

# POVERTY IN SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY – DEVELOPING OUR UNDERSTANDING AND COLLABORATIVE PLANNING 2023 Youth Consultation Report



## Poverty in South Dublin County:

### Developing our Understanding and Collaborative Planning 2023 Youth Consultation Report

#### Introduction

This report captures inputs and recommendations shared in four youth consultations held under the theme of 'Poverty in South Dublin County: Developing our Understanding and Collaborative Planning'. Consultations were held in April 2023 with St Mark's Community School and Firhouse Educate Together Secondary School in Tallaght Library, and with Collinstown Park Community College and St Kevin's Community College in North Clondalkin Library. Two consultations were held in May 2023 with St Aidans Community School Tallaght and with the Dublin South Comhairle na nÓG in Ronanstown Youth Service in Clondalkin. Over one hundred young people from Tallaght and Clondalkin participated in the consultations.

The consultations followed on from the Poverty in South Dublin County seminar held on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022 in the Institute of Population Health, Trinity College Dublin, Tallaght. Key stakeholders working across South Dublin County were invited to participate in the consultation. Recommendations and inputs from stakeholders are set out in a report on the seminar which is available to read [here](#).

As stated in the preceding report a number of contextual factors led to the seminar including:

- Discussions at the Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) to develop a county wide Child Poverty Plan,
- The commencement of the European Child Guarantee, which aims to ensure all children have access to the services and supports they need,
- The imminent development of a Local Community and Economic Plan, and the desire to ensure it is informed by those living and working in the community.

In line with these objectives the consultations sought to follow on from the seminar and gather the views of young people living in and going to school in Clondalkin and Tallaght to inform key recommendations for the Local Community and Economic Plan.

A Working Group was established to plan and promote the seminar and youth consultations, with representatives from South Dublin County Council (Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme, and the Social and Community Development Section), Tusla (CYPSC), The Institute for Population Health, TCD, and the two Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme areas in the County: The Childhood Development Initiative and Blueskies.



## Consultation feedback

The consultations used a World Café methodology<sup>1</sup> to engage with participants and gather feedback on the themes below relating to poverty. Under each theme participants were asked to consider their concerns, community strengths and assets through the lens of poverty. Participants were also asked to explore emerging issues and provide recommendations for change and improvement. All participants provided recommendations at the end of each world café discussion. Feedback from the consultation is set out in the next section.

Themes
Children and families
Community safety
Community spaces, services and supports
Food and energy poverty
Healthcare
Housing
Education
Further education and training



<sup>1</sup> The World Café methodology is designed to generate and support large group conversational dialogue. Participants are invited to discuss a topic in small groups. Groups are set up at tables covered with flipchart paper and pens and discuss a topic in rounds of twenty minutes. At the end of twenty minutes participants move to the next table. A host provides a briefing on the topic and asks questions while participants discuss and write thoughts and recommendations on the flipchart paper.

## Children and Families

Participants exploring the children and families topic focused on a number of key issues.

### Youth services

In relation to engaging with local services, such as youth clubs and community centers, many participants commented that they were aware of these as assets in their community but rarely engaged or made use of them. Reasons given ranged from a preference for 'unstructured hangouts', the facilities not being available where they live, or not feeling safe walking to community spaces in the evening. The latter is affected by poor lighting and a lack of safe cycle lanes. The need for better lighting was emphasized frequently by young people and particularly by young women.

The majority agreed that youth clubs are important and young people would be well served by the development of unstructured 'hang out' zones. It was suggested that hanging around and socializing is important for young people and could be better facilitated with youth services being available in the late evenings and at weekends. The Square in Tallaght is commonly used as a 'hang out' zone but it is not suitable to spend long periods of time. Liffey Valley Shopping Centre is used by young people in Clondalkin. The Guards have developed late-night soccer leagues in Esker, and it was recommended that more of these be developed across the county. Some youth services were acknowledged as excellent, with Quarryvale and Ronanstown mentioned. No participants had participated in SDCC family days.

More free activities, MUGA's and basketball courts in parks were referenced. WiFi needs to be available and working in MUGA's. More seating should be available at MUGA's so young people can socialize in between playing. Creative spaces and pursuits are also important for young people who are not interested in sports. Young people also spoke about feeling stereotyped which impacts on how they are treated at times and targeted by Gardaí. It is important to build a relationship between the community and Gardaí which would be assisted by community days where people can meet and get to know each other.

### Family supports

Participants noted that there are some financial supports available for families such as children's allowance, one-parent family payment and back to school allowance. These are regarded as an important resource for low-income families. Food banks are used frequently, along with breakfast clubs and hot meals, when available in schools and these are a valuable support for many young people. Some youth clubs provide healthy free meals, which is appreciated. Where parents are separated, they should be afforded the opportunity to live in social housing in the same area, so the children have easy access to both parents. Addiction affects many families and the community and requires increased responses and supports. Family support seems hard to find and navigate – they are perceived as confusing and slow-moving services.

### Transport

At the time of the consultations bus services to some areas of Tallaght had been withdrawn after 6pm, due to anti-social behavior. The wide-ranging repercussions of this were noted with participants discussing how it impacted access to food shopping options, access to services, transport back home from jobs and third level education. More footpaths along Kiltipper Road were requested.

## Recommendations

- More outdoor facilities (benches, picnic tables) near community centres, youth centres, MUGA facilities and parks.
- Provide outdoor phone charging facilities in parks so people know there is somewhere they can go when they have low phone battery.
- Youth services and community services to share information with schools to increase awareness of what they offer.
- Skateboarding and rollerblading facilities.
- More street and park lighting.
- More CCTV in parks / open spaces.
- More Gardaí patrols.
- Increase recreational activities for teenagers.



## Community Safety

While one World Café table was dedicated to exploring the theme of community safety specifically, the issue was consistently referred to within the other table discussions. Participants highlighted the multifaceted nature and impact of community safety with the topic also receiving the most significant number of recommendations. It was acknowledged that older people, ethnic minorities, LGBTQI+ Community and women and girls are most at risk of being subjected to anti-social behavior and feeling unsafe in their community. Participants described strategies that they draw on to stay safe such as videocalling with someone when walking or only walking with a group for added security. There is a sense of community in Clondalkin, and people look out for each other, which helps the feeling of safety when walking alone.

### Intimidation

Participants expressed concerns in relation to intimidation which includes violence (shootings and knife crime); drug dealing and drug related intimidation; being followed (especially by adult men); men filming young girls without consent; verbal abuse and intimidation; not feeling safe walking alone;

catcalling and wolf whistling; sexual abuse; gangs of young people; group intimidation; drunk people; anti-social behavior. Some shops sell personal protection equipment such as alarms and keychains which make young women feel safer if walking alone.

### **Public amenities**

Community safety fears extended to reluctance to use public spaces because of anti-social behavior. Participants cited the frequent dangerous use of motorbikes, scramblers, 'joyriding' and, fires which have an impact on feeling safe in parks, estate greens and local areas. There are perceived 'no-go areas' like some fields in estates, along with some roads and estates that were named where drug dealing takes place and are considered dangerous to go into after 5pm. Anti-social behavior takes place in different spaces and impacts different groups e.g. destruction of playgrounds results in reduced places for children to play or anti-social behavior on public transport leading to regular schedules being disrupted. It is difficult to feel safe also when there is a lack of action by bystanders and slow response time from Gardaí. There are needles and other drug paraphernalia on the ground in parks and estates.

There are a good number of football pitches within the county, which is appreciated, but more lighting and CCTV is required around the facilities. The youth centres in Brookfield, Fettercairn and MacUilliam are a good resource for young people. The MacUilliam area paths, trees and green have been upgraded recently, which is welcomed. Lighting was referred to on several occasions with Jobstown Park, MacUilliam, Collinstown and Griffeen Park receiving mention as needing lighting improvement.

It is important that community buildings look and are open and accessible. If not, the perceived image is poor. Participants said they felt some community centres in Clondalkin could be better utilized but feel like a "closed shop". If community centres and youth programmes advertised more widely and intensively and highlighted that they are affordable or free there might be a greater take-up of programmes. Make it as easy as possible for families and young people to know about things and engage. Visible Garda presence is important, so the community looks and feels safer for young people and families. Regular Garda patrols are needed.

### **Transport**

Improvement of public transport was stressed. Participants noted that they often wait for buses long past the scheduled arrival time. It is not unusual for buses to be significantly delayed. Intimidation, anti-social behavior and drug use occurs at bus stops and so passengers aim to time their arrival closely to the bus schedule to avoid potentially dangerous situations. Some participants stated they are avoiding public transport at the moment because of ongoing anti-social behavior towards buses and at bus stops. One participant relayed their experience of being on a bus recently when a brick was thrown through the window. When the bus stopped young people threw fireworks through the window. Some LUAS stops were perceived as having no poor security and being a hotspot for drug dealing and anti-social behavior. The condition of speed bumps on roads and location of cycle lanes are not suitable for cycling.

### **Recommendations**

- More CCTV cameras.
- More streetlights.
- Enforcement and checks on scrambler and motorbike licenses.
- Regular Gardaí patrols, particularly post 11pm.

- Initiatives to address early intervention and prevention of drug use and drug dealing by young people.
- Increased activities for young people – particularly young men.
- Increased security on public transport.
- Increased frequency of buses and accuracy of bus schedule.
- Targeted gender safety initiatives to address the need for behavior change by young men towards young women; increased awareness by young men about how they can support young women to feel safer to deter involvement in intimidation and assault.
- More information on how to access support in relation to intimidation prevention.
- Games consoles, pool tables, indoor and outdoor facilities in youth centres.
- Provide awareness and education on racism to try and prevent hate crime/racist incidents.
- Foster a better relationship between young people and Gardaí.



## Community Spaces, Services and Supports

### Youth facilities

Participant feedback generally focused on community spaces and services under this theme with young people stating they would like to see more basketball, volleyball and tennis courts in the local parks along with astro pitches. More safe places to spend time safely in parks and community centres was raised where young people can go to use a gym and do activities such as basketball and tennis. The cost of activities is prohibitive. It was acknowledged that there is a plethora of services within certain areas but not many people know about them – more easily accessible information in relation to this would be helpful. The North Clondalkin Library is a fabulous resource and offers great services and clubs.

Interestingly, only one participant in the Tallaght library consultation attended a youth club, Foróige. Three in the Clondalkin library consultation attend Ronanstown. Few could name other youth services. Only a small number were active in sports on a weekly basis, naming boxing, swimming, football and

dancing. Communication of activities via social media and posters is the best way for young people to become aware of what is available. Young people need to be consulted on the design of future teen spaces.

### Perception of public spaces

Sheltered areas, along with benches / picnic tables in parks where friends can meet, was suggested. This needs to go in hand with parks feeling and being safe spaces to spend time. Area imagery was also raised. Litter in areas where participants lived along with graffiti and dog poo in parks and pathways are a problem. More bins and a targeted approach such as enforcement of fines for people caught littering is needed. More frequent cleaning of public spots like canals and park waterways would help increase usage if people felt that the environment was clean. Bird houses, chillout zones, roller skating areas were additional suggestions. Participants appreciate the painted electricity boxes, they look well. There were mixed feelings towards CCTV with some feeling they will be quickly vandalized and others feeling they offer greater feelings of safety.

Additional comments were that the maintenance of gardens contributes to how an area looks and is perceived but it is not always possible for some families/residents to maintain their own garden to a high standard. Free garden services to support garden maintenance for people with disabilities, older people and one parent families would be useful.

### Recommendations

- Ensure new housing developments have access to community infrastructure e.g. community centres, sports facilities.
- Increase public lighting and use white lighting.
- Increase in public amenities in parks and beside youth and community centres (skateboarding, rollerblading, basketball, volleyball etc courts).
- More bins and anti-littering campaigns.
- Regular clean up in areas where drug paraphernalia is common, and where there is litter/graffiti.
- WiFi in areas that teens use e.g. at MUGA's.
- Seating area in more spaces like MUGA's so young people can hang out while engaging in activities.
- Sheltered spaces outside where young people can meet – few teen friendly spaces available.
- Increased promotion of youth activities and spaces.
- Volunteer garden maintenance programme.



## Food and energy poverty

Under the theme of food and energy poverty a number of participants commented that they were aware of the cost of living being an issue in their home. Salaries are not rising in conjunction with the cost of living. The rising cost of energy and food bills is mentioned frequently at home and use of heating and electricity is being monitored closely in the home. It was acknowledged that this was likely to have an impact on the stress levels and mental health of many families, particularly families at greater risk of low income, such as one parent families. Some people feel shame or stigma in relation to food or energy poverty which in turn can inhibit seeking support.

### Food poverty

In terms of food poverty shop brands are cheaper and some families only buy shop brands. Sugar and processed food were seen as more affordable than vegetables and fresh fruit. Several participants responded that there is not much fresh fruit in their home, it is easier to buy frozen fruit or convenience food. It is easier and cheaper sometimes to go to MacDonalD's for a meal. Some young people commented on the cost of their food choices increasing e.g. chicken roll now €5.50. However, food costs are starting to level off and decrease.

There are some good food initiatives in schools, for example fruit was given out in one school during every second period as a healthy snack. Another school provides a breakfast club which has strong take up. One school leaves free food boxes in a basket at the school exit every afternoon for students to take on their way home. Food poverty was felt to be more visible since the rise in cost of living with participants referring to greater use of food banks and seeing long queues at soup kitchens in some areas. Large food boxes should be available to be taken before school holidays. While food banks are an important resource, they should not be a normal way of life and more sustainable options should be developed.

The young people recognised the importance of access to good food as it impacts quality of life, noting that without appropriate nutrition individuals will have less energy, find it harder to concentrate and do well and are more likely to be sick. It is difficult to shop around for good food when there are only one or two options within walking distance and the family/individual does not have a car. A recent issue with buses not being available in some areas in Tallaght after 6pm had impacted food shopping choices meaning that their family could not always shop around for more affordable deals. There is

an increase in food theft with one young person working in a local shop commenting on baby food and milk being stored behind the check out because theft of these items is so frequent. Basic food necessities are being taken which highlights the need in the community and people should not be penalized for taking these items. Food waste needs to be targeted at all levels – individual and businesses.

Food supports provided through schools were seen as important and having a good take up. A community fridge might be useful where people can take and leave food which might reduce the potential for food waste. The way in which food is provided is important so that food poverty stigma is not reinforced. Community gardens are a good idea and can also help community cohesion. Some suggested workshops to demonstrate how people can grow their own food and promote the concept of self-sufficiency.

### Energy poverty

No participants discussed having solar panels in their own home but referenced their awareness of them being installed in some houses and estates and that they were likely to help reduce energy bills.

Good windows and doors are integral for preventing heat loss, but the cost is prohibitive for many families. There is a long waiting list for residents of social housing to get windows and doors installed. There is not enough support provided to families to manage the demands of the energy crisis.



It would be useful if more information was accessible or provided on how to reduce energy consumption in the home. More sustainable energy options are needed, and all homes should have solar panels to reduce high bills.

### Recommendations

- Access to information about retrofitting grants.
- Reduction in waiting list for upgraded windows and doors.
- Ensure grants are accessible.
- Dissemination of energy saving ideas with information about how they will make a difference to bills.
- All schools to have breakfast clubs and lunch clubs with food basket available at doors.
- Healthy food available and prioritized in schools.
- Provide local food supports in non-stigmatizing way.
- Reduce cost of healthy, non-processed foods.

## Healthcare

Within the healthcare World Café discussions similar themes emerged as at the stakeholder consultation. Participants referenced the need for support to develop and maintain healthy behaviors and the financial, emotional and health impacts of long waiting lists for healthcare. Awareness raising about what kind of health and wellbeing activities young people can do and have access was noted as helpful. It was suggested that targeted awareness raising around drugs is critical, so that young people know the reality of drugs and drug use and can make informed choices.

### Access to healthcare

Feedback in the consultations under the theme of healthcare predominantly focused on access to healthcare with waiting lists for GP's and dental care emerging as common concerns. It was acknowledged that there is some good healthcare provision and GPs but equally some participants felt they had received poor quality of service at times. Greater staffing is required along with better working conditions for staff so we can retain our healthcare workforce. Participants felt we have a clean environment in our hospitals and do provide free healthcare for people with chronic health conditions and illnesses. Participants would like to see more women centered healthcare with GPs giving more attention to women's issues and support for research into women's healthcare. There is reasonable awareness of sexual wellbeing among young people, but it is an issue that requires ongoing awareness raising.

### Mental health

Mental health services for young people were discussed in all groups with the impact of waiting lists being emphasized by many of the young participants. It was not seen in a positive light. Some had experienced really frustrating service provision and felt dismissed and abandoned, in particular when waiting for a diagnosis. They did not receive care from qualified therapists but students in training. This is particularly difficult in the case of young people with additional needs who feel neglected by health services. Medication is frequently seen as the solution, and it was felt that this is over emphasized. People should not be treated like 'one size fits all'.

Waiting times for transgender people and LGBTQ+ young people are significant. The Beacon of Light was referenced as a place where some participants had a good experience and could access complementary supports – art therapy, meditation. There is a new healthcare facility being built in Collinstown Park Community College which will be a strong health asset in the community. The new children's hospital is also good news.

### Being well

Being healthy was impacted by different things such as the cost of food and activities. It is important to exercise but doing free things like going for a run in the park doesn't always seem accessible when the park doesn't feel safe. Outdoor activities that have a guaranteed presence of other people to increase feelings of safety was recommended in this respect. Participants felt health issues are not always explained in an accessible manner, as many healthcare staff do not have accessible, clear ways of communicating.

### Recommendations

- More support for women's healthcare needs.
- Increase in availability of female doctors.

- Less reliance on unqualified counselors.
- Adjust the medical card threshold and drug payment scheme so they are more accessible.
- More mental health support and services for young people – particularly transgender and LGBTQ+.
- Increased health and wellbeing awareness raising amongst young people, using accessible, straightforward language.
- Increased first aid courses and classes on health and wellbeing in schools.
- Improve dental care.



## Housing

### Housing affordability

Young people expressed a multitude of concerns regarding housing highlighting that housing issues have serious implications for young people. Participants concerns included landlords, rent increases and landlords have a preference for tenants with high income. Managing rent is stressful for many families and choices are being made between rent, food and clothes. In addition, families are conscious of inequality in relation to managing the relationship with their landlord because of the risk of eviction and lack of places to go. Some houses offered are in poor condition and families do not want to live some locations offered because they are far from school or there are anti-social behaviour issues within the area. There are worries that the housing stock available is poor quality and vulnerable to dampness and mould on walls. Houses need to be environmentally friendly and energy efficient.

There is also a need to reduce the waiting time for houses. Many families have to take up temporary housing as a consequence. "I had to live in a hotel and move twice". This is hard to manage as a young person and influences education. Exposure to homelessness or housing insecurity / temporary accommodation environments is difficult for young people and has long term implications. Young people feel the stress of accommodation and cost of living worries that their parents are coping with. One young person shared her experience of homeless accommodation and stated that meals were provided but it is repetitive and needs more variety to ensure nutritional value. Temporary

accommodation options also need to be safe and appropriate for their users, especially pregnant women and young children.

There are social issues in some estates such as anti-social behavior, drug dealing, drug using, overcrowding with families doubling up. However, young people disagree with planning design that prevents homeless people from sleeping on park benches etc. It was agreed that there is a need to build up but there need to be limitations applied to ensure it does not put pressure on the local infrastructure.

### Housing availability

There is lack of housing choice due to limited housing stock which restricts options for the family. If the work from home policy was better supported and reinforced at government level more office buildings might be available for apartments. Participants expressed a sense of unfairness that purchasing a home is beyond the means of many. Some participants' families were living in grandparents houses which causes stress for both families and young people *"then it's the grandparents' rules and parents' rules so it's hard"*. Overcrowding and sharing of rooms with multiple family members is becoming more common. It was expressed by many participants that it does not feel like a level playing field in relation to housing – students, migrants, homeless people are all entitled to a place to live.

Many felt like they will not be able to afford their own home in the long-term future and some have adult siblings who are not in a position to move out. In the short term some participants commented that they will be restricted in their choice of third level because they would not be able to afford rent elsewhere. Additionally, student specific accommodation is expensive.

However, participants agreed that there are houses being built, they can see the developments when travelling to school or on the bus. It is perceived that there are delays with progress of some developments. The locations of some houses seem good – they are near schools, shops and good transport links. However, some large developments were identified as being problematic – *"there's going to be trouble there, way too many houses, people on top of each other and nothing to do"*. Houses need to be planned with access to youth and community services and facilities along with schools. At the same time green spaces need to be protected; without access to green spaces quality of life will be impacted. It is ideal to have mixed age developments *"everyone in my estate gets along, I think because it's all mixed ages"*.

### Recommendations

- Restrictions on landlords raising the rent – improved tenant rights.
- Rent reduction.
- Increase in affordable housing stock.
- Cost of living crisis, inflation to be addressed – affecting families now and will have a knock-on effect on future opportunities of young people.
- More mixed housing developments – older people, retired couples, young families.
- Reintroduce eviction ban.
- Provide more affordable childcare.
- Increase support for homeless people.
- Address waiting lists for houses.
- Increase percentage of social housing in developments.



## Education, Further Education and Training

School feels like a safe space where young people can reflect on their feelings and viewpoints. Many have good friends in school and value the support their teachers give. Many teachers are trained to be inclusive and aware of students needs now. Responding to different learning styles and having patience with students needs is important for students to feel accepted and valued in the school space. Some teachers do not try to make learning fun and engaging. Students are expected to adapt even if the subject is difficult. Not all students are treated the same way e.g. Travellers, refugee and neurodivergent students. This has a serious effect on students and teachers should be held accountable.

Some schools are quite strong on career guidance. The Accessing College Education (ACE) programme is a second level access programme which supports students from three participating schools in West Tallaght to complete the Leaving Cert and progress to third level. The programme was considered a valuable educational asset by students in the consultation. Other similar initiatives referenced were grinds provided by Citywise Education in West Tallaght and the Bridge to College programme. Breakfast and lunch clubs provided by schools and Foróige were noted as good resources that encourage students to come to school. The Clondalkin Access Programme supports trips to the Gaeltacht.

PLC's are a good stepping stone for many. There are different routes into education and people can and should return to education at any stage of life. The Leaving Cert system does not suit all learning styles and needs of students. It needs to be revised and updated. It is a direct route into third level but does not need to be the route that all students take. College is also expensive and not affordable for everyone so other options may be more feasible. Education is a lifelong thing and there is an expectation that learning will continue in different forms. Education is not something that all participants felt they had equal access to and some knew their choices were more limited than others.

Some participants need support as family poverty, addictions and other issues had made their home life complicated and they need to navigate more barriers than others. Financial support is a lifeline in this case. Some participants' parents went back to education in their 30's or later and had very positive experiences.

Access to high quality education has direct implications for life chances and the opportunity to succeed in one's career of choice. Teacher shortages for some subjects result in opportunities to study particular subjects being cut off. This could be addressed with more flexibility for e.g. qualified engineers teaching engineering although not qualified as a teacher. Particular subjects can be a strength for some, and the lack of availability consequently means that students are not afforded the opportunity to attain as many points as possible. Many participants could not access additional subjects outside of school because the cost is prohibitive. Some students felt that they are not offered support when doing poorly in a subject as the expectation is that if you start poorly this will continue. As such more grinds should be available in subjects that students struggle with most. Students in DEIS schools deserve the same educational opportunities as other schools. Participants spoke about issues impacting their day-to-day life in school which included dress code restrictions, gendered bathrooms, long breaks, the need for more sports groups and that Transition Year is not available in all schools or is mandatory in some schools.



Some students felt that they are not offered support when doing poorly in a subject as the expectation is that if you start poorly this will continue. As such more grinds should be available in subjects that students struggle with most. Students in DEIS schools deserve the same educational opportunities as other schools. Participants spoke about issues impacting their day-to-day life in school which included dress code restrictions, gendered bathrooms, long breaks, the need for more sports groups and that Transition Year is not available in all schools or is mandatory in some schools.

The increasing use of technology and digitalization of books was seen as positive. Some schools provide iPads instead of books which is useful and prevents the environmental impact of books. They need to be available online at a cheaper cost. The book rental scheme is not cheap – still a couple of hundred euro. Some schools are sponsored by companies e.g Microsoft and this support is important.

Issues that could be improved were listed as: no PE hall in one school; more additional learning supports from the school; pressure felt around exams/tests; no opportunity to take part in national sports events; more activities and experiences should be included in Transition Year.

Two school buildings were noted as being old and needing an upgrade.

### Recommendations

- More educational centers and spaces for after school study.
- A local study hub – the Tallaght library is great but too far for some students.
- Greater diversity and availability of youth activities.
- Student psychologist and counsellors.
- More activities within Transition Year.
- Information on what is available to do outside school hours.
- Improvement in teachers attitudes.

- Access to more sports facilities and indoor facilities.
- Stronger signposting on where to get different kinds of support.
- Increased drop in youth facilities.
- Consider extended opening hours of some sports facilities.

## **Conclusion and Next Steps**

This report captures the views of young people living in and going to school in South Dublin County. Participants provided a wealth of information and recommendations on the hot button issues for young people and where they feel change is needed. Findings also echo and reinforce much of the recommendations from the stakeholder consultation. The organisers of the consultations wish to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to all the young people that took part in the consultation. All participants were generous with their time and contributions. We also wish to express our thanks to the schools for facilitating students to attend the consultation; St Mark's Community School, St Aidan's Community School, Firhouse Educate Together Secondary School, Collinstown Park Community College, St Kevin's Community College and the Comhairle na nÓg.

All recommendations will be used to inform the forthcoming six-year Local Economic and Community Plan. This report will be disseminated to and considered by the Local Community and Development Committee along with the South Dublin County Children and Young People's Services Committee.

## **Summary of Key Recommendations**

### **National Actions:**

- Increased funding and services to address housing needs of all communities.
- More investment in women's healthcare needs.
- Increase in availability of female doctors.
- Less reliance on unqualified counselors.
- Adjust the medical card threshold and drug payment scheme so they are more accessible.
- More mental health support and services for young people – particularly transgender and LGBTQ+.
- Restrictions on landlords raising the rent – improved tenant rights.
- Rent reduction.
- Increase in affordable housing stock.
- Address the cost-of-living crisis and inflation.
- Improve dental care provision.
- Reintroduce eviction ban.
- Provide more affordable childcare.
- Address waiting lists for houses.
- Increase percentage of social housing in developments.

### **Service Provision Actions:**

- Youth services and community services to share information with schools to increase awareness of what they offer.
- Initiatives to address early intervention and prevention of drug use and drug dealing by young people.

- Targeted gender safety initiatives to address the need for behavior change by young men towards young women; increased awareness by young men about how they can support young women to feel safer; to deter involvement in intimidation and assault.
- Regular Gardaí patrols, particularly post 11pm.
- Increased security on public transport.
- Increased frequency of buses and consistency of bus schedule.
- More information on how to access support in relation to intimidation prevention.
- Provide awareness and education on racism to try and prevent hate crime/racist incidents.
- Foster a better relationship between young people and Gardaí.
- More streetlights and park lighting.
- More outdoor facilities (benches, picnic tables) near community centres, youth centres and parks.
- Provide outdoor phone charging and WIFI facilities in parks so people know there is somewhere they can go when they have low phone battery and to access internet/free calls.
- Skateboarding and rollerblading facilities.
- Increase in public amenities in parks and beside youth and community centres (skateboarding, rollerblading, basketball, volleyball etc courts).
- More bins and anti-littering campaigns.
- Regular clean up in areas where drug paraphernalia is common.
- Seating area in more spaces like MUGA's so young people can hang out while engaging in activities.
- Sheltered spaces outside where young people can meet – few teen friendly spaces available.
- Increased promotion of youth activities and spaces and what is available outside school hours.
- Access to more sports facilities and indoor facilities.
- Stronger signposting on where to get different kinds of support.
- Increased drop in youth facilities.
- Consider late opening hours of some sports facilities – access needed for free play, not just teams.
- Increased activities for young people – particularly young men.
- Games consoles, pool tables, indoor and outdoor facilities in youth centres.
- More CCTV in parks / open spaces.
- Enforcement and checks on scramblers and motorbike licenses.
- Access to information about retrofitting grants.
- Ensure grants are accessible.
- Disseminating energy saving ideas with information about how they will make a difference to bills.
- All schools to establish breakfast clubs and lunch clubs with food basket available at doors.
- Healthy food available and prioritized in schools.
- Provide local food support in non-stigmatizing way.
- Reduce the cost of healthy, non-processed foods.
- Increased health and wellbeing awareness raising amongst young people.
- Increased first aid courses and classes on health and wellbeing in schools.
- More educational centers and spaces for after school study.
- A local study hub – the Tallaght library is great but far for some students.