



Sligo County Childcare Committee
Coiste Cúraim Leanaí Chondae Sligigh

Strategic Plan

2007 – 2010

Funded by the Irish Government under the National Childcare Investment Programme 2006-2010



Funded by the Irish Government and part financed by the European Union Structural Funds
under the National Development Plan 2000-2006



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2.0 Summary of Review of the Strategic Plan 2001 - 2006

During the consultation phase for the Strategic Plan 2007-2010, a review was undertaken of the previous Strategic Plan 2001-2006. The review focused primarily on the following:

- Strategic objectives and aims for 2001-2006, i.e.:
 - Membership and Representation Issues
 - Quality Issues
 - Training issues
 - Actions to address local needs and capacity building
 - Consistency of National and Local Policy
 - Information Issues
 - Performance Review and Evaluation

- Implementation of the objectives, through discussions with the SCCC, lead agencies, groups, representatives and providers

- Future considerations for new objectives, based upon the following:
 - Growth in the childcare sector in the County since 2001, including number and range of childcare services, both community-based and private
 - Social and Economic developments in the County since 2001, including, for example, economic developments, population changes, infrastructure, Sligo's status as Gateway City, etc.
 - Changes in the profile of childcare within the County since 2001

A brief summary of the review of the Strategic Plan 2001-2006 is provided in Appendix I of this document.

3.0 Executive Summary

- Originally established under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP), the SCCC is now operating under the guidance of the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP), which will be administered under the Offices of the Minister for Children. As part of the introduction of the new NCIP, the SCCC undertook a Strategic Planning process to determine its Strategic Aims and Objectives to best meet the local needs of childcare in the County.

- The first stage of the strategic process was a Mapping Exercise, which has provided the SCCC with a visual guide to the location of existing services, types of services, areas for future development and likely gaps in childcare provision.

- ❖ The main points of note regarding current provision include the following:
 - There are 78 childcare facilities in the County, including community-based, private and voluntary notified childminders.
 - Excluding childminders, the number of community-based and private facilities is divided evenly in the County. However, there are a number of significant differences in terms of services provided and location:
 - Private providers provide the vast majority of full-day care services in the County.
 - Community-based providers focus mainly on sessional services
 - Disadvantaged areas, i.e. RAPID areas, within Sligo Town are serviced almost exclusively by community-based facilities.
 - Disadvantaged rural areas, i.e. CLÁR areas, are service primarily by community-based facilities.
 - The majority of facilities in non-disadvantaged areas in Sligo Town and in rural areas are privately-owned.
 - There are 33 facilities providing school age childcare in County Sligo. Within Sligo Town the majority of facilities are privately owned, while in rural areas the number of facilities is divided evenly between community-based and private.
 - There are 8 voluntary notified childminders in County Sligo. A recent advertisement encouraged non-notified childminders to advise the SCCC of their existence; a total of 37 childminders responded.

- ❖ The main points of note regarding future provision included the following:
 - The Mapping Exercise identified areas for future growth, based upon economic development, housing and projected population increases. This will provide guidance for the support of new childcare facilities.
 - Private childcare provision in the South of the county is relatively less than in the North of the County and in Sligo Town.
 - Further co-ordination will be undertaken with other county childcare committees regarding the provision of services on the County border.

- The second stage of the strategic process was the development of a Strategic Plan. This stage involved consultation with a wide range of stakeholders representing all sectors involved in the provision of childcare within County Sligo, including, e.g. agencies, groups, representatives and childcare providers. The purpose of the consultation was to obtain feedback about childcare in Sligo and identify areas for development in the childcare sector. A summary list of the topics raised during the consultation include the following:
 - ❖ Quality in childcare
 - ❖ Training for staff, committees and owner/managers
 - ❖ Networking
 - ❖ Information and communication
 - ❖ Funding, viability and sustainability
 - ❖ Staffing and personnel management
 - ❖ Co-ordination of services among agencies
 - ❖ Accessibility and affordability of childcare

- Having reviewed the findings of the Mapping Exercise and consultation phase of the Strategic Plan, the SCCC prepared its Strategic Aims and Objectives for the period 2007-2010. The Aims and Objectives form the guiding principles by which the SCCC will operate for the period of the Strategic Plan.

4.0 Policy Framework

4.1 Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP)

Under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) the primary focus of County Childcare Committees was the increasing of the supply and quality of childcare facilities in the County. Specifically, the EOCP called for each County to:

- ❑ Develop a co-ordinated approach to childcare provision in their area
- ❑ Develop a local childcare information strategy
- ❑ Develop quality statements and targets for the county
- ❑ Identify local 'black spots' in the provision of childcare and put forward proposals for alleviating the position
- ❑ Promote the establishment of new childcare facilities without displacing existing services
- ❑ Identify priority objectives for the county

One of the 33 committees established under the EOCP, Sligo County Childcare Committee is the body responsible for the coordinated delivery of quality childcare within County Sligo.

4.2 National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP)

The Minister for Finance announced the Government's National Childcare Investment Programme 2006 - 2010 (NCIP) in early December 2005. The new programme, which will be administered by the Office of the Minister for Children, builds upon the existing Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform's Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) and incorporates the following key objectives:

- ❑ Increasing the supply and improvement of early childhood care and education services, including full day, part-time and sessional childcare, childminding and school age childcare
- ❑ Supporting the coordinated delivery of child-centered care
- ❑ Supporting the breaking of poverty and disadvantage encountered by families

Key to the implementation of the NCIP is the role played by county-based Childcare Committees. Under the NCIP, Childcare Committees are afforded increased responsibility for the further development of quality childcare provision during the period 2006 - 2010.

This Strategic Plan provides the framework for the implementation of the NCIP within County Sligo by the promoter, Sligo County Childcare Committee. As such, it represents the background work undertaken by the Committee in developing the plan as well as the agreed county-level strategic goals and objectives for the five-year period of the Plan.

4.3 Quality Targets for Services with Young Children

The *European Commission's Network on Childcare* was established within the framework of a Recommendation on Child Care by the Council of Ministers of the European Parliament. Specific objectives for the development of childcare services proposed by the Network included the following:

- ❑ affordability
- ❑ access to services in all areas, both urban and rural
- ❑ access to services for children with special needs
- ❑ combining safe and secure care with a pedagogical approach
- ❑ close and responsive relations between services and parents and local communities
- ❑ diversity and flexibility of services
- ❑ increased choice for parents
- ❑ coherence between different services.

Quality Targets in Services for Young Children is the outcome of the work of the Network and identifies how different aspects of quality in childcare might be transformed into a quality policy framework which would serve as a guide to member states.

There are 40 Quality Targets identified in the document that cover areas such as:

- ❖ Targets for policy
- ❖ Targets for finance
- ❖ Targets for levels and types of services
- ❖ Targets for education and curriculum
- ❖ Targets for staff-child ratios
- ❖ Targets for employment and training
- ❖ Targets for environment and health
- ❖ Targets for working with parents and the community
- ❖ Targets for measuring performance

These quality targets have formed the basis for childcare policy documents developed within EU States, including Ireland, and will be referred to at several stages throughout this Strategic Plan.

5.0 Sligo County Childcare Committee (SCCC)

5.1 Ethos and Services

5.1.1 Mission Statement

The SCCC's mission statement, which will guide the development and implementation of its strategic objectives has been provided by POBAL, and is as follows:

To facilitate childcare providers to develop appropriate childcare services which respond to and cater for the childcare needs of local parents and their children and meets the objectives of the National Childcare Investment Programme 2006-2010; and to continue to support and work with childcare providers, parents and other key stakeholders at local level.

5.1.2 Vision Statement

The following statement, developed by the members of SCCC, provides a vision of what the SCCC will achieve through the implementation of its Strategic Plan 2007-2010.

'SCCC envisages that in valuing family support, in order that childhood be nurtured in a choice of settings that enhance the well-being of the child and meet the changing needs of the parent, the SCCC will be visible in its response to the provision of quality focussed childcare services.'

5.1.3 Services

Since its inception five years ago, the SCCC has played a pivotal role in the development of the childcare sector in County Sligo.

As the lead agency for coordinating the delivery of quality childcare services throughout Sligo, the SCCC has worked in unison with its partners and local providers to provide a wide range of programmes and services supporting the growth and development of the sector, including:

- Facilitating the following provider forums and networks:
 - Private Childcare Provider's Forum
 - Community Childcare Provider's Forum
 - Childminder's Network
 - Childcare Worker's Network
- Producing comprehensive reports on the state of the childcare sector in the County
- Publication of a Childcare Committee newsletter, informational leaflets, and other childcare related material
- Providing mentoring support and advice to providers in:
 - Planning and developing childcare services
 - Developing guidelines for good practice
 - Accessing capital and staffing grant aid funding
 - Recruiting and training staff

- Providing and/ or facilitating childcare related training for providers, parents, and management committees including:
 - Welcoming a child with special needs
 - Managing challenging behaviour
 - Embracing diversity in a childcare setting
 - School age childcare
 - Business and Marketing
 - Supporting your child's development through play
 - Developing children's self-esteem
 - FETAC level courses run in partnership with the VEC and FÁS
 - Committee responsibilities, policies and procedures

The SCCC, from its office in Sligo town operates a resource library for providers, parents and others with an interest in childcare, e.g. students from IT Sligo's BA in Early Childhood Care and Education. The resource library is updated on a regular basis with materials identified in consultation with St. Angela's College, Sligo, Institute of Technology, Sligo and FETAC Trainers. The Committee also operates a toy library for childcare providers in the County.

5.1.4 Outputs Achieved – Brief summary

The success of the SCCC in meeting its goals and objectives during the period of the initial Strategy Plan, 2002 - 2005, can be summarised by the following programme outputs achieved for County Sligo:

- Approximately 500 new childcare places were created
- 487 new childcare jobs were created
- More than €14 million was invested in childcare in County Sligo

Most importantly, the full impact of this investment and the efforts of the SCCC have contributed significantly to the social and economic well being of the County providing a solid foundation for future development in the region.

5.2 **Membership and Structure**

Established in 2001, the SCCC is a partnership of statutory, voluntary, community, and private sectors, including parents, working together for the enhancement of childcare in the County. In addition to statutory agencies, Committee membership is open to those involved in the childcare sector and, as a result, includes representatives of both private and community-based childcare services.

The current membership can be listed as follows:

- ❑ Sligo Family Support Ltd./ Lifestart
- ❑ Sligo VEC
- ❑ Ballymote Family Resource Centre
- ❑ Sligo Institute of Technology
- ❑ National Children's Nurseries Association
- ❑ Sligo Traveller Support Group
- ❑ Sligo LEADER Partnership Co. Ltd.
- ❑ Sligo Social Services Council Ltd.
- ❑ Sligo County Community Forum
- ❑ Sligo County Development Board
- ❑ Globe House (Reception and Integration Centre)
- ❑ Sligo County Enterprise Board
- ❑ Health Service Executive
- ❑ Sligo Family Resource Centre
- ❑ Sligo County Council
- ❑ People with Disabilities
- ❑ FÁS
- ❑ IFA
- ❑ Parents Representative
- ❑ Private Childcare Providers
- ❑ Community-based Providers

Positions on the Committee have been mandated for the *Department of Social and Family Affairs, Department of Education and Science* and *IFA*, but have not yet been filled by the organisations. *IBEC* also has a position on the Committee, but its post is vacant at present.

5.2.1 Committee Structure

The structure of the SCCC is outlined in the chart below.

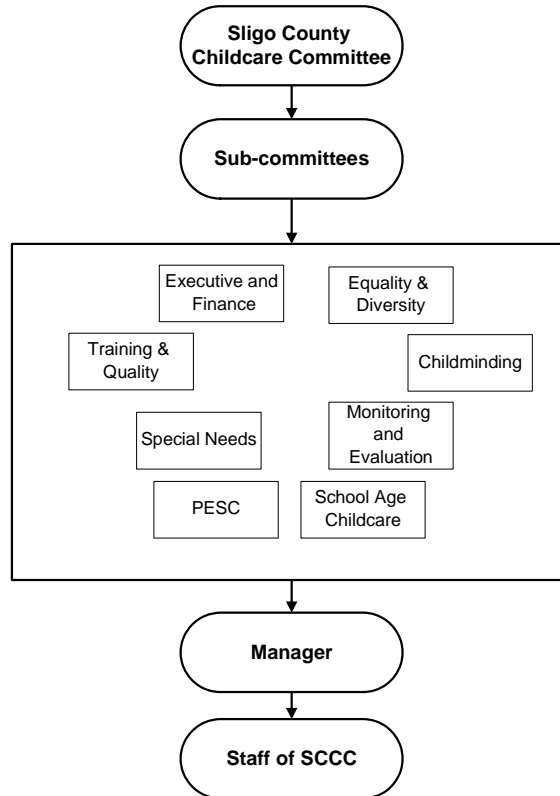


Figure 1 Committee Structure

5.2.2 Sub-committees

5.2.2.1 Executive and Finance

This sub-committee oversees tasks related to finance, staff support and development, policy, planning and public relations/information.

5.2.2.2 Equality and Diversity

This relates to matters such as access, diversity, education, assessing services and responding to the needs of target groups.

5.2.2.3 Childminding

The childminding sub-committee aims to progress actions relating to childminding initiatives.

5.2.2.4 Training & Quality

This sub-committee sets quality targets and co-ordinates actions aimed at achieving quality childcare provision in the County.

5.2.2.5 Special Needs

This sub-committee was established with the aim of addressing service gaps in childcare for children with special needs.

5.2.2.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

This sub-committee meets during the year to track the progress of actions to be implemented by the SCCC.

5.2.2.7 School Age Childcare

This sub-committee oversees the development of school age childcare within the County.

5.2.2.8 Project Evaluation Sub-Committee (PESC)

To meet the requirements of NCIP, the SCCC has established a Project Evaluation Sub-Committee (PESC) to evaluate and make recommendations regarding all applications for childcare funding under the new programme. The sub-committee, which is comprised of local representatives of the HSE, County Enterprise Board, VEC, LEADER, and County Council, is responsible for evaluating all NCIP applications from County Sligo and the submission of

applications to the Office of the Minister for Children/ POBAL. POBAL and the SCCC attend the PESC meetings for technical support. In assessing applications, the PESC will consider the identified childcare needs of the County in line with the SCCC's Strategic Objectives for the period of the NCIP.

5.2.3 Operational Guidelines

All executive, administrative and delivery functions are being carried out by the SCCC in accordance and co-operation with the CCC handbook and operational guidelines provided by POBAL. These include formal mechanisms for keeping boards fully and appropriately informed.

5.2.4 Submissions to POBAL

All documentation required by POBAL is submitted by SCCC in an accurate and timely fashion. This includes the following:

- Performance monitoring documentation is submitted every six months.
- Financial returns are submitted on a quarterly basis.
- Annual progress reports are submitted yearly.

5.2.5 Financial Practice

The SCCC adhere to financial best practice, as set out in the Manual of Accounting Procedures and Practices.

5.2.6 Legal Structure

SCCC is a company limited by guarantee. The list of members has been reviewed on a regular basis and all company regulations are complied with annually.

5.3 SCCC Staff

5.3.1 Positions and Responsibilities

Staff positions and responsibilities within the SCCC are outlined briefly below:

Post	Responsibilities
Manager	Plan and manage all activities of the offices and implement the Strategic Plan.
Administrator	Carry out all office administration and financial reporting.
Support and Development Worker (1)	Support all existing and developing childcare providers in the County.
Support and Development Worker (2)	A special remit to support applications under NCIP and also to support the development of School Age Childcare.
Childminding Advisory Worker	Support childminders caring for children in their own home.
Receptionist	First point of call for the general public and support worker to the Administrator
Early Years Health Promotion Worker	Pilot the implementation of the Nutritional Guidelines set out by the Department of Health & Children.

5.3.2 Personnel Practices

As part of the Strategic Planning, SCCC proposed to review the effectiveness of their policies and procedures, particularly in line with the National Human Resource Management Standard, i.e. FÁS's Excellence Through People.

To undertake this review, an external consultant, accredited in assessing and implementing Excellence Through People undertook a comprehensive assessment of the policies and procedures of SCCC. A summary of the conclusions of the assessment are provided below.

5.3.2.1 Policies and Procedures

A brief summary of the personnel policies and procedures operating within the SCCC is provided below:

- There is a written induction programme in place, which refers to issues such as equality & diversity policies and procedures and health & safety policies and procedures.
- There is an employee handbook in operation, which supports adherence to good employment practice with respect to areas such as recruitment, leave, grievance and disciplinary procedures. All employees are presented with the handbook upon commencement of employment and have access to it at all times.
- All employees have a contract of employment, formal job description and personnel file, all of which are stored securely within the Manager's office.
- The contract of employment and formal job description includes a commitment to flexibility in relation to working arrangements and co-operation

with, and participations in, work and organisational evolution and change.

5.3.2.2 Performance Management

The performance management system in operation within SCCC can be described as follows:

- All actions identified in the Annual Action Plan are assigned to individual SCCC staff.
- Each member of staff is responsible for implementing and reporting on the progress of their assigned actions. All reports and administrative documents relating to the actions are recorded and stored in two formats:
 - Hard copies of all documents relevant to reporting procedures are kept in a file allocated solely for the purpose of each action
 - Electronic copies of all documents relevant to reporting procedures are submitted to the manager on a regular basis
- A Support and Supervision meeting is held every month, which is attended by the Manager and all staff.
- A work report is provided by each member of staff at the Support and Supervision meeting, providing a detailed description of the progress of actions.
- All staff undergo a formal Performance Review with the SCCC manager once per year. The review includes an assessment of performance linked to individual and organisational objectives.

5.3.2.3 Customer Charter

- There is a Customer Charter and Complaints procedure in place within the SCCC.

6.0 County Sligo

As mentioned previously, the SCCC has a remit for coordinating the development and delivery of quality childcare provision throughout the entirety of County Sligo, a primarily rural, coastal county of 1,836 km² (709 square miles) and only one settlement of more than 1,500 residents.



Map 1 Sligo County and Town

6.1 Gateway City and the NSS

Sligo has been designated as a Gateway City under the National Spatial Strategy (NSS). As the national planning framework for Ireland for the next 20 years, the NSS aims to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development across the regions, supported by more effective planning. Within this context Sligo is recognised as having the potential to build scale and critical mass to drive greater development in the North West. The intent of this strategy

is to make the region more competitive according to its strengths while ensuring a high quality urban environment and vibrant rural areas.¹

The provision of childcare will be essential in achieving the main aims of the NSS in designating Sligo as a Gateway City, which include:

- A better quality of life for people in the region and
- A strong competitive economic position

The SCCC's experience over the past number of years has shown that, to achieve a better quality of life, an effective "work-life balance" must also be attained. This requires the implementation of "family-friendly" policies within the business environment, which can only be achieved with the support of quality childcare.

6.2 Population Profile

In 2006, a total of 60,863² people were reported as being residents of the County with 17,894 persons living within the urban boundaries of Sligo Borough itself. This most recent Census reported that County Sligo experienced a modest population increase of 4.6%, representing 2,663 additional residents, between 2002 and 2006. According to the 2002 Census a similar level of increase, 4.3%, was previously experienced in the County between the years 1996 and 2002. Despite this continuing growth, however, this latest increase is less the national average of 8.1% (8% in 2002) for the same period. A detailed description of the population of each DED in the County is provided in Appendix II.

6.2.1 Rural/ Urban Divide

As noted above, 17,894 persons reside in Sligo Borough according to the most recent Census with the remaining 42,969 residing in rural town and communities. Sligo Borough, despite

¹ Sligo County Council, Sligo Vision.

² Central Statistics Office, Census of Population, 2006. For the purposes of the Strategic Plan, statistics relating to the population of County Sligo are taken from the Preliminary Report, CSO, 2006, which provides the most accurate analysis of the population at the time of writing. Although statistics from the 2002 Census provide a more detailed analysis of the demographic profile, these are not considered relevant due to the anticipated changes to be reflected in the DED statistics between 2002 and 2006.

the experience of significant economic growth in recent years, reported a loss of 579 residents at the time of the 2006 Census, representing a -3.1% decrease in the town's population.

Previously, according to Census 2002 returns, 95% of County Sligo's non-urban population of, at the time, 39,727 persons were reported as living in communities of 1,000 inhabitants or less and only 5% as living in rural towns of between 1,001 and 1,500 persons.³ Furthermore, approximately 5,359, or less than 10% of the County's 2002 rural population lived in communities of between 500 - 999 residents.

In summary, of the 58,200 residents of the County in 2002 more than half, 55%, lived in predominantly rural communities of less than 499 inhabitants. It is not anticipated that the recent Census 2006 will report a significant change in this situation.

6.3 Profile of Specific Groups with Sligo

6.3.1 Children with Special Needs

Statistics from the HSE state that, at the start of April, 2007, there are 197 children with special needs in Sligo. Of those, 74 are within the 0-6 years age group. 13 children in the 0-6 years age group attend mainstream pre-school facilities, with access to one-to-one support. 15 of the 0-6 years age group attend specialist childcare services, i.e. outside mainstream service.

The one-to-one support is funded by the HSE through the facility, private or community-based, that is providing the service to the child. This has proved a very effective method of support, as it ensures ownership by the facility who become direct employers of the one-to-one support worker. The HSE also encourage the other staff within each facility to become familiar with the needs of the child, to ensure integration and continuity of service if the one-to-one support worker is not available.

³ Tubbercurry (pop. 1,171) and Strandhill (pop. 1,002), Census 2002

Particular issues of note identified by the HSE for the provision of childcare services to children with special needs over the coming years include the following:

- Access to training for childcare workers relating to children with special needs. This will assist in the integration of children into mainstream services by allaying concerns regarding skills among some providers when considering providing services to a child with special needs.
- Continuing to encourage other staff within the facility to become familiar with the requirements of children with special needs in their facility.
- Continuing to participate on the SCCC, which has proved very beneficial in co-ordinating actions between the HSE and the childcare sector.

6.3.2 Traveller Community

The National census 2006 indicated a Traveller population of 329. Other, more detailed, information regarding the Traveller community is provided in the Sligo Traveller Support Group's, Sligo Traveller Survey, a summary of which includes the following:

- The population of Travellers is mainly concentrated in the two major urban areas of Co Sligo. The majority live within the environs of Sligo town, with a secondary concentration living in Tubbercurry.
- At the time of enumeration the total number of Traveller families was 104 with 448 members, of whom 225 were male and 223 female.
- The population of young Travellers can be analysed as follows:

	0-2 yrs	3-4 yrs	5-6 yrs	Totals
Males	14	17	13	44
Females.	15	14	12	41
				85

	7-8 yrs	9-10yrs	11-12yrs	Totals
Males	23	21	10	10
Females	11	11	15	37
				91

- Regarding childcare the Survey states the following:

Whilst a number of Educational initiative in partnership with State are ongoing or are planned for the future, cognisance needs to be made of the need for Childcare provision that is of a high standard and is affordable. For example if another Pre development course were to be provided it would be reasonable to assume that a group of 15 to 20 women may participate. In order to facilitate participation on an equal basis a facility capable of catering for upwards of ten pre school children would need to be made available. In order to support Travellers in taking up employment opportunities Childcare facilities would need to be established which are appropriate to the needs of Travellers. Travellers would need to have confidence that such a facility was safe and sensitive and offered a high standard of care.

- It should be noted, however, that the statement above refers particularly to Travellers returning to education or training, e.g. primary health care course. The Sligo Travellers Support Group (STSG) stated that childcare is also a very important issue for the general Traveller population including, for example, respite care for Traveller women, regardless of whether they are participating in education or training initiatives. The STSG also stated that the number of Traveller children, for whom childcare will be required, will certainly increase over the coming years.
- On-site childcare provision, including School Age Childcare will also be required for at least two of the existing sites and,

for this purpose, STSG are working with the SCCC to review the possibility of sourcing funding for the service.

6.3.3 Asylum Seekers

There were 246 asylum seekers resident in Globe House on the last day of January 2007. There are another 102 asylum seekers in private rented accommodation through Sligo Town.

The number of children and families resident in Globe House on 5th March 2007 was as follows:

	<1 yrs	1-2 yrs	2-3 yrs	3-4 yrs	4+	Total
Children	18	10	7	8	23	66

	One parent	Two parent	Total
Families	26	10	36

There is a childcare facility within Globe House, which provides childcare for up to 20 children. Currently, there are another 8 children, resident within Globe House, receiving childcare in community-based facilities within Sligo Town.

6.3.4 Programme Refugees

Sligo Town plays host to programme refugees, the most recent of which arrived in September 2006. Currently 64 of the most recent programme refugees live in private accommodation throughout Sligo Town. Approximately 10 are under the age of five. There are no statistics available regarding the use of childcare by this section of the community.

It should also be noted that other refugees, apart from the current programme refugees, live in Sligo Town, for which, there are no population statistics available.

6.3.5 Non-Irish Nationals

While there are no statistics available to determine the number of non-Irish national workers in Sligo, discussions with agencies within the county indicates that the number of non-Irish nationals has grown significantly. The CSO Statistical Yearbook of Ireland 2006 states that non-Irish nationals living in Ireland account for approximately 10% of the total population. For indicative purposes, based upon the population of Sligo Town, where the vast majority of non-Irish nationals are living in Sligo, 10% would represent 1,790 people.

Regarding childcare, discussions with local agencies have indicated that while, in the past, many of the non-Irish nationals were workers residing in Ireland without families, this situation has changed. Many of the non-Irish national workers are now living in the County with their families and the requirement for childcare will increase among the community. Particular issues of relevance in this case will be:

- Access to information regarding childcare, including information in languages other than English
- Training, facilitation and/or multi-cultural days for staff and parents to encourage diversity in childcare

7.0 Strategic Planning Process

Beginning in early 2006, the SCCC initiated a strategic planning process that entailed the following activities:

- ❑ Consultation with key stakeholders
- ❑ Workshops/ strategic planning meetings
- ❑ Mapping of childcare services in the County
- ❑ Development of Strategic Plan

The methodology adopted by the SCCC in developing this Strategic Plan 2007 - 2010 is outlined below:

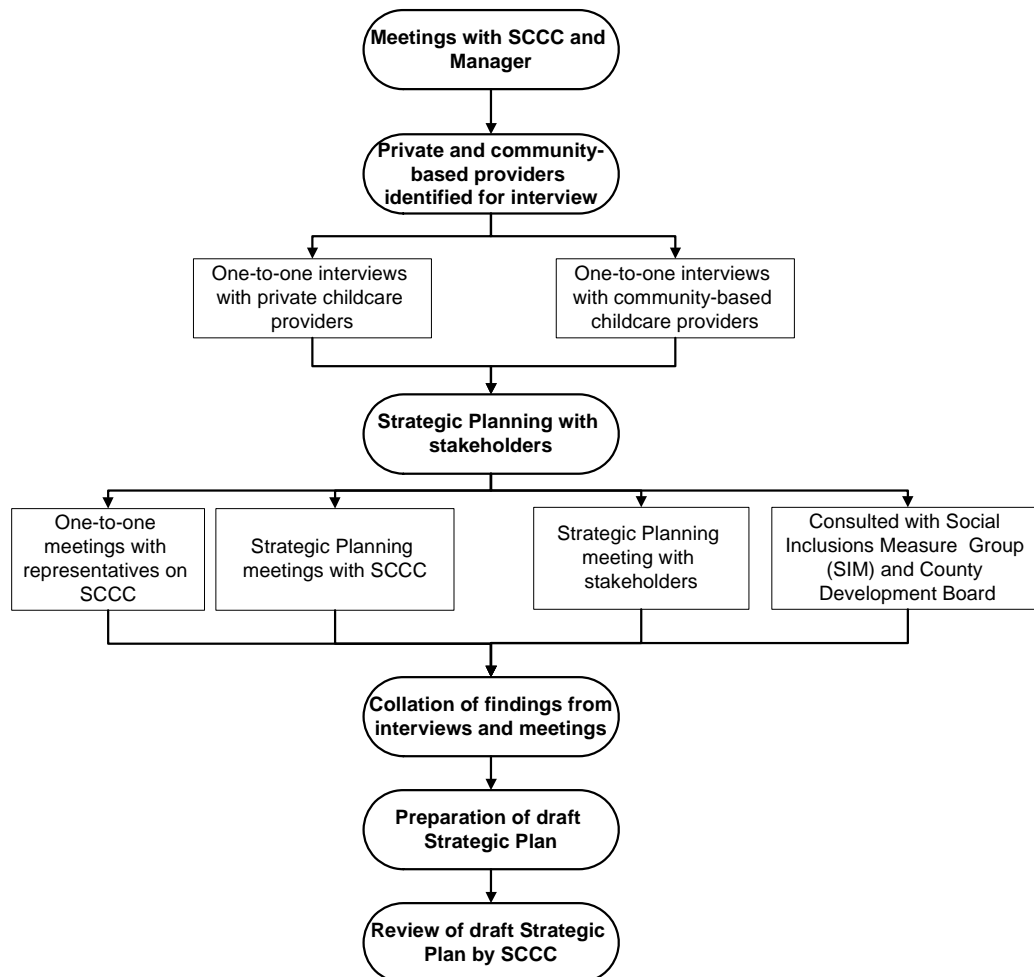


Figure 2 Methodology

8.0 Consultation

The first stage of the Strategic Planning process involved consultation with a range of stakeholders representing all sectors involved in the provision of childcare within County Sligo. This was conducted by external consultants and included both one-to-one interviews and group meetings with, specifically:

- Committee and staff members, including representatives of all agencies on SCCC, e.g. County Development Board, HSE NW, SIM, VEC, etc.
- Community childcare providers
- Private childcare providers

A primary purpose of this consultation was to obtain feedback regarding the impact of SCCC delivered programmes and initiatives from those most closely involved with childcare provision in the County. Specifically, the promoter sought to elicit the following from stakeholders:

- Views on the general state of childcare in the county, i.e. gaps in services, areas of concern, etc.
- Comments in regard to the SCCC, its activities, and provided support
- Suggestions as to possible future initiatives, challenges, etc.

In addition, this opportunity was availed of to inform stakeholders about the NCIP and the SCCC's Strategic Planning process.

8.1 Consultation with Private Providers

Twelve private childcare providers were selected for interview on a one-to-one basis as part of the consultative phase of the planning process. A primary aim of these interviews was to identify common areas of concern among private providers, particularly regarding their relationship with the SCCC.

In this regard, the interviews were very successful in highlighting the following topics, which were of concern to almost all providers that participated in the process:

- ❑ Quality
- ❑ Training
- ❑ Networking
- ❑ Communication
- ❑ Community Childcare facilities

8.1.1 Quality

- ❑ A small number of providers stated that the importance of quality has not been adopted by enough private or community-based providers in Sligo.
- ❑ They suggested that, while SCCC cannot make the providers adopt a quality-focus, the SCCC could play a major role in promoting quality in the County.
- ❑ There were a number of suggestions to pull a quality-awarding body into the process, to help promote quality. (NCNA was mentioned twice in this regard.)

8.1.2 Training

- ❑ Almost all of the private providers stated that the SCCC was supportive in identifying potential areas for training and informing them of forthcoming training.
- ❑ The majority of the providers had availed of training from the SCCC over the past year.
- ❑ However, there was a perception among a number of the providers that the majority of training is aimed more at community-based rather than private providers. In this regard, the providers implied the following:
 - Greater support was available to community groups towards the cost of training, i.e. staff wages, training costs, etc.
 - Training associated with the HSE was promoted primarily to community-based providers.

- ❑ One provider stressed the importance of rolling out the Early Years Curriculum Framework Training throughout the County.
- ❑ A number of private providers highlighted the importance of providing training to the “owners” themselves as private individuals, e.g. time management, management skills, etc.
- ❑ Staffing and personnel management were identified by a large number of providers as an important area for current and future support.

8.1.3 Networking

- ❑ Although all of the providers were aware of a previous childcare providers’ network and the existence of a small network of providers based in Sligo Town, they also perceived that there remained a lack of networking among Sligo private providers.
- ❑ Those that had been involved with the previous networks within Sligo County stated that the main reason for the demise of the network was primarily due to the lack of focus at meetings, creating a lack of interest among many of the providers who could not commit significant time to the meetings.
- ❑ The SCCC was not identified as being responsible for the lack of networking.
- ❑ Many of the providers were eager to provide suggestions regarding the re-development of networking within the County. These included the following:
 - Establish a private cluster group of childcare facilities that would meet at least 4 times per year. The SCCC should not play a leading role in this cluster, but should facilitate and provide support to the cluster.
 - Hold a private provider clinic once a year to establish a stronger relationship between the SCCC and private providers.
 - Incorporate the topics of networking and quality into the cluster meetings, to ensure interest among the private providers.

- Although personnel and staffing are of interest to the providers, the inclusion of such topics at meetings should be managed carefully to ensure that it does not “go down the old road” of focusing specifically on the difficulties of “one or two providers.”
- Hold open days or trips to models of good practice, particularly to facilities outside Sligo.
- Have more face-to-face visits by the SCCC to private providers.

8.1.4 Communication

- In general, private providers receive regular information from the SCCC.
- However, the use of the information by the providers should be reviewed, as many of the providers were unaware of some of the important issues addressed in recent newsletters distributed by the SCCC, e.g. Early Years Curriculum Framework Training.
- There is a perception among the private providers that the lack of “face to face” dealings with the SCCC affects their relationship with the SCCC

8.1.5 Community-based facilities

- There is a common perception among the private providers in County Sligo that the SCCC is focused mainly towards supporting community-based providers
- There is a perception among some that there is an “unfair playing field”, not focusing on the long-term sustainability of childcare facilities.
- Many of the providers stated that there should be greater enforcement of the “fee sliding scale” among community-based providers to ensure “fair practice.”
- A number of the private providers stated that they accept the necessary support to the community-based facilities and suggest that more support to the private providers could reduce the imbalance, e.g. facilitate networking, training, etc.

8.2 Consultation with Community-based Providers

As with the Private Providers, representatives of twelve community-based childcare providers were also selected for one-to-one interviews as part of the consultative process. Similarly, the primary aim of the interviews was to identify areas of concern for community-based providers as well as feedback concerning the SCCC and the delivery of childcare in the County. Responses from the community sector are outlined below.

8.2.1 Information, communication and relationship with SCCC

- All of the community-based providers provided positive feedback regarding advice and assistance received from the SCCC.
- Feedback was particularly supportive regarding information provided by the SCCC in relation to courses, funding and developments in childcare.
- Each of the providers stated that they had recent one-to-one contact with a representative of the SCCC. For the majority of providers, this included on-site visits by the SCCC and/or telephone queries to the SCCC office.
- The majority of telephone queries by the community-based providers in the recent past referred to staffing issues, which are discussed further below.

8.2.2 Staffing and Personnel Management

- Staffing and personnel management was identified by all community-based providers as a very important area of support to both the voluntary committee and the childcare manager. This includes:
 - Support and advice to the voluntary committee in managing the childcare manager
 - Support and advice to the childcare manager in managing their staff.

- The support identified in this regard included both advice on employment rights and general support for personnel management.

8.2.3 Funding, Viability and Sustainability

- Most of the community-based providers stated that the SCCC had provided significant support during the funding process, both for staffing and capital purposes.
- Funding was identified by a number of the providers as an important area for continued support for community-based facilities to assist them in ensuring viability.
- Funding was also raised regarding the sustainability and possible expansion of existing services. A number of the providers stated that, without funding support, it would not be possible to expand their current level of services and, in some cases, it would be very difficult to maintain the existing services.

8.2.4 Networking

- Networking was not identified as a major area of concern for management committees, due mainly to the lack of time commitment available from individuals on the committees.
- Childcare managers of community-based facilities supported the idea of networking, primarily to address staffing or personnel issues. However, as with private providers, the level of time commitment available to attend network meetings would be very limited.

8.3 Consultation with Other Stakeholders

In addition to childcare providers, representatives of the SCCC's partner agencies and organisations, as well as SCCC staff members, were also consulted either individually or during planning workshops as part of this process. Feedback from these individuals varied greatly due, in part, to the interests and remit of the agencies they represented.

A summary of key issues arising from the consultation conducted with representatives of partner agencies is provided below:

8.3.1 Coordination

- ❑ Greater cooperation and coordination is needed to ensure the delivery of enhanced childcare services and to prevent duplication of effort
- ❑ Partnering agencies need to ensure that those nominated to represent them actively participate in SCCC activities
- ❑ Responsibilities and roles of each SCCC partner organisation should be clearly defined
- ❑ Childcare services need to be developed to meet employer requirements as well as those of families
- ❑ Childcare providers need to work with parents and schools in County Sligo to ensure a seamless transition to primary education
- ❑ Networking, especially between community and private providers, has to be encouraged and facilitated by the SCCC

8.3.2 Quality

- ❑ Those employed in the childcare sector need to be encouraged and supported in undertaking professional development
- ❑ Awareness of the importance of childcare to the economy and the community, and as a career option, needs to be emphasised

- ❑ Accredited training, including training in equality and diversity, special needs, etc., should be the norm and not “add-ons”
- ❑ Quality of childcare must be uniform and not related to the cost of the service being provided
- ❑ The importance of achieving and maintaining a ‘work/life’ balance must be reflected in the quality of childcare being provided
- ❑ Childcare workers should move beyond FETAC 5 in accredited training. The EU Commission’s, *Quality Targets in Services for Young Children*, 1996, states that childcare workers should have a basic training of at least 3-years at a post-18 level.

8.3.3 Accessibility

- ❑ Childcare needs to be flexible to meet the needs of the community, e.g. drop-in services, full-day care, etc.
- ❑ Families must have choice and options in accessing childcare, e.g. availing of different types of childcare when necessary
- ❑ Actions need to be undertaken to ensure integration of all sections of the community in childcare, e.g. Travellers, asylum seekers, ethnic minorities, etc., require assistance and encouragement in availing of childcare
- ❑ In the case of those with special needs, providers must be encouraged and supported in integrating children into mainstream childcare services

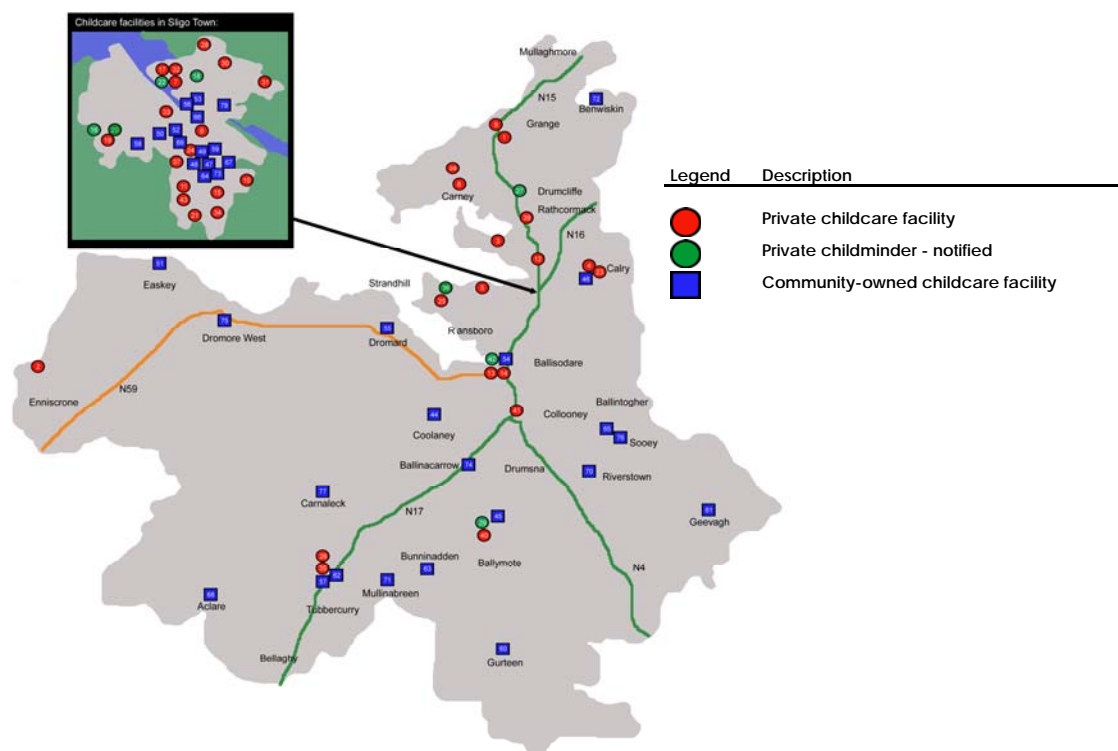
8.3.4 Affordability

- ❑ Financial supports for childcare must be more flexible in recognising local needs
- ❑ The funding of childcare needs to be directly linked to the delivery of affordable childcare
- ❑ Priority of funding should be given to areas identified as lacking adequate affordable childcare

9.0 Childcare Facilities in County Sligo

Since its inception, the Sligo County Childcare Committee has supported the establishment of a significant number of childcare facilities throughout County Sligo. These include community-based and private childcare facilities, as well as school age childcare and childminding services. The following sections provide a detailed review of the numbers, types and range of childcare services that currently exist in County Sligo. They illustrate the different nature of services provided by private and community-based facilities throughout the county and identify areas for development in terms of types and location of services.

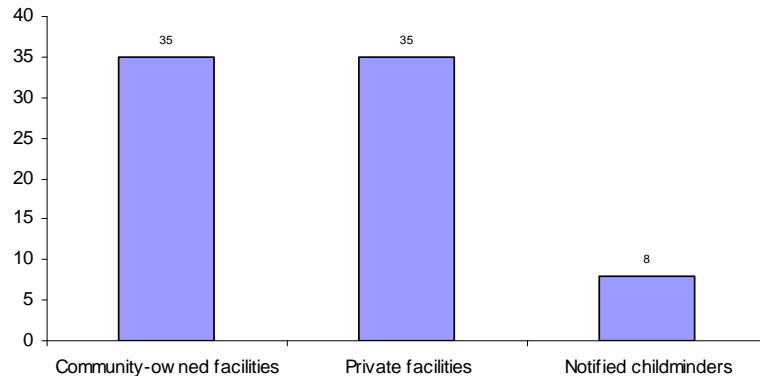
9.1 Childcare facilities and notified childminders in County Sligo



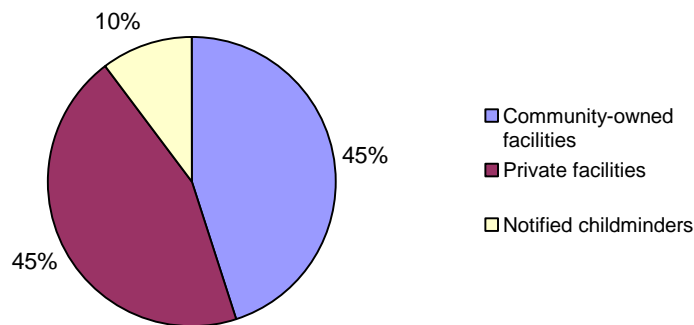
Map 2 Childcare facilities and notified childminders in County Sligo

1 Little Meadows	21 Cuddles 'n Care	41 Little Learners Montessori	61 First Friends Playgroup
2 Bartra Pre-School	22 Tom Thumb Childminder	42 Cozy Cottage	62 Tubbercurry Community Playgroup
3 Auntie Anns	23 Little Angels	43 Scooters	63 Bunninadden Village Montessori
4 Play n Learn	24 Lilliput Montessori	44 Coolaney Community Playgroup	64 Lifestart Family Support
5 Auburn Cottage	25 Children of Lir Playschool	45 Ballymote Comm Playgroup	65 Jollytots Playgroup Ltd
6 Fantasia Pre School	26 Spring Vale	46 Cairy Community Playgroup	66 Sligo Family Centre
7 Hopes and Dreams	27 Beverley Mulrooney	47 Lifestart Outreach Services	67 Resource House Project
8 Beginners World	28 Little People Playworld Creche	48 Mail Coach Road Playgroup	68 Aclare Community Playgroup
9 St Molaises Playgroup	29 Bernadette Lee	49 Globe House Drop-in	69 Naionra Naomh Iosaf
10 Stepping Stones	30 Happy Days	50 St. Michaels Family Life Centre	70 Little Buddies
11 Sligo Central Full Day Care	31 Little Darlings Creche	51 Little Steps Playgroup	71 Little Munchkins Playgroup
12 Teesan Playgroup	32 Little Star Playschool	52 Sligo Social Services Creche	72 The Benwiskin Centre
13 Toddlers Den	33 Magic Moments Montessori School	53 St. Joseph's Playgroup	73 Acom Pre-school
14 Start Rite Montessori	34 The School House	54 Kilmacowen Pre-School	74 Morning Star Kindergarten
15 Childsworld Creche & Montessori	35 Shooting Stars	55 Skreen/Dromard Comm Playgroup	75 Dromore West Community Playgroup
16 Rebecca Trainer	36 Paula Clerkin Cadden	56 St. Joseph's Pre School	76 Jollytots Playgroup
17 Humpty Dumpty Pre-school	37 Benbulbin Montessori	57 Tubbercurry Creche	77 Little VIP's
18 Annie McLoughlin	38 Once Upon a Time Montessori	58 Dreamchasers	78 Cozy Cats
19 Tom Thumb	39 Rathormac Montessori School	59 Abbeyquarter Comm Playgroup	
20 Kevinsfort Kids Academy	40 Learn Early Daycare	60 Busy Bees	

The total number of childcare facilities, including community-based⁴, private⁵ and notified childminders⁶ in County Sligo is 78. These can be categorised as follows:



The following graph represents the categories a percentage of the total number of facilities in County Sligo:



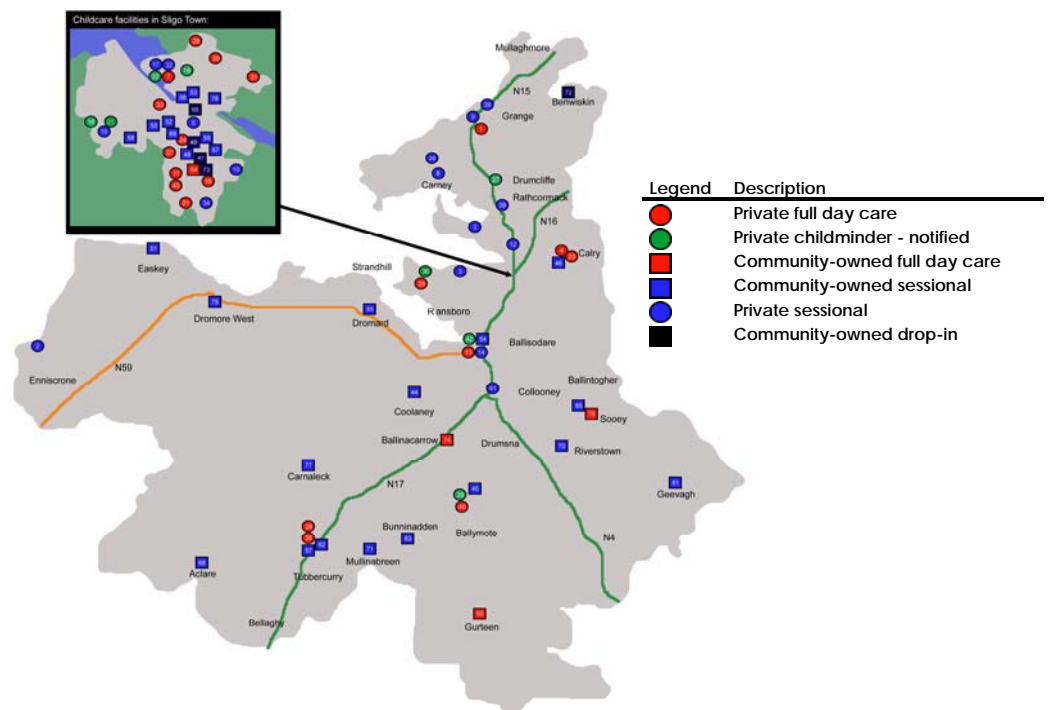
As can be seen from above, excluding notified childminders, the percentage of childcare facilities that are community-based and private is divided evenly in the County. However, the types of services being provided by private and community-based facilities differ significantly, which affects greatly the accessibility and affordability of childcare to different sectors of the community. This is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

⁴ The term *community-based* refer to facilities that are owned and operated by voluntary not-for-profit groups, with membership drawn primarily from local parents and representatives. These groups may operate as an incorporated body (e.g. limited company) or unincorporated group (e.g. group formed with a constitution.) The majority operate as companies limited by guarantee.

⁵ The term *private childcare* refers to facilities owned by private individuals. They are operated as sole traders, partnerships or limited liability companies. The majority operate as sole traders, with a slight increase recently in the number of those operating as limited companies.

⁶ A childminder is required to notify their services to the HSE if they care for over three children. It should be notified, however, that the majority of childminders are not notified to the HSE.

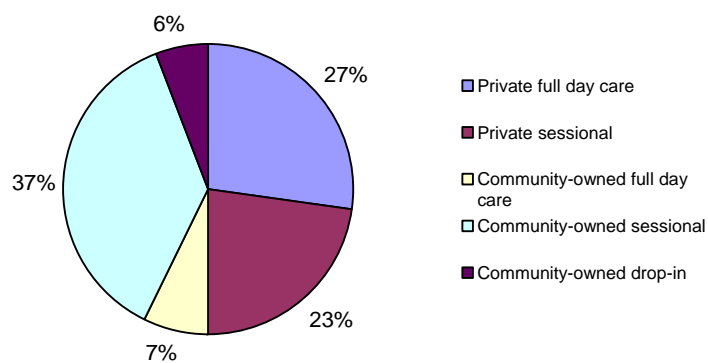
9.2 Types of childcare facilities in County Sligo



Map 3 Types of childcare facilities in County Sligo

The following section excludes childminders for statistical analysis.

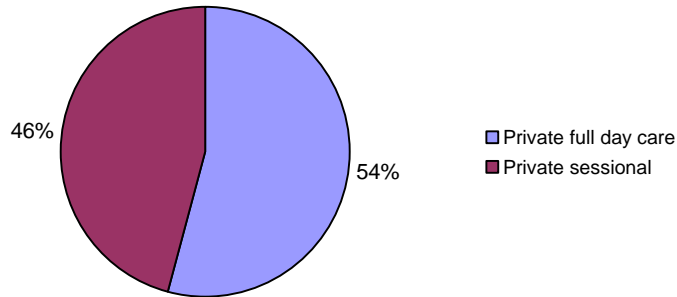
There are 70 pre-school childcare facilities in County Sligo, which can be categorised in terms of drop-in⁷, sessional⁸ and full-day childcare⁹:



⁷ Drop-in childcare refers to the provision of care for up to 2 hours per day.
⁸ Sessional childcare refers to the provision of care for up to 3.5 hours per day.
⁹ Full day care refers to the provision of childcare for over 3.5 hours per day.

9.2.1 Types of private childcare facilities

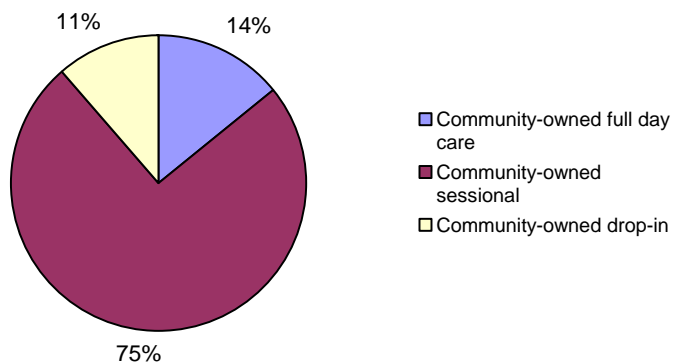
Private childcare facilities are categorised as providing full day care and sessional services.



There are no private childcare facilities providing drop-in services on a regular basis in County Sligo. The two main reasons given by private providers for not providing drop-in services relate to the fact that it “is not economical” and “causes disruption” to the service and the other children. It is unlikely that any major gaps in this service will be met by private providers in the near future.

9.2.2 Types of community-based childcare facilities

Community-based childcare facilities provide full day care, sessional and drop-in services.

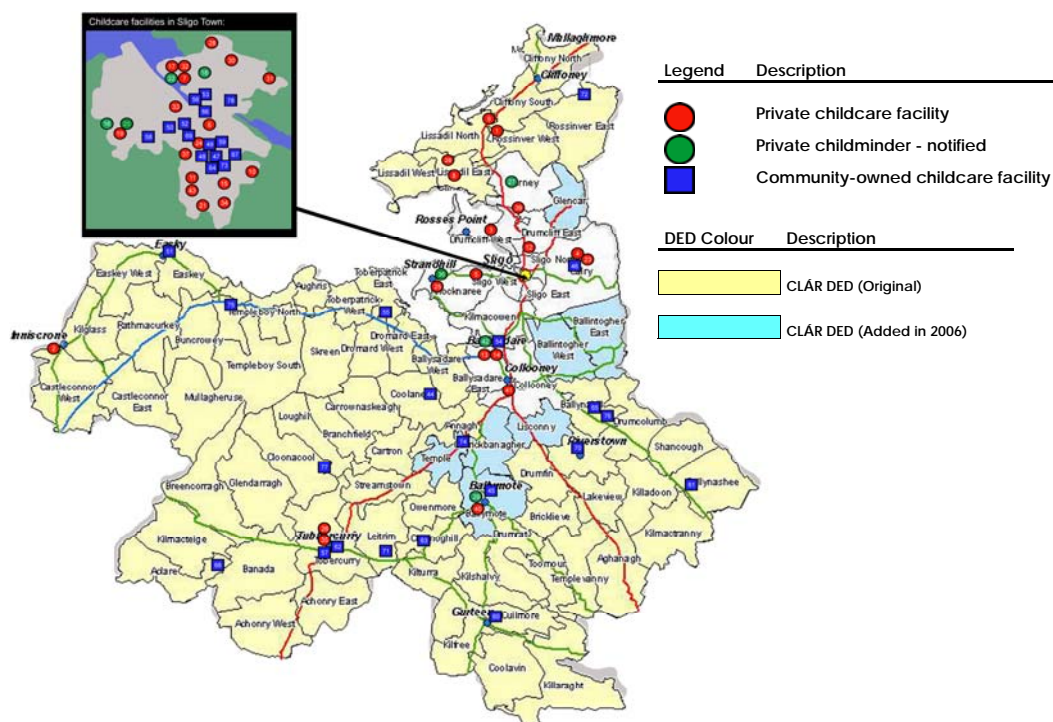


The graph above illustrates two areas for development within the provision of childcare by community-based facilities, i.e. full day care and drop in services:

1. It can be seen from the above that the numbers of community-based full day care facilities are very low, particularly in comparison to the private facilities, *i.e. 14% of community-based facilities provide full day care, compared to 54% of privately owned.* As one of the primary objectives of the NCIP, the increase in full day care within community-based facilities will need to be addressed in both Sligo Town and County. The provision of such services will require significant support from the SCCC to develop and ensure the viability and sustainability of community-based facilities.
2. Discussions with agencies and groups representing disadvantaged members of the community have highlighted the need for the provision of short-term childcare services. The main reasons given for the need for such services include the following:
 - Parents who are returning to the workplace from medium or long-term unemployment find it difficult to afford full day care and require childcare for shorter periods to match their part-time hours in the workplace.
 - Parents availing of educational or training supports require access to short-term services during course hours. Agencies have stated that the lack of such services has a dramatic effect on the ability of education or training providers to attract disadvantaged parents to programmes specifically designed to meet their developmental needs.

Experience to date in Sligo has shown that short-term services will not be provided on a regular basis by private providers and must be met by community-based providers. This opens the door for greater co-ordination with education and training organisations to provide their programmes in community-based facilities or other public facilities that can facilitate the provision of short-term services.

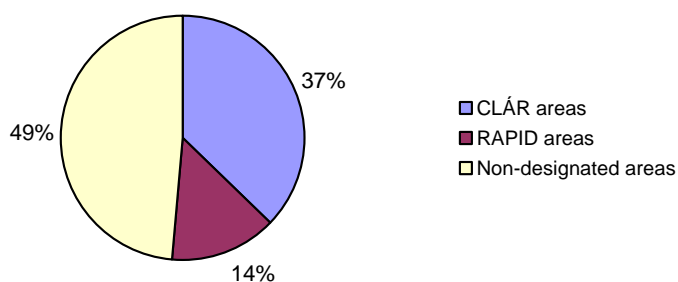
9.3 Childcare facilities and notified childminders in DED's in County Sligo



Map 4 Childcare facilities and notified childminders in DED's in County Sligo

The following section excludes childminders for statistical analysis.

The distribution of childcare facilities, both community-based and private across CLÁR¹⁰, RAPID¹¹ and Non-designated¹² areas can be analysed on a percentage basis follows:



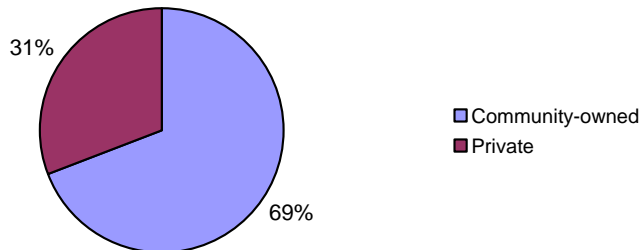
¹⁰ The CLÁR programme (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais), is a targeted investment programme in designated rural areas.

¹¹ The RAPID programme (Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment and Development) targets the most disadvantaged urban areas in the country. These include designated areas in Sligo Town.

¹² Non-designated areas refer to those not classed as RAPID or CLÁR areas.

9.3.1 Childcare facilities in CLÁR areas

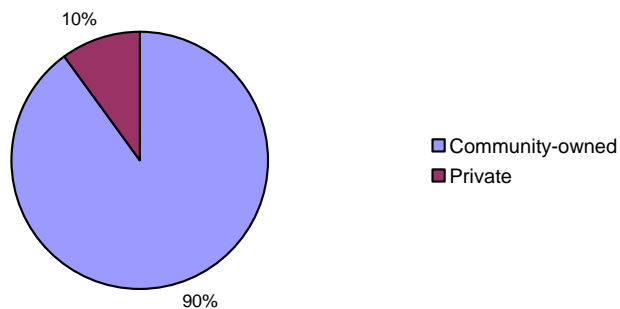
The percentage of community-based and private facilities in CLÁR-only areas is shown below:



The trend illustrated above of community-based facilities being the predominant childcare facilities in CLÁR areas reflects the situation primarily in the south of the County. As will be shown later, the trend is reversed north of Sligo Town and in non-CLÁR rural areas.

9.3.2 Childcare facilities in RAPID areas

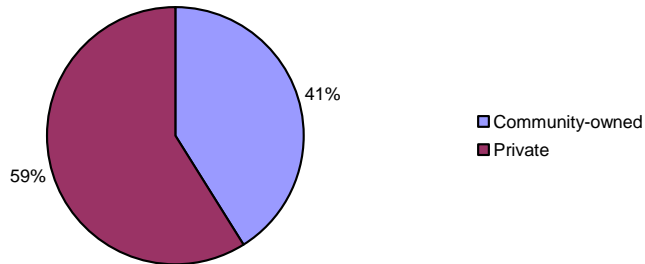
The percentage of facilities in RAPID-only areas can be illustrated as follows:



The graphs above show the important role played by community-based facilities in areas of disadvantage. The capital and, in particular, staff funding provide the community-based facilities with the support necessary to sustain their operations within these areas. Without these supports, it would be very difficult to achieve viability of the operations, as evidenced by the lack of private providers in the areas.

9.3.3 Childcare facilities in Non-designated areas

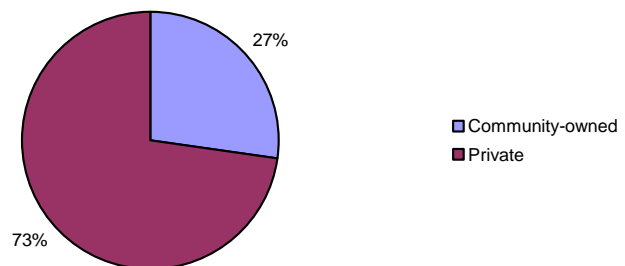
The percentage of facilities in Non-designated areas, i.e. neither CLÁR nor RAPID, can be illustrated as follows:



At first, the difference in provision by private and community-based facilities in non-designated areas may seem quite small, i.e. 59% as opposed to 41%. However, the differences increase when the non-designated areas are analysed further in the next section.

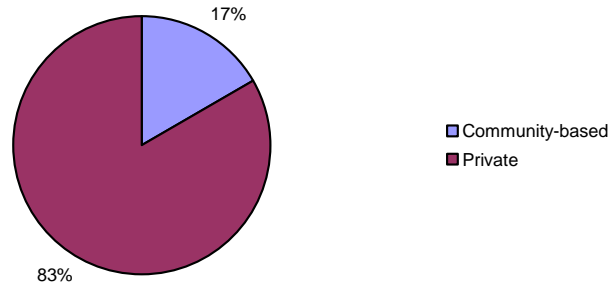
9.3.3.1 Non-designated areas in Sligo Town

The percentage of facilities in Non-designated areas in Sligo Town, i.e. within Sligo Town but outside RAPID areas, can be illustrated as follows:



9.3.3.2 Non-designated rural areas

The percentage of facilities in Non-designated rural areas, i.e. outside Sligo Town but not in CLÁR areas, can be illustrated as follows:



The graphs in the sections above highlight the difference in childcare provision by community-based and private providers within Sligo County and Sligo Town. For example:

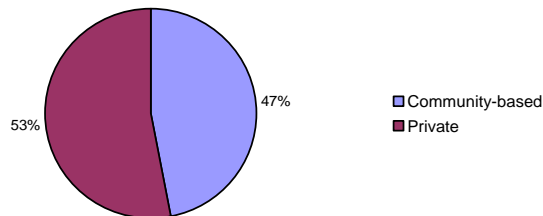
- Childcare needs within RAPID areas are met almost exclusively by community-based providers
- The number of private childcare providers within Sligo Town, excluding RAPID areas, is significantly greater than the number of community-based providers
- The number of community-based providers outside Sligo Town is significantly greater than the number of private providers.
- However, the number of private providers in non-Rapid rural areas is significantly greater than the number of community-providers in the same DED's

The contrast between the location of community-based and private facilities is also evident in the North and South of the County, as shown in the next section.

9.4 Analysis of childcare facilities in Sligo County and Sligo Town

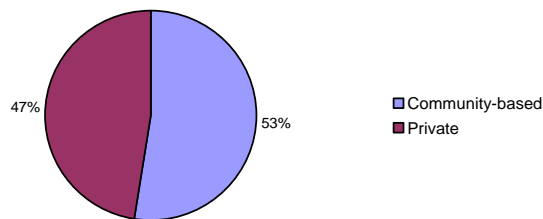
9.4.1 Childcare facilities in Sligo Town and County

Childcare facilities in Sligo Town are almost evenly distributed between community-based and private facilities:



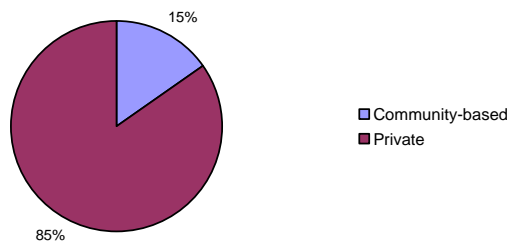
9.4.2 Childcare facilities in County Sligo (outside Sligo Town)

Again, facilities in County Sligo, outside Sligo Town, are evenly distributed between community-based and private facilities.



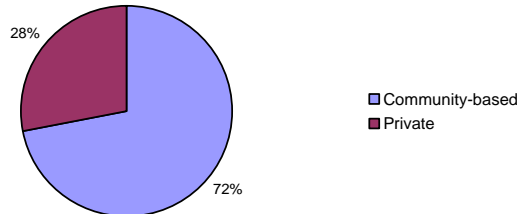
9.4.2.1 Childcare facilities in North County Sligo (outside Sligo Town)

The range of facilities in North County Sligo, outside Sligo Town, shows a significant difference between the numbers of community-based and private facilities in the area.

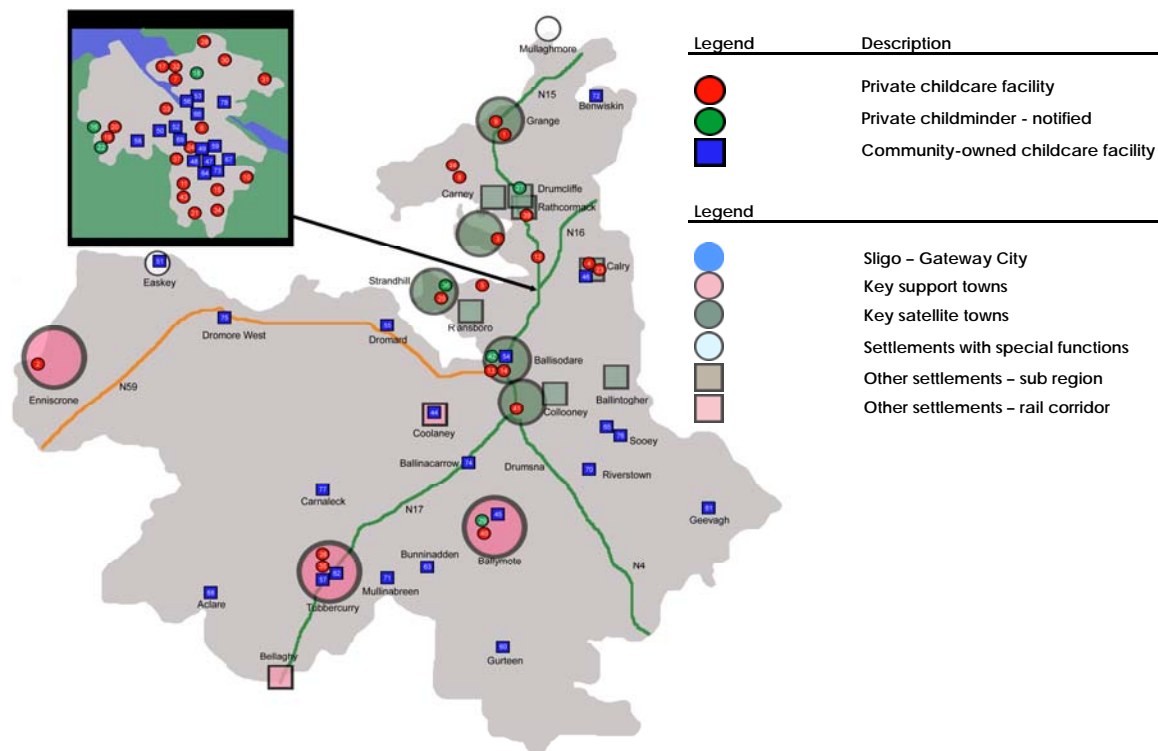


9.4.2.2 Childcare facilities in South County Sligo (outside Sligo Town)

In the South of the County, outside Sligo Town, the percentage of community-based facilities greatly outnumbers private facilities.



9.5 Childcare facilities and notified childminders in areas of projected growth in County Sligo



Map 5 Childcare facilities and notified childminders in areas of projected growth

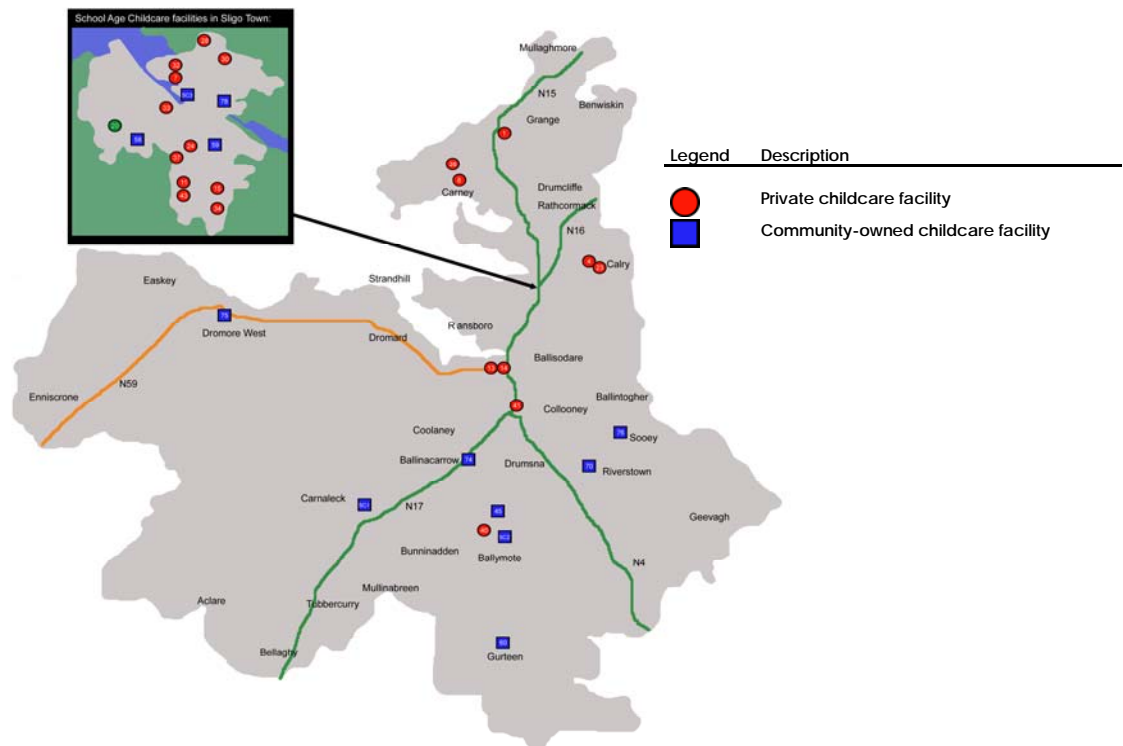
The areas of projected growth, shown in the map above, were identified in the County Sligo Settlement Strategy, drawn from the Sligo County Development Plan 2005 - 2011. The projected growth was based on calculations made prior to the publication of the 2006 Census and is likely to be adjusted somewhat in light of recent Census statistics.

However, the Strategy remains a good indicator of development areas for Sligo County over the coming years.

In line with the above, a number of areas within the County have prepared Mini-Plans and Local Area Plans for future development. These include, e.g. Strandhill, Ballisodare, Collooney, Enniscrone, Dromore West, Coolaney, Carney and Grange.

It should be noted that references to childcare, crèches and nurseries are very varied within these Plans. It is recommended that, regarding childcare, the SCCC should be consulted at an earlier stage in the preparation of future Local Area Plans to ensure planned development and reduce duplication of services.

9.6 School Age Childcare



Map 6 School Age Childcare (SAC) facilities in County Sligo

9.6.1 School Age Childcare and the NCIP

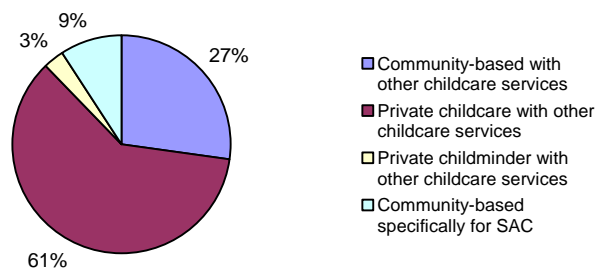
A School Age Childcare (SAC) Service takes responsibility for children, between the ages of 4 and 14 years, when they are not in the school setting e.g. before school, after school and during school holidays. Ideally, under the objectives of the NCIP,

School Age Childcare Services should operate on the basis of an agreement between parents/carers and staff with on-going structured links with local schools.

As a priority objective under the NCIP, the expansion of SAC services in Sligo will be an essential feature of SCCC's Strategic Planning over the next five years.

9.6.2 SAC Facilities in Sligo

There are 33 facilities providing SAC services in Sligo. The majority of the facilities providing the services also provide other childcare services, while 3 of the facilities are aimed specifically at providing SAC. The 3 facilities aimed specifically at providing SAC are owned and operated by community-based organisations.



Of the private facilities providing childcare services in Sligo, 57% also provide SAC. However, of the community-based facilities providing childcare services in Sligo, only 26% provide SAC.

9.6.3 Varying forms of SAC

A review of SAC services in Sligo highlights the different forms of SAC provided throughout the county, for example:

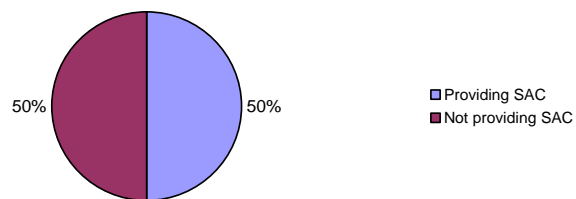
- Some facilities **only** provide SAC to children who have attended the childcare facility in the past and/or children who have siblings currently attending the facility. This is applied particularly in the case of private providers.
- A number of the facilities limit the number of SAC to 1-2 places, while others accept larger numbers up to a maximum of 10.

- Some facilities collect the children from school, depending on factors such as the distance to the school and the presence of siblings in the childcare facility.

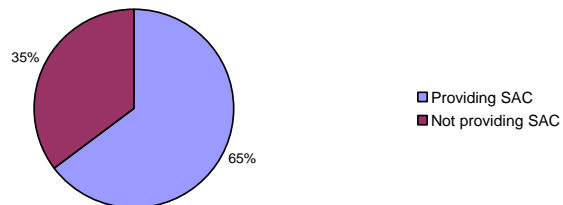
9.6.4 SAC by private childcare providers

57% of private childcare facilities in Sligo also provide SAC.

9.6.4.1 SAC by private childcare providers outside Sligo Town



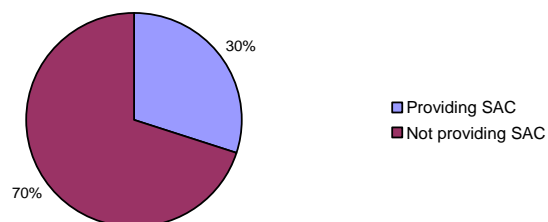
9.6.4.2 SAC by private childcare providers in Sligo Town



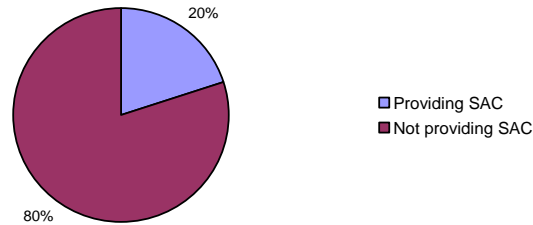
9.6.5 SAC by community-based childcare providers

26% of community-based Sligo childcare facilities provide SAC.

9.6.5.1 SAC by community-based childcare providers outside Sligo Town



9.6.5.2 SAC by community-based childcare providers in Sligo Town

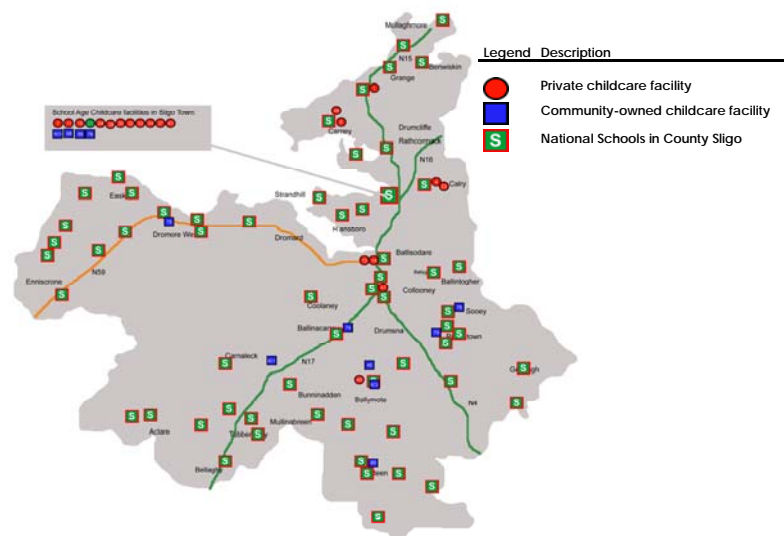


9.6.6 Linking SAC with Schools

A number of the agencies consulted during the course of the planning process emphasised their belief that SAC should be developed in line with existing educational structures within the County, i.e:

- ❑ SAC provides an excellent opportunity to generate greater links and develop co-ordination, at an educational level, between schools and childcare providers.
- ❑ The provision of SAC is an excellent means of addressing development and educational needs of disadvantaged young children, who would not, otherwise, have the opportunity to access learning support outside of school hours

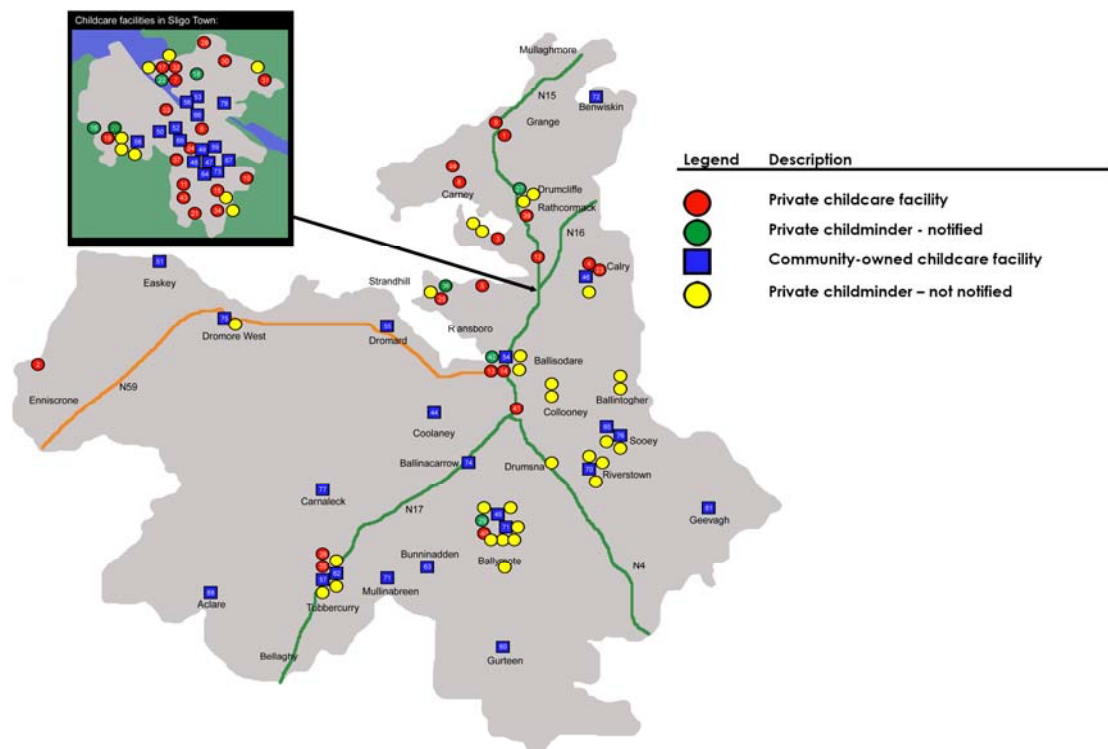
As a result, many of the agencies agreed that, to ensure the effectiveness of investment in SAC facilities, the SCCC should actively encourage, the use of school facilities for SAC. In some cases this would require the community-based groups to develop greater linkages with local schools and explore the possibility of using existing school facilities for the purposes of providing SAC.



9.6.7 Establishing balance between education and non-formal childcare

While all agencies and groups consulted during the course of the Plan agreed that some linkage with schools would be beneficial for SAC, a number of representatives and providers highlighted the importance of avoiding the implementation of a formal education curriculum within SAC. They stated that, while such a format could be beneficial in certain circumstances, a balance needs to be struck between formats such as homework clubs, educational support and non-formal childcare. The development of SAC will require a balanced mix of such formats to ensure it meets the needs of the children and parents and can be implemented effectively by childcare providers without merely extending school hours.

9.7 Childminding



Map 7 Childminders in Sligo

Childminders contribute significantly towards the provision of childcare services with Sligo. However, to date the number of childminders who have been voluntary notified to the HSE is relatively small, totalling 8

facilities. After a recent advertisement by the SCCC in the local media encouraging childminders to advise the SCCC of their existence, a total of 37 childminders responded. It should be noted however, that this response was merely an indication of their service, not a voluntary notification. Due to the significant impact of childminders on childcare within the County, the SCCC will be working to increase the number of voluntary notified childminders and establish a working group, from which a childminding network can be formed, to promote training and quality provision within the sector. This will be implemented through the SCCC's Childminding Advisory Worker

10.0 Linkages and Collaboration

The membership structure of the SCCC demonstrates the strong representation from agencies and groups within the County, including statutory agencies and NGO's. The SCCC liaises directly with each of the representatives on a regular basis, ensuring co-ordination between actions at a local level.

The need to develop quality childcare has also been highlighted as being of strategic importance to the future of County Sligo, socially and economically, by both the County Council and the County Development Board.

10.1 Sligo County Council

Sligo County Development Plan 2005 - 2011 recognises the social and economic importance of childcare services to the community and sets forth a number of objectives in relation to the development of childcare services in the County including:

- Support for the implementation of the SCCC's Strategic Plan
- Promoting the location of childcare facilities in settlement centres convenient to public access
- Encouraging the provision of childcare facilities as an integral part of residential schemes, places of employment, and in proximity to schools
- Working with the SCCC to identify priority areas for childcare facilities

10.2 Sligo County Development Board

In its *Action Plan for Economic, Social and Cultural Development 2006-2008*, Sligo County Development Board, of which the SCCC is a member, highlighted the importance of developing quality, locally provided, childcare in the County. As one of the 6 key objectives for the County during the period of the Plan, the development of quality childcare requires a co-ordinated approach to ensure that “Childcare remains a priority in the development of (Sligo as) a Gateway City.”¹³ The importance of the lead role of the SCCC in implementing actions regarding childcare in the County is also highlighted in the Action Plan.

Three specific actions for the development of childcare in County Sligo during the period 2006-2008 are identified in the Plan:

- ❑ The development of a comprehensive childcare needs analysis of the major employers within the County
- ❑ The assistance of the Local Authority to the Childcare Committee in support of the balanced development of services within the county (i.e. technical assistance)
- ❑ Assistance from the support agencies in identifying and development of rural services and facilities.

As identified in the County Development Board’s Action Plan, these actions will be implemented through the SCCC with the support of a number of other agencies in the County, including, e.g. FÁS, IDA, VEC, Sligo CEB and Sligo Leader Partnership.

The importance of childcare and family supports were also highlighted in the CDB’s Social Inclusion and Equality objective, which identified the lack of available childcare places as a significant barrier for socially and economically disadvantaged individuals wishing to pursue employment or educational opportunities. As a result, the Social Inclusion Measures Group (SIM) will work in conjunction with the SCCC in identifying and implementing actions regarding childcare for socially and economically disadvantaged groups in the County.

¹³

Sligo County Development Board, *Action Plan for Economic, Social and Cultural Development, 2006-2008*, 2006.

10.3 Approval and Consultation with CDB and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Group (SIM)

The SCCC is a sub-group of the CDB and, as such, liaises directly on a regular basis. This will include the submission of the Strategic Plan for approval by the CDB for formal endorsement. The SCCC is also a constituent member of the SIM group and will consult with them on a regular basis during the lifetime of the Strategic Plan. The Action Plan of the SCCC must be endorsed by the SIM group on an annual basis.

11.0 Review and Monitoring

The SCCC is committed to reviewing and monitoring the Strategic Plan on a regular basis. This will be achieved through the implementation of existing and new methodologies to be employed by the Board and staff, the procedures for which can be summarised below:

11.1 Procedure for linking the Strategic and Action Plans

- 1) Prior to the preparation of the annual Action Plan, the Committee and SCCC Manager will hold a Strategic Planning meeting to review the strategic objectives of the SCCC
- 2) The Action Plan will be prepared within one month of the Strategic Planning meeting and all actions within the Action Plan will be referenced directly to the SCCC's objectives in the Strategic Plan
- 3) All actions will be delegated to appropriate staff within the SCCC, who will have responsibility for reporting on the progress of their assigned actions through their Work Plan
- 4) The manager will hold a Support and Supervision meeting with all staff on a monthly basis to review their Work Plans and monitor progress of all actions
- 5) The Manager will report to the Committee on a monthly basis, providing details on the progress of the actions
- 6) An Annual Report will be prepared yearly, providing:
 - a. Details of the actions implemented during the year their impact on the delivery of the Strategic Objectives
 - b. A review of how the stakeholders collaborated to deliver on the Strategic Objectives

11.2 Procedure for monitoring Staff Performance and Implementation

- 1) Each staff member will be delegated appropriate actions, as identified in the Action Plan.
- 2) Each staff member have responsibility for reporting on the progress of their assigned actions through their Work Plan
- 3) Each staff member will present their Work Plan at the monthly Support and Supervision Meeting
- 4) An annual Performance Review will be undertaken by the Manager for all staff.
 - a. The Manager will discuss the Performance Review process with all staff
 - b. One week prior to the Performance Review, each member of staff will be provided with a copy of the Performance Review sheet
 - c. The review will include an assessment of performance linked to individual and strategic objectives
- 5) The Performance Review will be discussed and signed off by the Manager and staff member

11.3 Procedure for Strategic Plan Review

- 1) The Committee and SCCC Manager will meet on a quarterly basis to review the Strategic Plan. This will include a review of the following:
 - a. Delivery on the Strategic Objectives through the sample measurable outputs
 - b. The degree to which the stakeholders identified in the Plan are working collaboratively to deliver on the objectives
 - c. The effectiveness of the structure and membership of the SCCC and sub-committees in implementing the Strategic Plan
- 2) The Committee will agree on the measures necessary, if any, to ensure the effective implementation of the Strategic Plan

12.0 Strategic Aims and Objectives

This part of the Plan sets out what the SCCC's Strategic Aims and Objectives will be for the period 2007-2010. The Aims and Objectives were developed by the SCCC, having reviewed the findings of the research and consultation.

Aim	1. Improve the Quality of Childcare
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Promote and support the implementation of service quality programmes among childcare facilities in County Sligo 1.2. Promote career potential within the childcare sector and enhance career development opportunities for childcare workers 1.3. Ensure minimum training standards for childcare workers and facilitate appropriate career progression opportunities

Aim	2. Maintain and Increase Childcare Facilities and Places
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Encourage new service development, based upon local need, through NCIP funding 2.2. Support the growth of school age childcare in the county by private and community-based facilities 2.3. Support the provision of pre-school services for all children at least 1-year prior to primary school 2.4. Support the development of a sustainable childcare sector in the County 2.5. Support the development of a quality childminding sector

Aim	3. Support Families to Break to Cycle of Poverty
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Support an increase in the provision of affordable childcare through funding provision 3.2. Promote equality and diversity in the provision of childcare in the County

Aim	4. Support a Co-ordinated Approach to Delivery of Childcare
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1. Further collaboration and co-ordination among agencies regarding the development of childcare 4.2. Ensure the primacy of SCCC in relation to childcare issues 4.3. Provide support to business in relation to childcare matters 4.4. Recognise the key role of parents in childcare provision 4.5. Recognise the importance of providers to the childcare sector 4.6. Continually review the effectiveness of the structure of SCCC 4.7. Support training and development of all SCCC staff 4.8. Ensure the relevancy of the Strategic Plan

Aim: 1 Improve the Quality of Childcare		
Objective: 1.1 Promote and support the implementation of service quality programmes among childcare facilities in County Sligo		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
A minimum of 20% of all community-based and private childcare providers to achieve an accredited quality standard by the end of the current NCIP.	2010	SCCC Providers' Network BCCN, CECDE and Síolta
An article to be published in the SCCC newsletter, aimed at parents and childcare providers, to highlight SCCC's drive towards childcare facilities with quality standards. A sufficient number of copies of the newsletter will be sent to all childcare facilities to ensure it can be distributed to all parents.	2007	SCCC Providers' Network Parents' Network
Press releases to be prepared highlighting the importance of quality childcare. The press releases will be distributed for publication in the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Media publications such as the Sligo Champion, Sligo Weekender and Business Sligo Magazine □ Newsletters of other agencies and representative bodies in the County, e.g. Community Forum, Sligo County Council, Sligo County Development Board, Sligo CEB, etc. The SCCC will also promote quality childcare on the local radio Station, Ocean FM.	2007 for one article to be published in each publication and two broadcasts on Ocean FM. 2008-2010. At least three articles per year. At least one broadcast on Ocean FM per year.	SCCC Sligo CDB Sligo Community Forum Sligo County Council Sligo CEB
A section of the SCCC's website to be dedicated to the promotion of accredited quality childcare in County Sligo.	2007	SCCC
Presentation to be made at parents' network on quality childcare. This will include a brief introduction to the different quality standards and the Síolta framework.	2007	SCCC, Providers' Network
3 presentations to be made at different locations around the County, providing an introduction to the Síolta framework. Two presentations will be held in County Sligo and one in Sligo Town.	2008	SCCC Providers' Network
Support to be provided to childcare providers in the implementation of the Síolta framework. The roll-out of this support will be measured by the number of childcare facilities that the SCCC are satisfied are operating within the Síolta framework. The target percentage of childcare facilities in the County that will be implementing the framework will be 35%.	2010	SCCC Providers' network Síolta
100% of all new facilities to receive advice on the implementation of the Síolta framework	2007-2010	SCCC Síolta

Aim: 1 Improve the Quality of Childcare Objective: 1.2 Promote career potential within the childcare sector and enhance career development opportunities for childcare workers		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
<p>Work with VEC, FÁS and IT Sligo to raise awareness of childcare as an attractive career choice using printed material, advertising, career day presentations, etc. This will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ All secondary schools in the County be visited at least once per year to provide information on career's within the childcare sector ❑ Preparation, publication and distribution of a booklet on career paths and opportunities in childcare, e.g. through FETAC or IT Sligo's BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Care and Education. 	<p>Visits to secondary schools to be undertaken once per year.</p> <p>Booklet to be published by 2008.</p>	<p>SCCC IT Sligo FÁS Sligo VEC Secondary schools and Career Guidance Teachers SCEB Sligo Leader Partnership</p>
<p>Publicly recognise career development achievements of childcare workers through a press release, to be printed in at least two local newspapers, e.g. Sligo Champion and Sligo Weekender.</p>	<p>2008</p>	<p>SCCC</p>
<p>Work with Sligo CEB, VEC, FÁS and IT Sligo to promote working in the childcare sector as an attractive career choice for men. This will include promotional activities through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Media publications such as the Sligo Champion, Sligo Weekender and Business Sligo Magazine ❑ Enterprise newsletters and publications, such as the SCEB ❑ Promotional segment on the local radio Station, Ocean FM. 	<p>2007-2010</p> <p>Article to be published in at least three media publications and all newsletters by end-2008.</p> <p>Radio segment by end-2007.</p>	<p>SCCC IT Sligo FÁS Sligo VEC Secondary schools and Career Guidance Teachers SCEB Sligo Leader Partnership</p>
<p>Promote working within the childcare sector as an attractive and accessible career choice for minorities and people from disadvantaged sectors of the community, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ People with disabilities, including learning difficulties ❑ Members of minorities groups, e.g. refugees, Travellers, etc. ❑ Migrant workers <p>This will include presentations on opportunities for working within the childcare sector, to be presented directly to representatives of each target group. The SCCC will also support the adaptation of childcare training to include alternative methods of training such as "on the job" training for appropriate participants where "theory" may be a difficulty.</p>	<p>2007-2010</p> <p>Presentations to be made to each target group by mid-2008.</p>	<p>HSE NW Sligo Interagency Disability Group FÁS Sligo Leader Partnership Sligo Traveller Support Group Diversity Sligo Sligo Volunteer Bureau Sligo Inclusion Measure Group STSG and Traveller Parents</p>
<p>SCCC website to include section on current job opportunities in County Sligo</p>	<p>2007</p>	<p>SCCC</p>

Aim: 1 Improve the Quality of Childcare Objective: 1.3 Ensure minimum training standards for childcare workers and facilitate appropriate career progression opportunities.		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Work with childcare providers towards maximising the number of existing and new childcare workers in the County possessing, at a minimum, FETAC Level 5 or equivalent. The target level of childcare workers with FETAC Level 5 or equivalent will be 100% by 2010.	2010	SCCC Providers' network
Encourage childcare workers to progress beyond FETAC Level 5 in accredited training, e.g. IT Sligo's BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Care and Education.	2007-2010	SCCC IT Sligo
Establish a database detailing the number of full-time and part-time childcare workers employed by each childcare facility in Sligo and the qualifications of each worker. The database should be updated on a quarterly basis.	end-2007	SCCC Providers' network
Use the database to identify training needs of childcare workers in the county and deliver appropriate training in accessible locations throughout the County.	2008-2010	SCCC Providers' network

Aim: 2 Maintain and Increase Childcare Facilities and Places Objective: 2.1 Encourage new service development, based upon local need, through NCIP funding		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Evaluate and make recommendations based upon local need in relation to all funding applications from private and community-based providers wishing to expand and/or create services.	2007-2010	SCCC
Update the Strategic Mapping Exercise and Childcare Census on a twice-yearly basis.	2007-2010	SCCC
Identify areas of future childcare needs, based upon the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Existing provision of services, as identified in the Strategic Mapping Exercise and Childcare Census. □ Potential population growth, as identified in the Sligo County Development Plan. □ Regularly updated information of relevance to the provision of childcare in the County, e.g. population growth, enterprise development, training provision, housing development, etc. from agencies such as Sligo County Council, Borough Council, County Development Board, Enterprise Ireland, FÁS, Sligo CEB, VEC, etc. 	2007-2010	SCCC Sligo Leader Partnership Sligo County Council Borough Council County Development Board Enterprise Ireland FÁS Sligo CEB Sligo VEC Social Inclusion Measure Group
Prioritise childcare needs of the County based upon an annual review of future childcare needs, i.e. areas of population growth, disadvantage, and gaps in service provision.	2007-2010	SCCC Sligo Leader Partnership Sligo County Council Borough Council County Development Board Social Inclusion Measure Group
Support the development of affordable childcare in areas of disadvantage through Staffing Grants for Community-based providers.	2007-2010	SCCC

Aim: 2 Maintain and Increase Childcare Facilities and Places Objective: 2.2 Support the growth of school age childcare in the county by private and community-based facilities.		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Establish a framework for school age childcare to address issues such as: <input type="checkbox"/> Determine the relationship between “school age childcare” and other similar services such as homework clubs, after-school clubs, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Extent to which a formal curriculum should be implemented in school age childcare facilities The framework should determine the guiding principles, within a Sligo context, by which the SCCC will support school age childcare in the County.	2007	SCCC Sligo Leader Partnership Parents’ Associations Community Groups Parish Councils School Boards Social Inclusion Measure Group
Prepare an information leaflet on establishing a community-based school age childcare facility, providing an example of a model of good practice. This leaflet should address frequently asked questions regarding school age childcare, e.g. childcare within the national school system, insurance, staffing, space requirements, etc.	2007	SCCC St. Brendan’s Management Committee
Meet with representatives of the Rural Transport Initiative and Sligo Leader Partnership Co. Ltd. to review the possibility of using the Rural Transport Initiative to transport children from schools to school age childcare facilities.	2007	SCCC Sligo Leader Partnership Rural Transport Initiative Social Inclusion Measure Group
Deliver presentations on establishing community-based school age childcare to local Parents’ Associations, Community Development Groups, Parish Councils, School Boards of Management, etc., in target areas.	2007-2008	SCCC Sligo Leader Partnership Parents’ Associations Community Groups Parish Councils School Boards
Work with the Sligo Leader Partnership Co. Ltd. to identify how the school age childcare initiative can be used to address educational disadvantage in the County. Explore the possibility of community-based organisations accessing funding through the Leader Partnership Co. Ltd. to support school age childcare aimed specifically at communities affected by educational disadvantage.	2008	SCCC Sligo Leader Partnership Social Inclusion Measure Group

Aim: 2 Maintain and Increase Childcare Facilities and Places Objective: 2.3 Support the provision of pre-school services for all children at least 1-year prior to primary school.		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Promote the roll-out of the Síolta Framework throughout the county. <i>(Detailed objectives for this roll-out are provided in the Strategic Objectives referring to Quality.)</i>	2010	SCCC Providers' network Síolta
<p>Develop and roll-out a county-wide primary school transition policy and programme. This will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Review the possible roll-out of a transition programme in County Sligo, based upon experiences within the County of locally-developed programmes such as "Ready for School" and "Stepping Stones." □ Review the possible inclusion of sections of the DEIS programme (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools - Department of Education and Science) in the transition programme, particularly those relating specifically to linkages between school and childcare, e.g. the Early Start Pre-school Scheme. This will also facilitate the inclusion of socially disadvantaged areas in the roll-out of the transition programme. □ Developing further links with Lifestart in the implementation of a transition programme between pre-school and primary school. 	<p>Develop the programme by mid-2008</p> <p>Roll-out the programme mid-2008-2010.</p>	<p>SCCC Providers' network Lifestart Teachers' Education Centre HSE NW Sligo Leader Partnership Social Inclusion Measure Group Parents' Associations Community Groups Parish Councils School Boards NCCA Síolta STSG Traveller Parents</p>

Aim: 2 Maintain and Increase Childcare Facilities and Places		
Objective: 2.4 Support the development of a sustainable childcare sector in the County		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Provide training for private and community-based childcare providers. The training should be aimed specifically at developing skills regarding the viability and sustainability of childcare services as a business.	2007-2010	SCCC Sligo CEB HSE NW Sligo VEC FÁS
Avoid duplication in the provision of childcare in the county by co-ordinating service delivery and funding, based upon identified need.	2007-2010	SCCC
In rural areas develop linkages between existing facilities and services and childcare providers, e.g. schools, community centres, enterprise centres, etc.	2007-2010	SCCC County Development Board Sligo Leader Partnership Sligo Community Forum

Aim: 2 Maintain and Increase Childcare Facilities and Places		
Objective: 2.5 Support the development of a quality childminding sector		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Establish a Childminders' Network and facilitate a minimum of 4 network meetings per year.	2007 for first meeting 2008-2010 at least 4 meetings per year	SCCC Childminders' Network HSE NW
At least 35 childminders to be voluntary notified to the SCCC by end-2008	End-2008	SCCC Childminders' Network HSE NW
Provide training programmes to all voluntary notified childminders, with the aim of establishing a minimum level of training for all voluntary notified childminders	2007 for training to be identified 2007-2010 implement training programmes	SCCC Childminders' Network HSE NW Sligo VEC

Aim: 3 Support Families to Break the Cycle of Poverty		
Objective: 3.1 Support an increase in the provision of affordable childcare		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Establish and implement guidelines for supporting affordable childcare.	2007	SCCC
Promote and provide information on the implementation of tiered funding structures for community-based providers receiving staffing grants in areas of disadvantage.	2008	SCCC POBAL

Aim: 3 Support Families to Break the Cycle of Poverty		
Objective: 3.2 Promote equality and diversity in the provision of childcare in the County.		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
<p>Work with agencies to establish a protocol that will address the difficulties faced by many disadvantaged members of the community when trying to access childcare while pursuing education, training and employment. This will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Co-ordinating with education, training and employment agencies to identify possible short-term demand by participants and workers for childcare services. ❑ Providing a list of available short-term childcare places to agencies, for distribution among participants and workers. 	<p>2008 to establish protocol</p> <p>2007-2010 to maintain and distribute list on ongoing basis</p>	<p>SCCC Sligo Leader Partnership County Development Board FÁS Sligo VEC HSE NW Sligo Interagency Disability Group FÁS Sligo Leader Partnership Sligo Traveller Support Group Diversity Sligo Sligo Volunteer Bureau Social Inclusion Measure Group Parents' Support Network</p>

Aim: 3 Support Families to Break the Cycle of Poverty Objective: 3.2 Promote equality and diversity in the provision of childcare in the County. (CONTINUED)		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
<p>Provide assistance to existing and new childcare services to support the integration of new communities and disadvantaged members of the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Intercultural training days to be provided for childcare services that can be attended by all members of the service, including owners, managers, committee members, childcare workers, etc. SCCC will recommend that all members of the service attend the training. ❑ Provision of childcare booklets targeted specifically at sections of the community such as the Traveller community, International workers, families of children with disabilities, asylum seekers and refugees. The booklets will be printed in a variety of languages and will be proofed for distribution to all sections of the community. ❑ Promote networking among new communities, with a particular focus on childcare, e.g. Family intercultural days 	<p>2007 for first intercultural training day</p> <p>2008-2010 at least two intercultural training day to be held per year</p> <p>2008 for booklets to be published</p> <p>2007-2010 to promote networking</p>	<p>SCCC Sligo Leader Partnership County Development Board FÁS Sligo VEC HSE NW Sligo Interagency Disability Group FÁS Sligo Leader Partnership Sligo Traveller Support Group Diversity Sligo Sligo Volunteer Bureau Social Inclusion Measure Group Parents' Support Network</p>
<p>Implement appropriate childcare actions identified through the County Sligo Interagency Traveller Support Group.</p> <p>Support to the Traveller community will include the provision of information regarding available short-term childcare places, to be used by Travellers participating on education, training and/or work programmes. (This need was identified in the Strategic Review process.) This information will be distributed in conjunction with the agencies directly involved in the education, training and/or work programmes</p>	<p>2007-2010</p>	<p>SCCC Sligo Traveller Support Group FÁS Sligo VEC HSE NW Sligo Leader Partnership</p>

Aim: 3 Support Families to Break the Cycle of Poverty Objective: 3.2 Promote equality and diversity in the provision of childcare in the County. (CONTINUED)		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Support the provision of childcare for children with special needs through the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Provide training to providers, available to all members of staff, regarding childcare for children with special needs ❑ Work with the Parents' Support Network to identify and implement actions regarding childcare for children with special needs ❑ Review the possibility of implementing elements of the Roscommon Páistí le Chéile programme in County Sligo ❑ Facilitate networking between childcare providers and parents of children with special needs through, for example, the Parents' Support Network and the Providers' Network 	2007-2010 provide training for providers 2007-2010 work with Parents' Support Network 2007- Review roll-out of elements of Páistí le Chéile 2007-2010 facilitate at least three meetings per year between Parents' Support and Providers' Network	SCCC HSE NW Parents' Support Network Providers' Network
Facilitate International Workers in accessing quality childcare, through the publication and distribution of information booklets, to be printed in a variety of languages.	2008-2010	SCCC Diversity Sligo
Continue the provision of respite service for asylum seekers.	2007-2010	SCCC HSE NW

Aim: 4 Support a Co-ordinated Approach to Delivery of Childcare		
Objective: 4.1 Further collaboration and co-ordination among agencies regarding the development of childcare		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Provide evidence of co-ordinated planning for childcare through a co-ordinated approach among agencies. For example: <input type="checkbox"/> All reference to childcare strategies, policies and actions by agencies should involve direct consultation with the SCCC <input type="checkbox"/> Reference to childcare planning in, e.g. Development Plans and Local Area Plans, should involve consultation with the SCCC, to ensure integration and avoid duplication of services	2007-2010	SCCC Sligo County Council Borough Council Local Area Plan Sub-committees County Development Board
Collaborate on projects in support of the development of childcare in the BMW and Border region	2007-2010	SCCC BMW CCC's BCCN CCC's NVCO's
Co-ordinate with other Childcare Committees regarding the development of facilities along county borders, e.g. Enniscrone, Bellaghy and Dromahair	2007-2010	SCCC Leitrim CCC Mayo CCC Donegal CCC Roscommon CCC

Aim: 4 Support a Co-ordinated Approach to Delivery of Childcare		
Objective: 4.2 Ensure the primacy of SCCC in relation to childcare issues		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Maintain effective communication with partner agencies and ensure the effectiveness of SCCC's co-ordinating role in childcare in Sligo	2007-2010	SCCC All agencies
Establish and maintain ongoing one-to-one contact with all childcare providers	2007-2010 All providers to have face-to-face contact with SCCC at least once per year	SCCC
Regularly promote the SCCC as the primary body for childcare development in Sligo	2007-2010	SCCC

Aim: 4 Support a Co-ordinated Approach to Delivery of Childcare Objective: 4.3 Provide support to business in relation to childcare matters		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Conduct a survey of employers to identify childcare needs of businesses and employees	2007	SCCC County Development Board Sligo CEB Enterprise Ireland FÁS
Work with agencies and businesses to promote the development of a family friendly environment within the enterprise culture in Sligo. For example, identify a number of family-friendly case-studies among small and medium-sized businesses in Sligo and prepare a press release for publication in local newspapers, magazines and enterprise newsletters.	2007-2010 2008 for publication of press release	SCCC County Development Board Sligo CEB Enterprise Ireland FÁS

Aim: 4 Support a Co-ordinated Approach to Delivery of Childcare Objective: 4.4 Recognise the key role of parents in childcare provision		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Establish a mechanism for parental input on childcare matters through the Parents' Network	2007-2010	SCCC Parents' Network

Aim: 4 Support a Co-ordinated Approach to Delivery of Childcare Objective: 4.5 Recognise the importance of providers to the childcare sector		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Facilitate and support the development of the Providers' Network	2007-2010	SCCC Providers' Network
Facilitate and support the development of the Childminders' Network	2007-2010	SCCC Childminders' Network

Aim: 4 Support a Co-ordinated Approach to Delivery of Childcare		
Objective: 4.6 Continually review the effectiveness of the structure of SCCC		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Terms of reference to be adopted for all sub-committees	2007	SCCC
Periodic review of the effectiveness of internal committee structures, including, e.g., membership of committee and sub-committees, attendance at meetings, terms of reference for sub-committees, etc.	2007-2010	SCCC

Aim: 4 Support a Co-ordinated Approach to Delivery of Childcare		
Objective: 4.7 Support training and development of all SCCC staff		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Policy and procedure to be developed regarding training and development for all SCCC staff.	2007	SCCC
A training and development plan to be prepared each year, based upon needs identified through the performance review process and linked to individual job descriptions and the Strategic Plan.	2007-2010	SCCC

Aim: 4 Support a Co-ordinated Approach to Delivery of Childcare		
Objective: 4.8 Ensure the relevancy of the Strategic Plan		
Measurable Outputs	Timeframe	Stakeholders
Develop a procedure for reviewing/ revising the Strategic Plan	2007	SCCC
Show direct links between the Action Plan and the Strategic Plan.	2007-2010	SCCC
Liaise with other agencies to ensure direct links between references to childcare in other Development Plans within the County and the SCCC's Strategic Plan.	2007-2010	SCCC

Appendix I

**Summary of Review of
Strategic Plan 2001-2006**

Summary of Review of Strategic Plan 2001 -2006

Strategic Objective	Summary of Aim	Summary Review of Implementation	Moving Forward
Membership and Representation Issues	The Committee will keep its membership under review and ensure a broad, inclusive representative committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership, including attendance and active participation, is reviewed on a regular basis • Membership has been adapted to meet the developing childcare needs of the county, particularly among specific target groups • Co-ordination on childcare issues between lead agencies and groups within the County has improved through the regular membership review 	Membership will continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis, to ensure co-ordination and maximise representation for all members of the community within Sligo County.
Quality Issues	The Sligo County Childcare Committee is committed to the development of quality childcare services across County Sligo by 2006.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SCCC works closely with the HSE NW's pre-school inspection team • The implementation of quality improvement programmes is supported by the SCCC, through training, advice and information 	Quality will remain a primary focus of the SCCC, particularly through the implementation of accredited quality programmes and the Síolta Framework.
Training issues	Implement a comprehensive training strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training needs identified by the SCCC are met through the significant number of training programmes provided on a regular basis to all providers • Private and community-based providers confirmed that the SCCC is very effective at meeting their training needs 	The SCCC will continue to implement a comprehensive training strategy, which will include specific training needs identified by providers and agencies/groups through the consultation process of the Strategic Plan.

Summary of Review of Strategic Plan 2001 -2006 (Continued)

Strategic Objective	Summary of Aim	Summary Review of Implementation	Moving Forward
Actions to address local needs and capacity building	Local needs to be identified and actions implemented to support the development of new service provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number and range of childcare facilities has increased dramatically within the County during the period 2001-2006 • The Strategic Mapping process has identified areas for future service provision within the County 	Local needs and service provision will be reviewed regularly by the SCCC through the updating of the Strategic Mapping Process. Specific actions will be implemented regarding new service provision for specific childcare services, e.g. school age childcare, community-based services, childminding etc.
Consistency of National and Local Policy	The Committee will consider how best to integrate its planning process with that of the statutory organisations and with the other Partnership bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership of the SCCC has been adapted to ensure co-ordination and integration between the SCCC and other relevant agencies • The SCCC has ensured that childcare forms a significant part of the policy and planning process for Sligo, e.g. through the County Development Plan 	The SCCC will continue to ensure co-ordination and integration between agencies regarding childcare.
Information Issues	The SCCC will develop an appropriate range of systems to inform both the work of the Childcare Committee and to publicise the work of the Committee to a range of stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SCCC provides information to a wide range of stakeholders, including agencies and service providers • Private and community-based providers confirmed that the SCCC provides an important role for information regarding childcare developments within in the County 	Information dissemination will continue to be a primary focus for the SCCC. Innovative methods to ensure the effectiveness of information systems will be reviewed and implemented through the new Strategic Plan.
Performance Review and Evaluation	The SCCC is committed to regular and ongoing review and monitoring of strategic and operational objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee and sub-committee structures facilitate regular review of strategic and operational objectives • Operational policies and procedures within the SCCC enable operational objectives to be monitored on a regular basis 	The SCCC will adopt and implement policies and procedures regarding the review and monitoring of all strategic objectives under the Strategic Plan 2007 - 2010.

Appendix II
DED Statistics
CSO Population Statistics 2006

DED ID	DED NAME	Number of Persons		Change in Population	
		2002	2006	Actual	%
001	Sligo East	5,568	5,362	-206	-3.7%
002	Sligo North	5,745	5,340	-405	-7.0%
003	Sligo West	7,160	7,192	32	0.4%
004	Aghanagh	249	315	66	26.5%
005	Ballynashee	243	263	20	8.2%
006	Coolavin	393	447	54	13.7%
007	Cuilmore	510	490	-20	-3.9%
008	Drumrat	413	440	27	6.5%
009	Kilfree	465	480	15	3.2%
010	Killadoon	302	298	-4	-1.3%
011	Killaraght	413	392	-21	-5.1%
012	Kilmastranny	335	351	16	4.8%
013	Kilshalvy	262	298	36	13.7%
014	Shancough	134	139	5	3.7%
015	Templevanny	221	238	17	7.7%
016	Toomour	225	239	14	6.2%
017	Aughris	186	174	-12	-6.5%
018	Buncrowey	349	327	-22	-6.3%
019	Castleconnor East	257	231	-26	-10.1%
020	Castleconnor West	825	890	65	7.9%
021	Dromard East	161	163	2	1.2%
022	Dromard West	164	178	14	8.5%
023	Dromore	308	445	137	44.5%
024	Easkey	535	588	53	9.9%
025	Easkey West	698	695	-3	-0.4%
026	Kilglass	1,245	1,348	103	8.3%
027	Mahgeruse	49	45	-4	-8.2%
028	Rathmacurkey	558	555	-3	-0.5%
029	Skreen	159	165	6	3.8%
030	Templeboy North	280	285	5	1.8%
031	Templeboy South	194	191	-3	-1.5%
032	Toberpatrick East	219	256	37	16.9%
033	Toberpatrick West	281	296	15	5.3%
034	Ballintogher East	430	543	113	26.3%
035	Ballintogher West	384	418	34	8.9%
036	Ballymote	1,405	1,705	300	21.4%
037	Ballynakill	283	370	87	30.7%
038	Ballysadare East	1,215	1,208	-7	-0.6%
039	Ballysadare West	319	336	17	5.3%
040	Bricklieve	216	234	18	8.3%
041	Calry	1,836	1,808	-28	-1.5%
042	Carney	707	681	-26	-3.7%
043	Carrickbanagher	561	597	36	6.4%
044	Cliffony North	760	910	150	19.7%
045	Cliffony South	618	611	-7	-1.1%
046	Collooney	1,255	1,754	499	39.8%
047	Drumcliff East	855	773	-82	-9.6%
048	Drumcliff West	1,929	1,928	-1	-0.1%
049	Drumcolumb	277	294	17	6.1%
050	Drumfin	338	339	1	0.3%
051	Glencar	210	222	12	5.7%
052	Kilmacowen	1,868	2,053	185	9.9%
053	Knocknaree	2,833	3,217	384	13.6%
054	Lakeview	366	391	25	6.8%
055	Lisconny	367	404	37	10.1%
056	Lissadil East	507	635	128	25.2%
057	Lissadil North	969	1,131	162	16.7%

DED ID	DED NAME	Number of Persons		Change in Population	
		2002	2006	Actual	%
058	Lissadil West	483	474	-9	-1.9%
059	Riverstown	562	638	76	13.5%
060	Rossinver East	175	165	-10	-5.7%
061	Rossinver West	217	235	18	8.3%
062	Achonry East	483	528	45	9.3%
063	Achonry West	625	681	56	9.0%
064	Aclare	309	300	-9	-2.9%
065	Annagh	165	181	16	9.7%
066	Banada	576	579	3	0.5%
067	Branchfield	55	47	-8	-14.5%
068	Breencorragh	154	128	-26	-16.9%
069	Carrownaskeagh	99	98	-1	-1.0%
070	Cartron	182	179	-3	-1.6%
071	Cloonacool	232	253	21	9.1%
072	Cloonoghill	307	308	1	0.3%
073	Coolaney	457	548	91	19.9%
074	Glendarragh	145	159	14	9.7%
075	Kilmacteige	235	238	3	1.3%
076	Kilturra	205	239	34	16.6%
077	Leitrim	325	331	6	1.8%
078	Loughil	76	72	-4	-5.3%
079	Owenmore	104	103	-1	-1.0%
080	Streamstown	292	298	6	2.1%
081	Temple	229	226	-3	-1.3%
082	Tobercurry	1,894	2,177	283	14.9%

Appendix III
Sub-committees
Membership and meetings

Sub-committees

The membership of the sub-committees is detailed below. All sub-committees meet on a bi-monthly basis, except for the Management Committee, which meets on a monthly basis.

Management

Roisin Mc Glone, Parents Rep
John Kiely, FAS
Maeve Whittington, Sligo Social Services
Paul Bradley, Sligo Childcare Company FAS
Des Keaney, Health Board
Claire Dineen, Ballymote FRC

Monitoring and Evaluation membership is the same as that of the Management committee

Special needs

Geraldine Cosgrove, HSE
Roisin Mc Glone, Parent Rep
Martina mc Carrick, HSE
Geri Bruce, SLPC

School Aged Childcare

Des Keaney, HSE
Yvonne Stewart, Community Provider
Sandra Loftus, Private Provider

Childminding

Roisin McGlone, Parent Rep
Maeve Whittington, Sligo Social Services
Rebecca Trainer, Provider.

PESC

Geraldine Cosgrove, HSE special needs
Geri Bruce, SLPC
Mary Brodie, VEC
Stephen Walsh, CEB
Finnuala Meagher, Planning SCC
Maeve Whittington, Sligo Social Services
Des Keaney, HSE
Roisin Mc Glone, Parent Rep
Mary Waters, HSE Pre School Inspection
Claire Dineen, Ballymote FRC

Equality & Diversity

Floraigh Dunn, HSE
Philip White, Home youth liason
Des Keaney, HSE
Paddy Crampsey, Globe House
Martina Mc Carrick, HSE special needs
Carol Dillon, Lifestart Traveller Project.

Quality & Training

Margaret Gilmore, Sligo IT
Mary Brodie, Sligo VEC
Paul Bradley, Sligo Childcare Company
Maura Mc Guinness, St Angela's College
John Kiely, FAS
Fiona Kelleher, NCNA
Orla Touhy, Lifestyle National Office.