



COUNTY SLIGO

PROFILE OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

June 2007

**Commissioned by: Sligo Social Inclusion
Measures Group**



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INTRODUCTION

In its *Action Plan for Economic, Social and Cultural Development 2006-2008*, Sligo County Development Board undertook to:

'Review existing statistical data and undertake a profile of poverty in Sligo with particular emphasis on vulnerable groups'.

This profile of poverty and social exclusion in County Sligo has been prepared to fulfil this planned action with the purpose of providing an up-to-date picture of the nature and extent of poverty in the county and to inform strategic planning.

Measured in terms of national output and average disposable income per person, the past decade has seen unprecedented growth in the Irish economy. However, average figures for economic performance tend to mask disparities in living conditions, wealth and opportunity.

Despite the considerable progress achieved over the last decade, Ireland continues to have one of the most unequal societies in Europe in terms of income distribution. According to the European Union Survey of Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) average disposable income per person among the top 20% of earners is estimated to be five times the average for the lowest 20% (EU-SILC, 2005). Also, there has been an uneven distribution of wealth between regions and counties with the East and South significantly outperforming the Border, Midlands West in terms of expenditure on infrastructure and job creation and income levels.

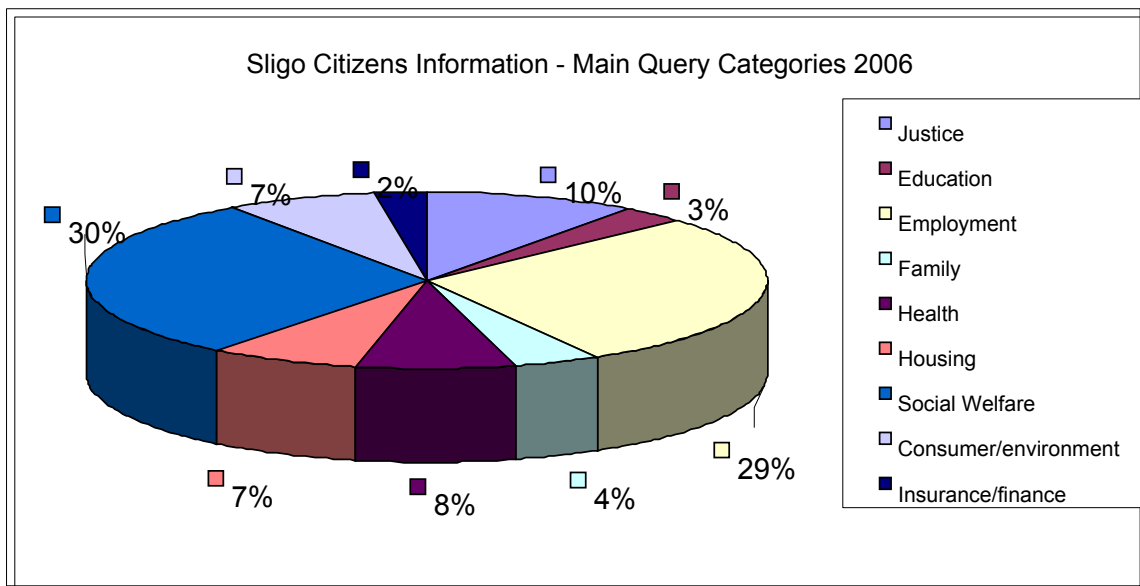
The main source of indicators of deprivation at a local level to date has been the Census of Population. Indices compiled from the small area statistics provided by the census provide useful indicators of the distribution of disadvantage, helping to highlight particular areas that are at risk. However, these indices reveal little of the nature of the difficulties experienced by people living in poverty or experiencing social exclusion.

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This profile aims to get beneath the average figures and uncover the problems faced by particular vulnerable groups of people in County Sligo.

The types of queries dealt with by the Sligo Citizens Information Service provide a useful indication of the range of problems experienced by people in Sligo on a day-to-day basis. Between September 2005 and June 2006 the service dealt with 9,747 queries. Of these, 94% were concerning issues related to social inclusion and quality of life.

Figure 3: Sligo Citizens Information Service: Main Query Categories - 2006



Source: Sligo Citizens Information Service Records

Using information from local agencies and organisations in combination with census data this profile quantifies the numbers of people in particular at-risk categories and, using figures from the EU SILC, it enables estimates of the likely numbers of people in County Sligo at risk of hardship through income poverty and/or social exclusion.

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The purpose of the Profile is to:

- Identify critical issues in the county
- Estimate numbers of people at risk
- Identify concentrations of need within the county
- Provide a basis for local policy development

The profile is arranged under the following headings:

Section 1 Policy

Section 2 Housing

Section 3 Welfare Dependency

Section 4 Health

Section 5 Education

Section 6 Employment and Income

Section 7 At-Risk Groups

SECTION: 1

Policy

National Policy

The recently published *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007–2016* (Government of Ireland, 2007), provides the national framework for policy on poverty and social exclusion. It builds on the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (1997) and the National Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-05. The overall goal of the National Action Plan is to reduce the rate of consistent poverty to between 2% and 4% by 2012 with the ultimate aim of eliminating consistent poverty by 2016.

In line with a key proposal in the new social partnership agreement, *Towards 2016*, the National Action Plan adopts a lifecycle approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion. This provides a clear basis for identification and analysis of the priority issues. The lifecycle approach focuses on the following categories of people:

- Children
- People of Working Age
- Older People
- People with Disability

The National Development Plan 2007-2013 (Government of Ireland, 2007) mirrors this approach and sets out targets for investment under a series of programmes as follows:

- Children Programme
- Working Age – Education
- Working Age – Social and Economic Participation
- Working Age – Justice
- Older People
- People with Disabilities

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- Local and Community Development
- Horizontal Programme

A total investment of about €50 billion over the period of the plan is envisaged for these programmes.

In addition, the National Development Plan envisages an investment of €37 billion in Social Infrastructure in the areas of:

- Social and Affordable Housing
- Health Infrastructure
- Justice
- Sports, Culture, Heritage and Community Infrastructure

Local Policy

The objectives of the programme for local government renewal (*Better Local Government: A Programme for Change* (Government of Ireland, 1996) include, among others:

- Local government's role in the community being widened
- Increased focus on tackling social exclusion

This has involved the establishment of new structures, functions and procedures at local level. In particular it provided for the establishment of the following structures:

- City/County Development Boards (CDBs)
- Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)
- Community Fora
- Social Inclusion Measure (SIM) Groups
- Social Inclusion Units (SIUs) at Local Government Level (eight were established initially)
- Rapid Programme Area Implementation Team

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The new national agreement, *Towards 2016*, puts social inclusion units on a more permanent footing with SIUs being rolled out to half of all city and county councils by the end of 2008. It is anticipated that Sligo will be included in this next phase of establishment of these units.

Local authorities are named as a key player in policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion.

The guidelines issued by the EU on the preparation of the current plans stated: '*It will be importantto take into account the regional and local dimensions.....and to involve regional and local authorities in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of the plans*'

(Guidelines for Preparing National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion, EU 2006)

The policy document *Building an Inclusive Society* (Government of Ireland, 2002) identified potential areas where local authorities can work to assist in the reduction of poverty as:

- Efficient delivery of public services such as housing, education, health and social welfare, ensuring they are accessible to all.
- Involving the local community in developing policy in key local governmental functional areas such as planning, environment and roads.
- Coordinated preparation of County/City Development Plans and Strategies, ensuring that the needs of vulnerable groups are considered.

In its policy statement *Linking Local and National Structures – Tackling Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion* (CPA, 2007), The Combat Poverty Agency set out some important recommendations for local authorities to play a practical role in this area.

It recommended that:

- Each city/county authority should develop and implement a Local Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy.

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- Key issues and priorities emerging from these local strategies should feed into the national policy processes.
- Guidelines on the implementation of Poverty Impact Assessments (PIA) at a local level should be developed and rolled-out to local authorities.
- National performance criteria should be prepared for inclusion in the business plans of local agencies and local authorities.

In response to the requirement that local government play an increased role in implementing national policy on poverty and social inclusion, Sligo County Development Board has set its key goal for social Inclusion in the County as:

'The development of a coordinated and multi-agency approach in tackling the structural attitudes and barriers surrounding social inclusion'.

(Sligo Integrated Strategy, Sligo County Development Board, 2002 – 2012).

SECTION: 2

Housing

Introduction

In Ireland, those living in rented or rent-free accommodation make up 43% of persons at risk of poverty and over 66% of those experiencing consistent poverty while representing less than 22% of the population. (EU-SILC, 2007). Public and social housing occupancy and demand levels are therefore strong indicators of poverty incidence.

This section provides a breakdown of the household types in County Sligo based on the 2002 Census of Population.

The numbers of houses rented by the local authorities and housing associations are given together with the number of applications and individuals on the housing waiting list.

Provision of accommodation for homeless people and the accommodation situation of traveller families are summarised.

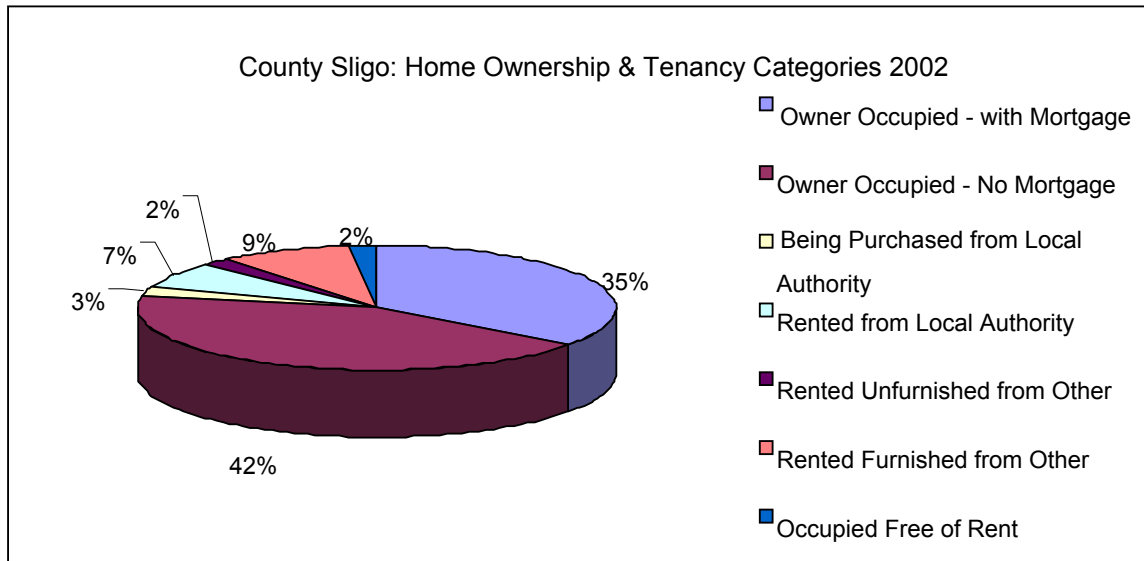
The supply level and demand for affordable housing is presented.

Household Types

The 2002 Census of Population recorded 19,508 households in County Sligo. Approximately 17.3% (3,282) of households occupy rented accommodation – a slightly lower rate than the overall national level of 18.5%

From the 2002 Census of Population and of the 18,995 households from which home ownership and tenancy details were gathered, the breakdown of ownership/tenancy categories is shown in Figure 2 below

Figure 4: Sligo: Home Ownership and Tenancy Categories - 2002



Source; CSO, 2002

Local Authority Housing

Sligo Local Authorities currently maintain a total housing stock of 1,829 units. Of these, 892 units (49%) are located in the County Council area with 937 units (51%) in the Sligo Borough area.

The vacancy rate for Local Authority housing stood at 4.9% in March 2007. These vacancies are accounted for by houses undergoing essential maintenance and repair and houses awaiting allocation.

Recent high inflation of house prices has led to a strong demand for social and affordable housing.

In March 2007, the number of applications for Local Authority housing in Sligo stood at 1,490. This figure is made up of 683 valid applications in the County Council area and 807 in the Borough Council area. A detailed breakdown of the applications to the County Council showed an average household size of 1.67 persons per application. Household size details were not available for Sligo Borough council applicants. However, applying

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the average household size for the county area to the entire Local Authority housing list gives an estimated number of 2,489 individuals in need of housing in the county. These figures are summarised in table 1 below:

Table 1: Summary of Applications for Housing, Co. Sligo 2007

Authority	Applications	Individuals (estimated)
Borough Council Housing Applications	807	1,348
County Council Housing Applications	683	1,141
Total	1,490	2,489

Source: Sligo Local Authorities Housing Sections

Voluntary Housing Associations

Sligo Borough and County Councils actively promote the involvement of voluntary housing associations in the provision of social housing in their functional areas. Generally, voluntary housing associations are formed to relieve a local housing need. A feature of the voluntary housing sector is that many associations also offer non-housing and related services such as group meals, social activities and welfare advice.

Voluntary housing accommodation has been provided to date in Sligo by the following bodies:

- Respond! Housing Association
- Cluid Housing Association
- Claddagh Housing Association
- Sligo Social Services Ltd.
- Finisklin Housing Association

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- A & M Housing Association
- Banada and Tourlestrane Housing Association
- Kilglass Housing Association
- Nazareth Housing Association
- Culfadda Housing Association.

Sligo Local Authorities' Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan 2004-2008 records 332 housing units provided by housing associations in the County.

Cluid is the main voluntary housing provider in Sligo with a current stock of 141 houses in the County.

Of these 108 are in the Sligo Borough area, with a further 12 in Ballinafad and 21 in Enniscrone.

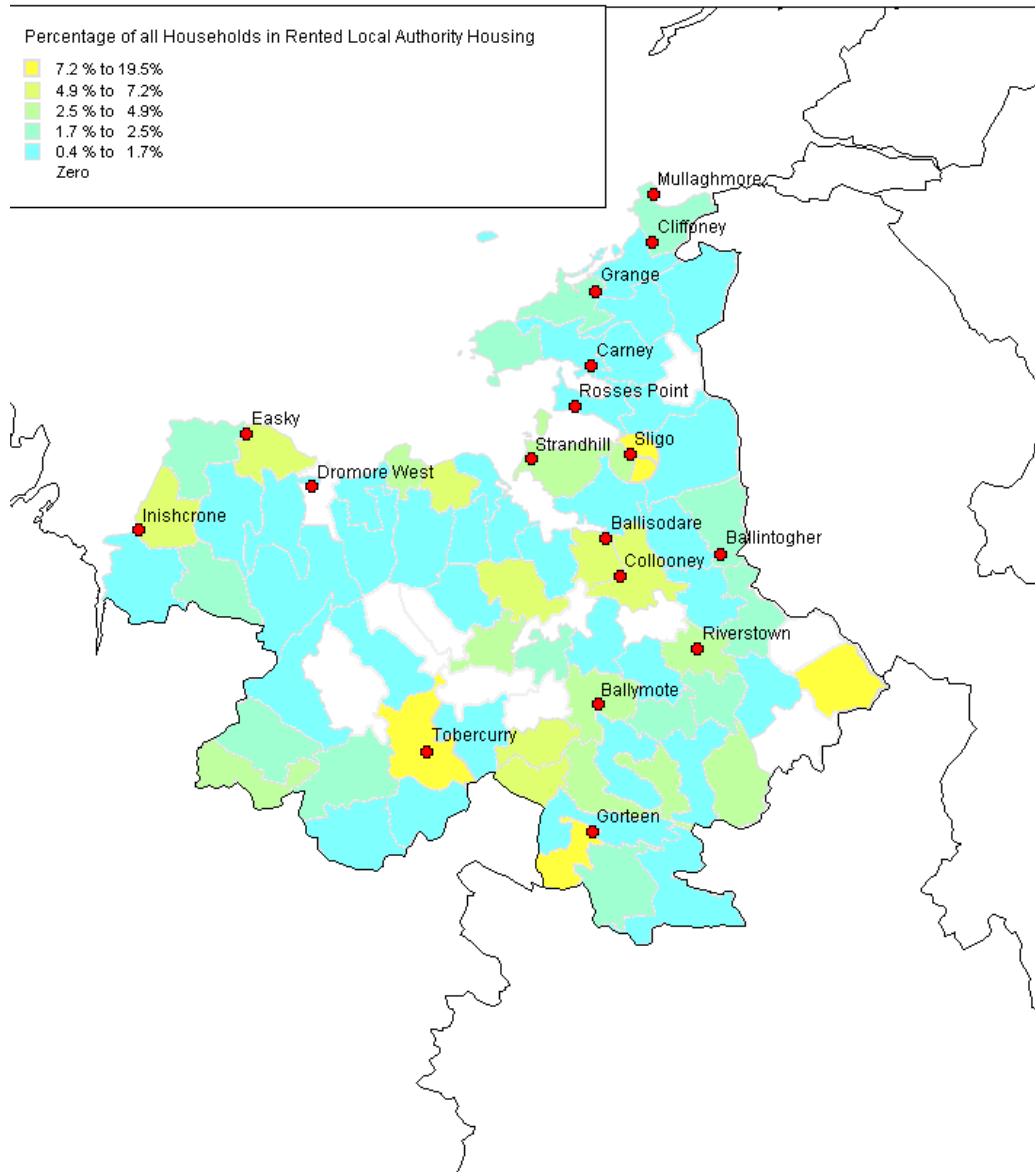
In allocating its houses Cluid draws on the housing lists of Sligo County and Borough Councils.

Map 1 shows the distribution of Local Authority Rented Accommodation in Sligo.

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Map 1

Sligo Percentage of all huseholds Rented from Local Authority



Homelessness

Two organisations provide accommodation for homeless people in County Sligo. These are Sligo Social Services and Finisklin Housing Association. Between these two services there is a total capacity for 74 people.

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Sligo Social Services, with subvention from Sligo Borough Council, provides accommodation for homeless people in three hostels with a capacity of 36 beds. Finisklin Housing Association operates two hostels with a capacity of 38 beds. One of these facilities caters for ex-offenders and has a capacity of 17 beds. In addition, the Health Services can provide temporary accommodation for approximately 23 persons in Sligo.

A report commissioned by WAVES Women's Support Services indicates that the accommodation services in Sligo for women and their children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness because of domestic violence fail to meet the level of demand. There is no dedicated refuge in Sligo for women experiencing domestic violence the nearest being in Letterkenny, Castlebar and Athlone.

Traveller Accommodation

A total of 448 members of the Traveller community were recorded in Sligo 2006. The average family size was 4.5 members and the number of family units 105. Table 2 below summarises the accommodation types occupied by the traveller population.

Table 2: Accommodation Types Occupied by the Traveller Community in Sligo

Accommodation	Number
Local Authority House	239
Private Rented House	4
Caravan - Halting Site	173
Caravan - Roadside	32
Total	448

Source: Sligo Traveller Survey 2006

The table above provides just a snapshot of the situation at the time of the survey. By definition, the Traveller population is variable and the needs of transient Traveller families are significant with an estimated 144 families visiting Sligo in 2006.

Affordable Housing

Two schemes make provision for affordable housing. These are the Shared Ownership Scheme and the Affordable Housing (1999) Scheme. Due to the significant increase in the cost of houses over the past number of years, many people looking to purchase a property are unable to raise a sufficient mortgage to purchase a property outright.

Purchasing a house under a Shared Ownership or Affordable Housing Schemes is a viable alternative for families who would not qualify for social housing but who are unable to access affordable property in the private sector.

The Housing Strategy of Sligo Borough and County Councils May, 2005 estimated that approximately 2,522 households are likely to experience affordability problems over the period of the Housing Strategy. The strategy makes provision for just 100 houses under the Affordable Housing Scheme to be completed in 2007 and 2008. Currently there are 37 applicants for affordable housing on the Local Authority waiting list. This scheme is considered to be under-subscribed nationally. Many people who would be eligible for assistance through this scheme appear to be unaware of its provisions.

SECTION: 3

Welfare Dependency

Introduction

Social transfers (welfare payments) play a key role in reducing poverty. The 'European Union Survey of Income and Living Conditions - 2005' (EU-SILC) reports that their impact in Ireland was to reduce the incidence of poverty by 20 percentage points in 2004 and 22 percentage points in 2005.

Social transfers play a particularly important role in reducing the risk of poverty for those aged 65 years and over.

The Department of Social and Family Affairs is the key agency for the disbursement of welfare payments.

The following categories of payment play a very significant role in poverty and social exclusion reduction as eligibility is decided on the basis of rigorous means-testing. As such these provide useful indicators of the numbers and categories of people at risk:

- Non- Contributory State Pension
- Job Seekers Allowance
- One-Parent Family Payment
- Disability Allowance
- Illness Benefit
- Carers Allowance
- Family Income Support
- Back to Education Allowance
- Farm Assist

This section provides information on the numbers of people in receipt of these payments in County Sligo in March 2007.

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The Department of Social and Family Affairs does not maintain a record of the geographic distribution of welfare recipients but for the purpose of this profile an approximate analysis of their distribution has been carried out. Also, it should be noted that the overall county figures are approximations as people living in the southwest of the county may be served through the Social Welfare Local Office Ballina office of the DSFA and some in the very south of the county may be served through the Social Welfare Branch Office, Boyle.

The areas mapped are as follows:

- Sligo Urban Area
- Sligo North and east
- Sligo West
- Sligo Southwest
- Sligo South

Map 2 shows the boundaries of the areas used for this spatial breakdown of social welfare payments in the county:

Map 2: Sligo Districts



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Table 3: Estimated Numbers in Receipt of Certain Social Welfare Payments, Sligo 2007

Social Welfare Payment	Number of Recipients Sligo 2007
Non-Contributory State Pension	2,207
Lone Parent Allowance	1,056
Disability Allowance	1,489
Illness Benefit	369
Carers Allowance	537
Family Income Support	356
Back to Education Allowance	77
Farm Assist	280
Jobseekers Allowance	1,135

Source: Department of Social & Family Affairs

Non-contributory State Pension

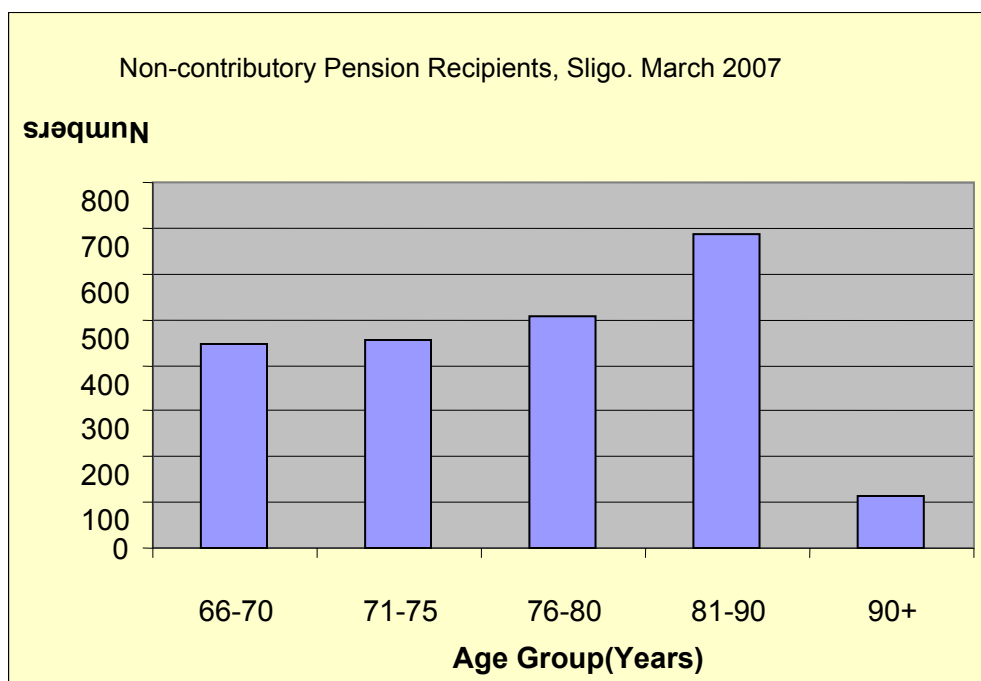
The State Pension (Non-contributory) is a means-tested payment for people aged 66 or over who do not qualify for State Pension (Transition) or State Pension (Contributory) based on their social insurance record. From January 2007 the maximum payment receivable is €200 per week. This is the category of Social Welfare payment with the largest number of recipients in the County with a total of 2,207 qualifying in 2007.

Table 4: Age and Distribution of State Non-contributory Pension Recipients in Sligo

Area	Age Group					Total
	66 -70	71 - 75	76 - 80	81 - 90	90+	
Sligo North and East	139	132	157	190	25	643
Sligo Urban	85	87	87	119	25	403
Sligo South	72	86	78	104	17	357
Sligo Southwest	66	64	71	126	21	348
Sligo West	86	86	113	147	24	456
Total	448	455	506	686	112	2,207

Source: Department of Social & Family Affairs

Figure 3: Age Distribution of State Non-contributory Pension Recipients in Sligo, 2007



Source: Department of Social & Family Affairs

Job Seekers Allowance

Jobseeker's Allowance is a means-tested payment made to people who are unemployed. The maximum personal rate of payment is €185.80. The allowance is payable to people in part-time and seasonal work for those days when they are not working and is not therefore a reliable measure of unemployment. A total of 1,135 people were eligible for this payment in March 2007 in Sligo.

One-Parent Family Payment

This scheme provides a payment of up to €185 per week personal rate and €22.0 for each child dependent. The payment rate is determined through an assessment process and is reduced in line with other income. A person in receipt of One-Parent Family Payment could earn up to €146.50 per week and may still qualify for full payment. People earning between €146.50 and €400.00 may qualify for a reduced payment. Where a person is in receipt of this payment for 12 months or more and their earnings subsequently exceed €400 they will continue to receive a transitional half rate payment

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for 6 months. In Sligo there were 1,056 one-parent families in receipt of this payment in March 2007.

Disability Allowance

Disability Allowance is a means-tested payment of up to €185 per week payable to people with a disability that is expected to last for at least one year. A total of 1,489 people were in receipt of this payment in Sligo.

Illness Benefit

This is a benefit payable to insured people who cannot work due to illness. Currently there are a total of 369 people in receipt of this payment in Sligo.

Carers Allowance

This is a means-tested payment of up to €200 per week for carers on low incomes who live with and look after certain people in need of full time care and attention. One of the qualifying conditions is that a person may not be self-employed or employed outside the home for more than 15 hours a week.

A total of 537 people in are in receipt of this payment in County Sligo.

Table 5: Age and Distribution of Carers Allowance Recipients in Sligo

Area	Age Group of Carers				Total
	18 - 25	26 - 35	36 - 50	50+	
Sligo North and East	2	14	65	82	163
Sligo Urban	4	25	68	69	166
Sligo South	0	3	23	32	58
Sligo Southwest	0	2	19	27	48
Sligo West	3	10	39	50	102
Total					537

Source: Department of Social & Family Affairs

Family Income Supplement

Family Income Supplement (FIS) is a weekly tax-free payment for families, including one-parent families, at work but on low pay. Income limits vary with family size. For example a family with one child can earn up to €480 per week and qualify for a payment under this scheme. A family with four children may have a combined income up to a ceiling of €720 per week and still qualify. The payment made under FIS is determined on a sliding scale depending on the family income and family size.

In Sligo, 356 families were in receipt of FIS in March 2007.

Back to Education Allowance

The Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) is a scheme for unemployed people, lone parents and people with disabilities who are getting certain payments from the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

The allowance can be paid to people who wish to do or take approved second or third level courses of education. BTEA is not an unemployment payment. Participants get a standard rate of payment which is not means tested. There are 77 participants in Sligo.

Farm Assist

Farm Assist is a weekly means-tested payment for low income farmers up to the age of 66. Payment rates take account of other income earned by the applicant and/or spouse/partner. Currently in Sligo there are 174 low-income farmers in receipt of this payment.

SECTION: 4

Health

Complex factors contribute to health inequalities, including links between poverty, inequality and health. The stark reality is that poor people get sick more often and die younger than those who are better off. Health and well-being are determined by a range of factors including adequate income and access to education, housing and transport.

Research conducted by the Institute of Public Health for the report on '*Inequalities in Perceived Health*' provides an indication of the scale of inequality in our society in relation to health. The following key conclusions of this research demonstrate the impact of education, unemployment and low-income on people's health:

- People with no formal education qualifications are half as likely as those with third-level education to have excellent or very good health.
- People who are unemployed are a third less likely than those in employment to have a high general mental health score.
- People with the lowest income are half as likely as those with the highest income to be very satisfied with their health or have a very good quality of life.¹

The EU Survey of Income and Living Conditions carried out in 2005 found that almost 25% of those with a chronic illness or disability were at risk of poverty. This represented a decrease from the level of 30% recorded in 2004.

There are 17,055 medical card holders in County Sligo representing 28% of the population. (Health Service Executive, Public Health Unit: March, 2007). In 2005 the EU-SILC recorded approximately 32% of the population as medical card holders. The EU-SILC found that in Ireland in 2005 almost 41% of medical card holders were classified as being 'at risk of poverty'.

¹ Institute of Public Health: *Inequalities in Perceived Health*, 2003

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Assuming that this rate is still valid (although it should be noted that the current trend is for at-risk-of-poverty rates to fall) this indicates that approximately 6,992 medical card holders in County Sligo are at risk of poverty.

The strong link between medical card eligibility and poverty risk means that the distribution of medical card holders is a good proxy indicator for the distribution of poverty risk in the county.

The criteria for eligibility for the general medical card use Disposable income (Gross income, less Income Tax and PRSI Contributions) as a measure in all assessments. Upper income limits are set according to age and family composition. Allowance is also made for the following:

Reasonable Weekly Rent /Mortgage Costs

Reasonable Weekly Child Care Costs

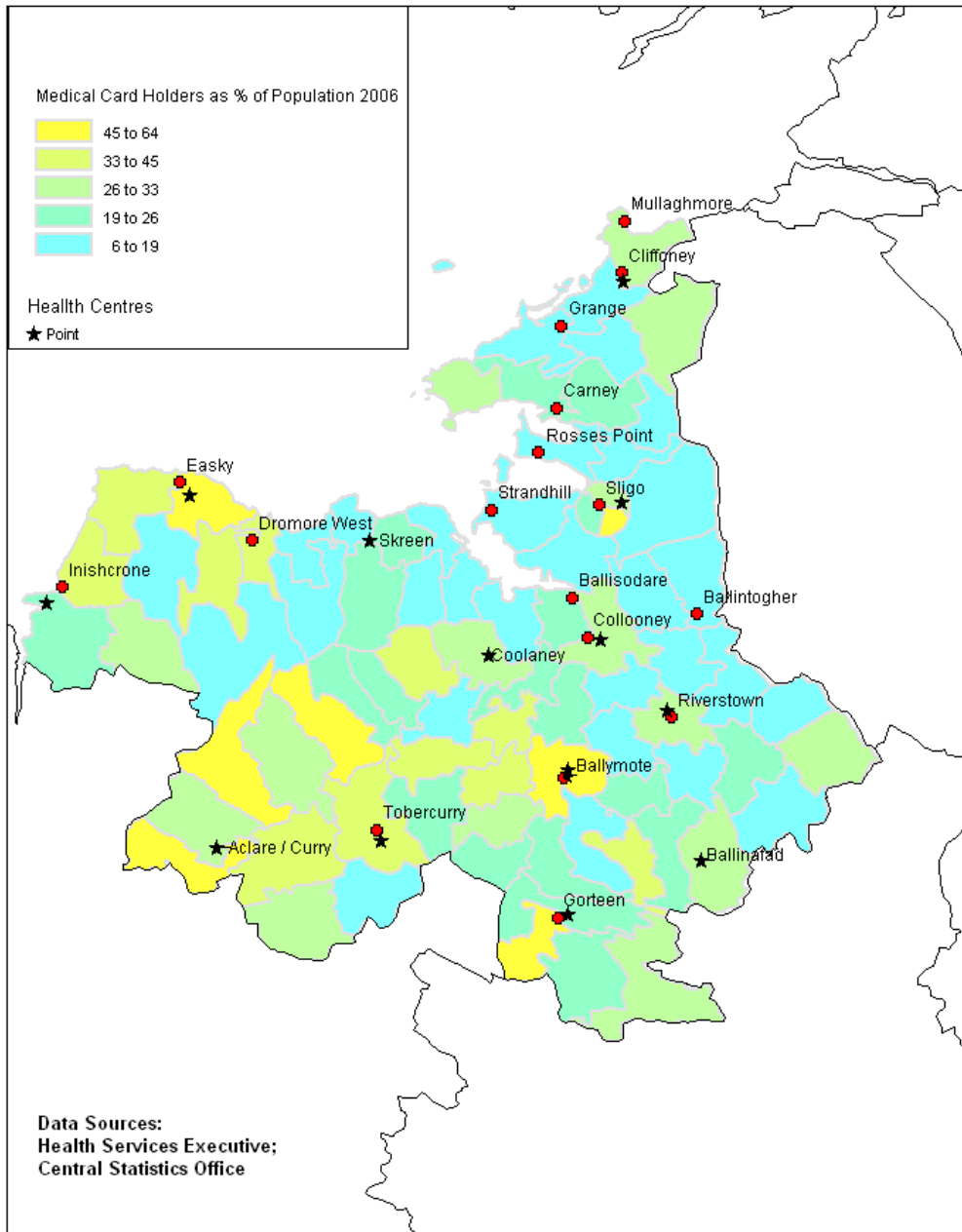
Weekly Travel Costs to Work (Actual cost of public transport or mileage @ €0.50 per mile).

Map 3 shows the distribution of medical card holders as a percentage of population (2006 Census of Population) in each district electoral division in Sligo. It shows a pattern of concentration of high rates of medical card eligibility in Sligo Borough, Ballymote, Easky, Gorteen and in the rural southwest of the county.

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Map 3

Sligo: Medical Card Holders as Percentage of Population (2006) and Medical Centre Locations



SECTION: 5

Education

Introduction

‘Education can play a key role in the promotion of a more inclusive society. Educational qualifications, or the lack of them, determine to a large extent the life chances of people. More than ever, underachievement at school results in social difficulties that can lead to a life of uncertainty, marginalisation, and dependence on the structures of social assistance. Lack of qualifications can combine with unemployment, dependence on social welfare, accommodation difficulties and health problems, and create a situation where the various aspects of disadvantage become mutually reinforcing.’

(Department of Education and Science)

While overall education attainment rates in Sligo compare favourably with national averages, as identified in a 2003 report by the Department of Education and Science, “the worrying tendency for educational disadvantage to cluster in specific schools/areas and to be reproduced across generations raises serious equity issues and highlights the need for effective educational interventions” (Supporting Equity in Education: Department of Education and Science, 2003).

Key indicators of educational disadvantage are:

- Educational Attainment Levels
- Disadvantaged Schools
- Absenteeism
- Participation in Second Chance Education

Educational Attainment

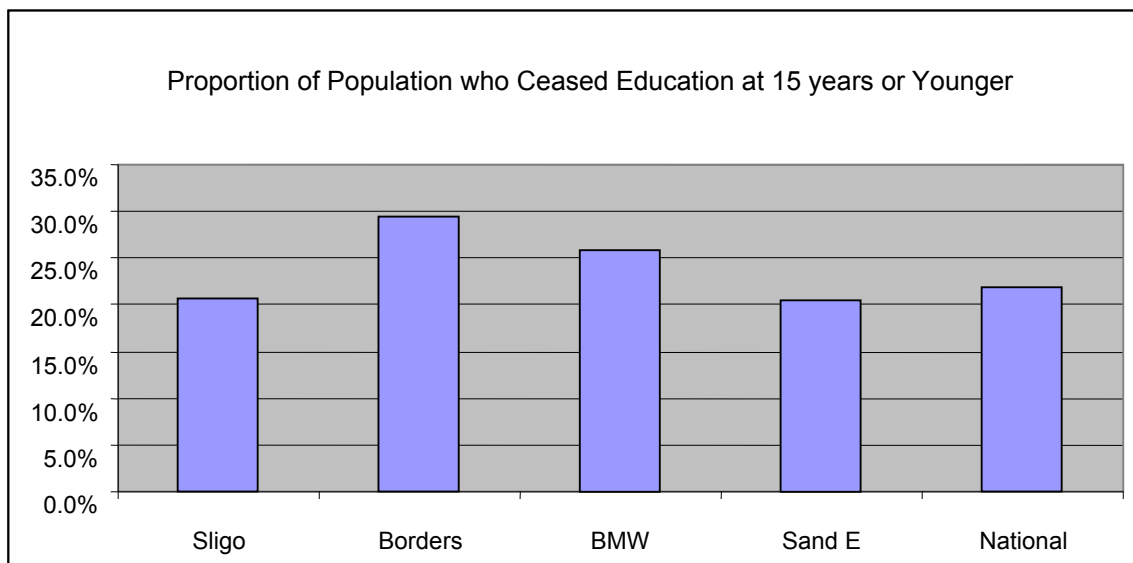
Educational attainment rates in Sligo are generally above the regional average and close to the National rate. It should be noted that 'early school leaver' rates are influenced by the age structure of a population. Areas with high proportions of population in the older age brackets will tend to record higher early school leaver rates as larger proportions of the population will have left the education system prior to the introduction of free secondary education.

The Early School Leaver Rate is defined as the proportion of the population that has completed education that did so before reaching fifteen years of age.

The 2002 Census of Population recorded an Early School Leaving rate of just over 20.7% in Sligo. This compares favourably with the National rate of 21.9% and is significantly better than the Border Region rate of 29.4%.

The comparative rates of early school leaving are shown in figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Comparison of Proportions of Early School Leavers: County Sligo and Nationally



Source: Census of Population 2002

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Given the limitations on early school leaving rates mentioned above, the retention rate of pupils in second-level schools is a more meaningful indicator of educational completion.

The latest data published by the Department of Education and Science on retention rates in second-level schools relate to the cohort of entrants to the first year of junior cycle in 1996. The methodology employed in this research tracks this cohort through each subsequent year of their participation in State-aided second-level schools. This exercise does not take account of pupils leaving the school system to follow alternative educational pathways such as Youthreach or apprenticeship training. Also, the tracking exercise does not account for those pupils who leave the State-aided system to enter non-aided private education establishments. As a result, the data provide a somewhat elevated figure for drop-out rates from the system. The retention rate is however, adjusted to take account of other factors such as death or emigration of pupils. County Sligo shows an above average retention rate in comparison to the national figures.

The retention rates for Sligo and the National average are shown in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Retention Rates for Pupils in Second-level Schools - Sligo and National

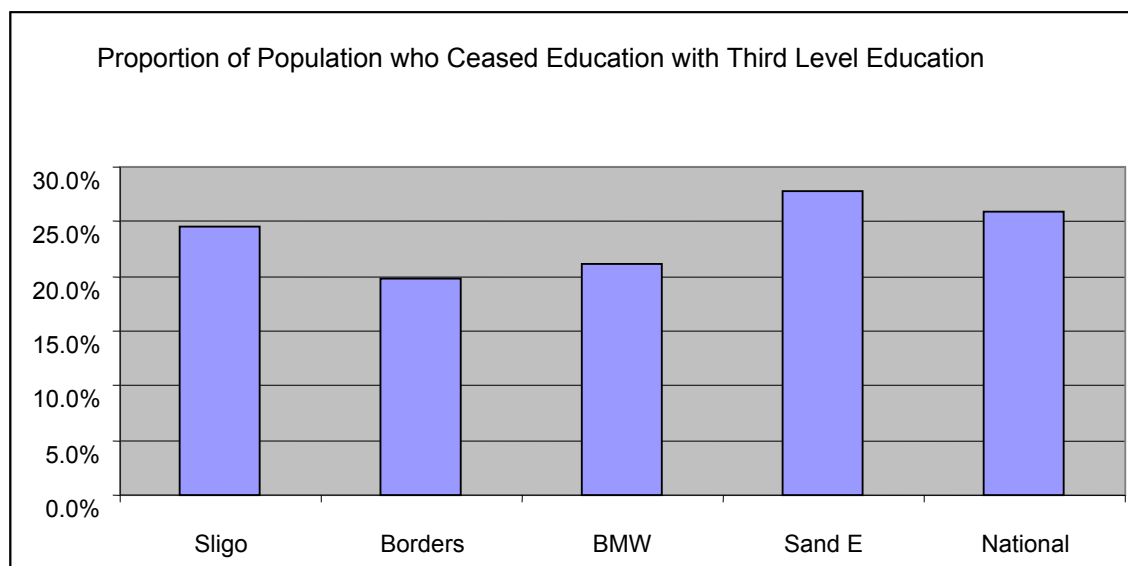
	Base Year (1996) Entrants	Junior Cert 'Sits'	Leaving Cert 'Sits'
National	64,068	60,597(94.6)	49,838(77.8%)
Sligo	1,017	977 (96.1%)	841(82.7%)

Source: Department of Education and Science; 2006

Sligo also shows a higher than average rate of third-level educational achievement with 24.5% of the population having attended education beyond secondary level. Again this is in line with the National average and significantly better than average rates for the Border, Midlands and West regional performance.

The comparative levels of participation in third-level education are illustrated in figure 5..

Figure 5: Comparison of Proportion of Population who Ceased Education with Third Level Education - Sligo, Regions and Nationally



Source: CSO 2002

In terms of admission rates to higher education courses Sligo also records a good performance, significantly ahead of the average for the state.

A county admission rate is calculated by dividing the number of new entrants (CAO and Non-CAO) with a permanent address in a county by the average of the number of 17-19 year olds from a county (i.e. the number of 17, 18 and 19 year olds divided by three). In 2004 Sligo recorded a 70.5% progression rate in comparison to an average of 55% for the State (Higher Education Authority, 2006).

Schools in Disadvantaged Areas

Schools seeking disadvantaged status are assessed and prioritised as to need on the basis of socio-economic and educational indicators such as unemployment levels, housing, medical card holders and information on basic literacy and numeracy. In addition, in assessing the relative levels of disadvantage among applicant schools, account is taken of pupil-teacher ratios. Schools in the designated disadvantaged areas are covered by the Department of Education and Science's School Support Programme.

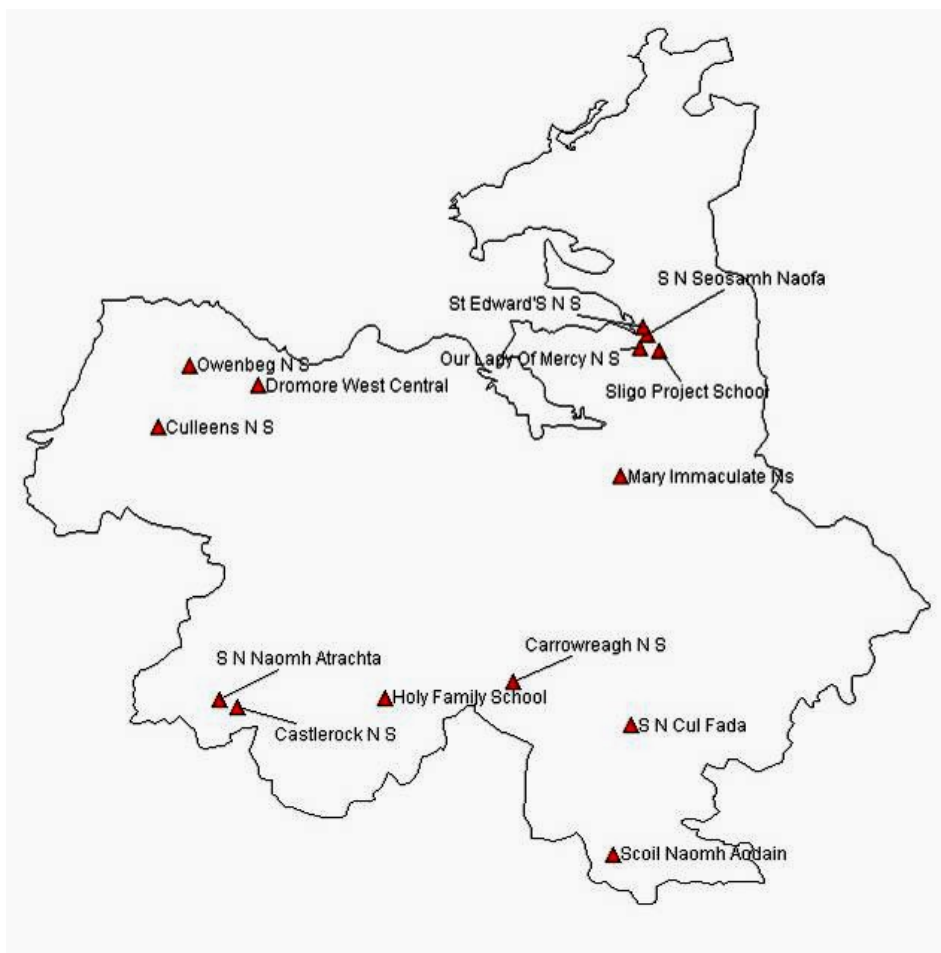
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Designated schools are eligible for increased revenue funding for running costs and equipment and are involved in home/school community liaison activities. Also, capital expenditure on these schools is at a higher level than is the case for non-disadvantaged schools.

Map 4 shows the locations of the 14 primary-level schools in Sligo designated as disadvantaged.

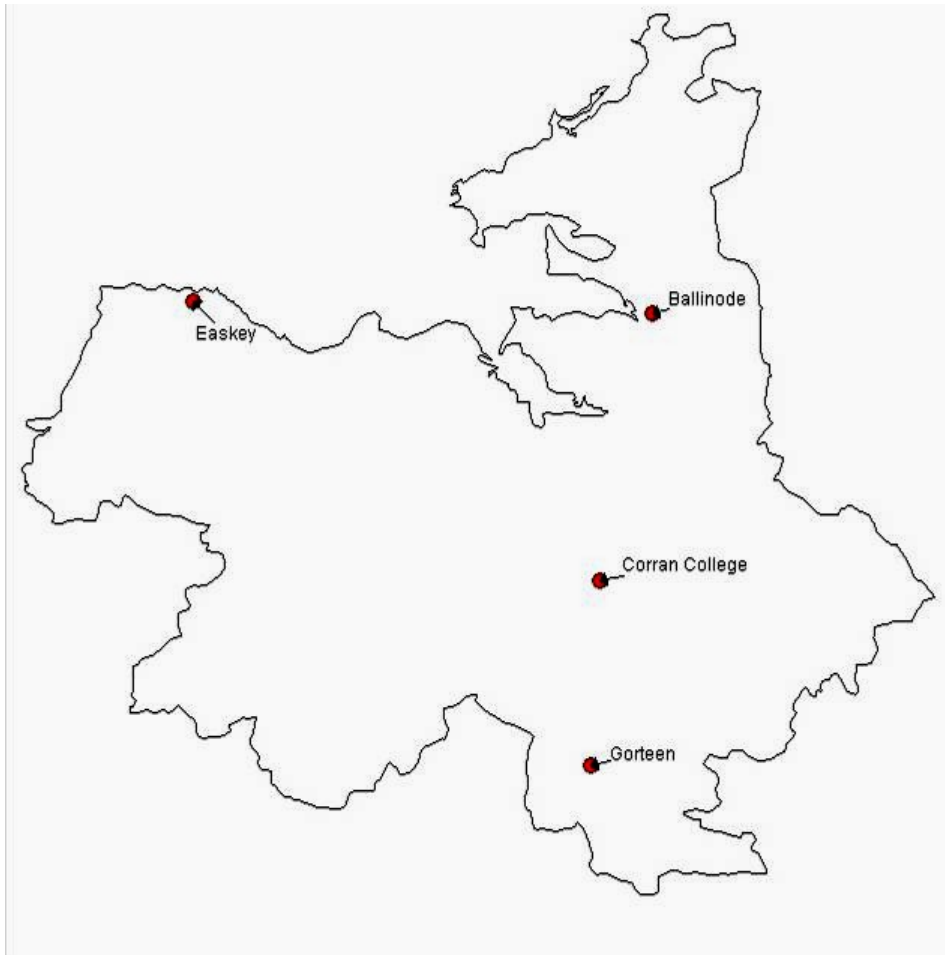
A total of 6,643 children were enrolled in primary level schools in Sligo in the 2005/2006 school year. Of these, 1,424 pupils (21% of primary school children) attend primary level schools designated as disadvantaged. Of these 505 pupils are in rural schools and 919 in urban schools.

Map 4: Location of Disadvantaged Primary Schools in Sligo



There are a total of 429 (9%) post-primary pupils enrolled in disadvantaged schools.

Map 5: Location of Disadvantaged Post-Primary Schools in Sligo



Two Primary Schools in Sligo cater specifically for children with special needs. These are:

- Cregg House, Ballincar
- St. Josephs, Ballytivnan

School Attendance

Poor rates of school attendance naturally impact negatively on educational attainment. Poor attendance rates by individual pupils are often related to illness or difficult home circumstances. There is a strong link between poor attendance rates and school disadvantage. Figures from the National Educational Welfare Board (Analysis of Attendance Data at Primary and Post-Primary Levels for 2004/2005; NEWB 2006) show that one in every five primary school students in the most disadvantaged primary schools misses 20 or more school days every year compared to one in every sixteen primary school students in the least disadvantaged schools. Furthermore, primary school students in the most disadvantaged schools miss on average 15 school days every year compared to an average of 10 school days a year missed by school students in the least disadvantaged schools.

This analysis by NEWB indicates that at primary level, school attendance rates in Sligo are close to the national average.

At secondary level however, the rate of absenteeism is high with 24.4% of students absent for more than 20 days in the school year. This rate is 5.6% above the national average rate.

This is summarised in the table below.

Table 7: Absenteeism Rates in Sligo Schools, 2004–2005.

Level	Absent for More than 20 days	% of Student Population	Variance from National Average
Primary	486	9.60%	-0.04%
Secondary	444	24.40%	+5.60%

Source: NEWB, 2006

Second Chance Education

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A number of programmes are available to enable people who missed out on mainstream educational opportunities to avail of 'second chance' education and training.

These are:

- Back to Education Scheme
- Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
- Youthreach
- Adult Literacy training

Back to Education Scheme

The Back to Education Scheme administered by County Sligo VEC provides part-time further education for young people and adults.

The scheme runs in 16 Centres in County Sligo in the following locations:

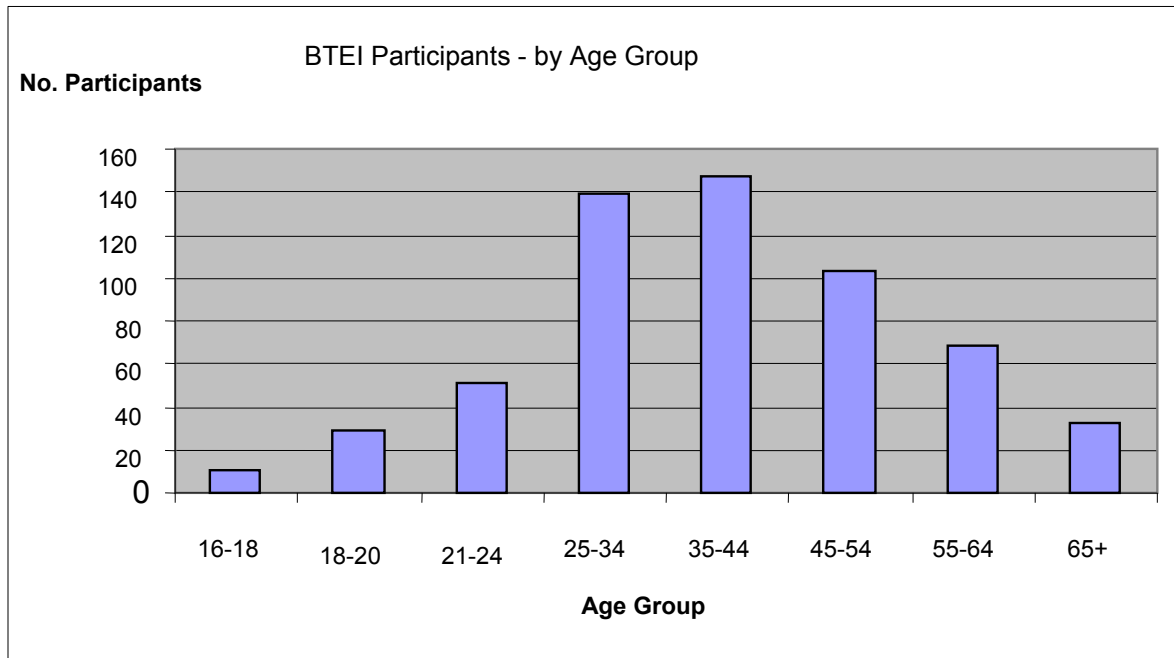
- Sligo Urban Area (9 centres)
- Easkey (2 centres)
- Grange
- Ballymote
- Tubbercurry (2 centres)
- Coola

There are a total of 580 participants in the County at February 2007. Participants are predominantly (76%) female , as shown in the following breakdown:

- 443 Female
- 137 Male
- The 25-44 age group makes up 49% of participants

The age profile of participants in the Back to Education Scheme in Sligo is shown in figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Age Distribution of Back to Education Initiative Participants



Source: County Sligo Vocational Education Committee

Second-chance education is supported by the Department of Social and Family Affairs through the Back to Education Allowance. In Sligo there are 77 recipients of this payment.

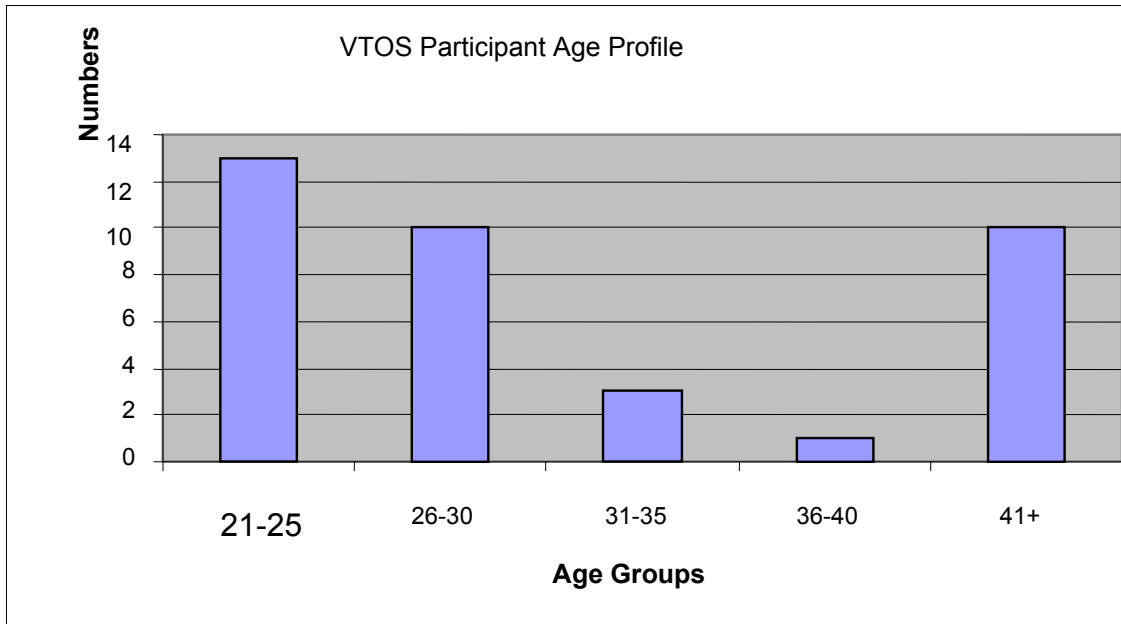
Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)

VTOS is a full-time course to help the long-term unemployed return to education without losing their social welfare benefits. The scheme is delivered by the Vocational Education Committee.

Courses lead to Leaving Certificate, PLC and FETAC qualifications. The allocation of places on this scheme in County Sligo for 2006-07 is limited to 40 places. Courses are provided in two centres in Sligo and Tubbercurry. In 2006-2007 there were 37

participants, 19 Female and 18 Male. The age profile of VTOS participants is shown in figure 7 below:

Figure 7: Age Distribution of VTOS Participants



Source: County Sligo Vocational Education Committee

Youthreach

This programme provides second-chance education for people aged 15–20 who have left school with few or no formal qualifications. It is delivered by County Sligo Vocational Education Committee. Courses lead to Junior Certificate and FETAC qualifications for participants. There is one centre at Cleveragh in Sligo with an allocation for 2006-07 of 40 places.

Enrolment is predominantly male and 30 participants were enrolled at December 2006. In 2006, 40 trainees received awards. Table 8 provides a breakdown of achievement of Youthreach participants in 2006.

Table 8: Achievement of Youthreach Participants in 2006

FETAC Foundation Certificate	6
FETAC Record of Achievement	19
FETAC Level 1	7
Junior Cert	8
Total	40

Source: County Sligo Vocational Education Committee

Adult Literacy Training

In 1997, an Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) International Adult Literacy Survey found 25% of Irish adults to have low literacy levels. A further 30% of the adult population did not have the skills needed for a modern, knowledge based economy. Although the survey pointed out literacy problems are most evident among adults over 40, Ireland's literacy problem among those aged 16-25 years was one of the highest in OECD countries (with around 17% of the population at the lowest literacy level).

Adult Literacy training provided by County Sligo VEC provides a service throughout the county on an 'as needed basis' through a panel of trained tutors. The Programme provides help for those experiencing difficulty with reading, writing, spelling, numeracy, form-filling and letter writing. In 2006 there were 984 participants in Sligo. It should be noted that 644 of these were in receipt of English language tuition under the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programme.

Table 9 provides a breakdown of the categories of literacy training provided by the VEC in Sligo during 2006.

Table 9: Adult Literacy Training, Sligo, 2006

Category	Male	Female	Total
Workplace Literacy	42	7	49
Mainstream Literacy	146	98	244
Intensive Literacy	5	0	5
CE/FAS	18	20	38
Family Literacy	0	0	0
Moving on Programme	4	0	4
ESOL	354	290	644
Total	569	415	984

Source: County Sligo Vocational Education Committee

SECTION: 6

Employment & Incomes

The EU SILC (2005) reports a 'risk of poverty rate' of 40.6% for unemployed people. While the at risk of poverty rate had reduced significantly for other groups, the unemployed have only shown a very slight reduction from 41.5% in 2004.

Key indicators of un-employment and income problems are:

- Labour force participation rate
- Numbers on the 'live register'
- Numbers receiving jobseekers allowance
- Numbers availing of employment services
- Relative Income levels
- Use of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)

Labour force participation

The labour force participation rate is defined as the proportion of the population aged 15 to 64 either in employment or actively looking for employment. The 2002 Census of Population recorded a Labour force participation rate of 56.8% for County Sligo. This rate is higher than the Border Region and just 1.5% below the national average.

Live Register Numbers

Numbers on the Live Register in Sligo in February 2007, totalled 1,906 persons. Of these, 1,562 were registered at the DSFA Sligo office and 344 at the Tubbercurry office. The twelve month trend for numbers of people on the live register in Sligo and its wider region are summarised below:

- Numbers on the Live Register in Sligo have reduced by 2.26% in the 12 months to February 2007.

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- Numbers on the Live Register in BMW Region have increased by 1.46% in 12 months to February 2007.
- Numbers on the Live Register in Border Region have increased by 0.55% in 12 months to February 2007.

(Source: Central Statistics Office; March 2007)

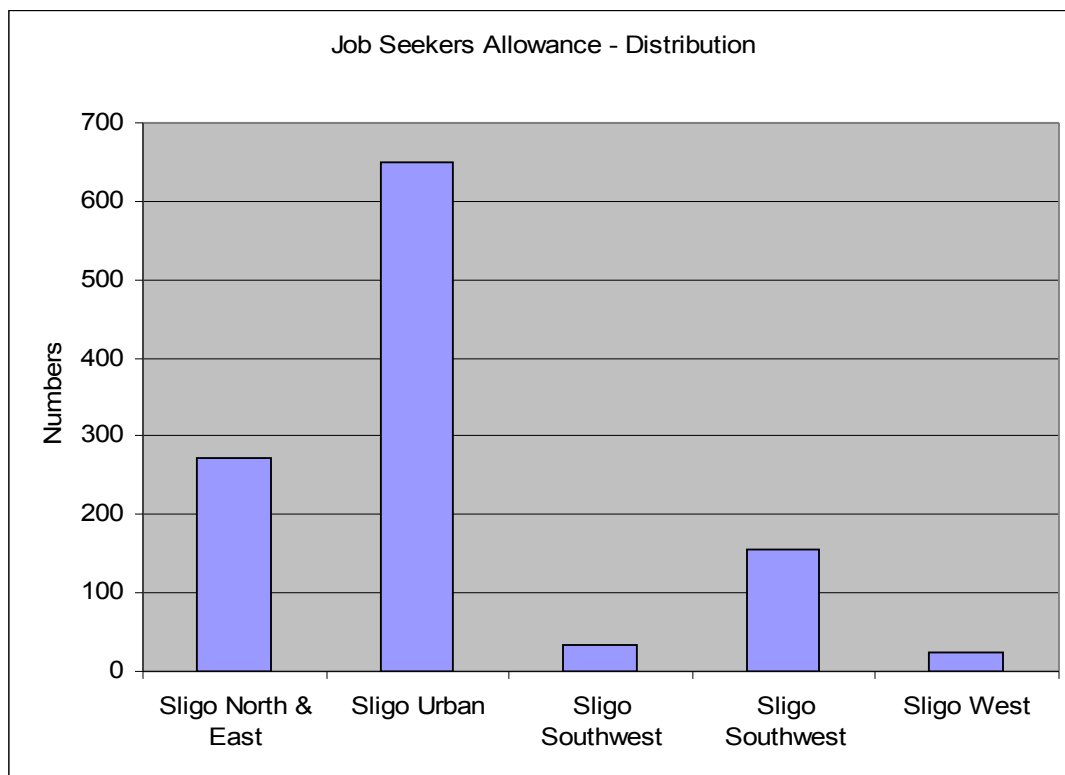
Jobseekers Allowance

A total of 1,135 persons were in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance in Sligo in February 2007. The gender breakdown was as follows:

- 835 Males (75%)
- 282 Females (25%)

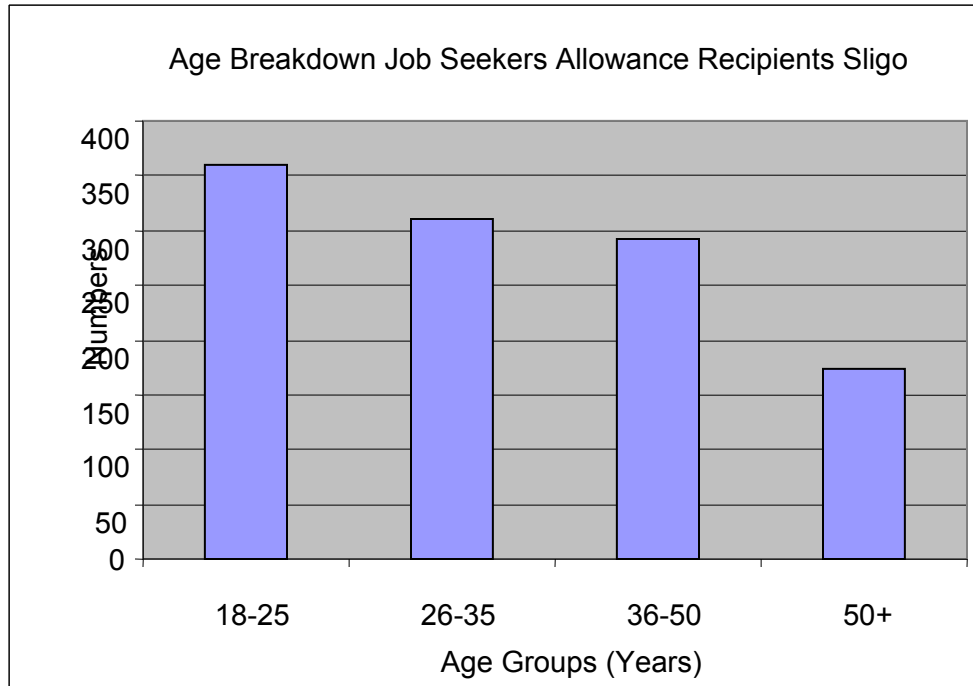
The distribution of recipients within the County is shown in figure 8 below and age distribution of recipients is presented in figure 9.

Figure 8: Distribution of Job-Seeker's Allowance Recipients in Sligo



Source: Department of Social & Family Affairs

Figure 9: Age Profile of Job-Seeker's Allowance Recipients in Sligo



Source: Department of Social & Family Affairs

Employment Services

FÁS is the agency with responsibility for employment services. It provides its services in County Sligo through its offices at Government Buildings, Cranmore Road, Sligo and its Training Centre, Ballytivnan, Sligo and at outreach clinics at Ballymote, Tubbercurry and Enniscrone.

Table 10 provides a breakdown of FAS' Employment Services activity in Co Sligo in 2005.

Table 10: Employment Services activity Sligo 2005

Activity	Client Numbers
Vacancies/Posts Recorded	2,119
Persons placed in Employment	1,398
Training/Education Provision	281
Persons with Disability Supported	240
Persons with Disability Placed in Employment	12
Persons with Disability Placed in Training or Education	162

Source: Fas Sligo

Employment Action Plan

The Employment Action Plan is an NDP priority programme operated by FÁS and the Department of Social & Family Affairs (DSFA). Clients referred by DSFA are offered a priority service by FÁS. To date 671 long-term unemployed persons in County Sligo have been referred through the Employment Action Plan. For 2005 the situation is summarised in table 11.

Table 11: Analysis of Employment Action Plan in Sligo

Numbers Referred	Interviewed	Placed in Training/ Education	Placed in Jobs	Total Placed
771	554	92	185	287

Source: Fas Sligo

Community Employment

The Community Employment Programme continues to be the major provider of temporary work places for the unemployed. In County Sligo, 26 Community Employment projects provide a training and development opportunity to 418 participants. Areas covered include Environmental, Community Centre, Heritage, Caring and Childcare.

Job Initiative

This programme currently provides full-time employment to 12 participants throughout various locations in the county. All of these would have been over 35 years of age and over 5 years unemployed prior to commencing on the programme.

Jobs Club Programme

Jobs Club is a programme which assists unemployed people to develop job-seeking skills necessary to obtain work. The Job Club is designed to assist participants in the development of confidence building, and provides the resources needed for an intensive search for work. Within the county, FAS Community Services has contracted with County Sligo Partnership Co. Ltd to deliver this service within its Partnership area and a Job Club is in operation at a fixed location in Sligo Town. Additional venues may operate throughout the county at various times to cater for the client group within their own geographic locality.

Local Training Initiatives

This programme provides for the training of individuals within their own geographic area and is identified and driven by local sponsoring groups. Currently there are four such programmes being undertaken in County Sligo, and between them they provide for up to 50 places. Activities covered range from Research, Literacy and Numeracy, to computer skills. A very successful Interagency Programme delivering primary health care to Travellers has just been completed and FÁS is currently involved in a similar approach in progressing this programme to a further level of training.

Community Training Centre

The Community Training Centre based in Sligo caters for approximately 90 trainees and provides a variety of training initiatives including Hairdressing, ICT modules, Catering, Sports and Leisure. Many of these, within the Youthreach category, either secure full-time employment or move on to further training and education.

People with Disabilities

FÁS is responsible for assisting persons with disabilities to obtain employment and training. To this end FÁS operates a Supported Employment Programme, which seeks to help people with disabilities obtain paid employment by providing a range of supports such as job coaches. FAS has responsibility for providing labour market services for people with disabilities. Throughout the Northwest Region, FAS assists this client group gain or retain employment in the private sector through a range of employment related supports.

The supports available through different units are:

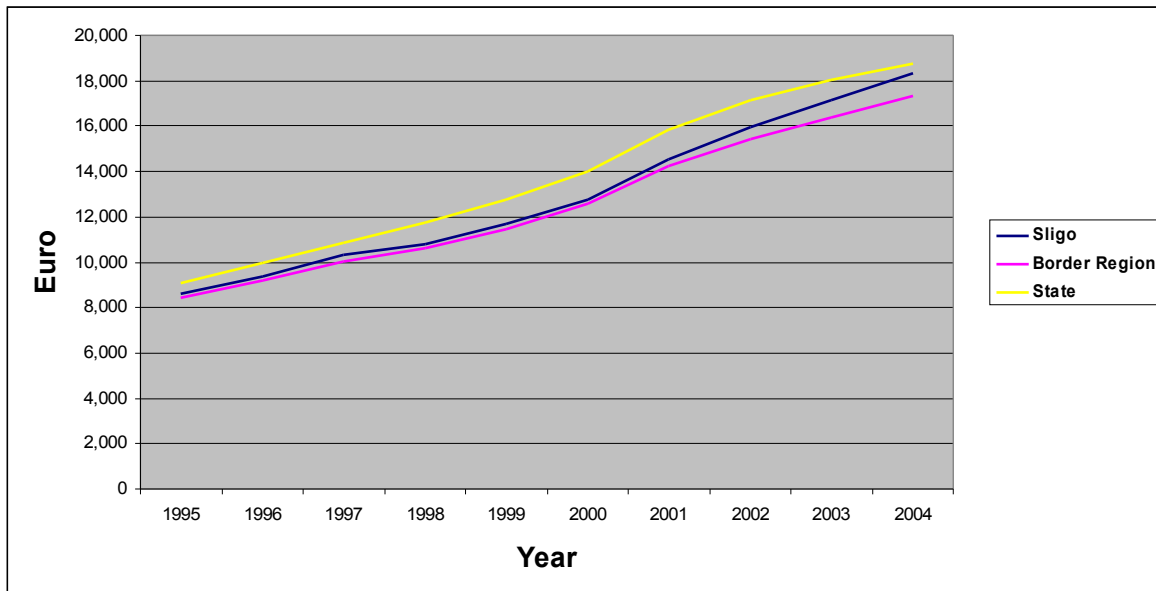
- Job Interviewer Interpreter Grant
- Personal Reader Grant
- Employment Support Scheme
- Workplace Equipment Adaptation Grant
- Supported Employment
- Employee Retention Grant Scheme
- Disability Awareness Training Support Scheme

There is provision for one full-time Job Coach and one part-time Job Coach to assist in the Supported Employment Programme within County Sligo.

Relative Incomes

Average disposable income per person has risen at an unprecedented level over the past decade. Estimated incomes for Sligo have grown at a greater rate than in the Border Region and the trend is for the average county income per person to converge with the national average. However, it should be remembered that these average figures do not reveal the major disparities that exist in income levels throughout Ireland. The EU_SILC reports that incomes among the top 20% of earners are five times those of the lowest 20%.

Figure 10: Estimate of Average Disposable Income per Person: Comparative Trends for County Sligo, Border Region and State.



Source: Based on CSO data, 2007.

Note: County estimates should be regarded as indicative rather than as accurate absolute figures.

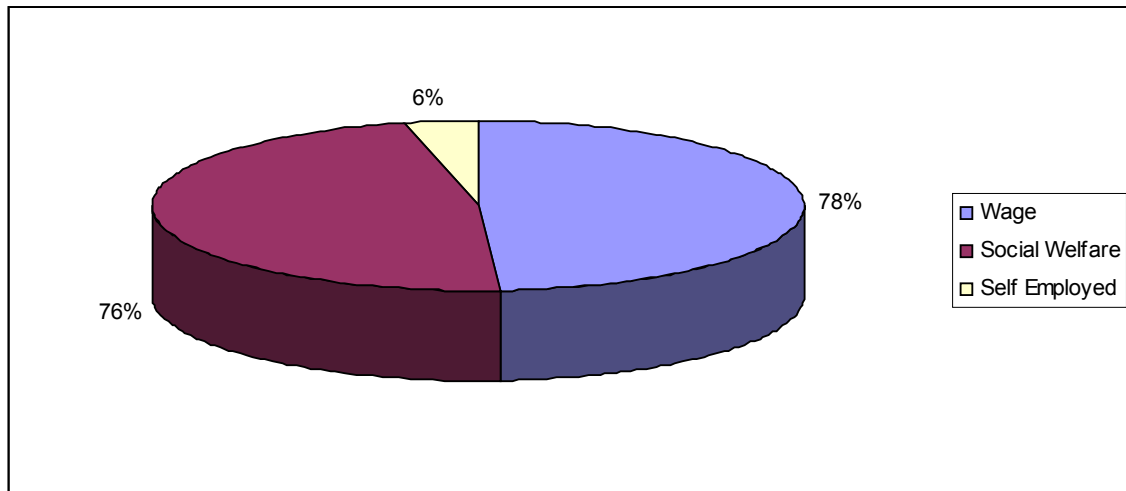
Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)

Sligo MABS dealt with 182 new clients in 2006. Approximately equal numbers were employed and social welfare dependent. The largest group availing of the service were single people with no dependents followed by single parents. Figure 11 shows the profile of MABS clients in 2006. The income source of clients is shown in figure 12.

Figure 11: Marital Status of New Clients. Sligo MABS 2006



Figure 12: Income Sources of Clients. Sligo MABS 2006



SECTION: 7

Vulnerable Groups

Introduction

This section provides more detailed information on those groups demonstrated to experience a high risk-of-poverty rate.

These are:

- Older People
- Lone Parents
- People with Disability
- Traveller Community
- Children
- Migrant Workers
- Asylum Seekers
- Refugees

Older People

In 2002, 7,673 people or just over 13% of Sligo's population were aged over 65 years

Older people living alone are most at risk in terms of poverty and social exclusion.

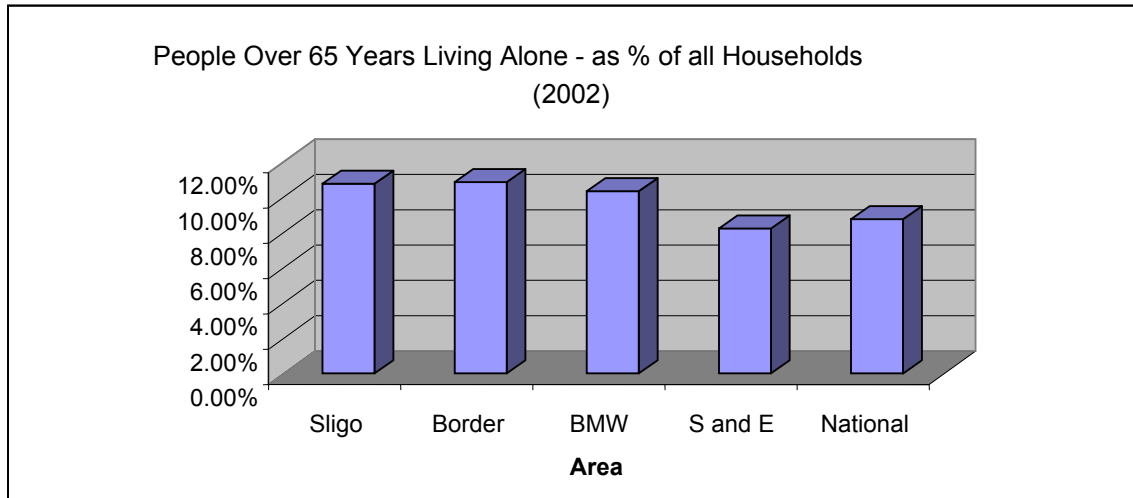
The 2002 Census of Population recorded 2,120 people over 65 years (27.6% of all people over 65) living alone in County Sligo. The gender breakdown of this group is; 802 Males and 1,328 females. This represents 10.8% of all households in the county.

This rate is similar to rates in the Border Region and in the Border Midlands and West Region as a whole. It is significantly higher than the rate for the South and East Region and the National average of 8.8%. The EU-SILC reported that in 2005 the 'at risk of poverty rate' among households with 'one adult with no children' was 28.8%. This

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category of household is predominantly composed of the elderly. This risk rate had declined from 35.7% in 2004.

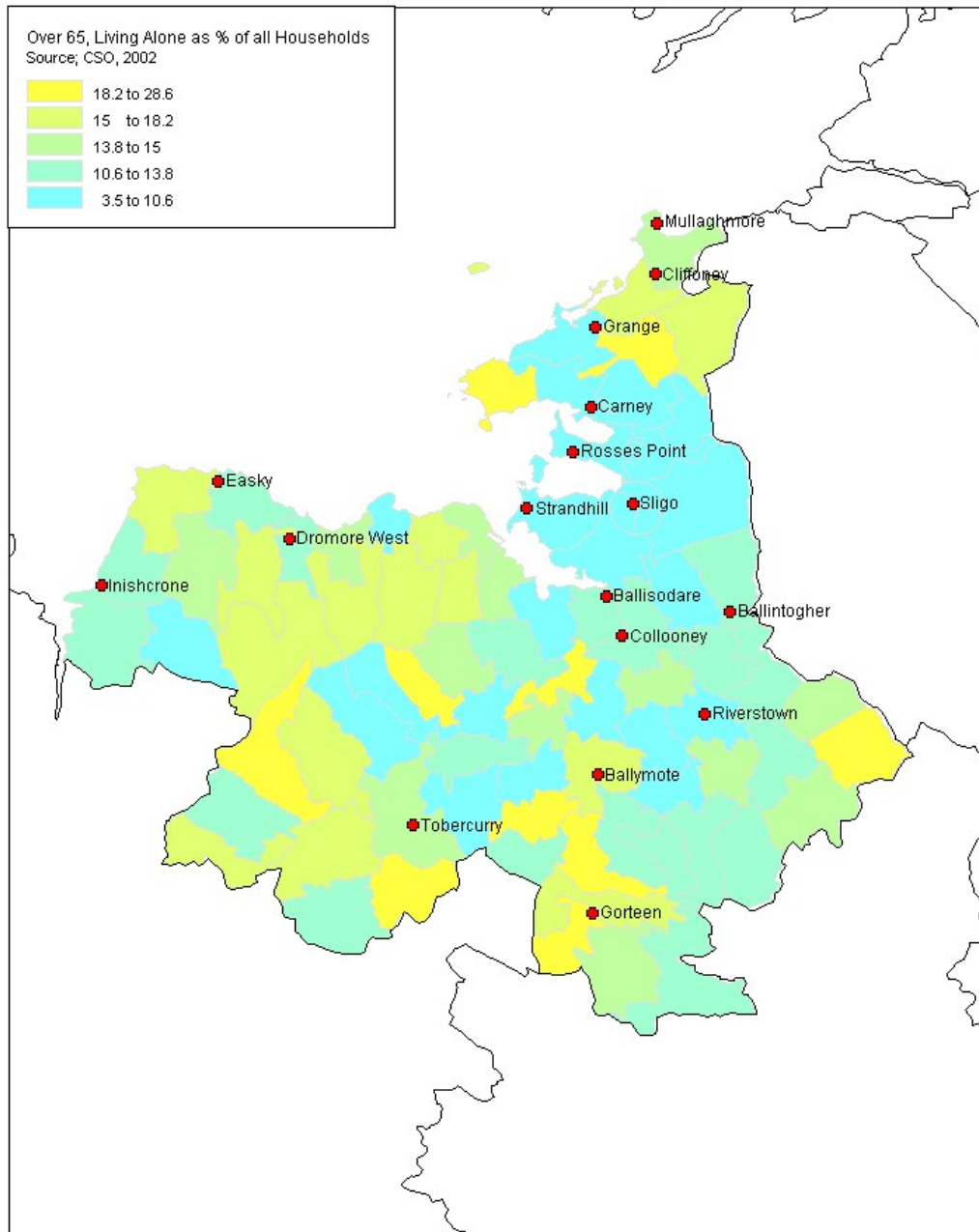
Figure 13: Comparison of Proportions of people over 65 years living alone in County Sligo, the Regions and Nationally



Source: CSO, 2002

Map 5 shows the distribution of people aged over 65 years living alone as a percentage of all households within Sligo.

Map 6: Aged Over 65 Years Living Alone as % of all Households



Lone Parents

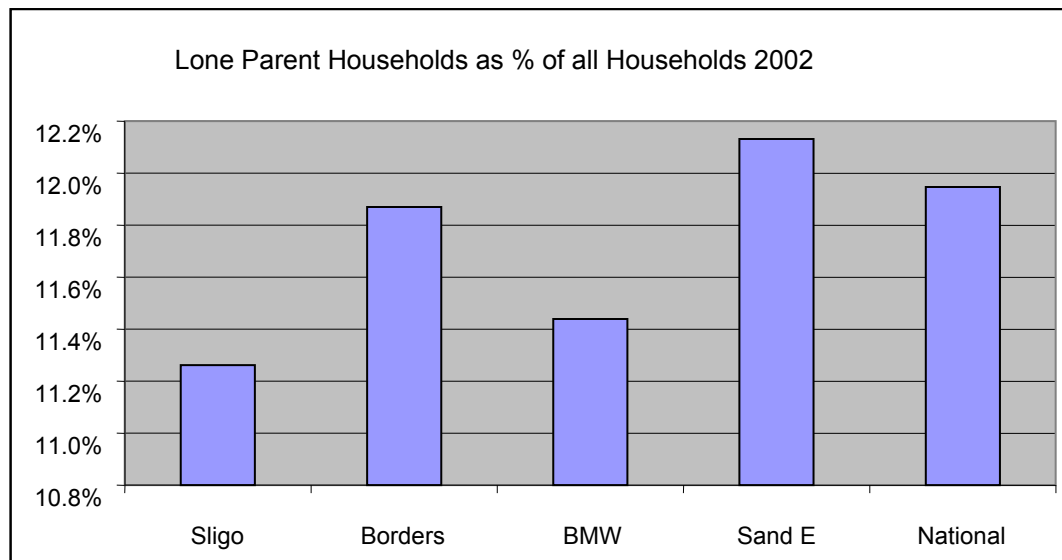
In its three year action plan 2006-2008, Sligo County Development Board identified lone parents as one of the groups in society most vulnerable to poverty, exclusion and long-term unemployment.

The EU_SILC reports that in 2005 nationally, 40.7% of persons living in lone parent households were considered to be at risk of poverty. This rate had reduced from 48.3% in 2004.

The 2002 Census of population recorded 2,212 households headed by a lone parent in Sligo. This represents an overall 11.3% of all households in the county. Compared with the national and regional averages, County Sligo recorded a relatively low level of single parent households.

The comparative rates are illustrated in figure 14.

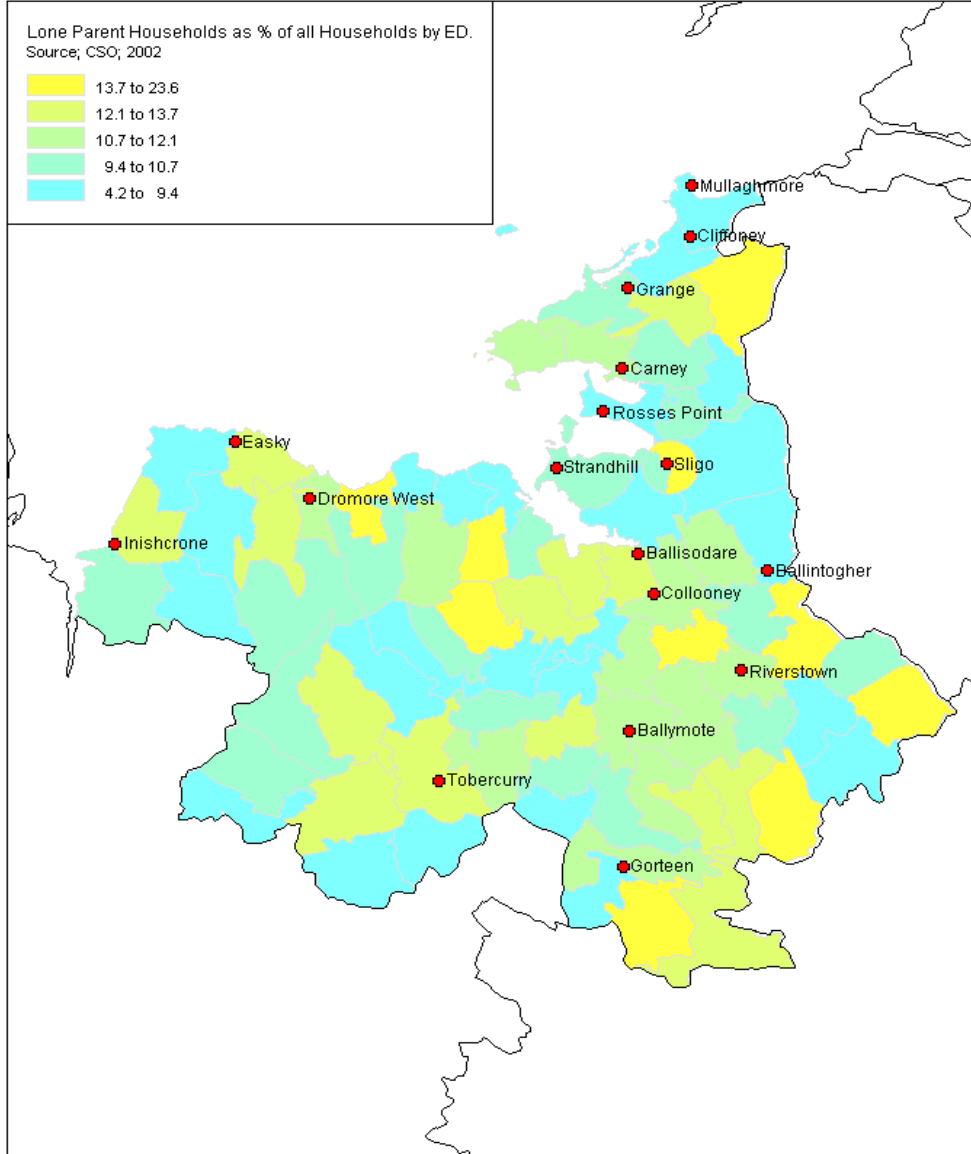
Figure 14: Comparison of Proportions of Lone Parent Households in County Sligo, the Regions and Nationally



Source: CSO,2002

Map 7 Shows the distribution of lone parent households within County Sligo.

Map 7: Distribution of Lone Parent Households in Sligo



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Sligo County Development Board has been selected by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to develop a pilot Labour Market Initiative for Lone Parents. The project is entitled 'Pathways to Employment for People Parenting Alone' or the PEPPA project.

Under this programme, the Board are developing an interagency education and training initiative based on individualised career path planning with thirty lone parents and an analysis of local labour market needs.

In addition to the core group who will avail of a high support programme, it is estimated that at least another thirty people will be sign-posted to other supports available locally. The programme is being introduced in Sligo City, Tubbercurry and Ballymote and Easkey through the Family Resource Centres in each area.

People with Disability

The EUSILC reports that in 2005, almost one in four of those with a chronic illness or disability were at risk of poverty.

The 2002 Census of Population recorded 5,100 people with disability in Sligo. This equates to approximately 10% of the population of the county. This compares with a national average rate of 8%.

Figures drawn from the National Physical and Sensory Disability Database (NPSDD) Record a significantly lower level of disability within the population of Sligo. A total of 428 Sligo people are registered on this database. Registration is voluntary and it must be assumed that only those with a severely disabling condition are recorded on this register. Also, it should be noted that the NPSDD does not include persons aged over 65 years.

Disability levels are strongly age-related. The 2002 Census of Population records 29% of all those aged 65 or more as having a disability - almost three times the rate for the county population as a whole.

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Table 12 shows the numbers of people with a physical disability registered in Sligo compared with the National total.

Table 12:

	Physical Disability		
	Sligo	National	% of National
0-17	55	5,485	1.00
18-65	274	12,238	2.24
Total	329	17,723	1.86

Source: Health Service Executive, 2007

Table 13 shows the numbers of people with a sensory disability registered in Sligo compared with the National total.

Table 13:

	Sensory Disability		
	Sligo	National	% of National
0-17	21	1,041	2.02
18-65	58	2,144	2.71
Total	79	3,185	2.48

Source: Health Service Executive, 2007

Sligo has a disproportionately high rate of persons with a sensory disability. Given that the population of Sligo stood at 60,894 in 2006, the county contains 1.44% of the population of the state. Thus the rate of sensory disability in the county is 58% greater than the average rate for the state.

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Table 14 shows the numbers of people with both a physical and sensory disability registered in Sligo compared with the National total.

Table 14:

	Physical & Sensory Disability		
	Sligo	National	% of National
0-17	5	512	0.98
18-65	15	1,008	1.49
Total	20	1,520	1.32

Source: Health Service Executive, 2007

Table 15 shows the total number of people with disability registered in Sligo compared with the National total.

Table 15:

	Total People with Disability		
	Sligo	National	% of National
0-17	81	7,038	1.15
18-65	347	1,5390	2.25
Total	428	22,428	1.91

Source: Health Service Executive, 2007

The Health Service Executive Primary, Community and Continuing Care service for County Sligo also deals with County Leitrim and a small area of west Cavan. In total in this administrative area, there were 855 persons with intellectual disability registered on the National Intellectual Disability Database in 2006. This represents an intellectual disability rate of 1% of the population of the region. Table 16 shows the relative proportions of intellectual disability levels recorded in Sligo and Leitrim.

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Table 16:

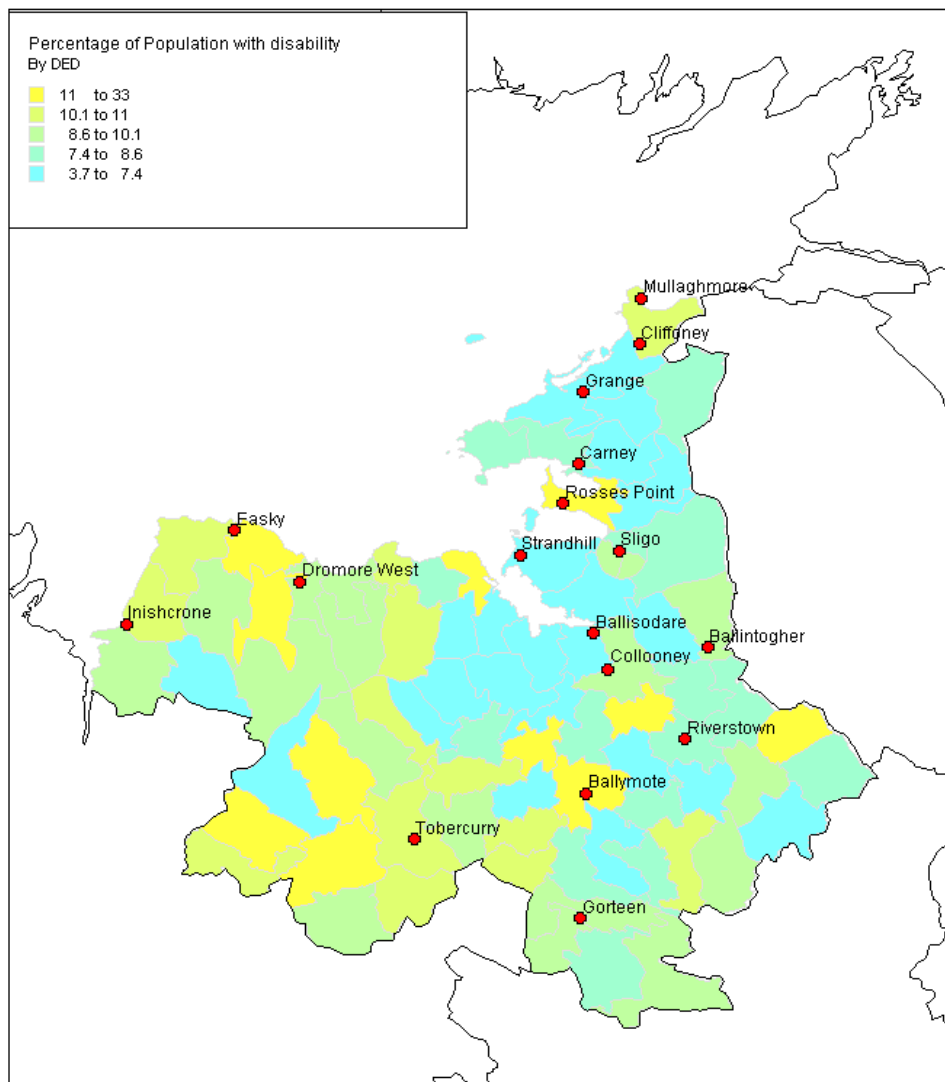
Level of Intellectual Disability	Number Registered	% of total
Mild	314	36.7%
Moderate	276	32.3%
Severe	172	20.1%
Profound	27	3.2%
Not Verified	66	7.7%
Total	855	

Source HSE 2006

In terms of service provision to people with intellectual disability the HSE provided day services for 51% and residential services for 47% of those with intellectual disability in the region in 2006.

Map 8 shows the distribution of people with disability as a proportion of the population by Electoral District based on the 2002 Census of Population.

Map 8



Source: CSO: 2002

Traveller Community

By definition the Traveller population in an area is variable. A survey of the Traveller community in Sligo conducted in 2006 showed a total population for Sligo of 448 travellers, representing 1.8% of the national traveller population.

A question relating to membership of the Irish Traveller community was included for the first time in the 2002 census form. Efforts to distinguish Irish Travellers in previous censuses had relied on enumerators identifying them during the fieldwork phase of the census. The earlier coverage was only partial, as it focused on Travellers who lived mainly in halting sites, encampments, mobile homes and caravans. By way of contrast, the question used in the 2002 Census was asked of the entire population.

The 2002 Census of Population showed a population of 364 travellers in Sligo. This equates to 0.62% of the total population of the county and is consistent with the national ratio.

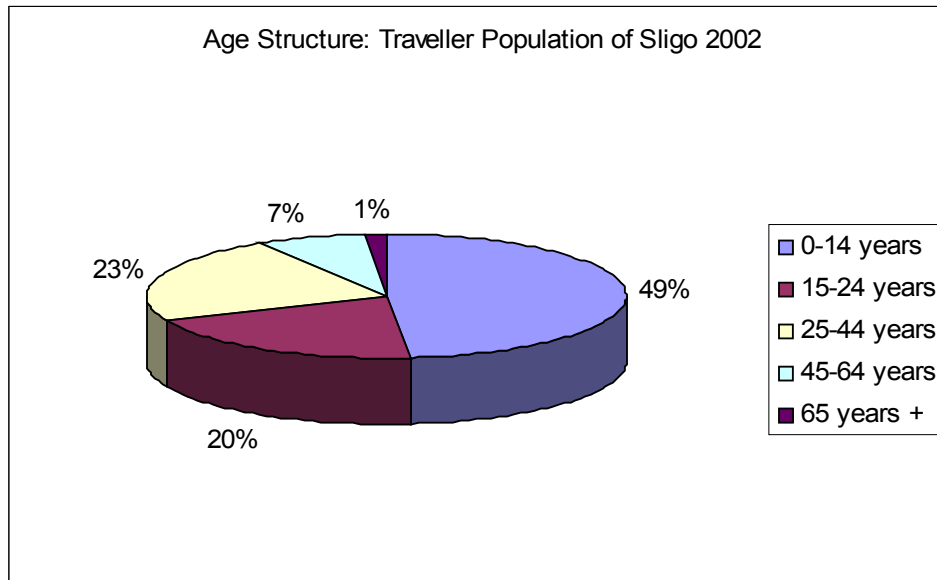
Life Expectancy

Examining the age profile of the traveller population in comparison to that of the total population of Sligo reveals a stark contrast in life expectancy levels and the relative proportions of young people in the two communities.

Nationally, Traveller males have a life expectancy at birth that is ten years less than males in the general population. For female Travellers the expectancy is twelve years less (*Traveller Health – A National Strategy 2002-2005*). Nationally, only 3.3% of travelers live beyond the age of 65 years.

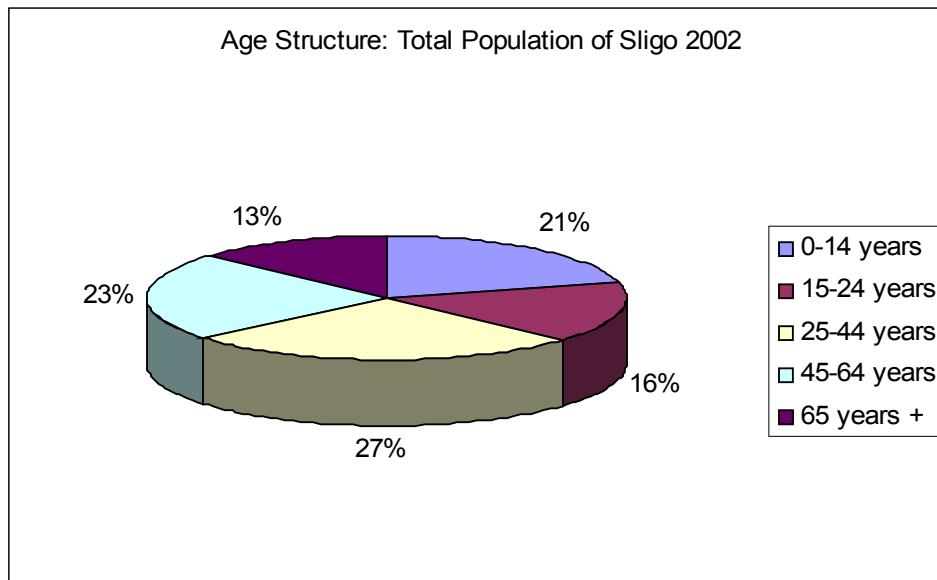
Figures 14 and 15 illustrate the situation among the Sligo Traveller population in 2002. Just 5 travellers (1.37%) were above the age of 65 years. At the other end of the age range, almost 50% of the traveller population was aged below 15 years. This is more than double the rate of the population in general where just 21% of the population is aged under 15 years.

Figure 15: Age Structure of the Sligo Traveller Population , 2002



Source: CSO Census of Population, 2002

Figure 16: Age Structure of the Total Sligo Population , 2002



Source: CSO Census of Population, 2002

Such an age structure can be attributed to the above average birth rates and mortality rates. However, there are further complex factors contributing directly and indirectly to

lower life expectancy such as poverty; inadequate accommodation and poor sanitation on halting sites; low uptake of medical services, including dental care; lack of availing of preventative health treatments; a lack of basic health education; and racial discrimination, which results in poor access to services.

(Traveller Health – A National Strategy 2002-2005).

Educational Attainment

Analysis of the 2002 census data shows a very low level of educational attainment among the Traveller community of Sligo.

In the 15-19 age group just 4 of 65 (6%) achieved Junior Certificate level education.

Overall, just over a quarter of the Traveller population (25.5%) had progressed beyond primary education level.

This low rate of educational attainment is reflected in the labour force status of the Traveller community with just 15% of the Traveller population at work. High levels of unemployment, sickness and disability result in very high levels of reliance on social transfers and the associated risk of poverty. The National Traveller Health Strategy (2002 - 2005) showed a clear positive correlation between poor health and poor living conditions.

Children

While children under 16 years of age account for just 22.5% of the overall population they represent almost 27% of those at risk of poverty and a significantly higher 34.3% of all persons in consistent poverty.

The 2002 Census of Population presents figures for children up to 15 years of age. In Sligo there were 12,089 persons in the 0-14 year age category representing 21% of the population.

Seven of the electoral divisions in Sligo with populations above 1,000 persons had higher than average proportions of children.

These are listed in Table 17 below

Table 17: DEDs with populations greater than 1,000 having above average numbers of children in the 0-14 years age group.

DED	Population 2002	Population Aged 0 to 14: 2002	% of population under 15
Kilglass	1,245	260	20.88%
Ballysadare East	1,215	317	26.09%
Calry	1,836	461	25.11%
Collooney	1,255	305	24.30%
Kilmacowen	1,868	431	23.07%
Knocknaree	2,833	649	22.91%
Tobercurry	1,894	418	22.07%

Source: Census of Population, 2002.

Asylum Seekers

Non-Irish nationals have a much higher risk of poverty than Irish nationals.

In 2005 almost 27% of non-Irish nationals were at risk of poverty, compared with 18% for Irish nationals.

Asylum seekers are accommodated under a system known as 'direct provision'.

This is a support system for asylum-seekers whereby all accommodation costs together with the cost of three main meals and snacks, heat, light, laundry, maintenance, etc are paid directly by the state. In addition, asylum seekers in receipt of direct provision are paid €19.10 per adult and €9.60 per child per week.

Child benefit is no longer paid to asylum-seekers if they arrived in Ireland after 1st May 2004.

Figures published by the Reception and Integration Agency of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (RIA, March 2007) report 250 asylum seekers accommodated at the privately owned Globe House in Sligo. This number represents 4% of the national population of asylum seekers and approximately 0.41% of Sligo's population.

Rapid and Clar Designated areas.

A number of areas within Sligo have been designated as disadvantaged under the two national designations RAPID and CLAR.

RAPID

RAPID stands for "Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development".

RAPID is an initiative of government to target the most concentrated areas of disadvantage in the country. Designation as a RAPID area confers a priority for investment in social and community infrastructure in an area.

In Sligo the following areas have been designated under the Programme:

- Cranmore Estate,
- Forthill Area/Cartron Estate,
- Garravogue Villas/Doorly Park,
- St Josephs Terrace/St Bridgets Place/Pilkington Terrace,
- Maugheraboy/Jinks Avenue/Tracey Avenue

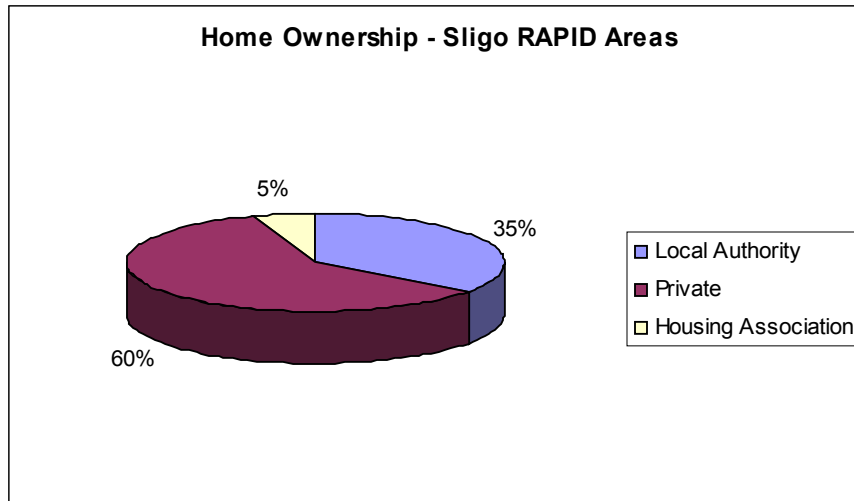
In total, 1,645 households are included in the Sligo RAPID Programme. This represents 25% of households in the Sligo Borough Council area.

Table 18 shows the distribution of household numbers within the RAPID areas in Sligo.

Table 18

RAPID Area	Total Housing	Local Authority	Private	Housing Association	Total
Cranmore	500	237	211	52	500
Forthill/Cartron	264	104	160		264
Garavogue/Doorly	251	79	172		251
St. Josephs	242	63	179		242
Maugheraboy	388	91	260	37	388
Total	1,645	574	982	89	1,645

Figure 17: Home Ownership in Sligo RAPID Areas



Source: Sligo Rapid Area Implementation Team

Census figures do not allow for an accurate analysis of population within the RAPID areas as they are below the small area level on which figures are reported, but an estimate can be derived by taking the average household size in Sligo Borough as reported in the 2006 Census of Population and applying this to the number of households in the Rapid designated areas. This produces an estimate of 4,557 persons living in the Rapid areas of Sligo.

A survey of residents of Cranmore estate was carried out in 2006 as part of the planning process for a major regeneration project on the estate.

This work summarised the key social issues present in Cranmore as being:

- 1• Early school leaving
- 2• High levels of unemployment
- 3• Lack of childcare facilities
- 4• High levels of welfare dependency
- 5• An increasing level of dependent elderly
- 6• Inadequate quality of housing stock
- 7• Increasing levels of anti-social behaviour
- 8• Absence of adequate youth facilities
- 9• Lack of sport/recreation facilities
- 10• Low property prices
- 11• Physical appearance of estate
- 12• Concern over housing allocations and tenancy agreements.

In tandem with these social issues, after a series of consultations with the residents, Sligo Borough Council (SBC) identified the following as key physical issues negatively impinging on the life of residents within Cranmore (Sligo Borough Council, 2005):

- 1• Poor image of estate due to repetition of houses
- 2• A number of derelict houses
- 3• Litter
- 4• Points of congregation and anti-social behaviour (unsupervised and areas of poor natural surveillance)
- 5• Back alleyways
- 6• Rat runs for motorcyclists
- 7• Poor housing design – very dense in places
- 8• Inadequate car parking spaces
- 9• Lack of recreation areas for young people
- 10• A brutal hard concrete environment.

The RAPID programme in Sligo has enabled the progression of a range of important projects since its establishment. One of the 'landmark' projects involved development of the Forthill Municipal Park, providing sports facilities and communal areas for the local community, supported by Sports Capital Programme, Dormant Accounts support and Sligo Borough Council funding. Other projects such as the Dream Chasers multi-purpose childcare facility and the Cranmore Regeneration Project have helped built confidence and a constructive working relationship between the community and local service providers.

CLÁR

CLÁR is an investment programme for disadvantage rural areas. It was introduced in October 2001 arising from a commitment in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness to provide a targeted investment programme in disadvantaged urban and rural areas. CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) is the rural strand of the programme.

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The measures in the programme cover physical, social and community infrastructure, e.g. roads, water schemes, enhancement, community/sports facilities and electricity conversions and were decided on after consultation with the communities in the areas concerned.

Sligo is a predominantly rural county with a relatively low proportion of the population living in large towns. The Clar designated areas in the county account for 34,572 people or 53% of the county population. Sligo urban area and its immediate hinterland are the only areas excluded from the programme.

Map 7: CLÁR Areas in Sligo



Appendix 1: Definitions Used in this document.

Poverty: People are said to be living in poverty if their income and resources are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living considered acceptable in Irish society. Because of their poverty they may experience multiple disadvantage through unemployment, low income, poor housing, inadequate health care and barriers to education. They are often excluded and marginalised from participating in activities that are the norm for other people.

Poverty risk: The proportion of people living in households where their disposable income is below the threshold of 60% of the national average disposable income. The EU measure of poverty risk is set at 60% of national average income.

Consistent poverty: combined with the lack of basic items such as warm coat, sufficient food or adequate heating. The percentage of people living in consistent poverty is the proportion of the total population, eg 7% who are living on a lower than normal income and who lack certain basic essential items there by experiencing a lower standard of living than the rest of society.

Relative income poverty: Relative income poverty is having an income that is less than what is regarded as the norm in society, giving a lower than normal standard of living. It is "relative" because it is measured by how much less it is *relative* to the income of the majority of people. It is usually expressed as a percentage figure, eg the 60% relative income poverty line is 60% of the disposable income of the average household.

Social exclusion: The process whereby certain groups are pushed to the margins of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, low education or inadequate lifeskills. This distances them from job, income and education 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.

Appendix 2: Published Information Sources

Action Plan for Economic, Social and Cultural Development 2006-2008 (Sligo County Development Board, 2006)

Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007–2016 (Government of Ireland, 2007)

The National Development Plan 2007-2013 (Government of Ireland, 2007)

Better Local Government: A Programme for Change (Government of Ireland, 1996)

Guidelines for Preparing National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion
EU 2006

Building an Inclusive Society (Government of Ireland, 2002)

Linking Local and National Structures – Tackling Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion (Combat Poverty Agency, 2007),

Sligo Integrated Strategy 2002 – 2012 (Sligo County Development Board, 2002)

Sligo Local Authorities' Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan 2004-2008

Sligo Traveller Survey 2006

Inequalities in Perceived Health (Institute of Public Health, 2003)

Supporting Equity in Education (Department of Education and Science, 2003).

Who Went to College in 2004? A National Survey of New Entrants to Higher Education (Higher Education Authority, 2006)

Analysis of Attendance Data at Primary and Post-Primary Levels for 2004/2005 (National Educational Welfare Board, 2006)

International Adult Literacy Survey Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

Traveller Health – A National Strategy 2002-2005 (Government of Ireland, 2002)

EU-SILC: European Union Survey of Income and Living Conditions 2005 (Central Statistics Office, 2007)

County Incomes and Regional GDP 2004 (Central Statistics Office, 2007)

Live Register Report (Central Statistics Office, 2007)

Census of Population 2002 (Central Statistics Office, 2003)

Census of Population 2006 (Central Statistics Office, 2007)

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Housing

In Ireland, those living in rented or rent-free accommodation make up 43% of persons at risk of poverty and over 66% of those experiencing consistent poverty while representing less than 22% of the population.

In Sligo 3,282 (17.3%) of households occupied rented accommodation in 2002,.

Sligo Local Authorities maintain a total housing stock of 1,829 units. Of these, 892 units (49%) are located in the County Council area with 937 units (51%) in the Sligo Borough area.

In March 2007, the number of applications for Local Authority housing in Sligo stood at 1,490 representing an estimated 2,489 individuals in need of housing in the county.

Sligo Local Authorities' Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan 2004-2008 records 332 housing units provided by housing associations in the County.

Homelessness

Sligo Social Services and Finisklin Housing Association provide accommodation for homeless people in County Sligo. Between these two services there is a total capacity for 74 people.

A total of 448 members of the Traveller community were recorded in Sligo 2006. Forty six percent of the Traveller population occupied caravan accommodation either in halting sites or on the roadside.

Welfare Dependency

In March 2007 the following means-tested payments were made in Sligo:

- Non- Contributory State Pension: 2,207 recipients
- Job Seekers Allowance 1,135 recipients
- One-Parent Family Payment: 1,056 recipients
- Disability Allowance 1,489 recipients
- Carers Allowance 537 recipients
- Illness Benefit 369 recipients
- Family Income Support 356 recipients
- Back to Education Allowance 77 recipients

- Farm Assist 280 recipients

Health

There were 17,055 medical card holders in County Sligo in 2007 representing 28% of the population. (Health Service Executive, Public Health Unit: March, 2007).

In 2005 the EU-SILC recorded approximately 32% of the population as medical card holders. The EU-SILC found that in Ireland in 2005 almost 41% of medical card holders were classified as being 'at risk of poverty'.

Education

The 2002 Census of Population recorded an Early School Leaving rate of just over 20.7% in Sligo. This compares favourably with the National rate of 21.9% and is significantly better than the Border Region rate of 29.4%.

Sligo also shows a higher than average rate of third-level educational achievement with 24.5% of the population having attended education beyond secondary level.

A total of 6,643 children were enrolled in primary level schools in Sligo in the 2005/2006 school year. Of these, 1,424 pupils (21% of primary school children) attend primary level schools designated as disadvantaged. Of these 505 pupils are in rural schools and 919 in urban schools. There are a total of 429 (9%) post-primary pupils enrolled in disadvantaged schools.

At secondary the rate of absenteeism from school in Sligo is high with 24.4% of students absent for more than 20 days in the school year. This rate is 5.6% above the national average rate.

Income and Employment

Numbers on the Live Register in Sligo have reduced by 2.26% in the 12 months to February 2007.

Sligo Money Advice & Budgeting Service dealt with 182 new clients in 2006. The largest category availing of the service were single people with no dependents followed by single parents.

Older People

In 2002, 7,673 people or just over 13% of Sligo's population were aged over 65 years

The EU_SILC reports that in 2005 nationally, 40.7% of persons living in lone parent households were considered to be at risk of poverty. This rate had reduced from 48.3% in 2004.

Lone Parents

The 2002 Census of population recorded 2,212 households headed by a lone parent in Sligo.

This represents an overall 11.3% of all households in the county.

Disability

The EUSILC reports that in 2005, almost one in four of those with a chronic illness or disability were at risk of poverty.

The 2002 Census of Population recorded 5,100 people with disability in Sligo. This equates to approximately 10% of the population of the county. This compares with a national average rate of 8%.

Disability levels are strongly age-related. The 2002 Census of Population records 29% of all those aged 65 or more as having a disability - almost three times the rate for the county population as a whole.

There were 855 persons with intellectual disability in Sligo/Leitrim registered on the National Intellectual Disability Database in 2006. This represents an intellectual disability rate of 1% of the population of the two counties.

Traveller Community

Nationally, only 3.3% of travelers live beyond the age of 65 years.

In Sligo, just five Travellers (1.37%) were above the age of 65 years. At the other end of the age range, almost 50% of the Traveller population was aged below 15 years. This is more than double the rate of the population in general.

In the 15-19 age group just 4 of 65 (6%) achieved Junior Certificate level education. Overall, just over a quarter of the Traveller population (25.5%) had progressed beyond primary education level.

Just 15% of the Traveller population is in employment.

Children

While children under 16 years of age account for just 22.5% of the overall population they represent almost 27% of those at risk of poverty and a significantly higher 34.3% of all persons in consistent poverty.

The 2002 Census of Population recorded 12,089 persons in the 0-14 year age group In Sligo representing 21% of the population.

An estimated 4,557 persons (25% of the urban population) live in the Rapid areas of disadvantage in Sligo.

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The Clar designated areas in the county account for 34,572 people or 53% of the county population.