

Carlow PPN Outreach Project



Background

While working on Carlow PPN's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 the Secretariat identified a need to employ an Outreach Worker on a contractual basis to ensure the goals within the Plan would be delivered on.

Carlow PPN's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 details concentrates on four goals: -

1. Policy and Decision Influencing
2. Membership
3. Partnership
4. Organisations Effectiveness

For these goals to be achieved and in particular Goal 2 – Membership, an Outreach Worker was appointed to develop and implement a community engagement project over a twelve-month period. The main aim of the appointment was to: -

- Deepen understanding of the role of the PPN, build relationships and support members to participate actively in the PPN
- Identify and support organisations not currently registered to join the PPN and to engage effectively with it
- Identify appropriate training and development needs of existing and new PPN member organisations, in the context of their effective engagement with the PPN
- Collect and analyse data on agreed fields and prepare reports for the Secretariat on a regular basis

The Outreach Worker, Roisin Dunne, was employed on a 12-month contract for 15 hours per week and was required to be flexible with days and times of work, with the capacity to work evenings and weekends depending on events.

Profile



Roisin started her career in SOS, Kilkenny where she worked for three years before emigrating to Australia where she worked in Child Protective Services for over 10 years. While on maternity leave Roisin returned to Ireland permanently. Roisin then started work with Carlow PPN. Roisin was very enthusiastic about the role and couldn't wait to get stuck in once PPN structures were explained.

Registered Groups

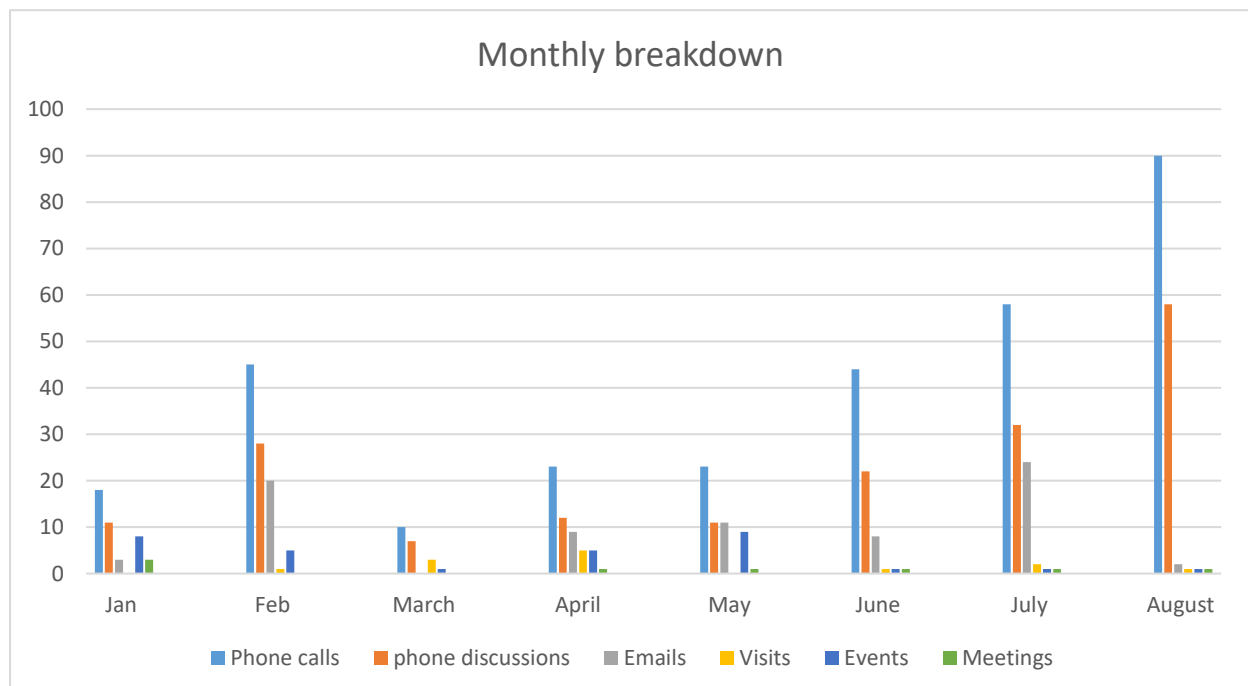
When the outreach position was implemented, Carlow PPN had 374 member groups registered throughout the County. In order to make contact with all registered groups in the timeline set out, the Outreach Worker aimed to contact an average of 10 groups per week over a 38 week period (January 2018 – October 2018).

Methodologies used to make contact with community groups consisted of:-

- Phone calls
- Emails
- Visits to groups
- Attendance at events facilitated by the PPN, agencies and community groups themselves, including Carlow PPN Plenary Meetings, Linkage Group Meetings, Carlow County Council Community Events etc.
- Survey – a survey was created to inform data collection and reports for the Secretariat. (Appendix 1)

The outcome of this contact resulted in monthly reports provided over the course of the Outreach Workers contracted role. The purpose of this analysis was to inform the ongoing work on Goal 1 and Goal 2.

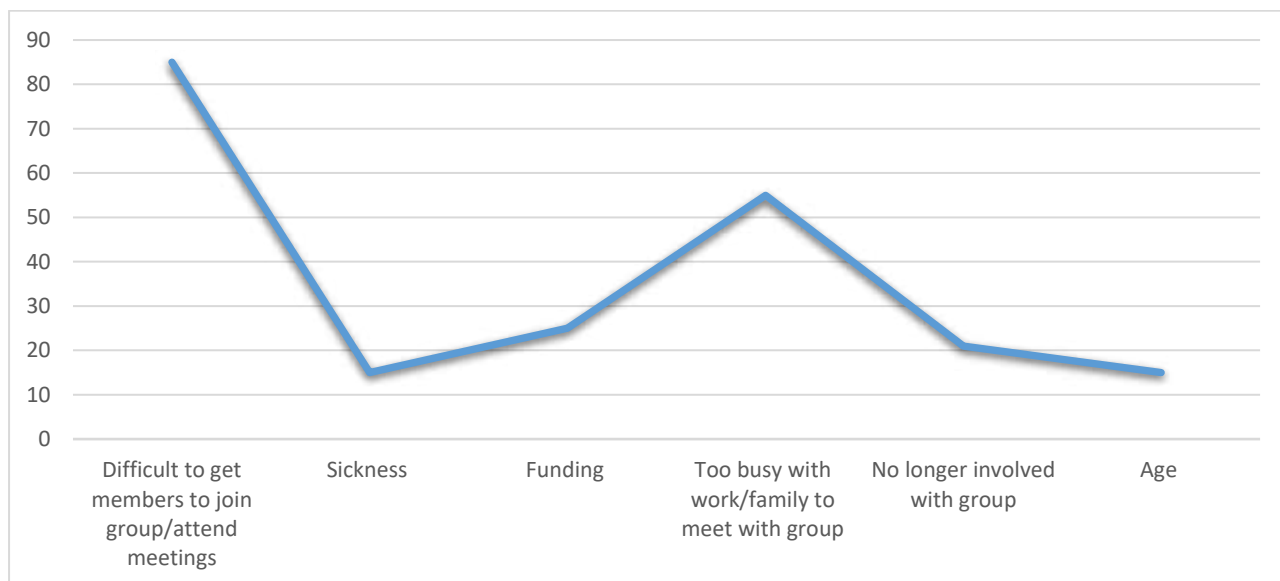
Level of Engagement



Events attended by the Outreach Worker

- County Carlow Environmental Network meetings
- Cardiac First Responder Meetings across the County (new members groups of the PPN)
- 'Water and Communities Office' environmental event
- Healthy Ireland – Tobacco HSE Healthy Ireland Regional Tobacco Action Plan meetings with and launch of report
- Social Justice Ireland's 30th Annual Social Policy Conference
- The Wheel's National Summit for the Community, Voluntary and Charity Sector
- Fleadh Cheoil meetings
- Active Retirement groups meetings
- Pride of Place Competitions and Awards
- Carlow Arts Council meetings
- International Women's Day event
- All training events provided by Carlow PPN
- Community meetings

Member Groups Feedback/Issues



- The main issue for community groups was and is finding new members to join and volunteer within their group.
- Serious illness of Chairperson/Secretary was reported by many groups which resulted in fewer meetings. Also, members of groups were absent from meetings as a result of sick family members.
- Funding is always a pressing issue with majority of groups expressing the need for more funding. Residents Associations reported that few residents made the financial contribution necessary for the upkeep of their estate and even fewer wanting to get involved in local events such as clean ups etc.

- Most groups expressed difficulty in finding people to take on roles such as Chairperson or Secretary when the current Chairperson's/Secretary's want to step down. In most cases seats become available due to ageing of members.
- Lack of attendance by members at committee meetings was also reported as an issue. This is reportedly due to members working long hours, family commitments and illness/ageing of Chairpersons and family members.
- Chairpersons report that they feel the lack of attendance at meetings is due to people not having an interest in community engagement in recent years with people being too busy to add further responsibility to their lives.
- Members have been very positive in their feedback regarding the PPN and the events/training organised by the PPN.

Survey results

Surveys were completed by both members and non-members and feedback included: -

- Work/family/too busy stopped groups from participating/engaging in meetings
- Receiving emails regarding grants/funding opportunities/events was very helpful
- Results from the questionnaire show majority of participants were unaware of the PPN and/or the benefits of joining
- Majority of participants were unaware of how to join the PPN
- When asked if the PPN was beneficial for those who have utilised the PPN, most people stated 'yes' with comments consisting of 'good for getting word out'
- Participants advised that they would rather attend trainings/meetings in the evenings rather than during day time hours
- Facebook is the most popular social media platform
- When asked about Linkage Groups, majority of those surveyed did not know what a Linkage Group was
- When asked why people registered with the PPN, the most popular answer was 'networking', with 'funding information' coming in second

Outcomes

- Greater awareness of PPN
- More requests to attend community events
- More requests to advertise on our E-Bulletin
- More collaboration with local agencies
- More collaboration from groups on funding
- Higher attendance at Plenary Meetings

Appendix 1 – Questionnaire

Do you know what the PPN does?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Are you aware of the benefits of being a member of the PPN?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you know how to join the PPN?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Have you utilised the PPN?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Was it beneficial?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Comment

How do you hear about upcoming Plenary meetings?

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Post
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Other

Do you attend any meetings?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you rather attending meeting/events during the,,,

- ☐ Day
- ☐ Evening
- ☐ Both/mix

Do you receive the E-Bulletin?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How?

- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Post
- ☐ Online
- ☐ Email

Do you circulate the E-Bulletin with your community groups?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How?

- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Post
- ☐ Online
- ☐ Email
- ☐ By hand

Do you use social media?

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None

Are you interested in attending trainings?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Comment _____

Have you attended any trainings?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Which _____

Are you aware of how to join a Linkage Group?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you want to join any Linkage Groups?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Comment _____

Are you aware you can join as many Linkage groups as you like?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How many Linkage groups are you joined? _____

What blocks do you experience that might prevent you from attending/engaging in events/meetings?

- ☐ Time of events
- ☐ Location of events
- ☐ Topic's discussed
- ☐ Content at meetings/events
- ☐ Work commitments
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Transport

Why did you register with Carlow PPN?

- ☐ Training opportunities
- ☐ To receive grant/funding from County Council
- ☐ Funding information
- ☐ Networking

- ☐ Social reasons
- ☐ Connection to other community groups
- ☐ Events

Other

How would you like to be kept informed about meetings/events?

- ☐ Post
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Phone call
- ☐ Other

Name _____

Group _____

Number _____

