

**Press Release**

**6 June 2024**

**Wexford County Council and Wexford Local Development officially launch  
SICAP 2024-2028**

On the 31<sup>st</sup> May, Wexford Co. Council and Wexford Local Development held an event hosted in Templeshannon Community Centre to mark the official launch of the SICAP 2024-2028 programme. SICAP (Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme) is managed at a local level by the Local Community Development Committee, with support from Wexford County Council, and actions are delivered in communities by Wexford Local Development. SICAP is a National Programme, and it is the governments primary social inclusion intervention.

SICAP supports disadvantaged communities and individuals including unemployed people, people living in deprived areas, people with disabilities, single parent families, people on low income, International Protection Applicants, Refugees, members of the Traveller and Roma communities and other disadvantaged groups. The target groups of the programme are predefined nationally.

Wexford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) have chosen 3 “Local Priority Target Groups” for a specific focus for the duration of this new programme which are:

- People living in disadvantaged communities
- People impacted by educational disadvantage
- Travellers

SICAP is currently delivered by Wexford Local Development through a team of professional Social Inclusion and community workers who work alongside local communities in collaboration with several different agencies with a focus on targeting those who are most disadvantaged in our communities in Wexford. It is a targeted, holistic programme for those groups and individuals who are most disadvantaged and less likely to connect with mainstream services.

SICAP has been active in County Wexford for a number of years, and this is the third iteration of the programme. WLD have successfully delivered the predecessor programmes and will be responsible for the delivery of this new programme for the next 5 years.

Speaking at the launch of the programme, Cllr. Aidan Browne, Chair of Wexford LCDC said *“Wexford County Council and the LCDC are committed to supporting our partners in delivering on agreed objectives, and I look forward to the continued collaboration between Wexford LCDC and Wexford Local Development, in delivering this key inclusion programme across County Wexford.”*

Cllr. John Fleming, Chairman of WCC said *“I’m delighted to see this level of resources being allocated to the county to ensure social inclusion continues to be delivered to a high standard to those areas, communities and individuals where the need is highest. Wexford continues to experience significant deprivation in specific areas and programmes such as SICAP ensure that every effort is made to reach those most in need of additional supports”*.

Mr. Eddie Taaffe, Chief Executive, Wexford County Council added: *“I would like to convey special thanks to all the staff and officials of Wexford County Council for their input into the management and oversight of the SICAP Programme over the past number of years, and to Wexford Local Development for their implementation of the programme, and I look forward to our continued efforts in the future. County Wexford has made progress addressing issues of social deprivation and marginalisation in recent years through our work with government, community groups, private citizens, and other key stakeholders. Wexford County Council is committed to addressing the needs that exist in the county, and to ensure that wellbeing, inclusion, equality, and diversity are at the heart of County Wexford’s communities, and we look forward to continued collaboration with our partners to achieve these goals”*

The CEO of Wexford Local Development, Brian Kehoe said *“We are working to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion at a local level, in practical ways; helping those in need to find work or to upskill, assisting many with accessing a tailored personal development course or gaining access to workplace skills or educational opportunities. SICAP helps to connect to those who are more marginalised, helping to point them towards a pathway of opportunities that might otherwise be missed or out of reach. We are very fortunate that our SICAP team are highly experienced and skilled in developing connections and building capacity in local communities across Co. Wexford. Over the last 5 years through the SICAP programme we have provided individualised supports to over 5,000 individuals and worked consistently with over 200 community groups. We’re delighted to be able to continue this important work over the next five years in collaboration with the LCDC and Wexford County Council”*.

Adding to Mr. Kehoe’s comments, the Programmes Manager with Wexford Local Development, Clare Ryan, spoke of the vital importance of SICAP in addressing inequality and improving outcomes for the most disadvantaged groups and individuals in the county. *“Equality is about securing equality of opportunity, equality of participation and equality of outcome. SICAP is making a real difference to the lives of disadvantaged people and communities in Co. Wexford. Building on the strong foundations and connections that are already in place, this new programme will ensure continuity of community-based supports where it’s needed most. SICAP funding effectively means that there are 30 professional community workers on the ground who directly connect and work alongside those communities most marginalised and impacted by poverty and inequality”*.

Martin Collins, Co-director of Pavee Point Roma and Traveller Centre, spoke about the impact of poverty and exclusion on the Traveller and Roma communities. He spoke

about the ongoing racism experienced by the Traveller Community and the importance of raising awareness and addressing the devastating impact of racism and discrimination on people's lives.

Sharon Murphy Pre-school home liaison officer with FAB shared her experience of poverty experienced by the children and families in the FAB area who access the community childcare facilities there. *"We are working with many families who have experienced intergenerational unemployment, substance misuse & educational disadvantage. Sharon went on to say "resources urgently need to be invested in early years services to support children and families who are experiencing multiple challenges. Many children accessing our services are hungry; food poverty is a very real issue".*

Seamus Whitney from Enniscorthy East Side Development group spoke about his experience of using community development approaches to address inequality in his community in Templeshannon and the importance of people coming together to have their voices heard and working together to be part of the solutions to some of the issues locally. Over the past year a new youth group has been established in Templeshannon which has already won a national award, but both youth and community work rely on a huge commitment from both volunteers, as well as agencies and community workers.

For more information on SICAP visit <https://www.wld.ie/social-inclusion-community-activation-programme-sicap/>

ENDS



(L-R) Mr Martin Collins, Co-Director Pavee Point Roma & Traveller Centre, Ms. Sharon Murphy, Pre-School Home Liaison Officer, FAB, Mr. Seamus Whitney, Enniscorthy East Side Development Group, Ms. Clare Ryan, SICAP Manager Wexford Local Development, Ms. Tara Farrell, WCC



(L-R ) Mr. Brian Kehoe, CEO Wexford Local Development, Ms. Dymphna O'Connor, Chief Officer Wexford LCDC, Cllr. Aidan Browne, Chairperson Wexford LCDC, Cllr. John Fleming, Cathaoirleach Wexford County Council, Mr. Eddie Taaffe, Chief Executive Wexford County Council, Ms. Clare Ryan, SICAP Manager Wexford Local Development, Deputy Paul Kehoe T.D



Members of Wexford Local Development



Members of Wexford Co Co Community Dept with Cllr George Lawlor & Cllr Aidan Browne ( Chairperson Wexford LCDC)