaken with LYS Volunteers
- Board & Staff planning workshops
- **2** World Café style consultation with funders/partners
- Stakeholder Survey..

The following themes emerged from these reviews and consultations and will inform the work of LYS:



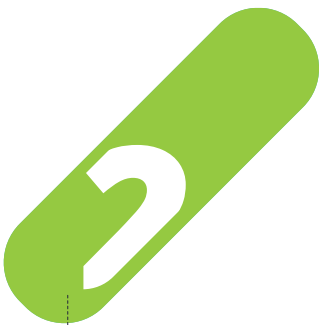
### Youth Work

Support and connect young people in the following key areas: social media; relationships; physical and mental health; leisure & recreation; education and training

Maintain an accessible service balancing both universal, targeted, rural and urban provision

Develop and sustain innovative and relevant opportunities for young people in-line with national and local contexts and trends.

Provide employment and training opportunities, which enable young people to engage in an increasingly competitive work-place.



### Planning & Evaluation

Prioritise best outcomes for young people in tandem with empowering processes and relationships

Practice a holistic and integrated approach built on an informed understanding of all facets of a young person's life

Ensure and enable the voice and meaningful participation of young people

Document, disseminate and learn from experiences with an emphasis on positive and celebratory achievements.



### Staff & Volunteers

Value staff voice, initiative, ownership, autonomy and participation

Strengthen the integration of and support for volunteers within a professionalised youth service.



### Collaboration

Develop positive learning relationships with appropriate stakeholders at governmental, community and individual levels.

# LIMERICK YOUTH SERVICE STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

In the preparation of this Strategic Plan, we reflected on the current environment both internally and externally and this analysis was central in informing our Strategic Plan.

**S**

Organisation ethos and mission

Well established and respected organization with a good reputation

Knowledge, experience and diverse skills of staff

Good working relationships, networks and collaborative approaches in place with young people, stakeholders and partners

Physical infrastructure and facilities across a variety of geographical locations

Commitment of Volunteers

**C**

The need for continued access to public funding

Negative perception and image of particular services or service users

Need to further develop research, monitoring and evaluation capacity

Strengthening our brand and communicating our message

Delivering a continuum of services to meet a diverse level of need

Staff burnout or turnover

**O**

Energy, innovation and creativity of Young People

New and emerging training, development and employment opportunities for young people.

International Youthwork

Philanthropic, corporate and commissioning funding options

Changing demographic profile and increasing diversity

**T**

Narrowing and restrictive focus of funding streams and shift to tendering and commissioning of services.

Changes at a policy, regulatory or operational levels

Complexity and extent of issues being presented by young people in areas such as mental health, social media, drug use etc.

Changing nature of, and decreasing levels of volunteering

# OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

2018-2021

## Theme 1 Inclusive & Integrated Youth Service

### Aim

To further develop and promote safe, integrated and inclusive youth services for young people in Limerick City & County.

## Theme 2 Youth Participation

### Aim

To ensure that young people are actively involved and have real influence and voice in decision-making on matters affecting their lives, both directly and indirectly.

## Theme 3 Supporting Volunteers

### Aim

To attract, support and sustain active volunteers so they may positively contribute to improving the lives of young people, and to strengthen communities and civil society.

## Theme 4 Young People achieving their potential

### Aim

To empower and facilitate young people to develop personally, economically and socially to meet their needs and realise their full potential.

## Theme 5 Enabling our Strategy

### Aim

To build a strong organisation that is open to learning, responsive to change and committed to its ongoing development.



## Theme 1 Inclusive & Integrated Youth Service

### Aim

To further develop and promote safe, integrated and inclusive youth services for young people in Limerick City & County.

- 1.1** Young people have access to safe, accessible and youth friendly facilities and services where they can socialise, develop and have fun.
- 1.2** Regardless of level of need, young people benefit from a range of high quality and responsive youth work activities, supports and services.
- 1.3** As part of an integrated service, marginalized, vulnerable and at risk Young People are prioritized and supported to access a holistic range of service and supports.
- 1.4** Young people benefit from programmes and services that promote personal development, communication, positive relationships and physical and mental health and well being.
- 1.5** Parents / guardians are supported to enable the best possible outcomes for their children.

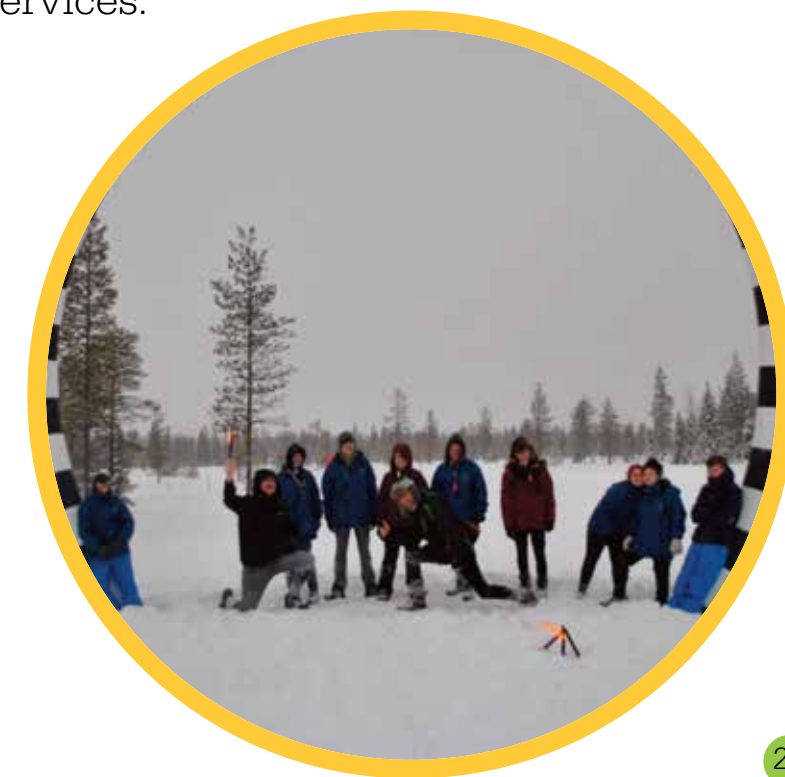


## Theme 2 Youth Participation

### Aim

To ensure that young people are actively involved and have real influence and voice in decision-making on matters affecting their lives, both directly and indirectly.

- 2.1** Young people are encouraged and supported to be active citizens and engage in political, social and civic life.
- 2.2** Young People have access to appropriate and relevant information and are supported to develop the skills, knowledge and opportunities they need to make informed choices about their lives.
- 2.3** Young people are involved in the process of developing, planning, implementing and evaluating programmes, activities, projects and services.





### Theme 3 Supporting Volunteers

#### Aim

To attract, support and sustain active volunteers so they may positively contribute to improving the lives of young people, and to strengthen communities and civil society.

- 3.1** Volunteers are supported, recognised and facilitated to provide a high quality safe experience to young people.
- 3.2** A greater number of parents and volunteers and supported and sustained to work with young people in their local communities.
- 3.3** Young People themselves have meaningful opportunities for volunteering.
- 3.4** Volunteers receive training which is relevant and appropriate to meeting the needs of young people with whom they work.



### Theme 4 Young People achieving their potential

#### Aim

To empower and facilitate young people to develop personally, economically and socially to meet their needs and realise their full potential.

- 4.1** Young people are engaged in learning and have access to relevant formal and informal education and training opportunities and alternative routes to qualifications.
- 4.2** Young people are supported to progress to formalised skills training programmes/courses.
- 4.3** Young people are supported to develop their skills, employability and increase their self-sufficiency through the development of key life skills.
- 4.4** Educational and developmental opportunities are co-created with and for young people.



## Theme 5 Enabling our Strategy

### Aim

To build a strong organisation that is open to learning, responsive to change and committed to its ongoing development.

- 5.1** LYS is continuing to strengthen governance and organisational management to ensure effective delivery of this Plan.
- 5.2** LYS is continuing to build knowledge, skills & capacity so as to be proactive in meeting the needs of young people.
- 5.3** LYS is developing a strong evidence and research base for our work and establishing robust data collection and evaluation mechanisms.
- 5.4** LYS is engaging in collaborative partnerships and activities in order to maximise outcomes for young people.
- 5.5** LYS is communicating and promoting our work and profiling our achievements.



# OUR PARTNERS



Schools



Donors

Community  
Partners &  
NGO



LYS collaborates and partners with a wide variety of local, regional and national organisations in order to deliver appropriate services and supports and maximise outcomes for young people.

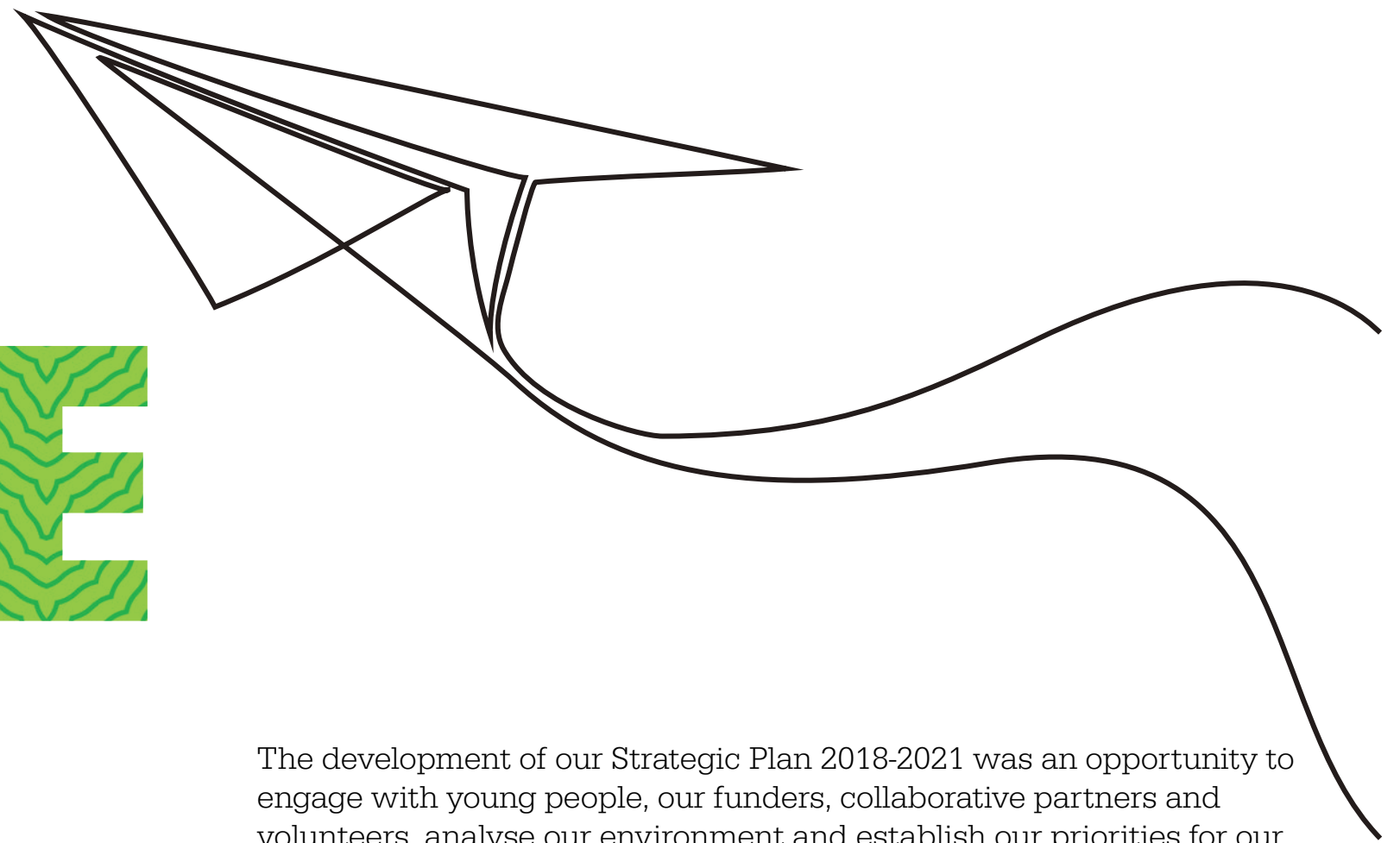


# OUR FUTURE

Over the last 45 years, Limerick Youth Service has held the needs of young people and their families at the centre of our activities and services. This is our greatest strength. The values which underpin our work combined with our commitment to delivering high quality services, support us in achieving our mission.

The environment and policy context for youth work has changed significantly in the last number of years. Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, the National Youth Strategy 2015 and the National Strategy on Youth Participation provide a robust and well defined framework for the delivery of youth work services. An emphasis on value for money, evidence based practice and outcomes based contracting provide us with an opportunity to showcase the range and impact of our work while at the same time presenting the challenge of an insecure funding model.

Significant issues remain for young people, youth unemployment remains stubbornly high, demand for services in the area of youth mental health are increasing and, drugs and alcohol continue to be significant issues in the lives of young people. In addition, Limerick City and County is changing, data from the 2015 census indicates a changing demographic profile with significant increases in population in newer suburban and city centre areas and a significant decline in more traditional communities. Our capacity to respond to emerging needs and a changing environment is evidenced by the development of new and innovative programmes in the area of Youth Mental Health, Education and Employability programmes.



The development of our Strategic Plan 2018-2021 was an opportunity to engage with young people, our funders, collaborative partners and volunteers, analyse our environment and establish our priorities for our work over the next three years. It also allowed us to revisit and reaffirm our commitment to our core mission and values. This Strategic Plan places young people at its centre and supports us to move to the next level of delivering quality services and programmes which are needs based and achieve the best possible outcomes.

We are confident this plan provides a roadmap for

‘Connecting with  
young people and  
supporting  
them to reach their  
full potential’

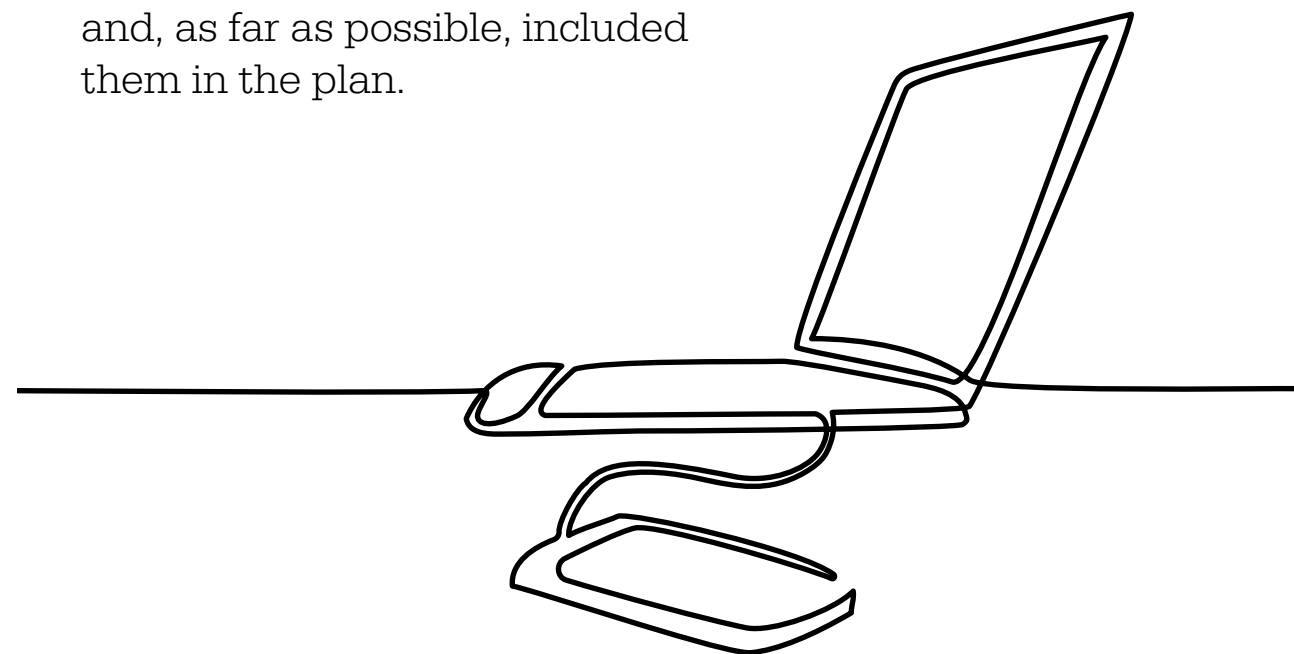




## A WORD OF THANKS

**We thank** everyone who contributed to the development of this strategic plan.

**We listened** to your views and, as far as possible, included them in the plan.





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# LIMERICK YOUTH SERVICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2021

