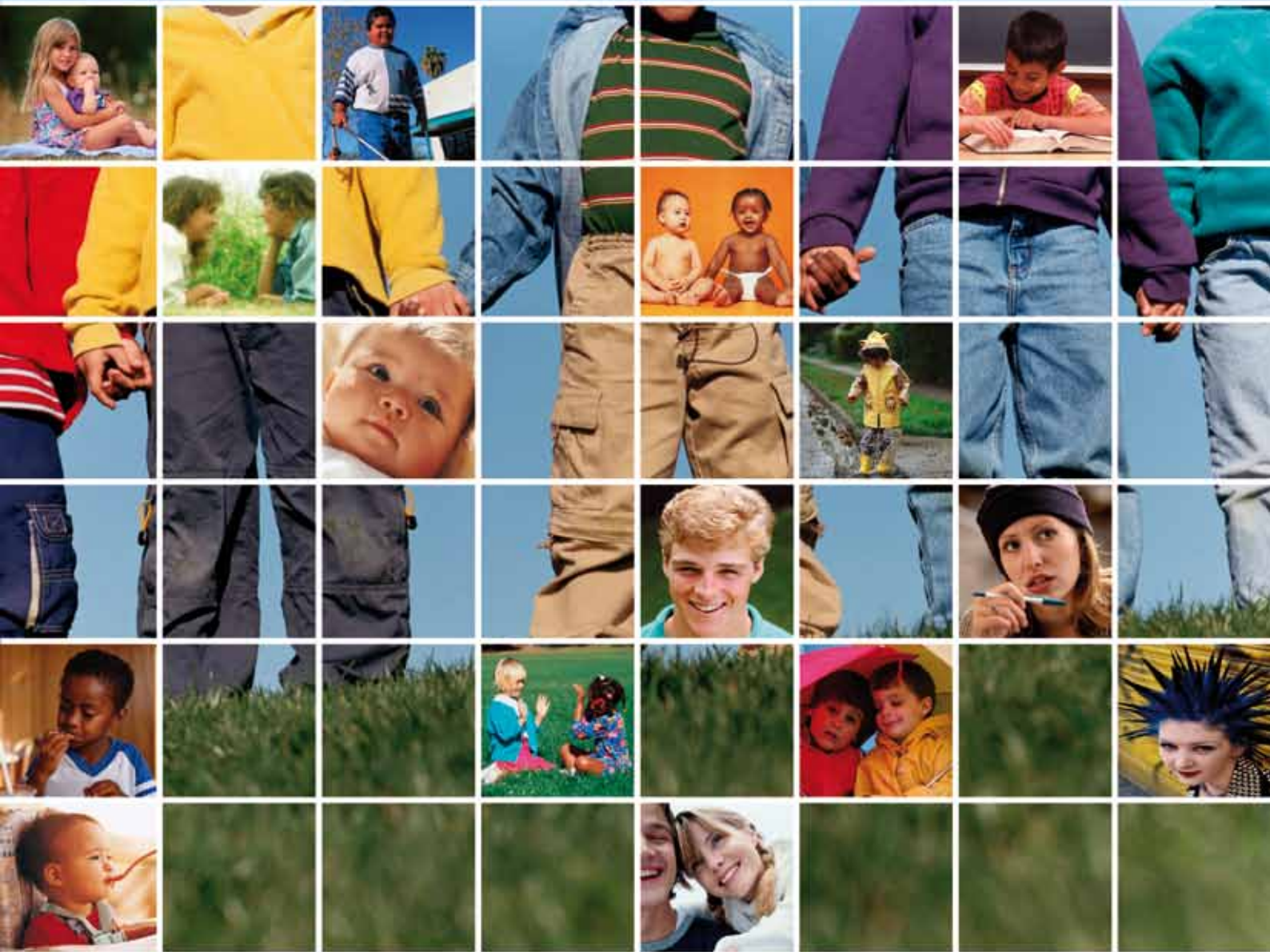


Steps towards the development of a Children's Services Committee in the County of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown



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Abbreviations: DLR: Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown

Note: this literature review was commissioned on behalf of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, the Health Service Executive and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Social Inclusion Unit.

Executive Summary

Key national policies:

General

- Department of Health and Children (2000) *National Children's Strategy: Our Children - Their Lives*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Department of Health and Children (1999) *Children First*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Department of Health and Children (2002) *Our Duty to Care*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland (2006) *Towards 2016: Ten Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2015*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Early childhood services

- Department of Health and Children (1991) *Child Care Act*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Department of Health and Children (2007) *Child Care (Amendment) Act*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (1999) *National Childcare Strategy*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Health

- Department of Health and Children (2007) *Health Act*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Department of Health and Children (2002) *Equality and Fairness, A Health System for You*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Mental health

- Department of Health and Children (2001) *Mental Health Act*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Disability

- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (2005) *Disability Act*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Young people at risk

- Government of Ireland (1997) *The National Anti Poverty Strategy*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Office for Social inclusion (2007) *The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Education

- Department of Education and Science (2004) *Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN)*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Department of Education and Science (1998) *Education Act*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Recreation

- Department of Education and Science (2001) *Youthwork Act*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- National Children's Office (2004) *Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.
- Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (2007) *Teenspace: A National Recreation Policy for Young People*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Key local research:

General

- Watters, N. (2009) *Social Inclusion Profile of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.

Early childhood services

- Fitzgerald, A. (2005) *Community Childcare Research Project: 'Towards a model of Best Practice'*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- Southside Partnership (2009) *Infant Matters Evaluation*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- Unique Perspectives (due to be published in 2010) *A mapping of childcare in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown*. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Childcare Committee.

Health

- Duffy, A. (2009) *Speech and Language Therapy: An Evaluation of a Southside Partnership DLR Pilot Project in the Loughlinstown/Shanganagh RAPID area*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- Share, P., Share, M. and Geraghty R. (2009) *Healthy Food Made Easy Evaluation*. Dublin: HSE and Southside Partnership.

Family support services

- Clarity Research Development and Training Ltd. (2009) *Family Support in Loughlinstown/Shanganagh RAPID Area: An Exploratory Study*.
- Curley Consulting (2009) *Mapping of Family Support Services in Dún-Laoghaire Rathdown County*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- McKeown, K., Haase, T., Pratschke, J. (2004) *Marking Life Better for Families: Evaluation of Springboard Project in Loughlinstown*. Dublin: East Coast Area Health Board.

Education

- Redmond, A. (2004) *Moving Beyond the Barriers: An Inter-agency Research Study on Early School Leaving in the Dún Laoghaire area*. Dublin: Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Local Drugs Task Force, Southside Partnership and Dún Laoghaire VEC.
- Southside Partnership & Blackrock Education Centre (2005) *A Guide to Local Supports and Services for Children with Special Education Needs*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- Southside Partnership and Youth Choices (2007) *Directory of Progression Routes for Young People with Additional Learning Needs in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown*
- Toolin, A. (2002) *An Audit of Local Supports and Services for Children with Learning Difficulties*. Dublin: Southside Partnership & Blackrock Education Centre.

Children and young people at risk

- Dún Laoghaire Youth Information Centre and Youth Choices (2008) *'I've had enough, I'm outta here': A guide for young people in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown area*. Dublin: DL Youth Information Centre and Youth Choices
- Mc Gearty, S. (2009) *Profiling of Services for at risk youth in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- McKeown, K. and Fitzgerald, G. (2007) *Mounttown Neighbourhood Youth and Family Project: An evaluation*.
- Nolan, A. (2006) *Profile of Vulnerable Groups*. Dún Laoghaire: Department of Community and Enterprise Dún Laoghaire- Rathdown County Council.

Disability

- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Childcare Committee Information for parents of children with a disability (Information Booklet).

Ethnic minorities and the Travelling Community

- Clarity Research Development and Training Ltd. (2009) *It's the bestest: An Evaluation of the STAG Traveller Youth Service*. Dublin: STAG.
- King, D. (2008) *'Opening Doors' Evaluation of the Dún Laoghaire Refugee Drop-In Project*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- Roe, S. (2007) *Report of a Consultation Process with Ethnic Minority Groups living in the County of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown*. Dublin: Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Anti-Racism and Diversity (ARD) Steering Committee.

Recreation

- Roe, S. (2008) *A Feasibility Study for the development of a Youth Café in the Dún Laoghaire Area*. Dublin: Dún Laoghaire VEC and Southside Partnership.

Background

The National Children's Strategy, Our Children-Their Lives (2000), is a 10-year plan of action, which calls on the statutory agencies, the voluntary sector and local communities to work to improve the quality of all children's lives. It includes a range of actions across such areas as giving children a voice so that their views are considered in relation to matters that affect them, eliminating child poverty, ensuring children have access to play and recreation facilities, and improving research on children's lives in Ireland.

The strategy provides the first comprehensive national policy document for the full range of statutory and non-statutory providers in the development of services for children and is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The strategy adopts a 'whole child perspective', recognising the multidimensional nature of all aspects of children's lives. The recognition that all parts of children's lives are interlinked has, in turn, implications for public policy-making and the integration of services relating to children.

As part of the monitoring process of the implementation of the National Children's Strategy, each County Development Board has been asked to establish a multi-agency Children's Services Committee.

The Agenda for Children's Services (Office of the Minister for Children, 2007) sets out the strategic direction and key goals of public policy in relation to children's health and social services in Ireland. This includes the 7 National Service Outcomes for Children in Ireland which are:

- Healthy, both physically and mentally
- Supported in active learning
- Safe from accidental and intentional harm
- Economically secure
- Secure in the immediate and wider physical environment
- Part of positive networks of family, friends, neighbours and the community
- Included and participating in society

Study aim

The aim of this study is to undertake a literature review on the needs of children living in the County of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown to inform the development of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Children's Services Committee.

Objectives

The key objectives of the study are as follows:

- To undertake a literature review on the needs of children in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown
- To collate and analyse any research done in the County on the needs of children
- To acquire an understanding of the national context in which the needs of children is being assessed and relate it to the local context
- To critically analyse all data collected and identify gaps and duplication
- To inform future steps for the development of the Children's Service's Committee

Methodology

All available relevant national policies and local research, relating to services for children and young people, were reviewed to undertaken this literature review.

Report structure

Each section relates to a particular theme concerning services for children and young people. Each theme examines the following areas:

- National policies
- Key local research
- Key stakeholders
- Gaps and recommendations relating to the theme
- Summary of key gaps and recommendations

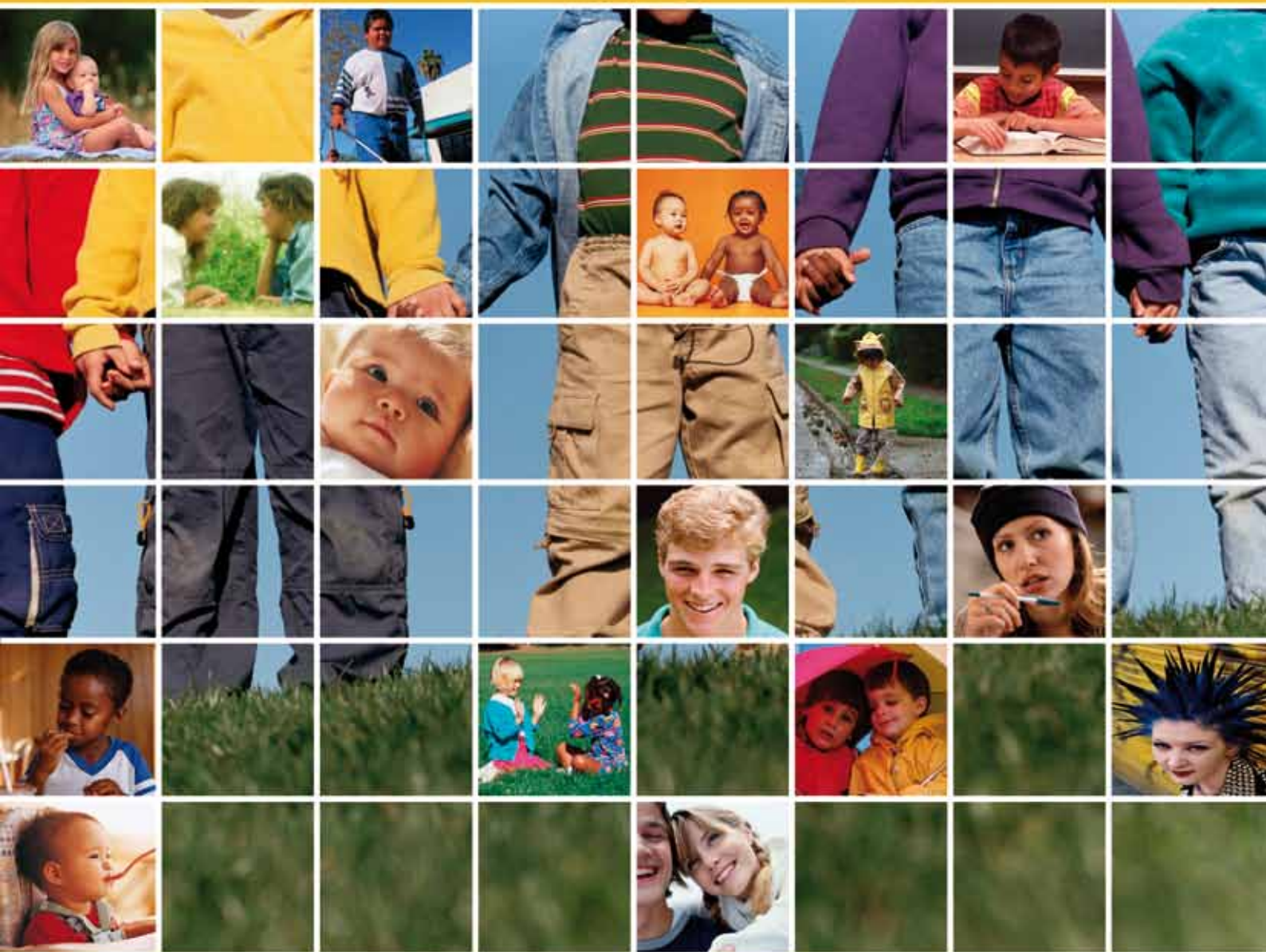
The sections are as follows:

- **Section 2-** Early Childhood Services
- **Section 3-** Health Services for Children and Young People
- **Section 4-** Mental Health Services for Children and Young People
- **Section 5-** Services for Children and Young People with a Disability
- **Section 6-** Education Services for Children and Young People
- **Section 7-** Services for Children and Young People from Ethnic Minorities and the Travelling Community
- **Section 8-** Services for Children and Young People at risk
- **Section 9-** Recreation Services for Children and Young People
- **Section 10-** Future steps



Section 2:

Early Childhood Services



National policies

Objective A of the **National Children's Strategy** (2000:50) states that, "children's early education and developmental needs will be met through quality childcare services and family-friendly employment measures."

Among the goals of **Towards 2016** (2006:41), the Framework for Social Partnership Agreement is that "every family should be able to access childcare services which are appropriate to the circumstances and needs of their children."

Other key early childhood policies include:

- CECDÉ (2006) *Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education*
- Department of Health and Children (1991) *Child Care Act*
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (1999) *National Childcare Strategy*
- Department of Health and Children (1999) *Children First*
- Department of Health and Children (2002) *Our Duty to Care*
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2004) *Towards a Framework for Early Learning*

Key local research

Key research relating to early childhood services in the DLR area includes:

- Curley Consulting (2009) *Mapping of Family Support Services in Dún-Laoghaire Rathdown County*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- Fitzgerald, A. (2005) *Community Childcare Research Project: 'Towards a model of Best Practice'*.
- Unique Perspectives (due to be published in 2010) *A mapping of childcare in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown*. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Childcare Committee.
- Watters, N. (2009) *Social Inclusion Profile of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.

Mapping of early childhood services

A recent mapping exercise conducted on behalf of Dún Laoghaire- Rathdown County Childcare Committee (Unique Perspectives, 2010), due to be published this year, provides a comprehensive stock-take of childcare in DLR, including details of the number of places, locations, types of services and age range.

Fitzgerald (2005) profiles the community childcare sector in DLR and estimates there are approximately 408 places provided by 16 separate centres. Childcare providers include SCAN, Family Resource Centres, playgroup and educational providers.

Key stakeholders

- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Childcare Committee (DLRCCC)
- HSE Pre-school Inspection Service
- Southside Childcare Action Network (SCAN)

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Childcare Committee (DLRCCC)

The key task of the DLRCCC is to develop and implement a co-ordinated strategy for the provision of quality, affordable and accessible childcare within the county. Key aims of the DLRCCC include:

- To assist communities in identifying needs and gaps in service provision and to develop new services to meet these needs.
- To facilitate a coordinated approach to childcare training at all levels.

- To encourage employers to facilitate parent's childcare needs.
- To provide information on grant applications and funding.
- To develop a targeted support strategy for equality, diversity and social inclusion.
- To work with other agencies in order to develop best practice guidelines for quality childcare provision and to enhance a co-ordinated approach to the development of childcare services.

HSE Pre-school Inspection Service

The HSE is responsible for inspecting pre-schools, play groups, nurseries, crèches, day-care and similar services which cater for children aged 0-6, under the [Child Care \(Pre-School Services\) Regulations 2006](#).

Southside Childcare Action Network (SCAN)

The Southside Childcare Action Network serves to promote and implement a strategy for community childcare within the Southside Partnership area. The network represents a group of 22 voluntary community based childcare organisations in the greater Dún Laoghaire- Rathdown area who have been working together since 1997 to promote and implement a framework for community based childcare (Watters, 2009).

Gaps and recommendations

Lack of access to affordable, quality, community based childcare

A lack of affordable quality childcare, particularly of a short term nature, was identified by Curley Consulting (2009) as a gap in family support services in the DLR area. Similarly, the need for quality community based childcare was highlighted as a key area for additional support by the recent social inclusion profile of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (Watters, 2009).

The most recent childcare mapping of the county (Unique Perspectives, 2010), identified the most significant issues to emerge from the report as social inclusion and affordability, which is believed to be partly attributed to the current economic environment. The report found that the extent of provision of childcare has increased in the area since 2006 when the last mapping exercise was undertaken. However, it does point to ongoing and future need for childcare provision, particularly in the areas of Ballybrack, Blackrock and Glencullen.

Staffing issues

Curley Consulting (2009) recommended a more effective, secure, longer term staffing model for childcare providers in the area which doesn't rely on FÁS employment schemes.

Community childcare issues

In terms of improving community childcare in disadvantaged areas of DLR, Fitzgerald (2005) argues there are three key points which need to be addressed, which are improve co-ordination, reduce complexity and increase capacity.

Firstly, the report identifies the need to improve co-ordination at a national and local level and recommends the development of a central co-ordinating mechanism. Secondly it identifies the need to reduce complexity at a local level as a number of local government bodies, agencies and organisations are involved in the co-ordination process. Thirdly, it identifies the need for greater capacity building through investing in initiatives to build the skills, abilities, knowledge and confidence of people and community groups, to enable them to take effective action and play leading roles in the development of childcare within their communities.

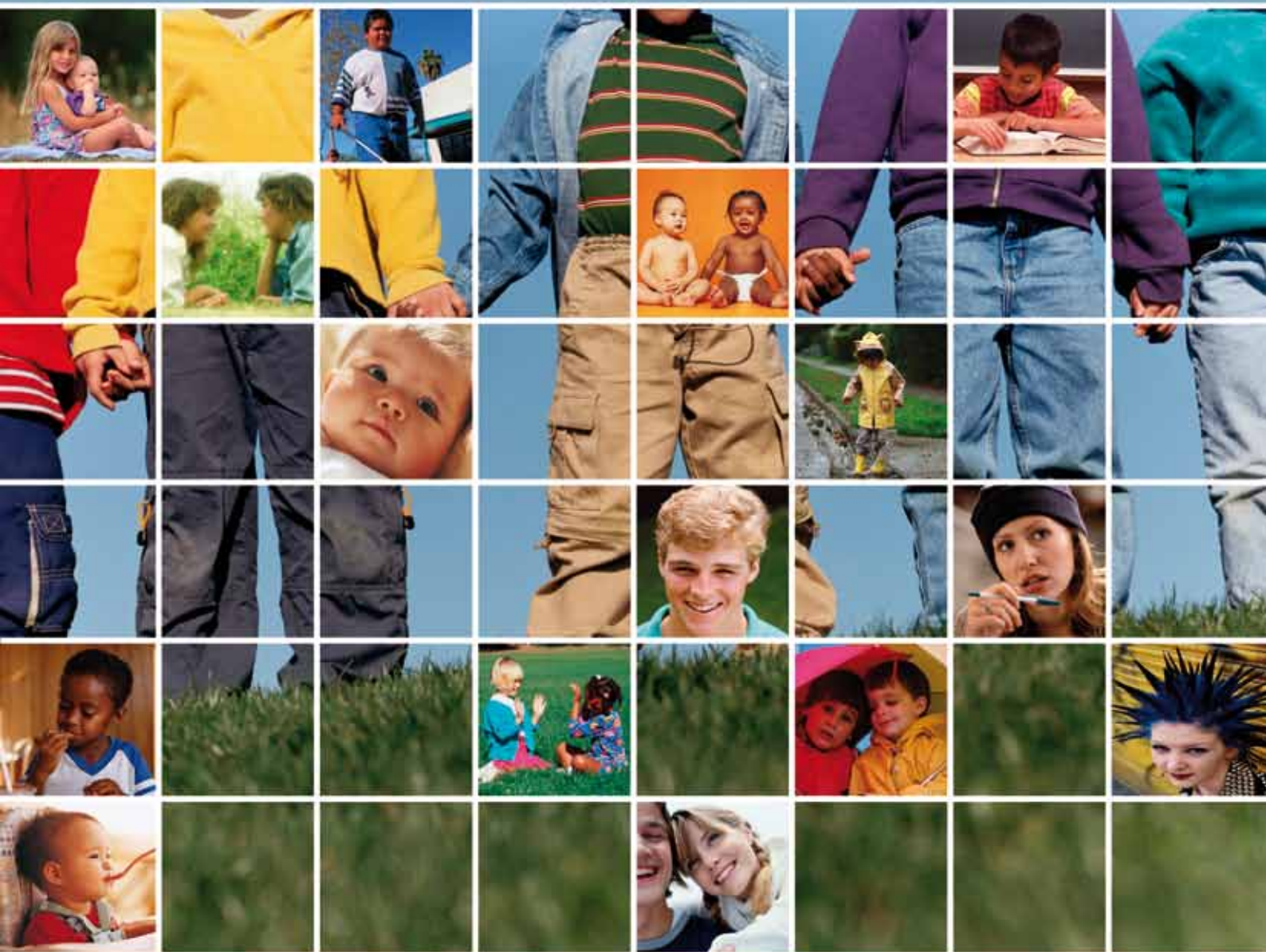
Mapping recommendations

Key recommended actions arising from the DLRCCC mapping exercise include flexibility in childcare provision, a more progressive approach to regulation, accessible and affordable training to higher levels, curriculum in the childcare setting, formalisation of the childminding sector, greater interagency collaboration and employer-based childcare.

Summary of key gaps and recommendations

- There is a lack of affordable, quality, community based childcare in the area
- There is a future need for childcare provision in the areas of Ballybrack, Blackrock and Glencullen
- Ethnic minorities experience difficulties in accessing childcare in DLR
- A more effective, secure, longer term childcare staffing model is needed
- There is a need to improve co-ordination, reduce complexity and increase capacity of community childcare
- More flexibility is needed in childcare provision
- More employer-based childcare is needed
- A more progressive approach to regulation of childcare is needed
- More accessible and affordable childcare training is needed to higher levels
- The curriculum in the childcare setting needs to be examined
- The formalisation of the childminding sector needs to be addressed
- Greater interagency collaboration is needed in terms of childcare in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown area

Section 3: Health Services for Children and Young People



National policies

Objective C of the **National Children's Strategy** (2000:55) states that, 'Children will be supported to enjoy the optimum physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.'

One of the goals of **Towards 2016** (2006:41), the Framework for Social Partnership Agreement, is that "every child should have access to world-class health, personal social services and suitable accommodation."

Other key health policies include:

- Department of Health and Children (2007) *Health Act 2007*
- Department of Health and Children (2002) *Equality and Fairness, A Health System for You*

Key local research

- Duffy, A (2009) *Speech and Language Therapy: An Evaluation of a Southside Partnership DLR Pilot Project in the Loughlinstown/ Shanganagh RAPID area*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- Share, P, Share, M and Geraghty R. (2009) *Healthy Food Made Easy Evaluation*. Dublin: HSE and Southside Partnership.

Key stakeholder

- Health Service Executive (HSE)

Services offered by the **HSE** to children and young people include:

- Psychological therapy services;
- Speech and language therapy services;
- Physiotherapy services;
- Social Work Services;
- Family Support Services;
- Public health nursing.

Gaps and recommendations

Speech and language therapy

Key gaps in health services for children and young people appear to focus mainly on speech and language therapy. Nolan (2006) highlighted the difficulty in accessing therapeutic supports such as speech and language, play and drama therapy for targeted children in designated disadvantaged schools.

The availability of speech and language therapy and support was also identified as a gap by a report exploring the support needs of families in the Loughlinstown/Shanganagh RAPID area (Clarity, 2009a).

An evaluation of the Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) project in the DLR area (Duffy, 2009) recommended that the HSE and Department of Education and Science be encouraged to provide additional support for projects of this nature, so that the burden of participation experienced by those who take part is reduced.

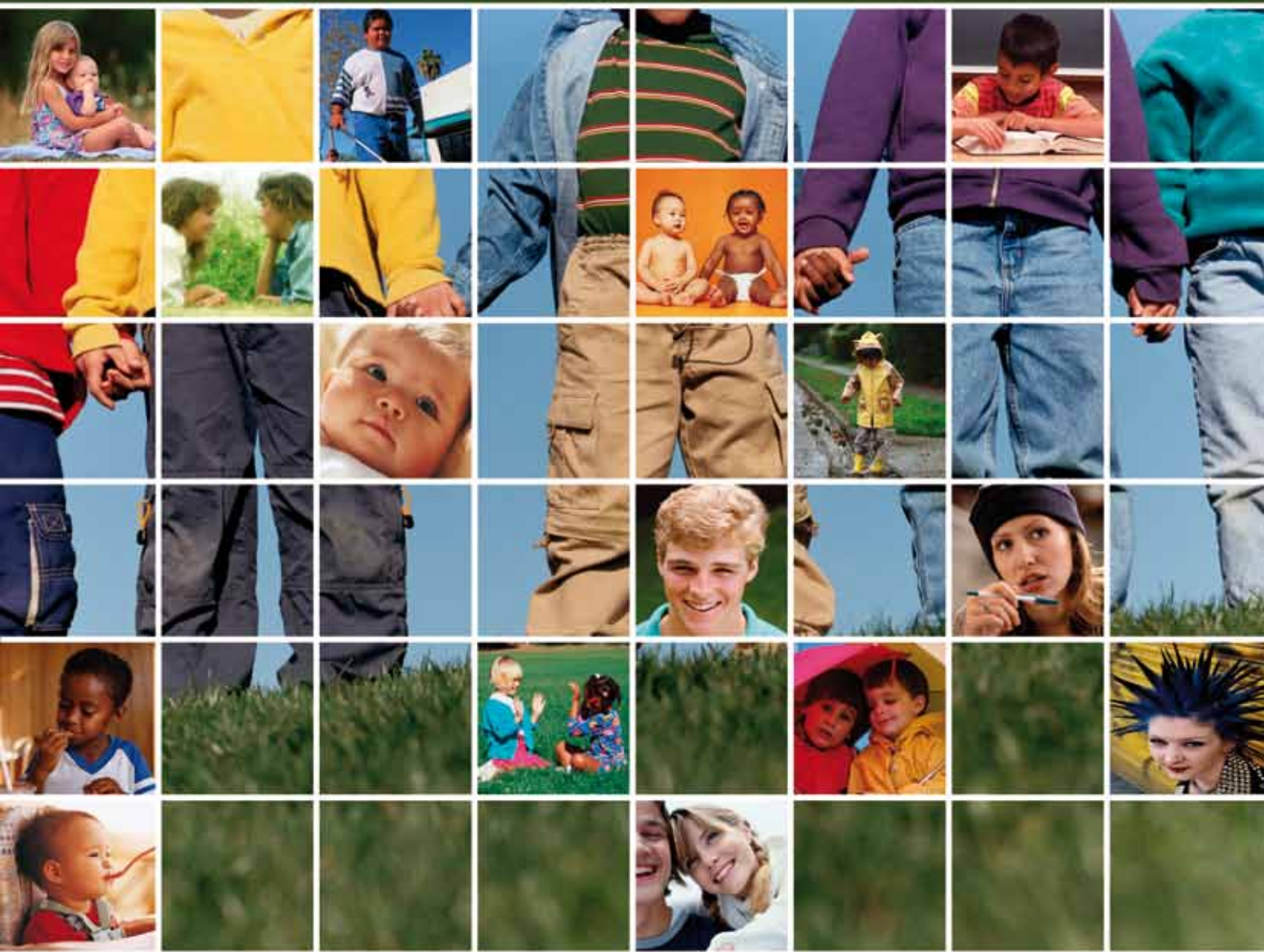
A mapping of family support services in the area (Curley Consulting, 2009) acknowledges the need for more speech and language therapists and recommends the rolling out of a pilot Speech and Language programme in the DLR area and that schools and pre-schools be resourced, supported and encouraged to participate in it.

Summary of key gaps and recommendations:

- There is a difficulty in accessing speech and language therapy for children and young people in the area
- Additional support for Speech and Language Programmes by the HSE and the Department of Education is recommended
- The rolling out of a pilot Speech and Language programme in the area is recommended

Section 4:

Mental Health Services for Children and Young People



National policies

Objective C of the **National Children's Strategy** (2000:55) states that, 'Children will be supported to enjoy the optimum physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.' The Strategy recognises that "services to meet the mental health and emotional needs of children continue to need expansion" (2000:55).

One of the goals of **Towards 2016** (2006:41), the Framework for Social Partnership Agreement, is that "every child should have access to world-class health, personal social services and suitable accommodation."

Other key mental health policies include:

- Department of Health and Children (2001) *The Mental Health Act*.
- Department of Health and Children (2006) *A Vision for Change: Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy*.
- Health Services Executive (2005) *Reach Out: Irish National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention 2005-2014*.
- Mental Health Commission (2006) *Code of Practice relating to admission of children under the Mental Health Act, 2001*.
- NESF (2007) *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*.

Key local research

Key research relating to mental health services for children and young people in the DLR area includes:

- Mc Gearty (2009) *Profiling of Services for at risk youth in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- McKeown, K, Haase, T., Pratschke, J. (2004) *Marking Life Better for Families: Evaluation of Springboard Project in Loughlinstown*. Dublin: East Coast Area Health Board.
- Watters, N. (2009) *A Social Inclusion Profile of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.

Key stakeholders

- HSE Psychological Services
- St John of God Services
- Teen Counselling Service

HSE Psychological Services are located in Our Lady's Clinic in Dún Laoghaire and offer psychological services to adults and children as well as families under the Early Intervention Services.

Services offered by **St John of God** include:

- **Lucena Clinic** is a specialist mental health service for children aged 0 to 13 years (Children aged 13 – 18 are seen in Lucena Clinic, Rathgar). Services include psychiatry, psychology, social work, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, nursing and play therapy.
- **Cluain Mhuire Community Mental Health Services** provide community mental health programmes for the people of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. It includes a Child Support Group which aims to provide support to children/teenagers whose parent/s attend Cluain Mhuire Mental Health Service.

The **Teen Counselling Service** provides counselling and support to teenagers and their families who are experiencing difficulties in their lives. It is funded by the HSE, the Family Support Agency, and the Young Peoples Facilities and Services fund, through Crosscare.

Gaps and recommendations

Additional mental health supports and services

A Social Inclusion Profile of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (Watters, 2009) identified the provision and availability of therapeutic services focusing on mental health as a key area for additional support. It highlighted the lack of services for young people with particular needs around therapeutic interventions, including those relating to mental health difficulties, as a significant gap. The study also highlighted the lack of services for minor as opposed to 'profound' mental health difficulties.

A report on family support services recommends that a community mental health initiative is needed in the DLR area (Curley Consulting, 2009)

Suicide prevention services

A profiling of services for at risk youth in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown (Mc Gearty, 2009) identified concerns about the problem of suicide among young people from disadvantaged communities. Communities feel that services to deal with suicide and mental health, and especially to support communities where there have been incidences of suicide, need to be available locally.

Waiting lists

Schools in the area highlighted difficulties in relation to accessing and referring to the services offered through the Lucena Clinic Child Guidance Service, and the long waiting list for the service (Redmond, 2004). The issue of waiting lists for Community Therapeutic Services is also raised by Curley Consulting (2009), which draws attention to the fact that the waiting list for Lucena Clinic is generally over one year, Living Life Counselling Centre is less than three months and Springboard is less than a month.

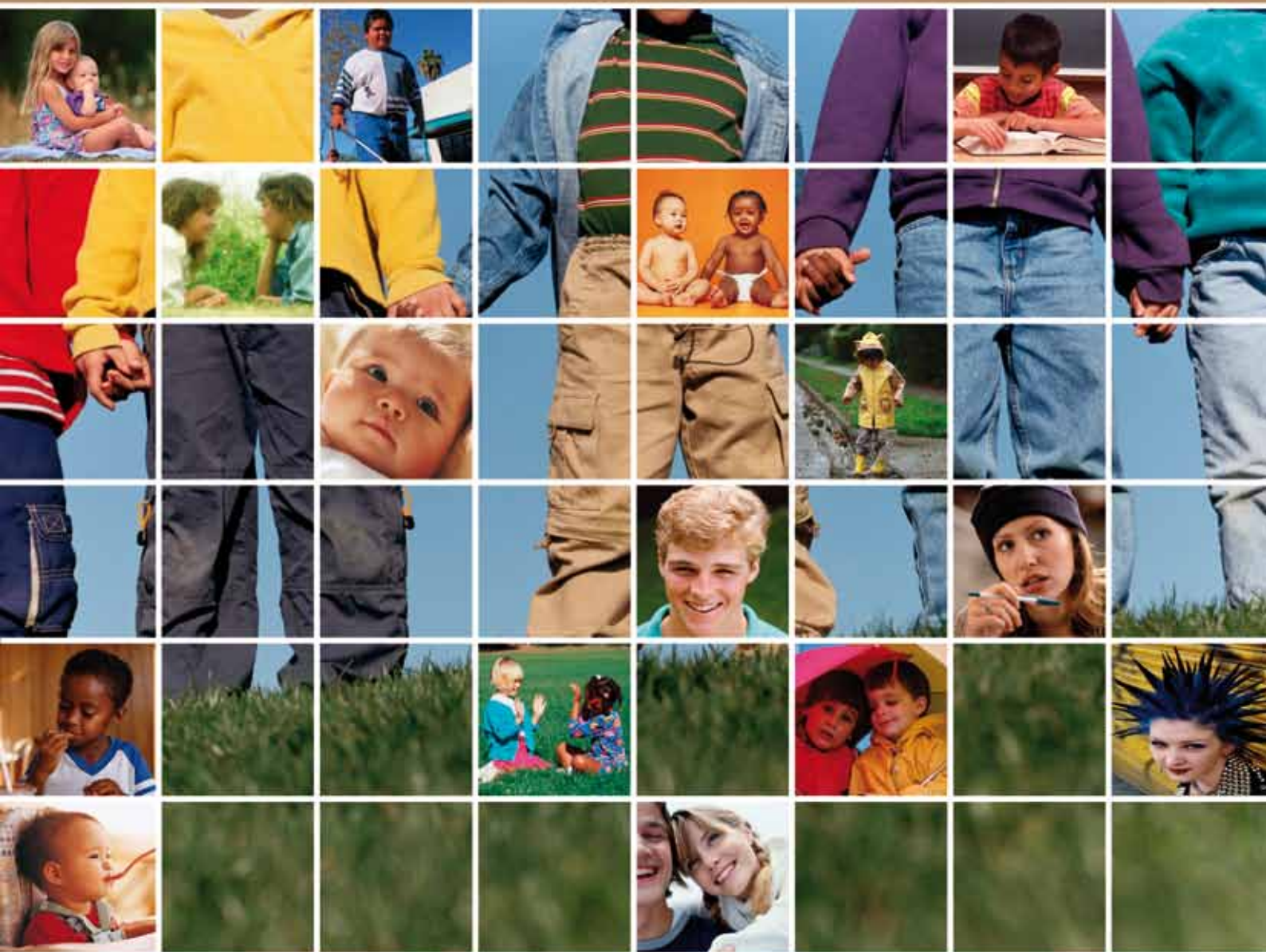
Counselling in schools

Schools in the area identified the need for access to specialised counselling supports that would help them to identify the child's needs, and respond accordingly (Redmond, 2004). Access to a Counselling Service within schools for children, particularly for those with behavioural and emotional difficulties, was also considered to be very important. The possibility of employing a behavioural therapist between a number of local schools was suggested in the report, as well as reaching an agreement with a local psychotherapeutic body to provide counselling services to schools at a nominal rate.

Summary of key gaps and recommendations:

- There is a need for additional mental health supports and services for children and young people in the area
- There is a need for suicide prevention programmes aimed at young people and support services for communities affected by suicide
- Waiting lists for community therapeutic services such as the Lucena Clinic need to be shortened
- Waiting lists for the National Educational Psychological Service need to be shortened
- More specialised counselling supports are needed for local schools
- More counselling services should be available to children and young people in local schools and sharing of resources between schools should be considered

Section 5: Services for Children and Young People with a Disability



National policies

The **Disability Act 2005** provides the following definition of disability: “Disability in relation to a person, means a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment”

Objective J of the **National Children's Strategy** (2000:68) states that, “children with a disability will be entitled to the services they need to achieve their full potential.”

Key local research

Key research relating to services for children and young people with a disability in the DLR area includes:

- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Childcare Committee *Information for parents of children with a disability (Information Booklet)*.
- Duffy, A. (2009) *Speech and Language Therapy: Final Evaluation*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- Southside Partnership & Blackrock Education Centre (2005) *A Guide to Local Supports and Services for Children with Special Education Needs*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- Toolin, A. (2002) *An Audit of Local Supports and Services for Children with Learning Difficulties*. Dublin: Southside Partnership & Blackrock Education Centre.

Mapping of disability services

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Board is currently undertaking a Disability Service Mapping exercise in the County. The aim of the study is to attain the nature and degree of disability service provision provided by local organisations and service providers in the County. The final report will capture the type and extent of disability service provision in the County. It will highlight the services that are currently available and identify any gaps and should provide clear recommendations for improvement of this service provision. This mapping is due to be completed in 2010 (www.dlrcdb.ie).

Southside Partnership and Blackrock Education Centre's (2005) *'Guide to Local Supports and Services for Children with Special Education Needs'* provides information in relation to special needs education supports and services.

Key stakeholders

- HSE
- St John of God Services

Services provided by the **HSE** for children with disabilities include:

- Early intervention services
- Public Health Nurses
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Residential Respite Care
- Residential Services
- Social Worker
- Communication Aids
- Assistive Technology (via Enable Ireland & Central Remedial Clinic)
- Seating Clinic (via Enable Ireland)
- Audiology

Services offered by **St. John of God** include:

- **Carmona Services** which provide a network of residential and day services in southeast Dublin and north County Wicklow for 260 children and adults.
- **The Callan Institute for Positive Behaviour Support** in Shankill provides consultation and training in the use of effective, non-aversive methods for supporting children and adults who have challenging behaviour.
- **St John of God Hospitaller Services** provide programmes and services to children and young people with an intellectual disability as well as to their families. Programmes and services include:
 - Family Advice and Support
 - Assessment
 - Continuing Education
 - Counselling
 - Early Intervention Employment
 - Housing
 - Outreach
 - Pastoral Care
 - Physiotherapy
 - Recreational/Social Activities
 - Residential Services Respite
 - Residential Services
 - Special Education Speech Therapy
 - Vocational Training

Gaps and recommendations

Lack of supports and services

A recent Social Inclusion Profile of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (Watters, 2009) states there is little support for children and young people with disabilities in the area. Similarly, Curley Consulting (2009) identified poor access to therapeutic services as a gap in family support services in the DLR area.

Key service gaps

Watters (2009) identified a consensus in relation to a lack of education, needs assessments, and ongoing support for those with intellectual disabilities in the area. The need for more supports for families with members who have special needs was also identified.

The availability of assessment for particular behavioural and learning difficulties and the implementation of timely and appropriate interventions and supports was also identified as a gap in a recent report conducted on behalf of RAPID (Clarity, 2009a) in the Loughlinstown/Shanganagh area.

In terms of service provision, Watters (2009) highlighted the difficulties of services catering for the wide range of intellectual disabilities from dyslexia to Asperger Syndrome.

Focus on physical rather than intellectual disabilities

Watters (2009) found there is a perceived overemphasis on services which are focused toward people with physical disabilities rather than those with intellectual disabilities.

Summary of key gaps and recommendations:

- There is a lack of supports and services for children and young people with a disability in the DLR area, particularly in the area of education
- The lack of availability of assessments for particular behavioural and learning difficulties and implementation of timely and appropriate interventions
- There is a stronger focus on services for those with physical rather than intellectual disabilities
- There is a need for more support for the families of children and young people with a disability
- Service providers can find it difficult to cater for the wide range of intellectual disabilities

National policies

Objective B of the **National Children's Strategy** (2000:53) states that, "children will benefit from a range of educational opportunities and experiences which reflect the diversity of need."

Among the goals of **Towards 2016** (2006:41), the Framework for Social Partnership Agreement are:

- Every child should grow up in a family with access to sufficient resources, supports and services to nurture and care for the child and foster the child's development and full and equal participation in society.
- Every child should leave primary school literate and numerate.
- Every student should complete senior cycle or equivalent programme (including ICT) appropriate to their capacity and interests.

Under the **Education Act 1998**, the Government is obliged to make appropriate education available to everyone, including children with disabilities and those with special needs.

The **Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act** (EPSEN) was enacted in 2004. Among the aims of the Act are:

- To make further provision for the education of people with special educational needs.
- To ensure that their education takes place, as far as possible, in an inclusive environment.
- To ensure that they have the same rights as everyone else to avail of and benefit from appropriate education.
- To help children with special educational needs to leave school with the skills necessary to participate, to the level of their capacity, in an inclusive way in the social and economic activities of society and to live independent and fulfilled lives.

Key local research

Key research relating to education services for children and young people in the DLR area includes:

- Redmond, A (2004) *Moving Beyond the Barriers: An Inter-agency Research Study on Early School Leaving in the Dún Laoghaire area*. Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Local Drugs Task Force, Southside Partnership and Dún Laoghaire VEC.
- Southside Partnership and Blackrock Education Centre (2005) *A Guide to Local Supports and Services for Children with Special Education Needs*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- Southside Partnership and Youth Choices (2007) *Directory of Progression Routes for Young People with Additional Learning Needs in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown*.

Mapping of education services

Southside Partnership along with Youth Choices (2007) completed a 'Directory of Progression Routes for Young People with Additional Learning Needs in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.' Southside Partnership and Blackrock Education Centre (2005) have produced 'A Guide to Local Supports and Services for Children with Special Education Needs.' Redmond (2004) identifies existing service providers targeting early school leavers in the DLR area.

Key stakeholders

- Beechpark Clinical Services
- Department of Education and Science
- Dún Laoghaire VEC
- National Council for Special Education
- St John of Gods
- The Learning Centre for Autistic Children

Beechpark Clinical Services for Children on the Autistic Spectrum, which is based in Stillorgan have special responsibility for the provision of a wide range of specialist clinical services for children on the autistic spectrum, their families, schools and other agencies throughout the Eastern Region. Staffing at Beechpark includes a clinical team which consists of Consultant Psychiatrist, Senior Clinical Psychologist, Education Psychologist, Senior Speech & Language Therapist, Social Worker and Occupational Therapist.

There are two day schools located on the Beechpark campus at Stillorgan, which are run in conjunction with the Department of Education and Science:

- **Ballyowen Meadows** for children aged 4 to 12 years with autism and related disorders.
- **Setanta School** for children aged 12 to 18 years with autism and related disorders.

The **Department of Education and Science** provides the following programmes for children and young people in the area:

- The **Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)** Programme aims to strategically target children in disadvantaged areas and focus on key issues around equality and access to education. DEIS focuses on the needs of children from pre-school through second level education (3 -18 years). It provides various supports to both primary and post primary schools including reduced pupil teacher ratio and access to numeracy/literacy support, Home School Community Liaison Services, and School Completion Programmes.
- The **Home/School/Community Liaison (HSCL)** Scheme acts as a link between the school and home. Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinators encourage parents to become more involved in a young person's education through courses, talks, etc. They discuss any aspect of school that may be causing anxiety or stress to a young person or a parent. Schools in the area with HSCL schemes include Good Shepherd National School, Holy Cross NS, Our Lady's National School, Scoil Colmcille Ballybrack NS, Dominican School Dún Laoghaire, Queen of Angels NS, Archbishop McQuaid NS, St. Tiernans Community School, Cabinteely Community School
- The **School Completion Programme (SCP)** provides supports to young people aged 4-18 years in order to help them to stay in school. Supports provided by School Completion Co-ordinators depend on individual needs. Programmes include after-school activities, sport and leisure programmes, and breakfast and lunch clubs. Schools in the area with School Completion Programmes include Ballinteer Community School, Cabinteely Community School, Holy Child Community School and St. Tiernan's Community School.
- The **National Educational Psychological Service Agency (NEPS)** provides psychological services in public and private primary and post-primary schools and in related educational centres. The NEPS Agency aims to support the personal, social and educational development of all children through the application of psychological theory and practice in education. The Agency has particular regard for children with special educational needs.
- The **National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)** was established in 2002 and has a statutory function to ensure that every child either attends a school or otherwise receives an education. In particular, the Board has a key role in following up on children who are not attending school regularly, and where there is a concern about the child's educational welfare. The Board also has responsibility for children who are being educated outside of schools (e.g. at home) and 16-17 year olds who leave school to take up employment.

Educational services for young people offered by Dún Laoghaire VEC include:

- The **Out of School Education Service** which works with other providers to cater for the educational needs of young people who are at risk of leaving school early and/or have already left school.
- **Alternative Learning Pathways** which is an educational programme catering for young people between the ages of 12 and 16 who are out of school or at risk of being out of school.
- **Sportsreach** which is the Youthreach Sport project that caters for early school leavers aged 16 and over.

The **National Council for Special Education** is an independent statutory body, based in Blackrock, which was set up to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs arising from disabilities with particular emphasis on children. Local Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENO) provide information and assist parents who have children with special educational needs or those who have concerns that their children may need some extra supports.

Educational services offered by **St John of Gods** include:

- **St. Augustine's School** which is a co-educational day and boarding school providing educational, social, recreational and vocational training programmes for 160 students with special education needs.

The Learning Centre for Autistic Children was set up by a group of parents in 2001 due to the absence of any school places for their children at that time. They set up the **Red Door School** for autistic children, which now operates out of Sandyford, where 12 children attend on a full-time basis. Each attending child's Individual Education Programme (IEP) is delivered under the practice and science of Applied Behaviour Analysis.

Gaps and recommendations

Assessments

A report exploring the support needs of families in the Loughlinstown/Shanganagh RAPID area (Clarity, 2009a) identifies the availability of assessments for particular behavioural and learning difficulties and the implementation of timely and appropriate resulting interventions and support as a major gap in the area of education.

Waiting lists

Redmond (2004) highlights the long waiting list for the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) among schools in the DLR area. The report describes the service as "overburdened" with "too many schools to cover." School identified the fact that NEPS does not respond to behavioural issues as a further gap. The broader support and development role that the Educational Psychologist could provide schools was also considered to be underutilised.

After school services

Afterschool services were identified as a key area for additional support in a recent Social Inclusion profile of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (Watters, 2009).

Absenteeism

'An Inter-agency Research Study on Early School Leaving in the Dún Laoghaire area' conducted by Redmond (2004) identified a number of gaps in service provision in this area. These included having no service in place to support schools to respond to persistent absenteeism. Schools in the area suggested the provision of alternative education programmes for pupils that are persistently absent to address this issue.

Early school leavers

The 'Moving Beyond the Barriers' report made a number of recommendations regarding early school leavers including:

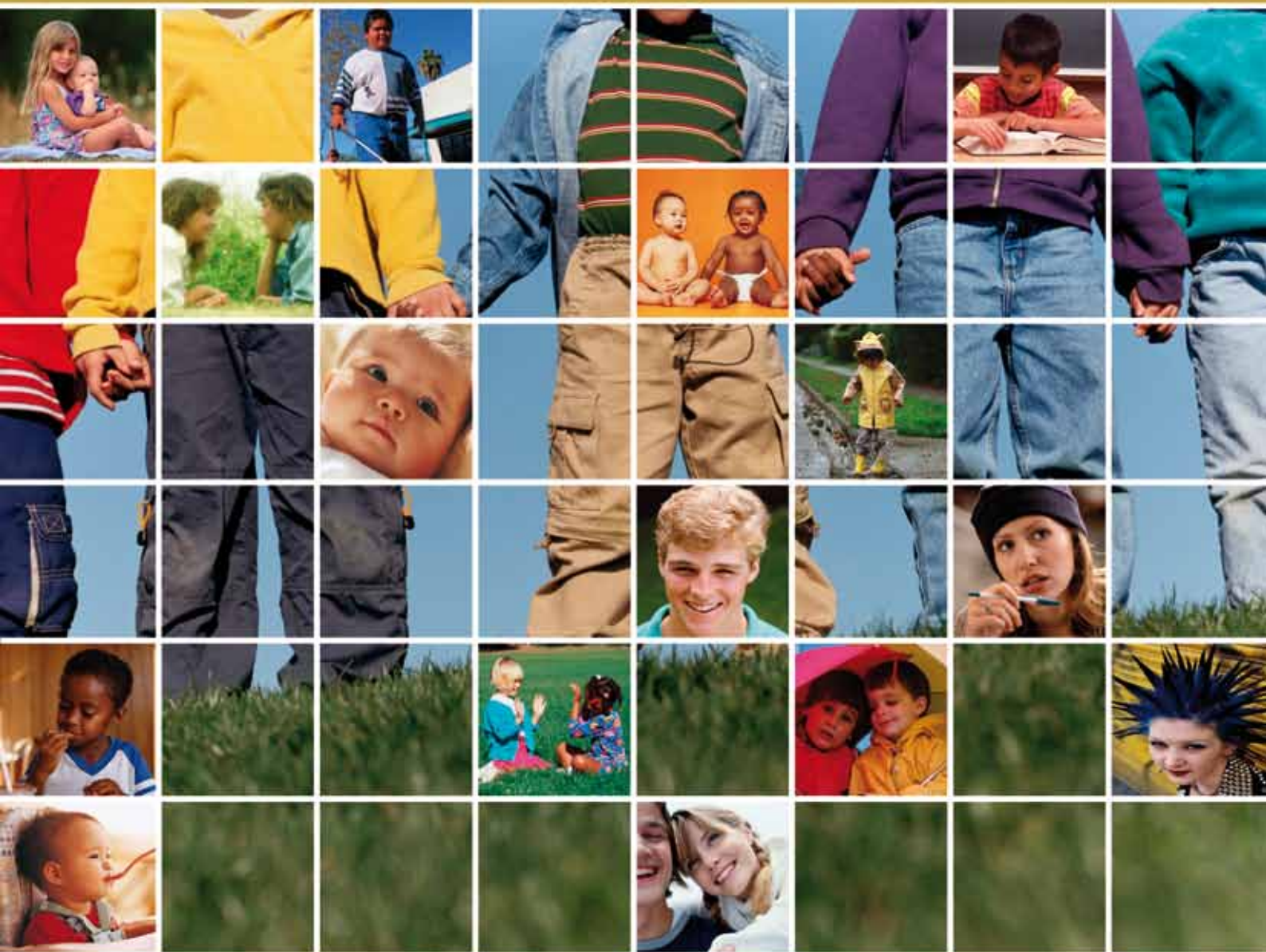
- To extend and develop preparation programmes and follow-up support for young people making the transition from primary to secondary level.
- To strengthen the links between schools, youth services, and community groups and to explore possibilities of working together
- To extend and develop new programmes designed to meet the needs of specific target groups such as early school leavers who are young mothers, young asylum seekers, young unqualified male school leavers and young early school leavers with drug issues.
- To strengthen links/information sharing between the three training centres and explore possibilities for working collaboratively with young early school leavers.
- To build and develop the range of services and supports available to young people between the ages of 12 and 15
- To establish a community based youth guidance scheme for early school leavers

Summary of key gaps and recommendations:

- There is a lack of availability of assessments for particular behavioural and learning difficulties and the need for quicker implementation of interventions and support
- There is a need for more after school services, particularly in areas of social disadvantage
- There are no services in place to support schools to respond to persistent absenteeism
- The provision of alternative education programmes for young people who are persistently absent is recommended by some schools
- There is a need for preparation programmes and follow-up support for young people making the transition from primary to secondary level
- Schools, youth services, and community groups need to work closely together to prevent early school leaving
- More targeted educational programmes are needed for specific groups such as early school leavers who are young mothers, young asylum seekers, young unqualified male school leavers and young early school leavers with drug issues.
- Greater dissemination of information between local secondary schools and training centres is needed in relation to early school leavers
- A community based youth guidance schemes with comprehensive integrated tracking systems, drop in, and outreach services is recommended for early school leavers

Section 7:

Services for Children and Young People from Ethnic Minorities and the Travelling Community



National policies

Objective K of the **National Children's Strategy** (2000:70) states that, "children will be educated and supported to value social and cultural diversity so that all children including Travellers and other marginalised groups achieve their full potential."

The National Children's Strategy (2000) also advocates the following actions in relation to children and young people from ethnic minorities:

- That public services will be provided in ways that take account of and respect the specific needs of children from social, ethnic, cultural and linguistic minority groups and specific staff training will be provided.
- Ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity considerations will be taken into account in all relevant national and local level public policy development and service delivery.
- The special needs of non-English-speaking children will be recognised and additional resources targeted to enable them to participate fully in mainstream school classes and activities.

Key local research

Key research relating to services for children and young people from ethnic minorities in the DLR area includes:

- Clarity (2009) *It's the bestest: An Evaluation of the STAG Traveller Youth Service*. Dublin: STAG.
- King, D (2008) *'Opening Doors' Evaluation of the Dún Laoghaire Refugee Drop-In Project*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- Nolan, A. (2006) *Profile of Vulnerable Groups*. Dún Laoghaire: Department of Community and Enterprise Dún Laoghaire- Rathdown County Council.
- Roe, S. (2007) *Report of a Consultation Process with Ethnic Minority Groups living in the County of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown*. Dublin: Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Anti-Racism and Diversity (ARD) Steering Committee.
- Watters, N. (2009) *Social Inclusion Profile of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.

Key stakeholders

- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- Dún Laoghaire Refugee Project (DRP)
- Dún Laoghaire VEC (DLRVEC)
- Southside Traveller Action Group (STAG)

The **Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform** provides the following service in the area:

- **Garda Ethnic Liaison Officers (ELO)** are trained to provide specific support and advice to victims of racist incidents. Local Ethnic Liaison Officers also provide support to the Dún Laoghaire Refugee Project and help improve the relationships between young ethnic minorities living in the Dún Laoghaire area and the Gardaí.

Dún Laoghaire Refugee Project (DRP) run a "Drop-In Centre" for young asylum seekers/those with residency every Monday evening in Dún Laoghaire Community Training Centre (DLCTC) on York Road. The aim of the centre is to provide a venue for young asylum seekers where they can relax, socialise, access information and advice, and plan social and cultural activities (King, 2008).

The DRP support these young people in terms of accessing education, which included liaising with secondary schools in the area to facilitate enrolment, liaising with Youthreach courses and providing literacy and language classes. The DRP also made weekly visits to the accommodation centres, to help young people with issues face-to-face (King, 2008).

A football team has also been set up as an integrated approach to supporting unaccompanied minors living in the DLR area. There are two teams with young people from Ireland and new communities

playing together, as well as supporters club which is attached to the football club which is hoped will develop into a youth club. A football pitch is provided to the young people by DLRCC and a meeting room is provided by the local Garda Ethnic Liaison Officer (Nolan, 2006).

Dún Laoghaire VEC (DLRVEC) **Separated Children's Service** was set up in 2003 to respond to the educational needs of Separated Children asylum seekers who are in the care of the Health Service Executive as they arrive in the State with no relatives or family. The service supports the needs of this group by responding to referrals, evaluating levels of literacy and English language, supporting schools and out-of-school activities. A Separated Children's Education Co-ordinator was appointed in 2003 through funds made available from the Department of Education and Science. The service is a joint initiative between City of Dublin VEC, County Dublin VEC and Dún Laoghaire VEC (Dún Laoghaire VEC, 2006).

STAG has operated a **Traveller Youth Service (TYS)** since 2004. It operates in the STAG Resource Centre in Sandyford Industrial Estate and employs one full-time Co-ordinator and five part-time Youth Workers as well as being supported by volunteers. The TYS provides a broad, activities based programme on a rotational basis to over 100 young people aged ten to eighteen years living on halting sites, group housing schemes, settled accommodation and roadsides. Staff of the service collect young people from their home places and bring them to the centre or other centres to participate in weekly programme activities (Clarity, 2009b).

The objectives of TYS are:

- To establish and develop relationships with young Travellers
- To provide both educational and fun activities for Travellers in the Dún Laoghaire – Rathdown area
- To promote integration between the Traveller and settled community
- To provide a service that supports and helps Traveller young people to combat barriers they face on a daily basis
- To provide a forum for young Travellers to develop their responses to issues of concern to them

Gaps and recommendations

Health and well-being of Traveller children

A report exploring the support needs of families in the Loughlinstown/Shanganagh RAPID area (Clarity, 2009a) identified the area of health and well-being of Traveller children as being of particular concern. Parents from the Travelling community reported social work services, public health nursing, education and child developmental assessments as being significantly under resourced. The need for supports and services to acknowledge Traveller culture was highlighted in order to improve accessibility and service use in general.

Specific initiatives that focus upon the needs of children and young people from the Travelling community in relation to education and links with schools were recommended as well as the appointment of an independent social worker for Travellers who is supportive and acknowledges the challenges facing the Travelling community.

Equality proofing services

A Social Inclusion Profile of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (Watters, 2009) found that some services for Travellers can be quite unsympathetic and dismissive and there may be an ingrained mistrust of mainstream services among members of the Travelling community. Therefore, they are often slow to trust support services and engage with them. The report suggests there is a need for more comprehensive policy and practice procedures in terms of equality proofing services for the Travelling community.

Value of Traveller Youth Service

An Evaluation of the STAG Traveller Youth Service (Clarity, 2009b) found young Travellers' opinions of the programme to be overwhelmingly positive. The report found that the TYS offers young people from the Travelling community opportunities to engage with activities which might otherwise be unavailable

or inaccessible to them, as well as providing “what might be considered respite for children from accommodation which is often unsuitable and sometimes completely inappropriate for those types of activities.”

Gaps in Traveller Youth Service

The evaluation also identified key gaps within the Traveller Youth Service. Young Travellers and their parents felt there should be a wider variety of activities for young people in the TYS, as well as more gender specific programmes. Those running the service identified the following gaps:

- need to enhance culturally appropriate activities
- more resources needed to work with Traveller children (aged 6-9 yrs)
- more specifically targeted initiatives/programmes
- greater parental support, involvement and volunteering on the programme

The management committee identified the need to engage young Traveller men in programmes, the need for culturally appropriate sexual health programmes, the need to redefine youthwork provision and practice in relation to Travellers and the need to network with mainstream youth service provision as specific gaps. A youth advisory group which comprised of representatives from various agencies responsible for the delivery of generic youth services within the geographical area covered by TYS highlighted similar service gaps. However, they viewed increased networking, specific programmes to deal with issues such as mental health and suicide as being particularly important.

Changing demographic of ethnic minorities in the area

Nolan (2006) highlighted the challenges faced by the Unaccompanied Minors Task Group and the UNITE Network as a result of the closing of hostels in the area. This presented difficulties in relation to continuing to provide supports to this target group.

Gaps in services for ethnic minorities

A consultation with ethnic minorities living in the DLR area undertaken as part of the development of the Anti-Racism and Diversity Action Plan (Roe, 2007) highlighted a number of gaps in relation to services for children and young people from ethnic minorities. In terms of education, the need for additional resource teachers for children and young people from ethnic minority groups was considered to be a very significant issue.

Other issues raised included the need for ethnic minority groups to be represented within the educational system, the education and training of children, parents and teachers on cultural and religious differences, the need for greater representation of ethnic minorities on the education curriculum and the teaching of broad and inclusive cultural and religious education. The provision of a drop-in centre in the area, which would help children and young people from ethnic minorities to integrate, was also suggested (King, 2008).

Lack of knowledge of services

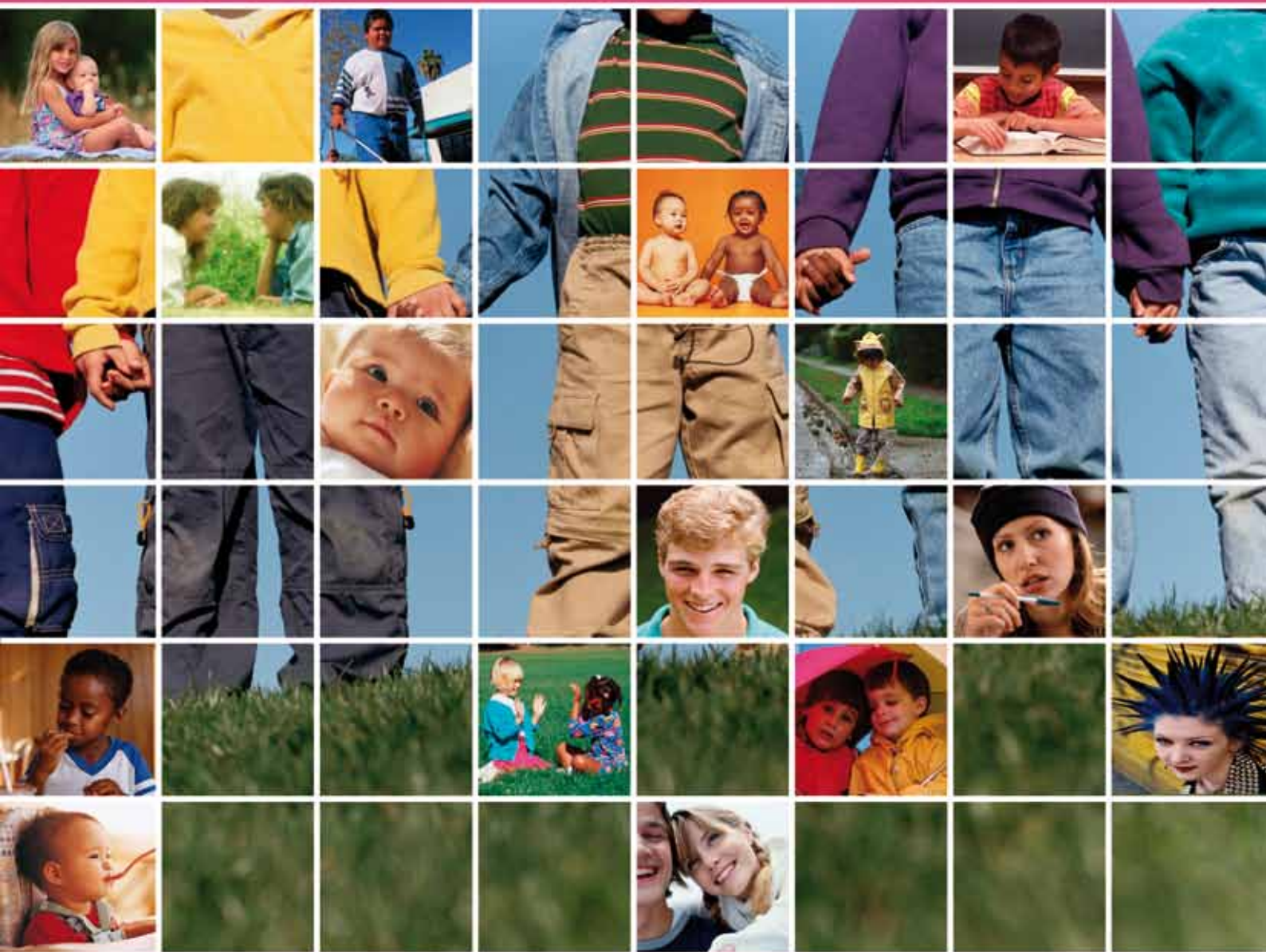
In relation to ethnic minorities, the Social Inclusion Profile of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (Watters, 2009) found there is a lack of knowledge of local services and supports among this group as well as a lack of proactivity on the part of some of the services.

Summary of key gaps and recommendations:

- There is a perceived gap in social work services, public health nursing, and education and child developmental assessments among parents of children from the Travelling community
- Gaps in youth services for Travellers includes work with six to nine year olds, more specifically targeted initiatives/programmes, to engage young Traveller men, culturally appropriate sexual health programmes, mental health and suicide programmes
- There is a need to redefine youthwork provision and practice in relation to Travellers and to network with mainstream youth service provision
- More comprehensive policy and practice procedures are needed in terms of equality proofing services for the Travelling community in order to address the mistrust of mainstream services among this group
- The provision of services to unaccompanied minors living in the area is becoming increasingly difficult due to the changing demographic of this group
- Key gaps in relation to services for children and young people from ethnic minorities are in the area of education, in particular the lack of resource teachers and teacher training
- The provision of a drop-in centre which would cater for all children and young people from ethnic minorities in the area in terms of recreation and integration was recommended
- Local services need to be more proactive in relation to making themselves aware to ethnic minorities

Section 8:

Services for Children and Young People at Risk



National policies

The **National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016** definition of poverty is:

“People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society.”

The Combat Poverty Agency defines social exclusion as:

“The process whereby certain groups are pushed to the margins of society and prevented from participating by virtue of their poverty, low education or inadequate life skills. This distances them from jobs, income and educational opportunities as well as social and community networks. They have little access to power and decision making bodies and little chance of influencing decisions or policies that affect them and little chance of bettering their standard of living.”

The overall objective of the **National Action Plan for Social Inclusion** is to eliminate consistent poverty by 2016. The plan sets out a comprehensive programme of action to address poverty and social exclusion comprising 12 high level goals and around 150 targets across all policy areas. These targeted actions are designed to mobilise resources to address *“long standing and serious social deficits with the ultimate aim of achieving the objective of reducing consistent poverty.”*

Definition of youth at risk

McGearty (2009) identified three broad sub groups within the young people “at risk” category:

- Those who are at risk of leaving school early
- Those who are already out of school but engaged with an alternative education/training initiative
- Those who are out of school and unattached to any services or supports.

Key local research

Key research relating to services for children and young people at risk in the DLR area includes:

- Clarity Research Development and Training Ltd. (2009) *Family Support in Loughlinstown/Shanganagh RAPID Area: An Exploratory Study*.
- Curley Consulting (2009) *Mapping of Family Support Services in Dún-Laoghaire Rathdown County*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- Dún Laoghaire Youth Information Centre and Youth Choices (2008) *‘I’ve had enough, I’m outta here’: A guide for young people in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown area*.
- McGearty, S. (2009) *Profiling of Services for at risk youth in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.
- McKeown, K, Haase, T., Pratschke, J. (2004) *Marking Life Better for Families: Evaluation of Springboard Project in Loughlinstown*. Dublin: East Coast Area Health Board.
- McKeown, K. and Fitzgerald, G. (2007) *Mounttown Neighbourhood Youth and Family Project: An evaluation*.
- Nolan, A. (2006) *Profile of Vulnerable Groups*. Dún Laoghaire: Department of Community and Enterprise Dún Laoghaire- Rathdown County Council.
- Redmond (2004) *Moving Beyond the Barriers: An Inter-agency Research Study on Early School Leaving in the Dún Laoghaire area*. Dublin: Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Local Drugs Task Force, Southside Partnership and Dún Laoghaire VEC.
- Watters, N. (2009) *Social Inclusion Profile of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown*. Dublin: Southside Partnership.

Mapping of services for youth at risk

McGearty (2009) provides a profile of services for at risk youth in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown. A guide for young people in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown area produced by Dún Laoghaire Youth Information Centre and Youth Choices (2008) also profiles services for young people at risk such as early school leavers.

Key stakeholders

- Barnardos
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- HSE
- Local Drugs Task Forces (LDTF)
- Southside Partnership

Barnardos is an independent charity which works with children and young people at risk in the DLR area providing services such as family support, after-schools projects and crèche and pre-school services. The concentration of services is on 1 to 5 year olds, but they also work with children up to the age of 8 in a group setting and up to the age of 12 on an individual basis. Barnardos work with around 300 children in three Barnardos centres in the DLR area (Nolan 2006).

The **Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform** run the following projects for young people at risk in the area:

- **Garda Youth Diversion Projects** which aim to divert offending juveniles away from criminality and the formal justice system by offering guidance and support to them and their families. Each Garda District in Ireland has a Juvenile Liaison Office, and it is their responsibility to maintain informal contacts with young people at risk, and to liaise with teachers, Health Service Executive staff, School Completion Programme Coordinators, and other Gardaí in their local area.

There are currently 3 Garda Diversion projects in DLR in the following areas:

- Ballyogan - Castle Project
- Loughlinstown and Ballybrack - LAB Project
- Sandyford - SAY Project

Services provided by the **HSE** for children and young people at risk in the area include:

- Child Welfare and Protection Services
- Family Support Services including Springboard, which is a family support initiative that provides services to children and families in need of support. A Springboard Family Support Service currently operates in the Loughlinstown area.

Mounttown Neighbourhood Youth Project is a community-based childcare and family service. It aims to support young people (4-12 years) to remain in the school system through a programme of social, educational and recreational activities.

The **Dún Laoghaire/Rathdown Local Drugs Task Forces (LDTF)** is comprised of a partnership between the statutory, voluntary and community sectors and targets areas experiencing high levels of drug misuse. The focus of LDTF is on the development of community-based initiatives to link in with and add value to the programmes and services already being delivered or planned by the statutory agencies, and to provide a mechanism for the co-ordination of services in these areas. The LDTF runs an addiction service, a drugs and AIDS service, a counselling service and an education and prevention service in Dún Laoghaire.

The LDTF supports a substantial number of initiatives in the county, including:

- The DLR Outreach Project (D.R.O.P)
- The Parachute Project
- The Haniel Drugs Project

- Youth Choices

Southside Partnership is an independent local development organisation serving the County of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. Its aim is to tackle socio-economic disadvantage and social exclusion within all sectors of the community. They work with groups such as Travellers, early school leavers, people with disabilities and refugees and host the Youth at Risk Network.

Gaps and recommendations

High demand on services

While it is recognised that there are excellent local initiatives dealing with young people at risk in the DLR area, such as Garda diversion projects, drug initiatives and the provision of new facilities, communities believe the scale of the problem means that these services are insufficient (McGearty, 2009).

Unmet needs

An evaluation of the Mounttown Neighbourhood Youth and Family Project (McKeown et al, 2007), found that, despite positive intervention, there is an underlying unmet need for young people at the end of the programme particularly in relation to emotional difficulties and peer problems.

More early intervention programmes

Early intervention for youth at risk was identified as a key area for additional support in a recent Social Inclusion profile of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (Watters, 2009). These interventions need to be customized for young people at risk, including early interventions in disadvantaged areas and at pre-school level. The need to prioritise the most disengaged young people who are at the greatest risk of exclusion in adulthood was also highlighted.

Similarly, a report conducted by Clarity (2009a) in the Loughlinstown / Shanganagh area highlights the need for more early and preventative intervention programmes for families beginning to experience difficulties, particularly more information and awareness programmes around drug and alcohol abuse. The lack of targeted youth services for young people at risk in the Shanganagh, Rathallagh and Loughlinstown areas was also highlighted. The report suggests the development of more locally based peer support programmes and locally based prevention programmes aimed at young people at risk in these areas.

Alcohol and drug abuse

Alcohol and drug abuse and other activities related to these problems such as anti social behaviour and risky sexual behaviour were identified as the most significant problems affecting at risk youth in the DLR area (McGearty, 2009).

Disadvantaged communities state that existing services are not providing sufficient support to local communities, particularly in relation to alcohol abuse and the growing problem of anti social behaviour.

Aggression

An evaluation of Springboard Project in Loughlinstown (McKeown et al, 2004) found that parents having difficulty managing their children was a significant issue for parents in the area. In terms of services, the report recommended that tailored programmes that would deal with aggression presented by children and other initiatives such as workshops for relaxation, exercise, cooking, self-esteem etc. be provided for these young people at risk.

More unstructured recreation

A Social Inclusion Profile of DLR (Watters, 2009) states that young people at risk, early school leavers, and young people in general, do not have any place to 'hang out' and undertake safe activities as a group. The report highlights the need for a large level of activities for this group in appropriate facilities, which if not provided can lead to anti-social behaviour.

The study states that services for early school leavers or those at risk of early school leaving in the DLR area are on the whole under resourced to cope with the extent of this issue. The need to take a family support approach to young people at risk was also suggested.

Waiting lists

While it is acknowledged that out of school provision for young people at risk is reasonably well resourced, McGearty (2009) identifies a significant cohort of at risk youth unable to avail of these services. For example, there were 50 young people on the waiting list for the DLCTC in February 2009. He states there is a need to invest resources to expand or replicate innovative alternative programmes such as the Alternative Learning Pathways programmes, or through resourcing additional initiatives and programmes through CTCs and Youthreach centres which can cater for this cohort of youth at risk and provide them with viable alternative routes into other training education and/or employment opportunities.

Interagency co-ordination

Communities in the DLR area identified the need for key agencies to come together more often and to respond more effectively and in a more timely manner to major social issues, such as anti social behaviour and drug abuse affecting young people (Mc Gearty, 2009).

Mc Gearty (2009) highlights the need for a co-ordinated interagency strategy to deal with at risk youth due to the large number of agencies involved in working with this group in the DLR area. While many agencies have individual strategies to deal with at risk youth, the report states that overall co-ordination and integration of work on the issues affecting these young people, such as alcohol and drug addiction services for teenagers, mental health services, and out of hours services, could be improved with more county wide approaches. This approach would also fit with the strategic plan of the DLRCC and DLR County Development Board.

Service providers

McGearty (2009) makes the following specific recommendations in terms of service providers dealing with young people at risk:

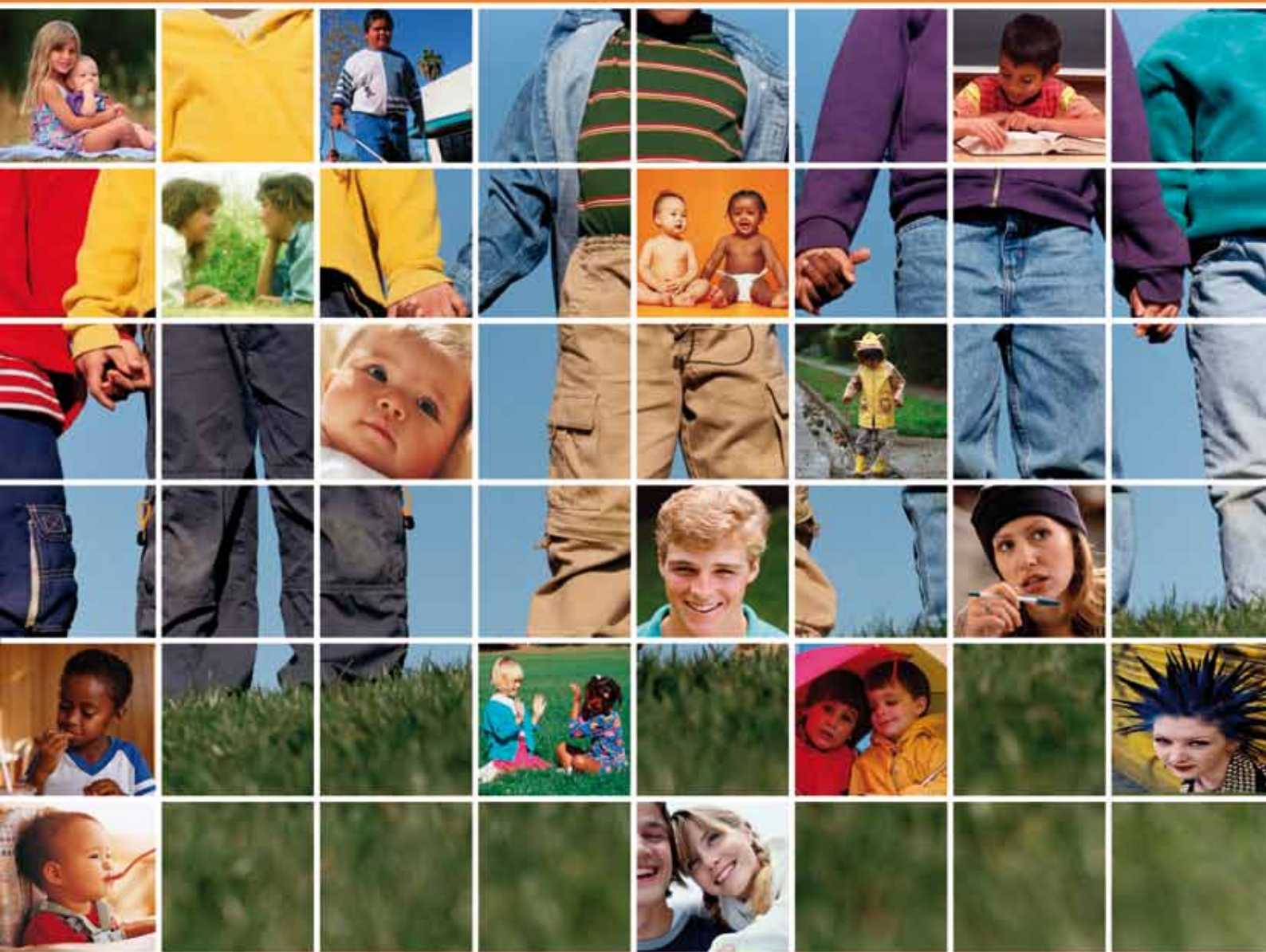
- The Youth at Risk Network support the development of good practice guidelines and policies for all who work with at risk youth and consultation with young people at risk on an ongoing basis.
- Southside Partnership/ the Youth at Risk Network should support and facilitate closer collaboration between agencies including the youth services and communities in disadvantaged areas. This could take the form of coordinating local area-based Youth at Risk sub-groups around specific issues.
- Southside Partnership should build on its strengths at community level and support and facilitate locally based initiatives to address gaps in services for youth at risk with the emphasis on volunteerism.
- The need for sharing of information regarding existing services targeting at risk youth.

Summary of key gaps and recommendations:

- While there are excellent structures and local initiatives in place for young people at risk, the extent of the problem means that these services are often insufficient
- Alcohol and drug abuse and other related activities are the key issues affecting young people at risk in the area
- There is a need for more early and preventative intervention programmes for young people at risk, especially at a local level
- More specific programmes dealing with aggression are needed for young people at risk
- More unstructured recreation facilities and activities are needed for young people at risk, particularly somewhere safe to hang out
- There are significant waiting lists for some out of school provision for young people at risk in the area
- Due to the large number of agencies involved in working with young people at risk in the area, a co-ordinated interagency strategy to deal with this group is recommended
- There should be more sharing of information between existing services targeting at risk youth
- There should be closer collaboration between agencies such as youth services and communities in disadvantaged areas

Section 9:

Recreation services for Children and Young People



National Policies

Objective D of the **National Children's Strategy, *Our Children — Their Lives*** (2000:57), states that “children will have access to play, sport, recreation and cultural activities to enrich their experience of childhood.” The Strategy also identified the need for more opportunities for community based play, leisure and cultural activities.

The **National Play Policy** and the **National Recreation Policy** were responses to this need. The National Play Policy *Ready, Steady, Play!* (2004) is aimed at children under the age of 12 and its purpose is to create better play opportunities for young children. The National Recreation Policy, *Teenspace* (2007), is aimed at young people between the ages of 12 and 18, and it provides a strategic framework for the promotion of better recreational opportunities for that age group.

One of the goals of **Towards 2016** (2006:41), the Framework for Social Partnership Agreement, is that “every child should have access to quality play, sport, recreation and cultural activities to enrich their experience of childhood.”

Other key policies include:

- Department of Education and Science (2001) *Youthwork Act*

Key local research

Key research relating to recreational services for children and young people in the DLR area includes:

- Roe, S (2008) *A Feasibility Study for the development of a Youth Café in the Dún Laoghaire Area*. Dublin: Dún Laoghaire VEC and Southside Partnership.

Key stakeholders

- Catholic Youth Care
- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
- Dún Laoghaire VEC and County Dublin VEC

Catholic Youth Care (CYC) delivers youth services in the two parts of the county (Dún Laoghaire and Dundrum/Rathdown). CYC's initiatives and programmes include programmes, training, events and activities for youth clubs/groups and adult leaders, summer programmes, programmes which promote social inclusion, youth arts activities, crime diversion programmes, drug education and prevention initiatives, adventure Sports Programmes and a Youth Information Centre in Dún Laoghaire.

Dún Laoghaire Youth Service is a joint project between **Catholic Youth Care** and **Dún Laoghaire VEC**. Its catchment area covers Dún Laoghaire VEC area including Loughlinstown, Ballybrack, Cois Cairn, Sallynoggin, Mounttown as well as central Dún Laoghaire. Dún Laoghaire Youth Service supports youth work activities, develops initiatives, identifies funding and promotes good youth work practices throughout these areas. The services of Dún Laoghaire Youth Service are run from community based centres throughout the Dún Laoghaire VEC area.

Dundrum/Rathdown Youth Service is a joint project of **Catholic Youth Care** and **County Dublin VEC**. It is the youth service provider in the Rathdown area of the County of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council oversees the following recreation services in the county:

- **Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Sports Partnership (DLRSP)** brings together various interests such as education, local government, sports interests and health boards to maximise the impact of investment in sport at local level. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Sports Partnership Programmes run programmes for children and young people with and without physical disabilities.
- **Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Sports Development Office** runs holiday sports camps, weekly sports coaching, coach training programmes, after-school sports programmes and child protection awareness training throughout the county. The aim of DLRCC Sports Development Office is “to increase participation in sporting and recreational activities throughout the county, across all groups”.

- **Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Leisure Services** manage public leisure facilities for DLR County Council and has facilities in Glenalbyn, Loughlinstown, Meadowbrook and Monkstown. The goal of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Leisure Services is to promote the benefits of sport on a non profit basis for the whole community. DLR Leisure Services work closely with DLR Sports Partnership.
- **Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Public Library Service** runs numerous events and activities for children and young people in libraries in the area throughout the year. As well as annual national festivals such as Bealtaine and Saoire they run activities such as story time sessions for young children.
- **Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Arts Office** runs the following programmes:
 - A **Youth Arts Programme** which has a youth-led approach and works in partnership with local youth service providers and DLR Community Development Section.
 - A **Primary Schools Programme** called Creative Classrooms which is run in partnership with Blackrock Education Centre.

Dún Laoghaire VEC and **Co. Dublin VEC** are the main agencies with responsibility for youth services in DLR. Dún Laoghaire VEC covers the old Dún Laoghaire county area and Co. Dublin VEC covers the Dundrum/ Rathdown area.

Dún Laoghaire VEC provides a wide range of services and supports to enable the delivery of a variety of programmes, projects and services to young people. This is done in partnerships with voluntary groups, voluntary youth organisations and other national service providers. There are over 8,000 young people engaged in youth work programmes, services and activities in the Dún Laoghaire area and over 460 voluntary youth leaders. Dún Laoghaire VEC was also involved in the development of a Youth Café in the area (www.dlvec.ie/youth).

Gaps and recommendations

More recreation facilities and activities

The provision of developmental/play activities for children is one of the key areas noted for additional support in the recent social inclusion profile of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (Watters, 2009).

A mapping of family support services (Curley Consulting, 2009) highlighted the lack of proper facilities for teenagers and young children in the area, particularly the lack of services for 6 to 12 year olds. While a number of after school programmes are available, there is a lack of places where they can go and socialise with their own age group.

More unstructured recreation for teenagers

DLRCC Draft Development Plan 2010-2016 states that increased recognition should be given to participation in non-competitive recreational activity such as playgrounds and multi-use games areas (MUGAs). The Development Plan states that special recognition should be given to targeting recreational facilities for teenagers. A report exploring the support needs of families in the Loughlinstown/Shanganagh RAPID area (Clarity, 2009a) also identifies the need for dedicated youth facilities, including drop-in facilities as a gap in provision the area.

Similarly, youth service providers interviewed in relation to the development of a Youth Café in Dún Laoghaire (Roe, 2008) identify the need for more unstructured activities for young people in the area. Principally, they highlight the lack of facilities for teenagers to hang out in the area. They believe this lack of facilities is leading to anti-social behaviour and alcohol and drug misuse, which in turn is leading to conflict between young people and the Gardaí.

According to young people interviewed in the Youth Café Feasibility Study (Roe, 2008), having nothing to do and nowhere to go and the lack of affordable recreational activities are among the key issues affecting young people in the area. They also stated that having nothing to do leads to underage drinking. Young people identified having somewhere to hang out, such as a Youth Café, as the single biggest need of young people in the Dún Laoghaire area.

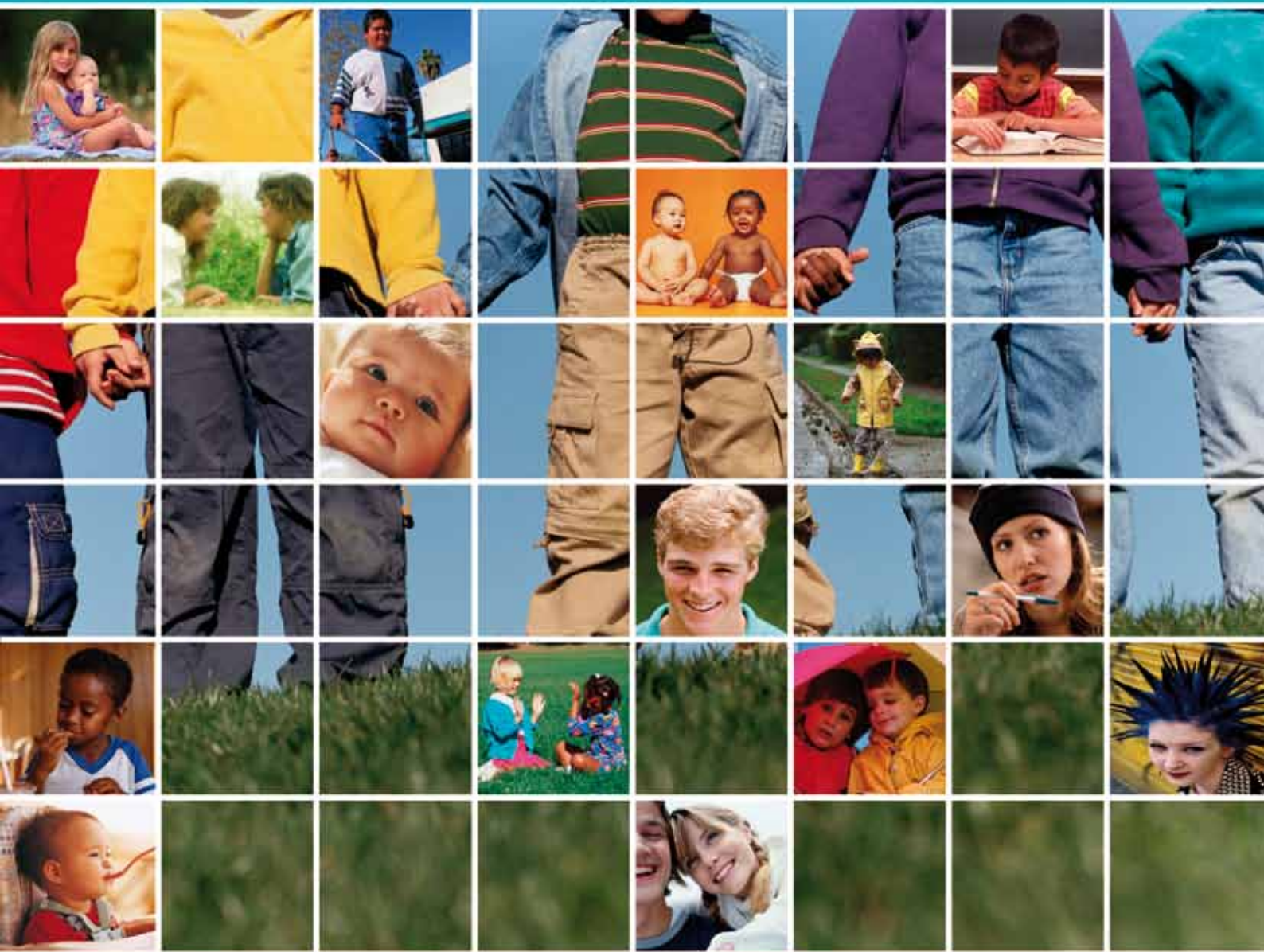
Recreation facilitating integration

The Anti-Racism and Diversity Plan (2007-2010) (www.dlrard.ie) identifies the importance of sporting programmes, both organised in schools and by clubs, in terms of integrating young people from ethnic minorities into the area and into Irish society.

Summary of key gaps and recommendations:

- There are a lack of affordable recreation facilities and activities for children and young people in the area
- There is a need for more unstructured recreation for teenagers
- There is a need for more facilities such as the Youth Café in Dún Laoghaire where young people can hang out
- Lack of facilities for teenagers is leading to anti-social behaviour and alcohol and drug misuse
- Involvement of young people from ethnic minorities in recreation programmes is recommended to aid integration into the area

Section 10: Future Steps



Introduction

The following recommendations of future steps for the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Children's Services Committee are drawn from the literature reviewed for this study. They are divided in the following themes:

- Early Childhood Services
- Health Services for Children and Young People
- Mental Health Services for Children and Young People
- Services for Children and Young People with a Disability
- Education Services for Children and Young People
- Services for Children and Young People from Ethnic Minorities and the Travelling Community
- Services for Children and Young People at risk
- Recreation Services for Children and Young People

Early Childhood Services

Key stakeholders identified in relation to early childhood services in DLR include:

- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Childcare Committee (DLRCCC)
- Southside Childcare Action Network (SCAN)

Future steps identified relating to early childhood services in DLR include:

- More affordable, quality, community based childcare is needed in the area;
- There is a need to improve co-ordination, reduce complexity and increase capacity of community childcare in the area;
- More childcare provision will be needed in the areas of Ballybrack, Blackrock and Glencullen in the future;
- More employer-based childcare is needed in the area;
- A more effective, secure, longer term childcare staffing model is needed;
- More flexibility is needed in childcare provision;
- A more progressive approach to regulation of childcare is needed;
- More accessible and affordable childcare training is needed to higher levels;
- The curriculum in the childcare setting needs to be examined;
- The formalisation of the childminding sector needs to be addressed;
- More information should be made available to ethnic minorities in relation to accessing childcare in the area;
- Greater interagency collaboration is needed in terms of childcare in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown area.

Health Services for Children and Young People

The key stakeholder identified in relation to health services for children and young people in DLR:

- Health Service Executive (HSE)

Future steps identified relating to health services for children and young people in DLR include:

- More speech and language therapy needs to be made available for children and young people in the area;
- The HSE and the Department of Education should provide additional support for Speech and Language Programmes;
- A pilot Speech and Language Programme should be rolled out in the area.

Mental Health Services for Children and Young People

Key stakeholders identified in relation to mental health services for children and young people in DLR include:

- HSE Psychological Services
- St John of God Services
- Teen Counselling Service

Future steps identified relating to mental health services for children and young people in DLR include:

- There is a need for additional mental health supports and services for children and young people in the area;
- There is a need for suicide prevention programmes aimed at young people and support services for communities affected by suicide;
- Waiting lists for community therapeutic services such as the Lucena Clinic need to be shortened;
- Waiting lists for the National Educational Psychological Service need to be shortened;
- More specialised counselling supports are needed for local schools;
- More counselling services should be available to children and young people in local schools and sharing of resources between schools should be considered.

Services for Children and Young People with a Disability

Key stakeholders identified in relation to services for children and young people with a disability in DLR include:

- HSE
- St John of God Services

Future steps identified relating to services for children and young people with a disability in DLR include:

- There is a need for additional supports and services for children and young people with a disability in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown area, particularly in the area of education;
- There is a need for additional assessments for behavioural and learning difficulties and the implementation of timely and appropriate interventions;
- There is a need for an equal focus on physical and intellectual disabilities in terms of service provision;
- There is a need for more support for the families of children and young people with a disability.

Education Services for Children and Young People

Key stakeholders identified in relation to education services for children and young people in DLR include:

- Beechpark Clinical Services
- Department of Education and Science
- Dún Laoghaire VEC
- National Council for Special Education
- St John of Gods
- The Learning Centre for Autistic Children

Future steps identified relating to education services for children and young people in DLR include:

- There is a need for greater availability of assessments for learning difficulties and implementation of interventions and support;
- There is a need for more after school services, particularly in areas of social disadvantage;
- There is a need for more services to support schools to respond to persistent absenteeism;
- Alternative education programmes should be provided for young people that are persistently absent

is recommended by some schools;

- There is a need for preparation programmes and follow-up support for young people making the transition from primary to secondary level;
- Schools, youth services, and community groups need to work closely together to prevent early school leaving;
- More targeted educational programmes are needed for specific groups such as early school leavers who are young mothers, young asylum seekers, young unqualified male school leavers and young early school leavers with drug issues;
- There should be greater dissemination of information between local secondary schools and training centres in relation to early school leavers;
- A community based youth guidance schemes with comprehensive integrated tracking systems, drop in, and outreach services is recommended for early school leavers.

Services for Children and Young People from Ethnic Minorities and the Travelling Community

Key stakeholders identified in relation to services for children and young people from ethnic minorities and the Travelling community in DLR include:

- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- Dún Laoghaire Refugee Project (DRP)
- Dún Laoghaire VEC
- Southside Traveller Action Group (STAG)

Future steps identified relating to services for children and young people from ethnic minorities and the Travelling community in DLR include:

- Social work, health and education services need to cater for the specific needs of the Travelling community;
- Youth services for Travellers need to cater for younger children and young Traveller men;
- More specifically targeted initiatives/programmes are needed for young Travellers such as culturally appropriate sexual health programmes, mental health and suicide programmes;
- There is a need to redefine youth work provision and practice in relation to Travellers;
- Traveller youth services should network with mainstream youth services;
- More comprehensive policy and practice procedures are needed in terms of equality proofing services for the Travelling community in order to address the mistrust of mainstream services among this group;
- Educational services for children and young people from ethnic minorities need to be reviewed;
- Local services need to be more proactive in relation to making themselves aware to ethnic minorities;
- A drop-in centre which would cater for all children and young people from ethnic minorities in the area in terms of recreation and integration should be considered.

Services for Children and Young People at Risk

Key stakeholders identified in relation to services for children and young people at risk in DLR include:

- Barnardos
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- HSE
- Local Drugs Task Forces (LDTF)
- Southside Partnership

Future steps identified relating to services for children and young people at risk in DLR include:

- More alcohol and drug misuse programmes need to be provided to young people at risk;
- There is a need for more early and preventative intervention programmes for young people at risk, especially at a local level;
- More specific programmes dealing with aggression are needed for young people at risk;
- More unstructured recreation facilities and activities are needed for young people at risk, particularly somewhere safe to hang out;
- Waiting lists for some out of school provision for young people at risk need to be shortened;
- A co-ordinated interagency strategy to deal with young people at risk is recommended;
- There should be more sharing of information between existing services targeting at risk youth;
- There should be closer collaboration between agencies such as youth services and communities in disadvantaged areas, which could be facilitated by agencies such as Southside Partnership or the Youth at Risk Network;
- Agencies such as Southside Partnership should build on their strengths at community level and support and facilitate locally based initiatives to address gaps in services for youth at risk with the emphasis on volunteerism.

Recreation Services for Children and Young People

Key stakeholders identified in relation to recreation services for children and young people in DLR include:

- Catholic Youth Care
- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
- Dún Laoghaire VEC and County Dublin VEC

Future steps identified relating to recreation services for children and young people in DLR include:

- More affordable recreation facilities and activities for children and young people are needed in the area;
- There is a need for more unstructured recreation facilities for teenagers to hang out such as the Youth Café in Dún Laoghaire;
- Involvement of young people from ethnic minorities in recreation programmes is recommended to aid integration into the area.

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