

Annual Report 2019



#LaoisActive

“Supporting sport & physical activity for all the people of County Laois”

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Foreword

Chairperson's Address

On behalf of Laois Sports Partnership, we are delighted to welcome this annual report, which provides an overview of the work of the Partnership in 2019.



We are delighted to report that interagency and stakeholder collaboration is a major factor in the successful delivery of many participation opportunities for all. This report gives a snapshot of these interventions and of trends in modern recreational sport / physical activity.

With additional support of Dormant Accounts, Department of Justice Integration and Disability Funding as well as Healthy Ireland Funding, Laois Sports Partnership has been able to increase the provision of services to harder to reach communities; working to remove barriers to participation and continuing to showcase the positive impact that sport can have on people's lives. The Partnership has made significant advances and has particularly increased the number of locally delivered programmes through our SVT Community Sports Hub and Rathdowney Erill Activity Hub. **In 2019 Laois Sports Partnership engaged 15,744 people in 136 programmes and delivered 35 training courses to 655 people, 7 of these courses relating to our Sports Inclusion Disability Programme with 217 people receiving training in Disability In.**

Target groups focused on during 2019 included children and young people, disadvantaged communities, men 16-40, integration initiatives, lifestyle intervention programmes and programmes for people with a disability, unemployed and teenage girls/ women.

We will continue to serve the people of Laois with the intention of fulfilling our mission to "Lead, co-ordinate, support, inform and deliver a range of sports and physical activity opportunities for our community". Sport and physical activity play a big part in the lives of people in County Laois and the growth of participation is evident through the numbers who are now participating in all activities. We now in Laois Sports Partnership, want all persons even those who do not take part in sports, easy access to both established and new sports as well as recreation and physical activity. It is also important that we continue to invest and develop our ranges of activities as there are ever increasing lifestyle health issues in Ireland. We work together with our local communities to create an environment that improves activity, health and wellbeing. With the population growth of the county it is key that Laois Sports Partnership continues to grow its strategic capacity and is supported as the lead agency for sports participation in County Laois.

Finally I would like to thank Sport Ireland, our partner agencies, volunteers, clubs and community voluntary organisations for their ongoing support and commitment to Laois Sports Partnership. I am confident that while the Strategic plan 2017-2021 provides significant challenges, it will enable the Laois Sports Partnership to continue on in a positive and productive manner to ensure this implementation of the visions and goals of LSP.

Is mise le meas
Eibhlín Smith

Key Findings

Background, Resources and Funding

- €619,579 was invested in LSP in 2019. This figure includes benefit-in-kind funding of €140,440 from partners
- Funding from Sport Ireland accounts for 40% of the total LSP funding in 2019, 17% from Dormant Accounts with the remaining 43% coming from other sources. These figures include benefit-in-kind funding.
- 14 people served on the LSP board in 2019.

In 2019, 3 people worked full-time and 2 part-time on behalf of LSP. All 5 staff were 100% directly funded by Sport Ireland and Sport Ireland Dormant Accounts. LSP also provided work placement to students from 3rd level colleges for work experience and opportunities to develop skills.

Achievements of Laois Sports Partnership in 2019

Development of Sports Infrastructure in Laois

- In 2019, LSP worked with 20 sports clubs / groups on a one to one basis and Laois County Council providing further supports to clubs through one to one and group sessions on making funding applications.
- 30 groups have been supported in the delivery of their activities.
- 1 club has been supported with regard to developing their organisational or management structures.
- LSP planned and delivered 35 training and education courses, workshops and seminars. 655 people attended these courses.

Delivering Sport Ireland Programmes

Active Leadership

- 30 sports leaders have been trained in 2 x Active Leadership Courses in 2019.

Code of Ethics – Safeguarding 1, 2 & 3

- 210 participants completed 14 Code of Ethics Basic Awareness – Safeguarding 1 courses.
- 11 participants completed 2 Club Children’s Officer – Safeguarding 2 courses.
- 6 participants completed Designated Liaison Person – Safeguarding 3 courses.

Local Programme Delivery

- 9,895 people participated in 79 locally delivered participation programmes of these participants 463 women participated in 16 Women in Sport programmes.
- Sports Disability Inclusion Programme – 1,711 participants in 36 programmes.
- 173 volunteers supported the delivery of these programmes.
- Over 100 partners involved in delivering initiatives between clubs, community organisations, hubs and stakeholders.
- SVT Activity & Wellness Hub saw 20 programmes with 2,915 participants.

Building and Sustaining Partnerships

- In 2019 LSP was involved in different policy actions involving different organisations

Information Provision

- Over 5,000 individuals provided with general or specific sport-related information through LSP online, social media or text promotion.

Summary of LAOIS LSP Impact in 2019



LAOIS SPORTS PARTNERSHIP
COMHAR SPÓIRT NA LAISE
— SPORT IRELAND —

€619,579
in total funding incl.
€140,440
in Kind funding

655
participants on
35
Training
Courses

Sports Inclusion
Disability Prog.
1,711 participants
in 36 programmes

227 people from
Local Clubs received
Safeguarding
Training
(Child Protection)



173 Volunteers
assisted with our
Sports Inclusion
Disability
Programme

SVT Activity &
Wellness Hub
2,915 participants
in 20 initiatives

1,223
took part in
#BeActive Night -
Riverdance

9,895
participants in
79 Locally Delivered
Programmes,
incl. 16 Women in Sport
with 463 Participants



LSP Management

Background to LSP

This report reflects the work of the Partnership for 2019. Information provided through the reporting system is collated into a database tracking the depth and breadth of LSP initiatives. LSP activities from this database are highlighted as examples of good practice and are presented as case studies later in this report.

Project Funding Sources

Funding from Sport Ireland (Core, Disability and Women in Sport) accounted for 40% of the total LSP funding in 2019. Additional funding was also secured for LSP by Sport Ireland for specific projects under the Dormant Accounts Scheme to the value of 17% of overall funding. The remaining 43% was raised from local sources, including benefit in kind funding.

Monetary Funding (Locally & Nationally Leveraged) €122,559 20%

Benefit In Kind (Locally Sourced) €140,440 : 23%

Sport Ireland Core/Programme €241,410: 39%

Sport Ireland Women in Sport Grant €8,400: 1 %

Sport Ireland Dormant Accounts Funding €106,770: 17%

After core funding from Sport Ireland, Healthy Ireland Funding through LCDC, HSE and Laois County Council were the next most significant source of monetary funding with benefit in kind support mainly coming from partner agencies and clubs/organisations.

Sport Ireland funding to LSP increased from €220,342,184 in 2018 to €249,810 in 2019.

LSP continues to be successful in securing funding from local sources. €122,559 of total funding has been contributed by local and national sources. Monetary funding sourced locally accounts for 20% of overall LSP support and benefit in kind support accounts for 23% of overall funding. Excluding Dormant Account Funding, Laois LSP is once again pleased to note that over 50% of its costs are being sourced locally. This follows a recommendation from the 2005 Fitzpatrick & Associates Review of the LSP programme.

LSP Management and Staff

Board of Management Participation and Representation

A total of 14 people served on the LSP board in 2019. 50% of LSP board members are female, which is positive in terms of diversity on boards.

Board members bring specific skillsets to their work within LSP. This expertise is in the areas of finance and management, as well as public relations, governance and human resources. All of this helps to contribute to the effective running of LSP.

LSP Staff

LSP core staff members are funded by Sport Ireland while other part time personnel are funded through other sources. Along with the Co-ordinator and Administrator LSP employs a Sports Development Officer and a Sports Inclusion Disability Officer (SIDO), which is supported in part by Sport Ireland. We also employ a part-time Co-ordinator for the SVT Activity & Wellness Hub supported through Sport Ireland Dormant Accounts. In 2019, LSP also provided placements to students from 3rd level colleges for work experience and opportunities to develop skills. LSP also contracted a further 8 tutors to deliver programmes, courses and initiatives within the Partnerships structure.

Case Study: SVT Paddle Training

What is the purpose of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

The aim of this training is to build on the skills gained from their level 2 skills training that will be provided and putting those skills to use in a practical setting so that the participants are gaining confidence and competence to undertake their own paddling journeys without needing an instructor or guide. Within this training participants will be given the opportunity to take part in trips led by our instructors. On these trips the instructors will encourage participants to independently learn and maintain a safe learning environment so that they are free to use their experiences from the training given to make decisions but knowing they have the support of the instructor.



While also going through the process participants will have the opportunity to be introduced to level 3 skills in order to have an understanding of the path for gaining more experience and going forward as an instructor. All of the above will be done training will be done in both canoes and kayaks. The participants will also have the opportunity to plan the trips for the end of the training.

What are the aims of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

Participation in paddle sports especially in the Vicarstown area.

Engage people with sufficient knowledge of the water.

Engaging participation in SVT Canoeing & Kayaking Club for the future.

Upskill interested participants and give them the ability and confidence on the water and on embarking journeys on the water.

We really want to give participants a more in-depth skills base when it comes to paddling and organising paddling trips along with allowing them to utilise their basic paddle skills and experience. Showing the participants the next levels of skills that will be required in order to become Instructors and prepare them for the next level if they wish to go on. Engaging local scout group to upskill for water activities.

What was involved in the running of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

Getting the right instructors to deliver and design a suitable programme.

Setting out the programme type with the instructors for participants to gain the above experiences and skills.

What were the outcomes of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

All participants gained the valuable experience needed from what was outlined in our aims.

Participants got the chance to become level 2 paddles in both Canoe & Kayaks while also receiving their RSR 1 water safety. Doing this allowed participants to have the confidence on the water and also preparing them for their river journeys. We have upskilled the scouts in order for them to proceed with their casual paddle with their groups and also have given them an in depth view of RSR 1. The other participants all gained the same experiences that they can bring onto the water in the SVT Canoe & Kayak Club.



What are the next steps for the Programme/Initiative/Event?

The next steps for this group is the preparation for trips and going on their 3 scheduled trips. While also keeping their skills, and joining the SVT Canoe & Kayaking club. Some are preparing for instructor level and moving onto that stage.

Quotes from participants, teachers, parents, partners etc.

Thoroughly informative and enjoyable course. Gained so much confidence on the water on perfecting skills base. Instructors were so helpful and no issue or question was ever too much and we learned so much from them. Super course thank you.

Brilliant programme. Covered so much in the weeks we were on the water. So much more than a basic course and to be able to have our skills on both Canoe & Kayak is fantastic. Really looking forward to joining the club and going further with my skills.

Thank you. Fabulous programme. Really informative and way beyond what I had initially thought it was going to be. Way more skills and practicalities on the water.

List of Programmes

Name of Programme	Type of Programme	Number of Participants
Sports Hall Athletics	Primary School Athletics	1634
Basketball Coaching	Primary School Basketball	1112
Basketball Tournament	Primary School	1104
Healthy Ireland	Lifestyle Intervention Programme & Cardiac Rehab Phase 4	74
Laois Connects	Seminars, Walks & Parkrun	332
Go for Life	Older Adult Programme	170
Basketball Blitz	Primary School Basketball	200
Traveller Men Programme	Gym	10
Portlaoise Street Leagues	Soccer Programme for males aged 16-40	100
Operation Transformation	Walking	958
Integration Programme	Multi Activity	124
HSE Programmes	Lifestyle Intervention	44
Women In Sport	Multi Activity	463
Urban Outdoor Adventure & Community Coaching	Outdoor Recreation & Coaching Course	180
Get Ireland Walking	Walking	194
Teenscene & After School Activity & Cycling Camps	Multi Activity	260
General & Local Programmes	Multi Activity	4,159
Sports Inclusion Disability Programme	39 x Multi Activity	1,711
SVT Activity & Wellness Hub	32 x Multi Activity	2,915

2019 in Pictures



2019 in Pictures



National Lottery Good Causes Awards



Case Study Waterways for Health

Walking on Water – Waterways to Health

Engagement with nature through outdoor activities can have a significant positive impact on an individual's health and wellbeing. Get Ireland Walking, Waterways Ireland and Local Sports Partnerships from Kildare, Carlow and Laois are launching a walking programme on canal and river routes across the three counties. The aim of this programme is to immerse participants into a natural environment enhancing the walking experience with water providing the therapeutic element. A network of walking trails along the canals provide accessible and fun



ways for families, groups, clubs and individuals to use regularly. This programme will facilitate targeted groups with guided support from County Walking Facilitators from Local Sports Partnerships. Waterways Ireland are driven to promote the activity of walking and collaborate where possible to support Get Ireland Walking in its campaign to get more people more active more often. We live on an island surrounded by green and blue spaces which provides a plethora of opportunities to engage with nature for improved health and wellbeing. This programme will consist of a series of walks for six weeks with three separate groups and service providers which include families, addiction and cardiac care services. We hope the experience for those who do participate is enjoyable and fun. Walking can be a catalyst for so much; the physical, mental and social benefits, all addressed. It helps break down barriers and lay foundations for growth, better health and wellbeing. The accessibility of walking and the amenities we are surrounded by can enhance our quality of life, and this is the objective of the programme and for all participants”.

Waterways Ireland has seen a huge increase in the number of recreational and tourist users on and along all our waterways in recent years. With the provision of our Blueway and Greenway trails, we have now created even more opportunities for people to try new recreational activities. This also offers greater health and well-being and social opportunities for locals.

Collaboration with Waterways Ireland, Get Ireland walking and the Local Sports Partnerships to deliver Waterways for Health was an ideal opportunity to encourage people to see inland waterways as a fitness and recreational opportunity for them.

Waterways for Health kicks off on March 8th, 2019 for 8 weeks. We are delighted to share with you the successes of the programme and to share our plans for further promotion of walking trails on Ireland's waterways.

What are the aims of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

To create physical activity sessions that focused on developing components of fitness including cardiovascular fitness, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, mobility, balance and fundamental movement skills through games.

Encourage and focused on team bonding and communication

To help participants understand the importance and mental wellbeing of engaging in physical activity on and around green and blue spaces.

Waterways for Health

Some staff members of Cuan Mhuire will now be trained as Walking Leaders and will continue to bring participants of the rehabilitation programme on walks in green and/or blue spaces to help mental and physical well-being. Local sports partnership next initiative as part of European week of sport will see a return of some of the participants that have completed their treatment as volunteers to assist with the role out of Barrow way walk event on Sunday 29th 2019. This is testament to the benefits this group received from 8-week programme.

Laois & Kildare Sports will continue to identify new areas of potential intervention with the Waterways for Health initiative.

Testimonials from programme participants:

“Walk was great today down, the canal was very peaceful, seen a few ducks, the smell of fresh cut grass down the bank was lovely, also the point where the river and the canal met was nice, brought me back to my childhood of when I used to go swimming in parts of the canals.”

“Felt good to get out of the unit, get some fresh air, walk the canal, just to be walking for that length of a walk, have no real worries, just to have a chat with the lads at the end, then to have tea and brown bread, to be able to play some football, brought me back to when I play football, good times, its pushing me to get back playing.”

“Started in Monasterevin walked by what looked to be little harbour, had a banging headache today so it was good to get out just to enjoy the walk to the canal.”

Stradbally lake to be able to sit in the sun, not to be uneasy and just enjoy what I was doing, soon as I casted in I actually caught a fish, a nice big one, even if I didn't I would of enjoyed it, I felt human not judged, that's what the great thing about all the walks and fishing you can just relax and be yourself. Majella and Debbie are great, very kind always up for the chat, even cooked the fish that was caught, and some sausages then played some ball and hurling. Then to top it all off, I got a lovely cup and an Easter egg. All in all, it was a great day.

“I really enjoyed today, it was something different and exciting. 13 addicts rowing a huge boat for the first time, we knocked it out of the park there was a lot of trust put in us it was good, had pictures taken also had tea and biscuits, everyone got on well it was very enjoyable, something I'd like to do again.”

“I find the walks good for getting my head in a good place. Walking on the beautiful scenery along the canals. Another good thing about going for walks every week, is the chance to walk with someone I otherwise wouldn't this allows me to have good conversation with them and get to know them. The walks are good for giving the group something to look forward to and puts everyone in good spirits. It also gives me time to reflect and enjoy the little pleasure of a stroll down the canal. It makes me appreciate the power that nature can have on my mental wellbeing.”

“Tonight, I am reflecting back on the walks we were on the last 6 weeks, I was told we cover 50km all together which surprised me because I wouldn't have thought that because they were all leisurely walks and probably the because I enjoyed them so much, I didn't think about how far I was travelling. I have thoroughly enjoyed each walk and enjoyed talking with Majella and Debbie and getting to know them and them getting to know me. They are both really nice people and I really appreciated that they took time out of their lives to show us the benefits we can get from a simple walk through nature, I have honestly learned a lot from them both and I am truly grateful for meeting them on our walks. Listening to the little pearls of wisdom that Majella brought each week was very interesting. Last week we were brought on a boat and we had a blast rowing to the beat of the drum, I learned that I should give anything a go because 9 times out of 10 I will enjoy the new activity that I would of never have done otherwise. So, I would like to say how thankful and grateful I am for being given the opportunity of walking the waterways along the Laois and Kildare because it was for mental health can benefit from walking and it really helped me to bond with the other residents over the 6 weeks and it has been a pleasure getting to know Majella and Debbie too.”



Letter of thanks from Cuan Mhuire Councillor;

On behalf of Cuan Mhuire Athy, I would like to thank Majella and Deborah for your time and effort over the past 8 weeks. Your enthusiasm and commitment have been greatly appreciated by our residents and staff. The compassion and empathy expressed by Majella and Deborah towards our residents has been outstanding and that has been something to behold.

For our residents to feel safe, not judged, included and allowed the freedom to express themselves in a fun and exciting way is testament to how Majella and Deborah treated them. Each resident has spoken about both of them in the highest regard.

As our program encourages spirituality and recreation and these two elements play a huge part in our program, our residents experienced first-hand the benefits of true spirituality while taking part in the initiative over the 8 weeks.

Although our residents use the gym 3 times per week to help with their physical fitness, taking part in the walks and chatting and observing nature has shown them the importance of getting outside and walking the waterways and allowing themselves to experience the benefits of walking.

Moving forward, we hope to somehow include this initiative into our program as the residents have thoroughly enjoyed every minute of their experience with Majella and Deborah. Both Majella and Deborah have come here to show our residents a different way to exercise and keep healthy, adding another element to contribute to their mental health. They both have brought compassion, empathy and genuineness to our residents and these experiences will stay with them for their lives.

Both of them are truly amazing people and I can assure you that you both have left a lasting impression on each of our residents. Thanks to Majella and Deborah for taking the time and understanding our residents every week.



LSP's Media

Continuous promotion of all our activities through our **website**, **social media** (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube), **newspapers** (Leinster Express & Laois Nationalist), **posters** and **newsletters** has definitely

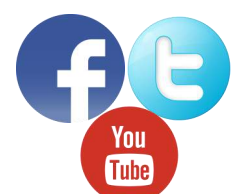


increased information requests to the office. Highlighting our Sports Inclusion Disability (S.I.D.) programmes through these outlets has also helped us to promote inclusion around the county. Our S.I.D. profile is growing annually with a wider range of opportunities to participate is now available and with more clubs engaging around inclusion for all e.g. we worked closely with Portlaoise Wrestling Club to develop wrestling for people with disabilities in Laois and Rock GAA with Rock for All. We have run 3 Disability Inclusion Training courses in 2019,

2 Awareness Training and 2 Autism in Sport and 1 NCBI workshop training which also helps to create more awareness around inclusion, along with the up-skilling of volunteers in local clubs. This gives people with disabilities more confidence with engaging in their local clubs.

We utilise all our social media platforms to communicate the work of the LSP and set up events through Facebook and have monthly page slots in local papers to promote the work of the LSP. We do annual reports, mid-year reports, newsletters and continue to update our website which also promotes the key messages of the LSP. High profile campaigns with partner agencies such as **European Week of Sport #BeActive Night, 20/20 Campaign, Laois Connects**, Healthy Ireland projects through LCDC, etc. also help increase our profile and communicate the work we do.

Using social media outlets has given us a great platform to promote the work of the LSP and we have seen an increase in our **Facebook** likes from 3,666 to 5,007 followers from high profile events such as #BeActive Night, Operation Transformation Nationwide Walks etc; **Twitter** followers from 1,198 to over 1,250 and visits to our website continue to increase. We are constantly looking at other methods of increasing our profile and communicating the work of the LSP .



Promotion

Also from information we sent to clubs/organisation regarding grants e.g. Sports Capital Grant's and Go for Life saw an increase in calls seeking further information and assistance.



Promotional tools such as our **signage and inflatable arch for fun runs** has assisted us in engaging clubs and organisations and reaching a wider audience. Our fun run signage has been used by over 30 clubs/organisations, from athletic clubs to GAA clubs and walking clubs, with over 5,000 people participating in their events.

This is a fantastic asset to clubs and has assisted us in the brand promotion of Laois Sports Partnership.

Laois Sports Partnership last updated its print **Club Directory** in 2015, which promotes the key messages of the LSP, these are handed out to clubs/organisations and members of the public. In 2019 we updated the web version.



Laois County Council printed a **directory of summer activities for children and young people** which was distributed through schools. Laois Connects also assists us in heightening the profile of the work we do and communicate the message of benefits of physical activity for positive mental health and wellbeing.

New signage and noticeboards with new Sport Ireland branding at the LSP office has resulted in more footfall and we have seen an increase in queries relating to sport and physical activity.



A major factor which the Laois Sports Partnership considers to have helped in achieving outputs include an increased profile of LSP activities in the local newspapers, with a monthly page in both the **Leinster Express** and the **Laois Nationalist**. This not only affords the community the opportunity to keep updated on activities in their area but also highlights our S.I.D. programme with a monthly profile being included in the article.

Promotion

Use of Media (including Social Media)

Number of radio interviews	1
Number of articles in local press/radio	50
Number of articles in national press/radio	3
LSP Website: Number of new articles	107
LSP Website: Number of hits	1,999
Facebook: Number of posts/updates	2,000
Facebook: Number of Followers	5,007
Twitter: Number of tweets	4,567
Twitter: Number of Followers	1,250
Twitter: Number Following	591
Number of texts sent via text service	5,200
TOTAL	



Club Development Work

Laois LSP primarily works with the following **Target Groups**: Children of pre-school age; Children of primary school age; Girls of secondary school age; Women aged 18-50; Men aged 18-50; Older People; People with a physical disability; People with an intellectual disability; People with a sensory disability; People experiencing mental health difficulties; Unemployed people; Travellers; People of migrant communities; Disadvantaged Communities; Coaches; Sports club volunteers.

Many of these target groups are involved in a wide range of sports clubs across the county.

Providing Funding Information

Number of clubs worked with (one to one basis)	30
Number of clubs worked with (through group sessions) Safeguarding	227
Number of group information sessions run	1
Number of clubs supported in making funding applications (one to one basis)	20

Supporting Club Development

Number of clubs/groups supported in the delivery of activities	30
Number of clubs/groups helped in developing their organisational or management structures	1

There are approximately **375** clubs in the Laois area and Laois Sports Partnership work in conjunction with these to help with development and support. Training courses, advice and activity sessions are vital to the continual success of local clubs. We trained up 655 people in 2019 over 35 training courses.



We delivered training for coaches locally through the NGB's including FAI, Athletics. We also delivered a number of Sport Ireland training such as:

Active Leadership, Safeguarding Training, Disability Inclusion Training courses which enhances club development work. Clubs are more aware of being inclusive and accessible to all due to the S.I.D. Programme.

Increasing programmes and participants within the S.I.D. programme has allowed for increased work in the area of Club Development such as Rock for All and Wrestling programmes.

Improved linkages with clubs and implementing support initiatives such as the inflatable arch and signage for fun runs has been hugely successful both in terms of promotion to the wider community but also supporting clubs/organisations when funding resources are scarce.

We have supported a number of clubs in **meet and train events** over the past couple of years which has raised our profile as a supporting organisation locally. The Streets of Portlaoise 5km 2019 saw a record number of participants 970 taking part, 100 of them were from a Meet & Train programme. which we have continued to support since it started up. Fit4Life St. Abban's with over 100 people participating.

Vicarstown Parkrun is going from strength to strength with approx. 48 runners weekly. Also a Junior Parkrun was established through the SVT Community Sports Hub in 2017 with approx. 31 children weekly and we have linked schools and community events to both Vicarstown Parkrun's as finale events to encourage greater participation and future sustainability.



The process of updating our **clubs directory** annually renews direct contact with the most recent active club contacts and a new booklet is being planned for 2020.

Our **Basketball** for primary schools programme utilised local coaches to deliver coaching with 21 schools, with approximately 1,112 children receiving coaching in 2019. 1,104 students from 36 schools participated in a Blitz Day in May. This initiative has led to Primary Schools Mini-Basketball National Committee utilising this model and is now linking with schools in Portlaoise area who have established a league with 5 schools participating and 200 children involved.



LSP General Programmes



Our **Sports Hall Athletics Programme** is continuing to be successful with 33 schools and 1,634 children participating in 2019. Of these schools one student had visual impairments and was delighted with the efforts made to ensure she could participate, as she was often left out of physical activities and 30 students were from St. Francis School. 48 students from St.Fiacac's N.S. represented Laois at the Sports Hall Athletics Festival 2019 in Athlone.

The continual promotion of the **Laois Walks Festival** has assisted us in helping people establish formal walking groups within Laois with 2 newly established groups in 2019 which are linking in to the Get Ireland Walking initiative. The increased interest in walking in Laois has led also to Activator Poles training and further IHF Walking Leader Training.

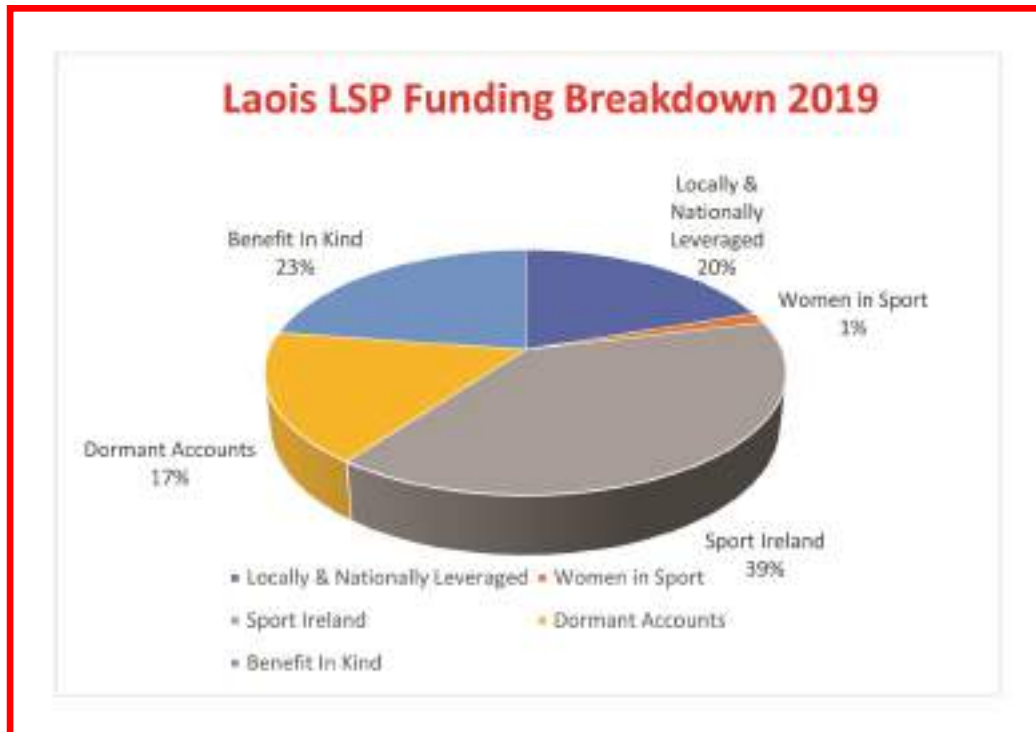


Other programmes run throughout the year include; True Transformation; Active Living; Fit Schools, Portlaoise Street Leagues, Activator Poles, Nordic Walking, Community Coaching Teenscene etc.



LSP Funding

Funding	Laois LSP Funding Breakdown 2019	% of Total
Locally & Nationally Leveraged	€ 122,559.00	20%
Women in Sport	€ 8,400.00	1%
Sport Ireland	€ 241,410.00	39%
Dormant Accounts	€ 106,770.00	17%
Benefit In Kind	€ 140,440.00	23%
Total Funding	€ 619,579.00	100%



Received funding from Sport Ireland Dormant Accounts, Health Service Executive, Laois Partnership, Laois County Council, Go for Life, Healthy Ireland Funding through LCDC

Training & Education

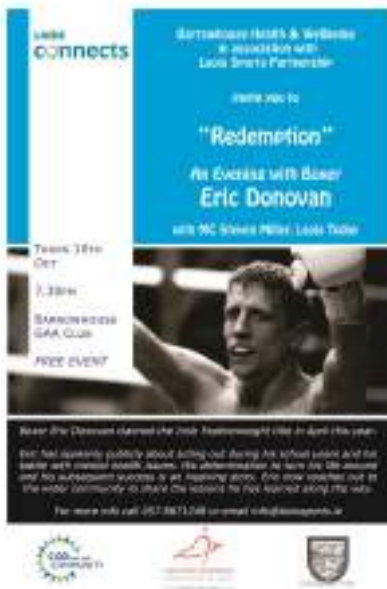
List of Training Courses in 2019

Name Of Training	Type of Training	Participants
Safeguarding 1	Child Protection	210
Safeguarding 2	Child Protection	11
Safeguarding 3	Child Protection	6
Disability Inclusion Training	CARA	55
Disability Awareness Training	CARA	104
Autism in Sport & NCBI	CARA	58
Athletics Assistant	Athletics Ireland	12
First Aid	LOETB	18
Occupational First Aid	LOETB	16
Sports Leader Award	Sport Leader Award UK	93
Walking Leader Training	Irish Heart Foundation	19
Active Leadership	Sport Ireland	30
Active Lifestyle Award	Sport Ireland	23

Providing Training & Education

Laois Connects Seminars:

Mental Health Awareness has become a major focus over the past few years. People are becoming more conscious of the fact that they have to look after their mind as well as their body. In addition it has been highlighted that participation in sport and physical activity has a positive effect on your mind. Our **Sport Seminar** covered “Redemption” with Eric Donovan which saw 50 people attend with a further 70 people attending the Kathleen Gorman Memorial Talk in association with Mental Health Ireland CE Martin Rogan and our Nikki Bradley Overcoming Adversity through Sport had 25 people in attendance. Throughout the week there was 12 walks across the County, 2 x Parkruns which launched the Laois Connects Week and all promoting positive health and wellbeing with over 389 people participating.



Safeguarding Training:

Safeguarding 1 (Basic Awareness), 2 (Club Children's Officer) and 3 (Designated Liaison Person). Due to demand, we ran 14 Safeguarding 1 courses with 210 participants and 1 x Safeguarding 2 course with 11 participants and 6 participants on 1 x Safeguarding 3 course in 2019.

Disability Inclusion Training:

There was an increased interest also in providing activities for people with a disability such as wrestling being just one of the newest activities. Three **CARA Disability Inclusion Training** courses were completed in 2019 with 55 participants, 1 x Disability Awareness Training Courses and 104 participants , 2 x Autism in Sport Workshops with 38 participants and 1 x NCBI workshop with 20 participants.



Schools:

Schools also require more education and training in upskilling particularly in generic and minority sports and Laois Sports Partnership are constantly striving to fill this gap in education in **basketball, badminton, Fit Schools, and Sports Hall Athletics.**

SID Programme:

The Sports Inclusion Disability programme provided training to volunteers while participants enjoyed programmes such as Rock for All, Wrestling, Summer Athletics, Basketball, Rugby, Wheelchair Hurling, Junior activity club. 1,711 participated in 36 programmes in 2019 with assistance from 173 volunteers.

Other Training Supports:

We support meet and train events, including offering our Inflatable Arch and fun run signage which widens our profile in the county.

We provide in house training to our work placement participants, we have seen a huge increase in the number of placement requests this year. We provide continuous training to our CE placements whom assist programme delivery.

The **Club Development Grants** are very important to clubs and organisations as the small funding goes a long way in assisting them to upskill their volunteers. Feedback from clubs have indicated that even small funding which they receive goes along way in upskilling volunteers and participating in National Governing Bodies coaching courses as well as physical activity programmes.

Laois Marlins Swim Club trained up 4 x Level 1 Coaches, 8 x Level 1 Volunteer Officials and 16 x Level 2 Volunteer Officials.

The Heath running club goal was to complete a couch to 5k and provide a social outlet for the community to come together and get active. Upon completion of programme participants completed their first Vicarstown Parkrun on 23rd March which continued into a running group meeting in the Heath GAA.

St. Patrick's AFC is a soccer club in Graiguecullen who's goal was to promote integration through soccer. As a result of the project picked up about 25 boys and girls who had never been involved in Soccer before. As the kids are aged 3 – 5 their parents attend all training sessions and they have now developed friendships and have fostered understanding amongst different ethnic and religious groups.. They also ran an Integration Through Football (AMIF) program to include the provision of reading and writing classes for adults in their clubhouse. 11 women took part in the fitness class and associated mental health talks .



Local Projects

Local Projects are very important to the LSP profile within the county as we are seeing an increase in demand for community activities to assist whether it be by organising some physical activity or liaising with sporting organisations to get involved. The value of sport and physical activity increased in 2019 with more partner agencies utilising sport and physical activity as a mechanism to reach hard to reach target groups. Local Projects allows us to meet the needs of the people in Laois and the type of programme interventions they require.

The **True Transformation** proved successful again this year, with two groups and 44 participants completing the programme. This is a 6-week programme which focuses on providing information and advice to participants as well as physical activity.

The programme has proven to be very successful. We have successfully and consistently achieved significant improvements in the physical and metabolic characteristics of the participants. Overall we are very happy with the content of the programme and plan to continue to incorporate the 4 key elements in each programme. The 4 key elements are (i) home based and on site exercise training, (ii) nutrition plans and workshops, (iii) health education workshops, and (iv) assessment of fasting blood samples to determine metabolic health.

The **Disability Boccia League** has proven very successful and is increasing in numbers of teams participating year on year with 120 participants,. The teams practice weekly in their centres and travel to play each other in the Boccia League over 6 months with the grand finale hosted by Laois Sports Partnership.



Laois Connects showcases the power of multi-agencies working in partnership to provide a wide range of supports and activities in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing.

The **Sports Leader Award** is a Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership which provides an ideal starting point for learners aged 13 years and over who wish to develop their leadership skills, whilst under the direct supervision of their Tutor/Assessor or other suitably qualified adult. The syllabus is designed to develop generic leadership skills that can be applied to a variety of sports and/or recreational situations as well as contributing to the personal development of the learner. It consists of six units of work including a one hour demonstration of leadership and the award will take approximately 33 guided learning hours. The Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership is a practical award in which learners must demonstrate their ability to lead others in simple sport/activity. We delivered 4 x Level 1 courses with 82 participants.



Local Projects - Partners & Funding

Volunteers are vital for the delivery of many of the disability programs with 173 assisting us in 2019. We are very lucky to have a large number of committed volunteers. There is now an increased awareness of the **SID programme** by partners, and volunteers play a huge part in assisting delivery of disability programmes. Increased funding from Sport Ireland and our partner agencies support from Laois County Council and Health Service Executive has allowed us to run more programmes for people with disabilities and increase participation to 1,711 in 36 programmes.



Promotion of the work of the LSP through our monthly news page and social media which is growing assists us in spreading the word of the work of the LSP and engaging with target groups.

The importance of partner supports at local level is critical to the success of Laois Sports Partnership in delivering local projects based on needs analysis locally. In 2019 we received supports from **Local Clubs & Organisations**, **Health Service Executive**, **Laois Partnership**, **Laois Offaly Education Training Board** and **Laois County Council** for programmes such as True Transformation, Portlaoise Street Leagues, Community Coaching Programme, Integration programmes etc.

Funding was a huge assistance in delivering local projects this year with our partner agencies such as the Health Service Executive supporting our True Transformation Programme and Sports Inclusion programme which was very successful and LCDC Healthy Ireland Funding supporting a number of programmes such as Cardiac Rehab and Activator Poles programme.



Time Committed To Different Working Methods

Make an estimate of the total number of days that staff have committed to the LSP for the year	220 Days
What percentage of this time is funded or supported through Sport Ireland core funding.	100%
Estimate of FRC's total time spent on project development and administration	80%



The Sports Inclusion Disability Officer role is funded by Sport Ireland and supported locally by Laois County Council and Health Service Executive.

All staff are utilising Salesforce to manage LSP workload, operational plan for the year, task management, roles and responsibilities, track training and programmes as well as diary management.

We are working with our partner agencies in delivering and assisting local programmes.

2019 participation figures at a glance:

- **LSP TRAINING & EDUCATION – 35 TRAINING COURSES WITH 655 PEOPLE**

RECEIVING CERTIFICATION

- **LSP PROGRAMMES – 136 PROGRAMMES WITH 15,744 PEOPLE PARTICIPATING**

Case Study

#BeActive Night Riverdance



What is the purpose of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

Family friendly initiative to mark European Week of Sport and BeActive night. A night of active activities for all the family to participate and enjoy.

What are the aims of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

The aim of this event was to put on a night of activities for families in the community and surrounding areas to participate in. We wanted to get people active while also enjoying what we have to offer in SVT. We wanted to have activities that could be enjoyed by every member of the family and that everyone would participate in doing.

What was involved in the running of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

In order for us to run this event we wanted to come up with a novel idea to get people active while also enjoying an evening of fun physical activities. As it was the year of the 25th anniversary of River Dance we set out to do River Dance along the canal bank in Vicarstown. A previous attempt was made 19 years ago in Vicarstown. The attempt was to have as many people form a line along the canal bank while doing River Dance, the record of 1000 participants was recorded back then. We wanted to try beat this record while having the River Dance as our main event as a start of the many activities we would have throughout the evening. We partnered up with a local School of Dance to help with the River Dance aspect and have professional dancers to take part in the line along with the community. All the dancers were from our SVT area and surrounding areas. We also invited six local underage football teams in their kits along our line doing the River Dance with the dancers and the community. We advertised on all our social media and ad posters and adverts taken out in local newspapers. Linking in with the various groups that would be involved on the night and organising the entertainment was another aspect we had to do. We wanted the whole family catered for on the night, with something everyone could enjoy and do. As a spectacle view this looked fantastic, the colours of all the football teams along with the dance costumes mixed in with everyone one else who was taking part in the dance was a lovely sight.

Organising all our volunteers and people to help out on the night in order for this to run smoothly was a huge element of our event. We wanted to make sure everyone who was participating in the event and those that were there got the most enjoyment of the night.

Being active with your family and enjoying it was something very important to us. Our volunteers play a massive part in all our events and again were paramount to the success of our Be Active Night.

What were the outcomes of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

Our #BeActive night was a massive success for SVT and Laois Sports Partnership. The wave of people along the canal was a fantastic spectacle for all to see. Our evening of activity was enjoyed by the young, old, active and non-active. We had families out enjoying our dance along the canal and the fun activities in the GAA pitch. We joined dancers, young footballers, coaches, mummies, daddies, grannies, grandads, aunties & uncles all in a line along the canal and danced our hearts out and we broke the record of 19 years ago while enjoying a physical activity. The main event happened on the canal bank before moving down to the GAA field for the rest of our activities. We lined all our teams up behind a bag piper who led our teams, families, and participants down to the field for the rest of our activities. The 6 local underage football teams participated in a mini blitz on three pitches Annanough GAA, O Moore Park and Croke Park, we also had All Ireland Referee Maurice Deegan as our 'Celebrity' referee for the Croke Park pitch. Aside from the mini games we had six different types of bouncing castles for all ages, an arts & crafts tent, face painting tent, tug of war on the pitch, a sensory tent and our tandem bikes were going around the track. Inside the hall Buggie School of Irish Dance done a ceili where we had lots of the older family members enjoy and we had tea/coffee and treats available.

Our line was formed,
our dance was done,
our footballers paraded
to their pitches, our
bouncing castles were
well used, our face
painters created lots of
wonderful characters,
our ceili dancers enter-
tained and people
joined in to dance with
them, our sensory tent
was joyfully used as



were our tandem bikes which were cycled round our track by our volunteers and many who wanted to try them out too. While our River Dance was going on we also had a group out on the water in canoes from our SVT Canoe & Kayaking club which added to our spectacle and gave people the opportunity to see what was going on.

#BeActive Night Riverdance

Quotes from participants, teachers, parents, partners etc.

'We had such a great evening, from the dancing along the canal to the entertainment in the field. Such a great show of events for everyone. Thank you SVT'.

'My kids loved all the entertainment especially the canal bank, they danced away and had so much fun. The parade down to the pitch for the footballers and families went down a treat. As a family we had a great night, thank you'.

'Loved the evening, loved the dancing on the canal and loved the festivities down in the pitch. Watching all the footballers in their kit dancing and then playing their games was great. They also had loads of fun on the bouncing castles and loved getting presented with their medals and goodie bag. A really well organised event from start to finish'.

'My son loved the sensory tent you provided, it was a welcome relief for me also. After the dance on the canal which he loved I was a bit apprehensive about him going to the field with all the noise and activities but when we both seen the sensory tent it was amazing. He never left it and enjoyed it so much. Thank you'.

'Very well organised event from start to finish. Everything that was laid on was fantastic. Well done'.

'loved the novelty of river dance along the canal, I was there 19 years ago as a child and got to bring my own child back with me to enjoy it this time around. Great night'.





Case Study

Rock for All - Rock GAA Club

What is the purpose of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

In February, the wheels were set in motion for all-inclusive Gaelic football sessions for children with additional needs to play, learn and interact in an environment suited to their needs at The Rock GAA Club.

The brainchild for this project came from parent Laura White and Juvenile secretary of the Rock GAA club, Anthony Ging.

When Laura initially inquired about how her child could play and learn GAA skills, the wheels were set in motion.

Our Sports Inclusion Disability Officer was approached by the chairperson of the Rock GAA who was looking for guidance in how to set this up, and were advised about training and courses to complete and supports from the Sports Partnership.

What are the aims of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

The much-welcomed 'Rock for All' programme sees children with additional needs such as autism, ADHD and visual impairments get the chance to have fun with their peers for an hour every Sunday.

Their aim is to involve children from four to 16 years old around the county and of all abilities in Gaelic football in a fun, non-competitive way.

Children with additional needs may like to partake in Gaelic games, but due to different factors, they might not like playing matches or physical elements of play.



What was involved in the running of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

Coaches/Volunteers from the Rock GAA took part in Safeguarding training, Disability Inclusion training & Autism in Sport training

Soon, almost 20 parents expressed interest in the novel idea to hold this in The Rock GAA club. With the success of the 'Rock for All' group, they have decided to change training times to coincide with Little Rockers to add to the fun and atmosphere of the mornings.

What were the outcomes of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

What made this programme so successful, however, were the volunteers who turned up every Sunday morning. They each provided one-on-one attention to the children who joined the programme, giving the children hands-on help.

Having so many volunteers every week also gave the children the chance to develop strong connections with their coaches, making the programme especially successful.

"Parents were utterly delighted" by the new programme. Their children learnt the skills of the Gaelic games and each session finished with a match where children demonstrated their skills and competitiveness.

Although the programme started out as a six-week programme, because of its success and parents' delight the programme continued all year.

The children belonged to a team and loved the social aspect of this programme.

What are the next steps for the Programme/Initiative/Event?

For 2020 we would like to link with Laois GAA and run a Cul Camp in the Rock for children with additional needs.

Quotes from participants, teachers, parents, partners etc.

In recent weeks, they have been getting out in the fresh air, having loads of fun and picking up football skills along the way. Anthony is amazed at the feedback the idea has had so far. "This is bigger than we ever expected. We've had parents from Castletown, Clonaslee, The Heath, contacting us about this. I never realized starting this journey just how big it could get," said the juvenile secretary. "We want to build a community around this. We're really delighted with the support Laois GAA, Leinster GAA and Laois Sports Partnership have given us," added Anthony. Those interested need only to turn up with sports gear, enthusiasm and a sense of fun.



For further information on the above programme or our Disability Inclusion Programmes please contact Catriona Slattery Sports Inclusion Disability Officer.

Case Study

Social Tennis for Over 50's



What is the purpose of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

Get people in the age category 50+ more active

Provide a social outlet and social interaction

Create awareness of Abbeylex tennis Club and tennis as a sport for over 50s.

What are the aims of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

Increase participation in sport of tennis. 36 people signed up for initiative, either former members or new to sport .

What was involved in the running of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

Bringing Abbeylex Tennis Committee on board with initiative

Advertising and awareness of program

Coaching and use of ball wall and pairing in matches

Daily Plan preparation

Organize access to club and refreshments

What were the outcomes of the Programme/Initiative/Event?

Abbeyleix tennis Club will gain some new members

Some participants have been exposed to tennis for first time

Participants enjoyed the social side of the program and felt better

having some physical activity

Appreciating the necessity of warm ups

Improved tennis technique for some members

What are the next steps for the Programme/Initiative/Event?

Some participants will return to tennis and become club members

Club have agreed to extend program 1 day a week during daytime hours
Other clubs will be encouraged adopt similar program

Quotes from participants, teachers, parents, partners etc.

“Appreciate the opportunity to return to playing tennis. Well done coach Gary & Laois Sports partnership” - Mary B

“Very enjoyable 8 weeks, fantastic facilities, and program well put together” Thomas

“Really enjoyed the social element with added bonus of learning new skills”

“Excellent initiative and really enjoyed.

Please do more of tennis and look forward to doing more on Nordic Pole walking and outdoor gym”

Statistical programme information

Just over 30 participants signed up to program and all attended at least 1 session.

Approx. 2/3 had played tennis before, and remainder new to sport.

Av. of between 10/12 per session



Abbeylax Tennis Club

Social Tennis for Over 50's

Abbeylax Tennis Club are delighted to launch our fun Social Tennis Programme for the over 50's. Join us for some light coaching sessions and fun games, followed by tea and chats!

Registration Day:
Thursday 4th of April, 11.00am - 12.00
Abbeylax Manor Hotel, All Welcome!

8 Week Programme:
Commencing Tuesday's & Thursday's
(9th & 11th of April), 11.00am - 12.30pm
Abbeylax Tennis Club
Only €2 per session!

For more information, please contact Abbeylax Tennis Club on 086 6684049 or info@abbeylaxtennis.com

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