



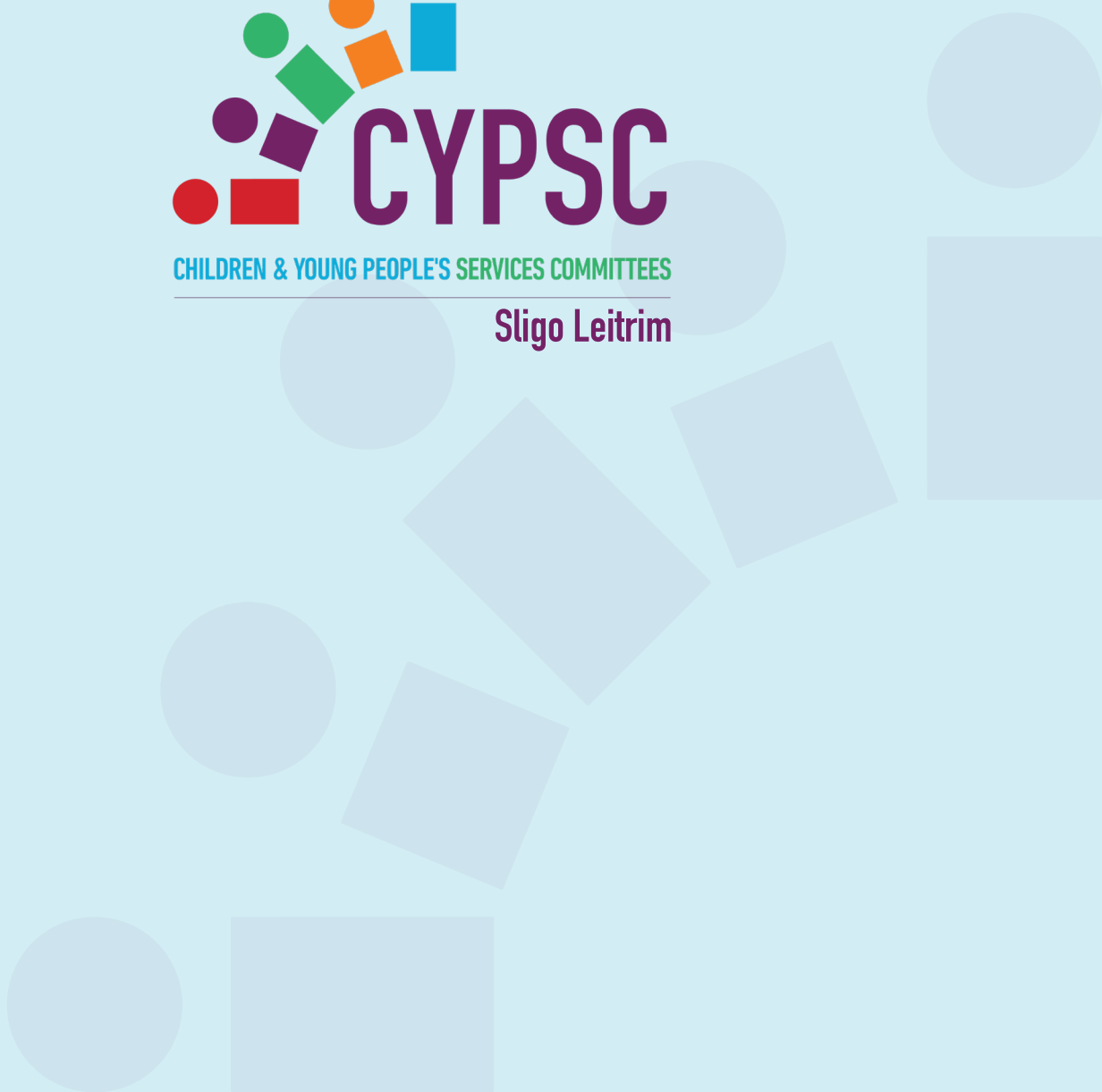
# Sligo Leitrim Parenting Support Strategic Plan 2022-2026

*Seeking to ensure that Every Door is the Right Door*



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEES

Sligo Leitrim



# Table of Contents

Introduction	7
Our Consultation: What Parents and Services Told Us	8
Our Vision, Mission, Aim, Strategic Objectives and Values	10
Sligo Leitrim Strategic Focus Areas and Action Plan 2022 – 2026	12
Strategic Focus 1: Enhancing Our Communication and Co-ordination Pathways	13
Strategic Focus 2: Connecting Parents and Building Support Services Capacity	15
Strategic Focus 3: Empowering Parents and Building their Confidence	17
Strategic Focus 4: Recognising and Supporting Fathers	18
Strategic Focus 5: Supporting Parents in Our Diverse Communities	19
Strategic Focus 6: Supporting Parents of Children 0 - 5 years	21
Strategic Focus 7: Parents of Children 6 – 12 years	26
Strategic Focus 8: Parents of Young People 13 – 18 years	28
Strategic Focus 9: Supporting Parents Self-Care	31
Strategic Focus 10: Supporting Parents in the Wider Context	32
Sligo Leitrim Parenting Support Strategy Review and Monitoring	35

# Message from the Chairman of Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Services Committee.

Being a parent is a complex and important task. Children greatly benefit from effective parenting from birth, right through to adulthood. It is, therefore, very important that parenting support services are available and accessible to assist parents in this key function. Supporting parents is a central objective in many key national policy documents; “What works in Family Support”; “Improved Outcomes for Children”; “50 key messages” and “First 5”; “Better Outcome, Brighter Futures” to name just some government policies. The Sligo Leitrim Parenting Support Strategic Plan 2022-2026, developed by the Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC), endeavours to locate the provision of parenting support as a key strategic objective over the next five years. Having listened to the views, needs and perspective of parents it is hoped that the strategic plan will act as a voice and influence regarding the development and provision of parenting support services. Strategic objectives in the plan include; to communicate and inform parents of parenting supports available; to empower parents in their parenting role; to encourage and promote co-operation and partnership in working with parents, services and communities; to support fathers, diverse communities and different cultures and to promote models of best practice. A central tenet of the parenting support strategy is to ensure that “every door is the right door” and to provide meaningful support services that meet the needs of parents in the Sligo Leitrim Community.

As Chairperson of the Sligo Leitrim CYPSC, I would like to acknowledge the work and contribution of the CYPSC “Learning & Development Working Group” and the CYPSC Coordinator in driving the development of this Parenting Support Strategy. I look forward to seeing this strategy develop and being of very practical value to parents in the Sligo Leitrim area.

***Dr. Liam White***

Area Manager, Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan  
**Tusla Child and Family Agency**

# Message from the former Chairperson of the Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Services Committee Learning and Development Working Group.

Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Services Committee, through their Children and Young People's Plan 2020 – 2022, committed to supporting parents, by providing clear accessible information and supports to them.

Drawing on national parents' support policies and strategies including 'First 5', '50 Key Messages', 'Better Outcomes Brighter Futures 2014 – 2020', Sligo Leitrim CYPSC charged their Learning and Development Working Group with the task of producing a local parenting support strategy, to identify the specific needs of parents, parenting in Sligo and Leitrim.

The aim of the Sligo Leitrim Parenting Support Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026 is to ensure that 'every door is the right door' for parents seeking information or supports in their parenting journey. As engagement and consultation with parents, young people and local organisations that provide supports to parents was key to developing this strategy, the Learning and Development Working Group took a proactive approach and engaged with parents, young people and services, through surveys, one to one interviews and focus groups to achieve this.

Parenting is a very individual process that requires different supports at different times. Acknowledging and normalising supports as well as recognising that one size does not fit all is a core strength of the strategy.

Throughout the lifetime of the strategy, it is hoped to communicate, coordinate and improve the delivery of parenting supports across Sligo and Leitrim. The document will be a live strategy with the capacity to evolve and change as the needs of parents' change.

As Chairperson of the CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group, I was privileged to hear the needs of parents and young people articulated, along with working with a dedicated working group who have the needs of parents and young people at the forefront of their every-day work.

I look forward to seeing the results and the positive outcomes that will be achieved for the parents, young people and families in Sligo Leitrim through implementation of the strategy.

## **Sharon Boles**

Chairperson CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group

**(Up to September 2021)**

# Message from the present Chairperson of the Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Services Committee Learning and Development Working Group.

This Strategy has been a vision for the members of the Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Services Committee Learning and Development Working Group for many years and now, we are delighted to see that vision finally come to fruition.

For almost eighteen months, a sub-committee of the working group with the expertise of our researcher has engaged with front-line workers, community and statutory organisations, funders and most importantly parents and young people of Sligo and Leitrim to draw up this Strategy. Throughout the collation of information, analysis and drafting of the Strategy, the researcher worked closely throughout the Spring and Summer of 2021 with the sub-committee over numerous online meetings to coax, tease out and finally pull together this Strategy. This was ably enabled and facilitated by the CYPSC Coordinator who supported the committee throughout the process.

Over the coming five years it will be the responsibility of the CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group to promote, implement, review and report on the actions outlined in the Strategy. This is a formidable task. However, help is at hand, and we plan to utilise existing structures such as the Parenting Support Champions, the Parenting Hub Sligo Leitrim West Cavan, the CFSN areas members and the wider membership of CYPSC in collaboration with parents in Leitrim and Sligo to undertake this work.

We are confident that by 2026 a greater number of parents will feel more support, more confident and more in tune with their children and young people as a direct result of the actions of this Strategy. The creation of this Strategy is just the beginning of this work.

I look forward very much to being a part of that.

***Elizabeth King***

Chairperson CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group

# Sligo Leitrim Parenting Support Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 Introduction

Our Parenting Support Plan 2022 - 2026 traces its origins to the **CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group** which identified the need to formulate a specific Parenting Support Strategy for Sligo and Leitrim. To progress the development of parenting strategy a Parenting Support Sub Group comprising members who have been involved in initiatives centred on supporting parents at all levels across the two counties.

In setting out our strategic focus for the coming years, the **CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group** undertook a searching analysis of its previous activities and initiatives, against a backdrop of significant national policy and practice development and changes.

## Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC)

Established in 2014, CYPSC is a partnership of a range of statutory and community/voluntary agencies working together:

**“to secure better outcomes for children and young people through more effective co-operation and collaboration by existing services and through interventions at local level”.**

CYPSC and its various working groups collaborate on delivering the Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Plan 2020 – 2022.

You can view the CYPSC Plan at <https://www.cypsc.ie/your-county-cypsc/sligo-leitrim>.

Our strategy therefore reflects that policy and practice operating environment, including:

- The establishment of Sligo Leitrim **Children and Young People's Services Committee** and its subsequent Action Plans.
- **Better Outcomes and Brighter Futures**, the National Policy Framework for Children and Families 2014 - 2020.
- **Investing in Families**, Supporting Parents to Improve Outcomes for Children
- **50 Key Messages** to accompany Investing in Families, Supporting Parents to Improve Outcomes for Children (Tusla 2013).
- **Healthy Ireland 2015 – 2025**, the national framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland and the local **CHO1 Health and Wellbeing Plan**.
- The **First 5**, a whole-of-Government strategy to improve the lives of babies, young children and their families. It is a ten-year plan to help make sure all children have positive early experiences and get a great start in life.
- Establishment of **MyChild.ie** website for parents containing information and advice on pregnancy and the first 3 years of your child's life.

# Our Consultation: What Parents and Services Told Us

A key motivation for the development of a parenting support strategy was to establish how best support services can **communicate, co-ordinate and improve supports** to parents and families in Sligo and Leitrim. As a result, our plan is based on extensive consultation with parents and services to deliver **collaborative actions and information exchange** that seeks to enhance local parenting supports and services as well as diminish any duplication.

Our consultation sought to identify the needs of parents and families and support organisations and how a plan for Sligo and Leitrim could meaningfully respond to parenting supports needs. With 334 parents, 31 organisations and 14 young people participating in the consultation process clear directions were identified to address the needs of parents and organisation across the two counties. *(A report of our consultation outcomes can be viewed at: <https://www.cypsc.ie/your-county-cypsc/sligo-leitrim>).*

## Some of what the consultation told includes:

There is a range of parenting support organisations in Counties Sligo and Leitrim, either with a specific focus of delivering parenting supports or part of a menu of support options. However, the consultation identified that:

*“There seems to be several different organisations... (but I’m) not sure exactly which group offers what support” (Parent).*

Parents felt strongly that collective and co-ordinated efforts need to be made by service providers to energetically **advertise and communicate programmes and supports available** to reach as many parents as possible.



Support services also pointed to the need for greater co-ordination of parenting supports to ensure that duplication or confusion does not occur. This pointed to a need to develop **a space that explicitly states the parenting supports that are available to parents.**

Therefore, a key action in our plan is a greater enhancement of our **parent hub** information website



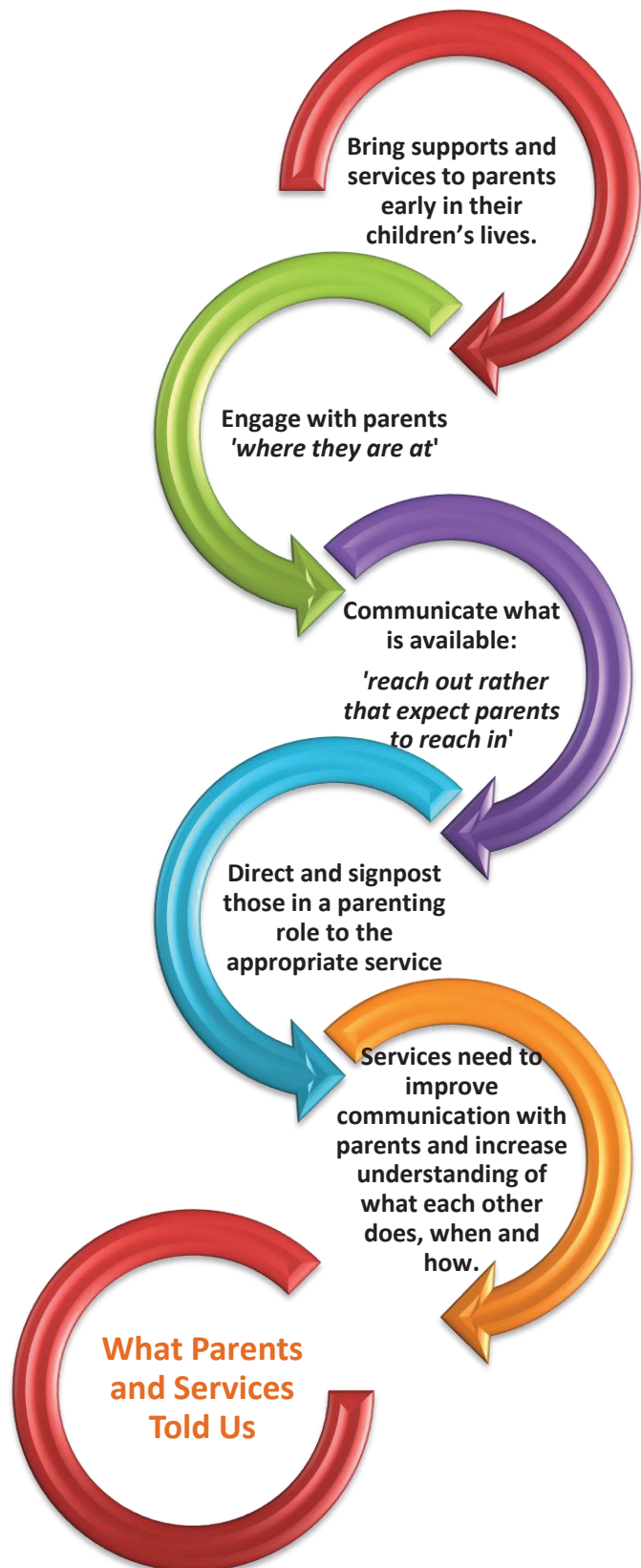
The **pressure on parents to be 'perfect'** was most evident amongst the consultation participants and a high incidence of reticence in seeking support, advice and information is due to a perception that parenting supports are only for parents who may not be able to cope at a particular time as opposed to bolstering parents' confidence, skills, wellbeing and enjoyment of parenting:

*"It should be normal to ask for help"*  
(Parent).

The **placement of parenting supports when parents most need them** was also a key theme arising from the consultation across all groups and the need to **'normalise'** parenting supports early. Our plan seeks to focus on the significant stages and transitions in the life parenting cycle to provide support when most needed.

**Specific groups of parents** were identified as requiring particular focus our parenting support plan including fathers, Traveller / Roma and New Irish communities. The consultation outcomes told us that specific barriers exist that prevents these groups of parents from accessing and participating in parenting supports.

Specific actions in our plan will seek to encourage such groups and others to participate in parenting supports such as **enhancing the role of peer support** (e.g. increased parent to parent support groups) and **enhancing services capacity** to deliver sensitive supports.

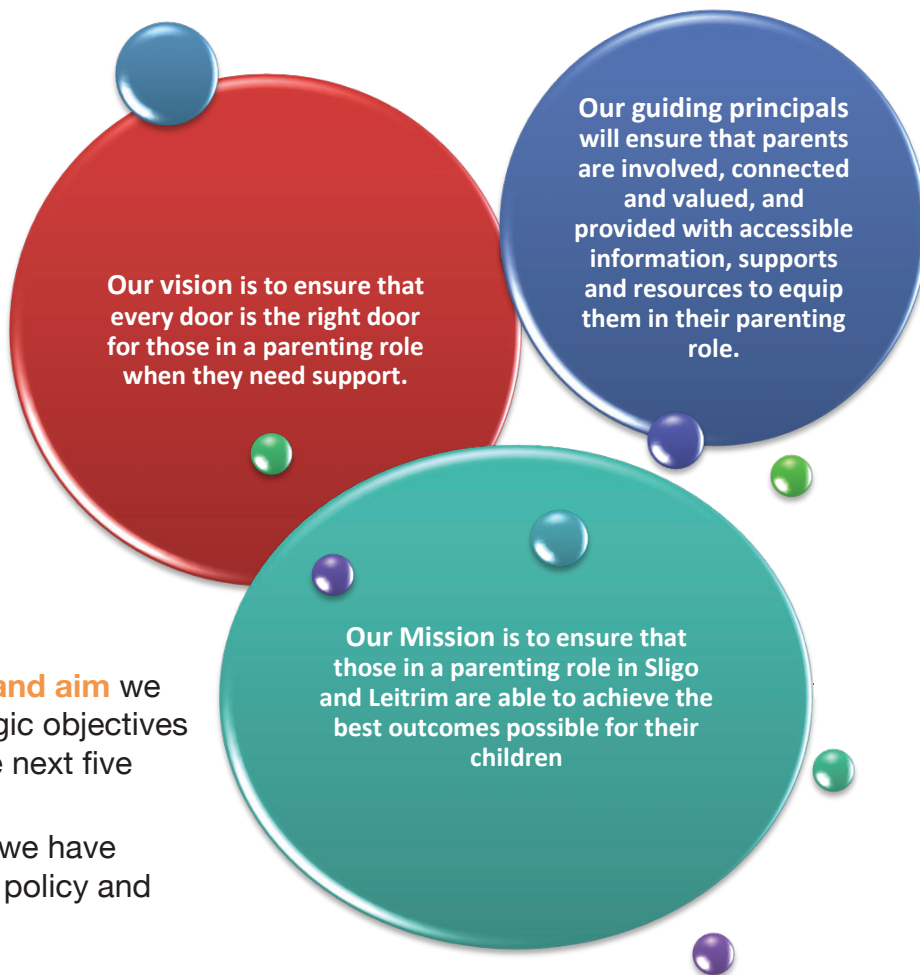


# Our Vision, Mission, Aim, Strategic Objectives and Values

At the heart of the work of the **CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group** is a set of guiding values and principles that supports and informs every aspect of our work and will continue to do so over the life of our plan. The overarching aim of our strategy **to act as an effective co-ordinating voice of parenting services** in furthering parenting support actions and the promotion of communication between parents and services.

In order to achieve **our vision and aim** we have identified four core strategic objectives which we will focus on over the next five years.

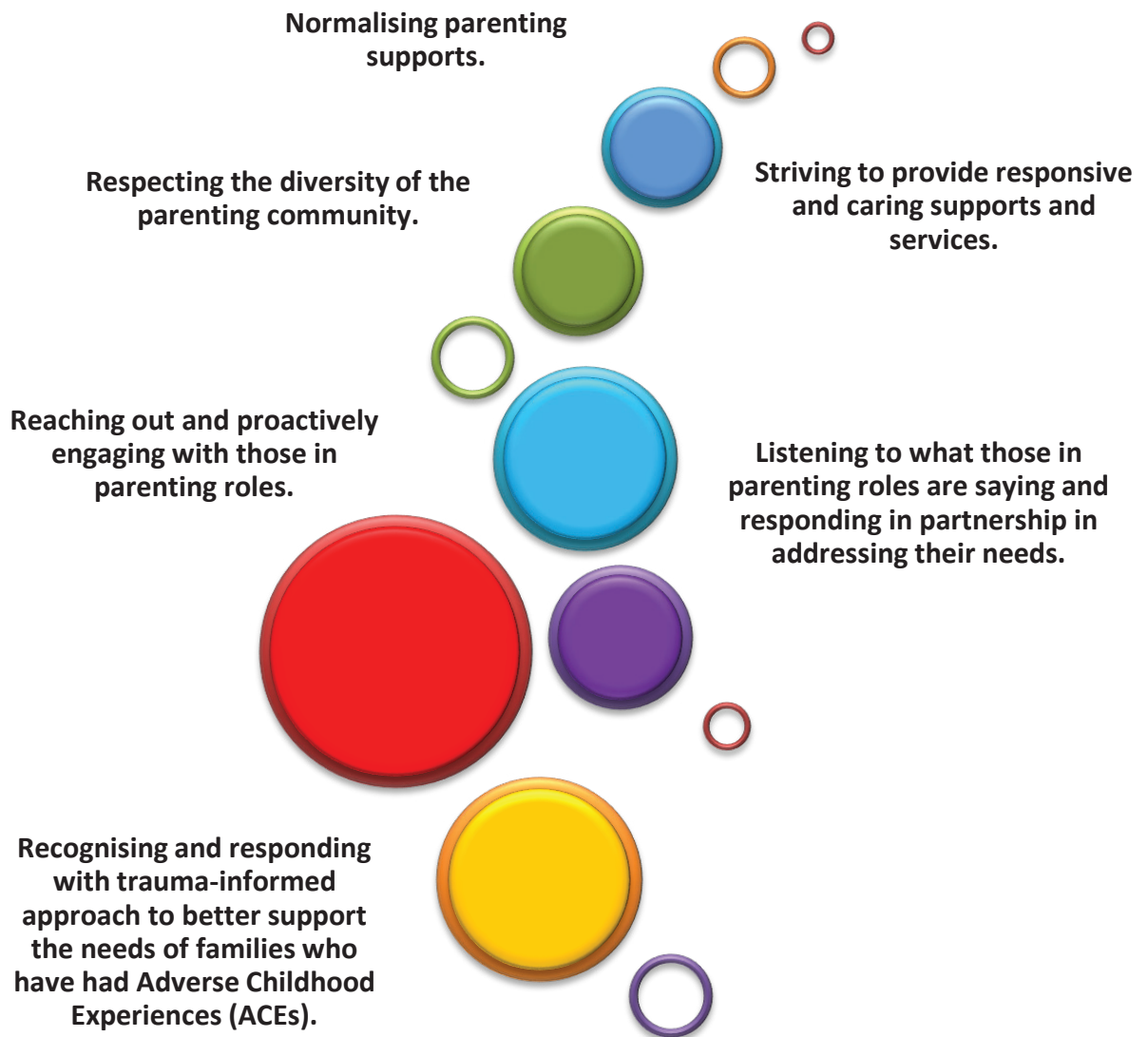
In identifying these objectives, we have taken account of the operating policy and practice context.



Sligo Leitrim Parenting Support Strategic Objectives 2022 - 2026 are:

- To **communicate** with and inform parents of the parenting supports that is available to them.
- To encourage **co-operation** with and between parents, services and communities in Sligo and Leitrim.
- To continue to **develop and expand supports** to ensure parents are empowered in their parenting role.
- To **foster best practice** in the area of parenting support and the promotion of good supports and service provision across Sligo and Leitrim.

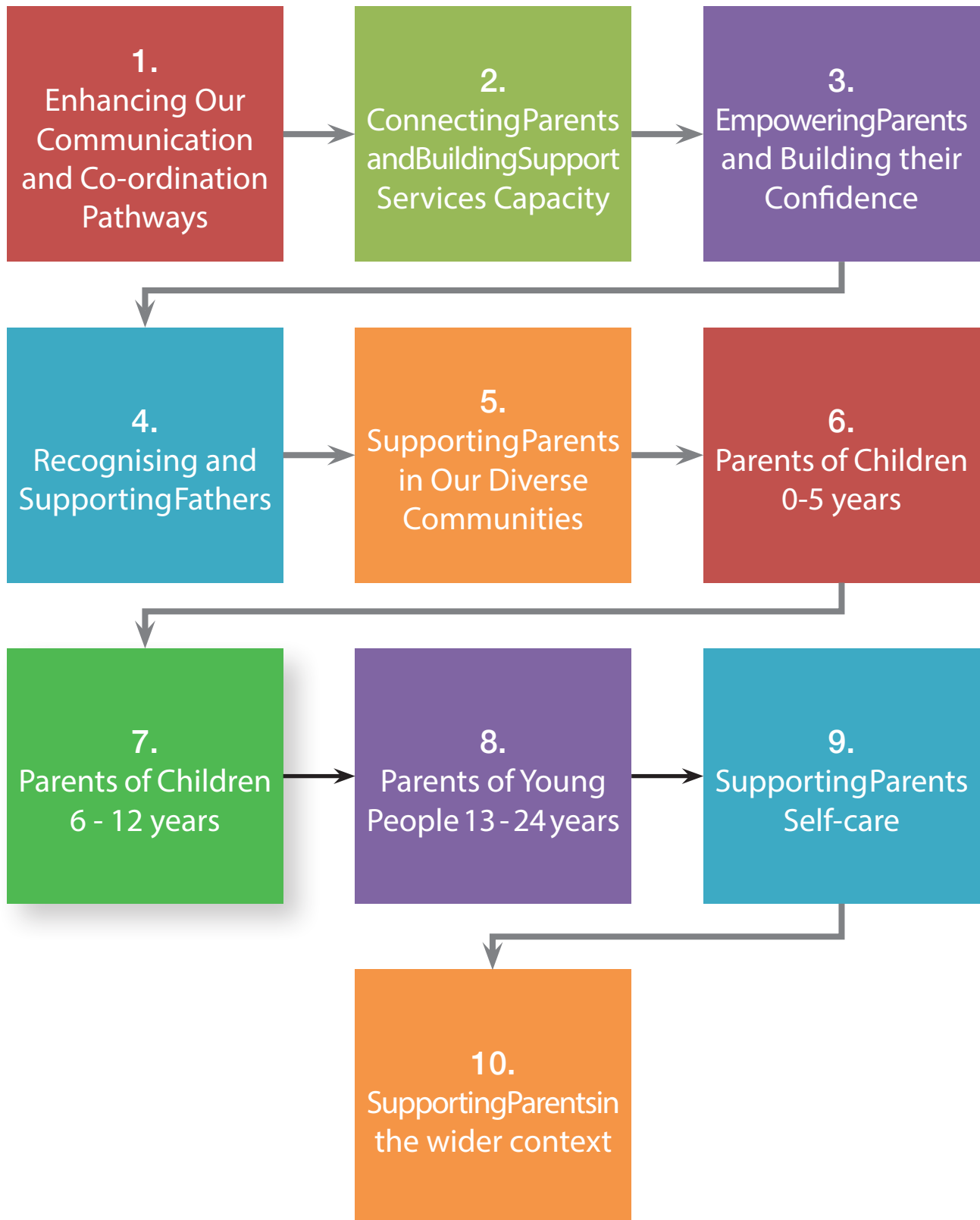
We will work with and support those in parenting roles while demonstrating **our values** of:



**Our intended outcomes** are to have a direct impact on parents, families, organisations and communities in Counties Sligo and Leitrim through effective communication, information sharing and responses by parenting support services across the two counties.

To this end the following section outlines our strategic focus areas and action plan to achieve our vision, aim and these outcomes.

# Sligo Leitrim Strategic Focus Areas and Action Plan 2022 – 2026



## Strategic Focus 1: Enhancing Our Communication and Co-ordination Pathways

**Expected Outcomes:** Our plan seeks to ensure that parenting supports are **available and responsive** to individual parents' circumstances.

To achieve this, actions will support the **enhancement of communication** with parents and with/between services. Outcomes will strive to ensure parents and service providers will know the **pathways to support** and there will be enhanced connections between parents and the relevant services and supports. For parenting support services, outcomes will include improved connectivity and **co-ordination** between services.

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Enhanced Communication with Parents</b>				
1.1 Build information and signposting capacity of those who parents (i) meet every day <sup>1</sup> , and (ii) in voluntary and community roles <sup>2</sup> who are pivotal to directing parents to support services.	Host an annual information session for identified organisations and services.	2022 - 2026	<p><b>Lead:</b> Parent Hub Co-ordinator CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group.</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Parent Support Champions HSE Tusla Other statutory organisations Community and Voluntary organisations</p>	Number of organisations and % of staff participating. (KPI)
Enhance the role of the Sligo Leitrim Parent Hub.	Review the role of Parent Hub Co-ordinator in the context of the increased role and responsibility in the roll out of the Sligo Leitrim Parenting Support Strategy.	2022		Additional Parent Hub resources available to parents and services.
1.3. Increase social media presence on a range of platforms.	Broaden the range of social media platforms.	On-going		Increased presence on social media platforms.
1.4 Ensure information is available in an easily accessible format and available in different languages.	Communicate with all stakeholders in plain and accessible language.	On-going		Review each publication/communication for accessibility of format and languages.

1 e.g. Community Nursing Services, General Practitioners, schools, crèche personnel etc.

2 e.g. Sports Development Officers, dramatic societies, Scouting Ireland etc.

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Parenting Support Services Co-ordination</b>				
1.5 Seek to enhance communication bridges between services in order to add value to existing and established co-operation and networks.	<p>Host a parenting support information exchange session for services.</p> <p>Present and exchange information.</p>	March 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026 October 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026	<p><b>Lead(s):</b> Parent Hub Co-ordinator Parent Support Champions CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group.</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> HSE Tusla Other statutory organisations Community and Voluntary organisations.</p>	Number and type of services participating. (KPI)
1.6 Support connectivity between services and staff to communicate and signpost to each other.	Develop a series of short video clips on every service and include in a library of resources.	2022		Number and type of organisations participating in video development. (KPI)
	Create and promote Sligo Leitrim Parent Hub website.	On-going		Parent Hub Website established. Number of parents accessing website. (KPI)
	Enable parenting support services to contribute to Sligo Leitrim Directory of Services.	2023		Number of Parenting Support services included in Directory of Services.

## Strategic Focus 2: Connecting Parents and Building Support Services Capacity

**Expected Outcomes:** Parents can experience times when they are **unsure what to do** and want **supports are readily available to them** when they most need it. Peer support can provide relevant information, advice, and support at this time. Our plan strives to ensure that those in a parenting role **feel supported** through enhanced **peer supports and networks**. A further outcome will seek to improve support services **capacity** to address the needs of parents who are experiencing challenges and stress and incorporate an increased focus on **valuing parents input** into how services can best meet their needs.

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Increased Peer Supports for Parents</b>				
2.1 Increase peer to peer support structures to enhance connections between parents.	Increase provision of group-based peer supports appropriate to age.	2022 - 2026	<b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group  <b>Partners:</b> Family Resources Centres (FRCs) Community and Voluntary organisations	Number of parent support groups maintained and established per annum. (KPI)
2.2 Pilot a befriending support service for parents.	Explore and document existing examples of befriending services/supports.  Establish a befriending support service initiative.	Completion of pilot by December 2026		Number of parents receiving support. (KPI) Impact Evaluation (Report)
<b>Enhanced Trauma-Informed Practice</b>				
2.3 Support parenting services personnel to recognise and respond with a trauma-informed approach to better support the needs of families who have had and are currently experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).	Provide training to parenting support management and staff in responding to families with best practice in trauma-informed care and approaches.	2022 - 2023	<b>Lead:</b> Mace Project <b>Partners:</b> CYPSC TUSLA HSE FRCs Community and Voluntary organisations Other statutory organisations	Number of training sessions delivered. (KPI) Number and type of services participating. (KPI) 100 personnel trained. (KPI)

# 2

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Increasing Parents Involvement and Engagement</b>				
2.4 Increase parent's involvement in a consistent, organised and meaningful way in the consultation, planning, implementation and evaluation of activities.	Encourage each parenting support service to increase the involvement and input of those in a parenting role in all relevant activities.	2023	<b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group  <b>Partners:</b> TUSLA HSE FRCs Community and Voluntary organisations Other statutory organisations	Review of outcomes annually. (KPI)
	Examine creative ways of engaging more vulnerable parents.	2024		Strategies identified and documented to further enable support services to engage vulnerable parents in their child's learning and social development.



### Strategic Focus 3: Empowering Parents and Building their Confidence

**Expected Outcomes:** Our Plan recognises that parents need different kinds of support at different stages in their children's lives. Striving to ensure that parents feel **empowered and confident** in meeting any challenge they experience along their parenting journey is a key priority. It is vital that **information** on the range of supports and services is available to parents and their children who are going through challenging times, and especially those families who are **living with a disability**. Services too require capacity building in negotiating the evolving changes within disability services. Our actions will seek to increase services capacity to signpost parents to **relevant pathways especially towards existing and evolving disability supports**.

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Empowering Parents through Information Provision</b>				
3.1 Increase opportunity for parents of children/ young people living with a disability to share supports, concerns, and experiences.	Map local peer support groups.	2022 - 2023	<p><b>Leads:</b> Parent Hub Co-ordinator CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> HSE Disability Support Services Community and Voluntary organisations</p>	Number of peer led and support groups identified. (KPI) Presentation of specific information on Parent Hub website.
3.2 Increase accessible information to parents of children/young people living with a disability.	Work with disability support services to provide better and accessible information to parents.	2022 - 2026	<p><b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Parent Hub Co-ordinator HSE Disability Support Services</p>	Increased information available to parents. Survey of parents in 2023 and 2025.
3.3 Increase services and parents' awareness of the reconfiguration of all children's disability services and the integrated access pathway with Primary Care.	<p>Promote information on integrated pathway to services.</p> <p>Document clear signposts to and through the appropriate services for parents.</p>	2022 - 2023	<p><b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group</p> <p><b>Partner:</b> HSE Disability Services</p>	Information provided in accessible and clear format. Signpost document developed. (KPI)
<b>Integrated Access Pathways</b>				
	Ensure dissemination of information on parent hub website.	2023	<p><b>Lead:</b> Parent Hub Co-ordinator</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group HSE Disability Services FRCs Community and Voluntary Organisations</p>	Information presented on Parent Hub Website.

# 4

## Strategic Focus 4: Recognising and Supporting Fathers

**Expected Outcomes:** Our consultation suggests that, despite some progress, fathers still have a low level of participation in parenting supports and that **services** should seek to be more **proactive in their efforts to engage fathers**. The strategy will strive to ensure that **father's voices are listened to, heard, and supported** and that father's **equal responsibilities and role in parenting are acknowledged**. Outcomes arising from our actions will endeavour to increase awareness among healthcare professionals of fathers' support needs from the earliest stage of parenting and seek to increase their inclusion in parenting programmes/supports.

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Increasing Fathers Equality</b>				
4.1 Encourage strategies and practices that result in father's greater equality in their parenting role.	Engage a Development Worker for Fathers to increase the recognition of their role in parenting.	2022 - 2026	<b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group  <b>Partners:</b> Tusla HSE Healthy Ireland Healthy Communities	Development Worker engaged. Number and type of information resources targeted specially at fathers. (KPI) Document learning arising from innovations. Number of group supports established. (KPI) End of initiative evaluation.
	Identify the specific parenting support needs of fathers.			
	Encourage fathers to participate and engage in parenting programmes.			
	Parenting support services to 'Dad' proof services to encourage father's participation.			
	Engage fathers in a manner that encourages their involvement in activities.			
	Pilot tailored group supports for fathers.			
<b>Increasing Fathers Equality</b>				
4.2 Seek an enhanced focus in midwifery education and training and community support services of fathers parenting role.	Raise awareness of fathers parenting role with Sligo University Hospital (SUH) and community healthcare professionals.	2023 - 2024	<b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group Development Worker <b>Partners:</b> SHU Maternity Services Community Nursing Service GPs	Type and level of information provided to maternity support services. (KPI) Survey of Fathers post awareness / information raising process. Survey of services at start and end of initiative.

### Strategic Focus 5: Supporting Parents in Our Diverse Communities

**Expected Outcomes:** Our plan will enable an **inclusive intercultural approach** that respects our diverse communities and has positive regard for their cultures. Outcomes arising from our actions will strive to ensure that each parent and practitioner knows exactly what services are available to support parents from our ethnic minority and culturally diverse communities. In addition, arising from our plan services will endeavour to be more reflective of, and accessible to our diverse families and communities. A central focus of our plan is to encourage **service providers to resource cultural diversity training for staff** to increase awareness of the evolving parenting needs of our ethnic minority and culturally diverse communities.

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Parenting Support Programmes</b>				
5.1 Seek to establish specific supports to ensure that ethnic minority groups and culturally diverse communities participate in parenting support programmes.	Deliver parenting programmes that are culturally sensitive towards the needs of the Traveller/Roma and new communities.	2022 - 2024	<p><b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Sligo Traveller Support Group Migrant Support Groups IPAS FRCs Tusla Mace Project</p>	Review existing and developing programmes through a culturally sensitive lens.
	Co-deliver parenting support programmes in partnership with the Traveller/Roma and new community's representative groups.			Number of programmes co-delivered. (KPI)
	Train and mentor facilitators from ethnic minority groups to develop and deliver parenting support programmes.	2023 - 2026		Number of facilitators trained. (KPI)

# 5

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Information Provision</b>				
5.2 Services to strive to make parenting support information available and accessible to parents of ethnic and culturally diverse backgrounds.	Encourage services to have a translate button embedded on their websites.	2022 - 2023	<b>Lead:</b> Parent Hub Co-ordinator  <b>Partners:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group Sligo Traveller Support Group Migrant Support Groups IPAS FRCs Tusla HSE	Number and type of services with translate facilities on websites and associated media platforms (KPI).
	Ensure information contains imagery and language that demonstrate the value of diversity.			Number of diverse languages and imagery used in information resources. (KPI)
	Each support service will be able to signpost new communities to English classes, interpretative and translation supports.			Number of referrals complete. (KPI)
<b>Diversity Training</b>				
5.3 Encourage parenting support services to review their programmes through a diversity lens.	Encourage services to resource and avail of diversity training for service personnel.	2022	<b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group  <b>Partners:</b> All parenting support services	Number of services participating in cultural diversity training. (KPI)
<b>Befriending Support</b>				
5.4 Increase peer to peer support structures that provide connections between parents.	Pilot a Befriending Support Programme to provide a continuum of support to ethnic minority and culturally diverse families.	Completion of pilot by December 2026	<b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group  <b>Partners:</b> FRCs Sligo Traveller Support Group Migrant Support Groups IPAS	Number of participants delivering and receiving supports. (KPI)  Impact Evaluation (Report).

## Strategic Focus 6: Supporting Parents of Children 0 - 5 years

**Expected Outcomes:** Early support to parents is already a priority for local parenting support services, practice and policy in Sligo and Leitrim. Achievements in this area provide an excellent basis for **further development of supports to parents** in their early parenting journey. Outcomes arising from our actions will seek an increase in normalising the engagement of parents with services from the earliest stage of parenting. The establishment of a specific communication strategy targeting pre-natal and post birth placement of information on the existing support pathways will be instrumental to the success of this focus. Our delivery of parenting programmes will strive to support the building of **infant mental health resilience**. Coupled with this will be the increased focus on the role of **play** in boosting bonding and improving infant mental health and wellbeing. A vital component of our early support strategy will seek **increased awareness of the transition supports available** to parents of pre-school/primary school children.

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Pre - natal and Post-natal Parenting Information</b>				
6.1 Increase parenting support information and awareness amongst parents at pre / post- natal stages.	Review the information content available in a hospital maternity support packs.	2022	<b>Leads:</b> Lifestart Support Parenting Sligo County Childcare Committee Leitrim County Childcare Committee  <b>Partners:</b> Parent Hub Sligo Maternity Services (SUH) Community Nursing Service	Report of Maternity Pack Review.
	Develop and seek to include Sligo Leitrim Parent Hub and Services contact details leaflet with in a hospital maternity pack.	2023		Number of leaflets circulated. (KPI)
	Lifestart Support Parenting will work closely with Sligo Maternity Unit (SUH) to provide a. information packs and b. regular visits to ante-natal class sessions.	2022		Number of information packs circulated. (KPI) Number of visits. (KPI)
	Develop a range of promotional information items for circulation to homes containing 'Important Numbers for You and Your Baby'. <sup>3</sup>	2023		Number and type of promotional items developed and delivered. (KPI)

<sup>3</sup> e.g., Fridge magnet, key ring, smart phone app. etc.

## 6

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Supporting Breastfeeding Mothers and their Families</b>				
6.2 Increase support, information and resources to mothers who chose to breastfeed.	Research and draw on the best available evidence of 'what works' in supporting breastfeeding mothers and their families.	2022 - 2024	<b>Lead:</b> HSE <b>Partners:</b> CYPSC Active and Healthy Working Group Breastfeeding Friendly Sligo Steering Group Mace Project Lifestart FRCs Sligo Maternity Service (SUH) Community Nursing Service	Documentation of research findings on best practice.
	Assess what information and guidance is needed to support breastfeeding mothers and their families in Sligo and Leitrim.			Documentation of information and guidance assessment.
	Support the further development of a community-based support programme for breastfeeding mothers and their families.			Number and geographical spread of programmes. (KPI)
	Encourage all parenting support staff to undertake feeding and weaning transition support programmes using resources that are available e.g., HSELand modules.			Number and % of staff undertaking HSE Modules.
	Increase Midwives and community health and wellbeing practitioners awareness of trauma informed practice and the subsequent barriers to breastfeeding.			Number and % of staff participating in awareness raising initiatives / staff feedback. (KPI)

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Promoting Attachment and Play</b>				
6.3 Provide parents and services with information and knowledge regarding the positive role of play and attachment in bonding and promoting a strong parent child relationship.	Examine the existing play and attachment resources available.	On-going	<p><b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> MACE Project Lifestart Support Parenting Sligo County Childcare Committee Leitrim County Childcare Committee Tusla CFSN FRCs Parent Hub</p>	Audit of Play and Attachment Resources. (KPI)
	Enhance early year's practitioners understanding of the role of bonding and secure attachment between parents and their children through the delivery of a set of webinar programmes.	2022		<p>Number of Webinars programmes delivered. (KPI)</p> <p>Number of attachment promoting programmes delivered per annum. (KPI)</p> <p>Number and % of staff participating (KPI)</p>
	Where attachment issues are identified provide attachment-based parenting support programmes e.g., Circle of Security (MACE, Lifestart Support Parenting, Tusla facilitators).	2023 - 2026		
	Promote universal play and attachment programmes (e.g. Lifestart Support Parenting).	On-going		

## 6

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
	Promote and increase the knowledge of the role of play and attachment amongst parent and child groups.	2023		Number and type of inputs to parent and child groups. (KPI)
<b>Resourcing Play and Attachment</b>				
6.4 Promote the free play opportunities / outdoor play and resources.	Map the free play opportunities in Sligo and Leitrim and those available in libraries, on websites (e.g. <i>Let's Play Ireland, First Five etc.</i> ).	2023 - 2026	<b>Lead(s):</b> CYPSC Active and Healthy Working Group Parent Hub Co-ordinator  <b>Partners:</b> Sligo CCC Leitrim CCC Sligo County Council Leitrim County Council LCDC Sligo PPNs Leitrim PPNs Development Companies Library service	Annual survey of free play resources. (KPI) Information promoted on Parent Hub Website.
	Promote 'how to play' guidelines.	2022		Information promoted on Parent Hub Website.
<b>Increasing Participation in Transition Programmes</b>				
6.5 Increase parent's awareness and participation in transition programmes. e.g. <i>Home to early years services / Early years services to primary.</i>	Map existing programmes in relation to transition to primary school drawing on best available evidence of effective programmes <sup>4</sup> .  Ensure coordination of national transition programmes including Mo Scéal (NCCA) and monitor its roll out.	2022 - 2026	<b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group <b>Partners:</b> Sligo CCC Leitrim CCC Pre-schools Primary Schools Sligo and Carrick Education Centres.	Transition programmes identified and documented.  Local experience of Mo Scéal Programme documented.

<sup>4</sup> Transition from Preschool to Primary School: Research Report 19 (O'Kane, 2016) and Transition from Preschool to Primary School: Audit of Transfer Documentation in Ireland (O'Kane and Murphy, 2016b)



Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Supporting Infant Mental Health Resilience</b>				
6.6 Support the building of infant mental health resilience.	Deliver parent support programme aimed at building positive mental health in 0-3 year olds.	2022 - 2023	<b>Leads:</b> Lifestart Support Parenting Sligo County Childcare Committee Leitrim County Childcare Committee	Number and geographical spread of Positive Mental Health Programmes delivered. (KPI)
<b>Supporting Future Parents</b>				
6.7 Establish awareness of parenting supports and responsibilities in partnership with young people.	Explore the delivery a parenting education and awareness programme for TY students with key youth and community organisations.	Complete by end of 2026	<b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group <b>Partners:</b> Sligo and Carrick Education Centre Schools Youth organisations Community and Voluntary Organisations Comhairle na nÓg.	Number of TY programmes developed and delivered. (KPI)

# 7

## Strategic Focus 7: Parents of Children 6 – 12 years

**Expected Outcomes:** Our consultation identified parents’ desire to be **prepared for ‘the next stage’** on the parenting journey. Parenting support programmes have long been a cornerstone of the support offered to parents in Sligo and Leitrim and our plan includes a clear focus on what parents can expect next in the parenting journey. Outcomes arising from our actions will seek to increase **communication and information resources** available to parents of children making their transition to second level education, and increasing parents’ opportunities to participate in transition programmes. These transition programmes will provide accessible information and signposting and will strive to be instrumental in supporting parents and children through this significant life stage. Social media has become a valued part of parents and children’s day to day lives but it can also bring challenges. Our plan endeavours to explore the best ways possible to support parents and their families in navigating **social media** safely and with confidence.

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Provision of Parenting Programmes</b>				
7.1 Continue the delivery of parenting support programmes to those in a parenting role.	Deliver group-based programmes to support parents. (e.g., <i>Triple-P, Parents Plus, Circle of Security</i> etc.).	2022 - 2026	<b>Leads:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group Parent Hub Co-ordinator MACE  <b>Partners:</b> All services delivering parenting programmes	Number and type of parenting support programmes delivered per annum. (KPI) Number of parents participating per annum. (KPI)
<b>Increasing Parents Information on Navigating Social Media</b>				
7.2 Improve the guidance information available to parents in supporting their children’s access and use of social media.	Explore best practice in delivering an integrated approach to promoting and providing information and awareness raising to parents on navigating social media.	2023	<b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group  <b>Partners:</b> Parent Hub Co-ordinator Parent Support Champions	Documentation of best practice. Guidance documented and circulated.
<b>Increasing Participation in Transition to Second Level Programmes</b>				
7.3 Increase parent’s awareness and participation in transition programmes.	Map existing programmes in relation to transition from primary to second level school drawing on best available evidence of effective programmes.	2022 - 2026	<b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group  <b>Partners:</b> Parent Hub Co-ordinator Primary Schools Second level schools Sligo and Carrick Education Centres	Transition programmes identified and documented.

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
	Agree a co-ordinated approach in the delivery of transition programmes for parents.	2022 - 2023		Document co-ordinated approach in the delivery of transition programmes.
	Promote the involvement of parents in transition programmes from primary to second level with a focus on orientation and <i>'this is what to expect'</i> .			Number of parents participating and geographical spread in transition programmes. (KPI)
	Promote the delivery of transition programmes in early fifth class.			Number of parents participating transition programmes at fifth class stage. (KPI)



## Strategic Focus 8: Parents of Young People 13 – 24 years

**Expected Outcomes:** Creating a supportive environment for the parents of young people is acknowledged as an important stage for receipt of information, guidance and supports. Our consultation with parents told us specific challenges that parents and young people face including **heighten stress and the need for families themselves ‘to get on with one another’**. In addition, the challenges of parenting young adults who may not be in employment education or training (NEETS) or who are vulnerable due to social pressures or negative life experiences raise particular pressures for parents and their families. Parents also voiced their concern that Covid-19 has increased levels of anxiety and stress experienced and expressed by their young people. Outcomes arising from our actions will seek to increase parents’ capacity to parent young people while supporting their resilience and capacity to act independently. Our actions will seek to enable parents to support their young people in **building positive and healthy sexual wellbeing and relationships** and to prepare them for possible future parenthood. Outcomes will seek to make information more clearly and readily available to parents in bolstering their young people **awareness and exploration of their sexuality** including transitioning gender identity.

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Provision of Parenting Programmes</b>				
8.1 Continue the delivery of parenting support programmes to those in a parenting role.	Support the improvement of family relationships through the implementation of Functional Family Therapies (FFT) or similar programmes.	2023	<p><b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Mace Project Tusla HSE FRCs CFSN Meitheal Community and Voluntary Organisations</p>	Number of FFTs introduced and delivered. (KPI)
	Ensure the continued delivery of a range of parenting support programmes (e.g. <i>Parent Plus Adolescent Programmes</i> ) and once off webinars (funding dependent).	2022 - 2026		Number and type of parenting support programmes per annum. (KPI) Number of parents participating. (KPI)

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
	Promote parenting supports with a focus on a strength based approach in building young people's resilience and capacity.			Documentation of strength based approach.
<b>Increasing Participation in Transition Programmes</b>				
8.2 Promote the availability of transition / access programmes.	Seek schools input in relation to scheduled transition programmes for inclusion on parent hub website.	On-going	<b>Lead:</b> Parent Hub Co-ordinator  <b>Partners:</b> Primary Schools Second level schools Sligo and Carrick Education Centres	Number of transition programmes presented on parent hub website / social media platforms per annum. (KPI)
	Highlight with disability services the need for information in accessing wider education, training and employment options.	2022	<b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group <b>Partners:</b> Disability Services CYPSC Economic Security and Opportunity Working Group	Number of disability services providing transition supports / information on wider education, training and employment (KPI)
<b>Building Parents Information Resources on Mentoring and NEETs</b>				
8.3 Highlight information on local initiatives to parents of young people who are not in employment, education or trainings (NEETs). Increase awareness of mentoring programmes including Cranmore Education Mentor Programme and Foróige Mentor Me.	Work with youth, education and training services to promote information on supports and programmes available to NEETs. Promote mentoring programmes available in Sligo and Leitrim among parents.	2022	<b>Lead(s):</b> CYPSC Economic Security and Opportunity Working Group Parent Hub Co-ordinator <b>Partners:</b> Youth Services Community and Voluntary Organisations Employment Support Services Education and Training Providers	Number of parents signposted to relevant supports and services. (KPI)

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Raising Awareness of Progression Pathways for Young People with ASD</b>				
8.4 Explore the development of ASD transition support programme.	<p>Promote awareness of ASD transition programme amongst parents.</p> <p>Provide information and signpost direction to parents to support young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to progress to further / higher education, training or employment.</p>	<b>2022</b>	<p><b>Lead(s):</b> CYPSC Economic Security and Opportunity Working Group Parent Hub Co-ordinator</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> HSE Autism Services MSLETB Sligo County Council PEACE programme Youth Services Disability Services</p>	Number of parents signposted to information and resources. (KPI)
<b>Sexuality, Relationships, Sexual Health and Gender Identity</b>				
8.5 Provide a co-ordinated and uniform pathway to ensure ease of access to information for parents on sexuality, relationships, sexual health, LGBTIQ+ supports and gender identity explorations and transitions.	Determine resources / information on sexual health and wellbeing are available.	2022 - 2023	<p><b>Lead:</b> Learning and Development Working Group</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Parent Hub FRCs Smiley Foróige HSE Health Promotion and Improvement</p>	Parent Hub website Information updated annually.
	Work with local partners to establish agreed pathways and signposting to information.	2022		Documented pathways to supports
	Seek the development of Sexual Health and Well-being Plan as a key action in the CYPSC Plan 2023 – 2025.	2023		Sligo Leitrim Sexual Health and Wellbeing Plan for Young People.

### Strategic Focus 9: Supporting Parents Self-Care

**Expected Outcomes:** In our consultation process parents and young people told us that our plan needs to include actions to support parents to look after their own **well-being**. Outcomes arising from our actions will seek to ensure that parents have access to a range of well-being supports thereby enhancing their own parenting skills and impacting positively on their children's wellbeing.

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Promotion of Parenting Own Wellbeing</b>				
9.1 In conjunction with other services support the further development of wellbeing initiatives.	Encourage partner organisations to increase awareness and promote wellbeing programmes to parents and families.	2022 - 2026	<p><b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Parent Hub Co-ordinator HSE Tusla Healthy Ireland Community and Voluntary Organisations</p>	Number of well-being programmes delivered per annum. (KPI)
<b>Increasing Participation in Activity Programmes</b>				
9.2 Promote the range of well-being initiatives available to parents.	Promote and signpost sports partnership activity programmes as part of increasing wellbeing amongst parents.	2022 - 2026	<p><b>Lead:</b> Parent Hub Co-ordinator</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Sligo Sport Partnership Leitrim Sports Partnership Local Development Companies FRCs Healthy Ireland</p>	Number of initiatives per annum. (KPI)
<b>Promote Wellbeing as a Core Element of Parenting Supports</b>				
9.3 Maintain a parent centred focus in Healthy Ireland initiatives.	Link with Healthy Ireland and Healthy Communities initiatives to promote wellbeing as a core part of parenting supports to address anxiety, stress and the need for self-care.	2022 - 2024	<p><b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group</p> <p><b>Partners:</b> Healthy Ireland</p>	Number of parent wellbeing focused initiatives funded and delivered. (KPI)

# 10

## Strategic Focus 10: Supporting Parents in the Wider Context

**Expected Outcomes:** Our plan recognises that parenting can be affected and interrupted by the **wider social, economic and personal experiences of a family**. Arising from our actions we will seek an increase in awareness of the **interconnectedness of social, economic and cultural challenges** and understanding how negative life events can impact on parenting. In addition, practical outcomes will strive to ensure that readily available social, economic and information supports are signposted by services to parents in partnership with relevant agencies.

Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Supporting Parents in Caring for Others</b>				
10.1 Supporting parents who are caring for others to access relevant information, supports and resources.	Signpost parents who are caring for their children and their own parents / relatives to support organisations.	2022	<b>Lead:</b> Parent Hub Co-ordinator <b>Partners:</b> CFSNs CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group HSE Family Carers Support Youth Support Organisations Sligo County Council Leitrim County Council Age Friendly Programme	Number of and type of relevant signposts on Parent Hub website. (KPI)
	Highlight supports available to young carers.	2021 - 2026		Number and type of supports to young carers. (KPI)
<b>Supporting Those Parenting Alone</b>				
10.2 Increasing tailored supports to meet the needs of those parenting alone.	Signpost parents to specialist advice and information at a local and national level.  Signpost to the FRCs and other organisations to ensure access to a wide range of universal supports and resources.	2022 - 2026	<b>Lead:</b> Parent Hub Co-ordinator <b>Partners:</b> FRCs Statutory Organisations Community and Voluntary Organisations	Number of and type of relevant signposts on Parent Hub website. (KPI)



Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
<b>Supporting Those Parenting while Separated</b>				
10.3 Ensuring information on services and supports are available to parents.	Using the Sligo Leitrim Directory of Services (and additional local information as they arise) document supports that are available to parents.  Signpost to the FRCs and other services to ensure access to a wide range of universal supports and resources.	On-going	<b>Lead:</b> Parent Hub Co-ordinator  <b>Partners:</b> FRCs Statutory Organisations Community and Voluntary Organisations	Number and type of resources and information signposted on Parent Hub website. (KPI)
10.4 Provide support to parents who are separated from their children.  <i>(Due to a myriad of reasons such as divorce, separation, imprisonment, domestic abuse, homelessness, non-resident fathers, family separation, contact problems).</i>	Provide information, education and signposting for parents facing contact challenges after separation.	2024	<b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group Development Worker for Fathers <b>Partners:</b> FRCs CFSN Meitheal Probation Services Asylum /Refugee Support Services Simon Community DVAS Community and Voluntary Organisation One Family Treoir	Documentation of information and deficits in information available. Type of information provided. (KPI) Number and type of information signposting on Parent Hub website. (KPI)
<b>Developing Supports for Parents Emerging from Domestic Violence</b>				
10.5 Develop supports and information for parents.	Liaise with Domestic Violence Working Group in supporting parents emerging from domestic violence situations.	2022 - 2023	<b>Lead:</b> CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group  <b>Partners:</b> CYPSC Domestic Violence Working Group HSE Tusla DVAS	Number of Interventions delivered (KPI) Documentation of evidence-based domestic violence programmes for children and young people aged 0-24 years.

10

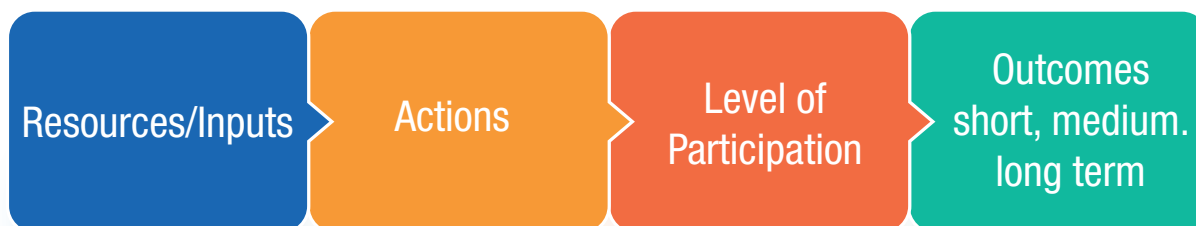
Objectives(s)	Actions	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility and Partners	Measure(s)
	Liaise with Domestic Violence Working Group on the documentation of evidence-based domestic violence programmes for children and young people aged 0-24 years who have experienced domestic violence in Ireland and internationally.	2022		

# Sligo Leitrim Parenting Support Strategy Review and Monitoring

Throughout the delivery of our Parenting Support Plan for Sligo and Leitrim the CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group will consider key questions in advance of delivery of actions and be mindful of their specific impacts on parents, services and communities. To this end, the following questions will aid our **planning** in advance of delivery of our actions:



In order to measure our performance over the period 2022 - 2026 the CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group will **review** our actions on an annual basis. We will use a simple logic model matrix to monitor and document our actions, outcomes and impacts. This review process will result in the delivery of **an annual report of outcomes**. This will include review and documentation of actions under the following matrix:



## Role of CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group:

The CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group will support and guide the work of the Parenting Support Strategy in its promotion of its mission and aims. The structure will also allow for the establishment and devising other structures as the work requires.

# Acknowledgments

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The Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) Learning and Development Working Group wishes to acknowledge Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education Training Board for administering the grant which supported this consultation project



Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Services Committee and the CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group wishes to thank Josephine Lally, Consultant, who carried out the consultation process with parents, young people and services which led to the development of the Sligo Leitrim Parenting Support Strategy 2022 – 2026.

Sligo Leitrim Children and Young People's Services Committee and the CYPSC Learning and Development Working Group wishes to thank parents, young people and services across both counties for their contribution towards the development of the Sligo Leitrim Parenting Support Strategy 2022 – 2026 which aims to communicate, coordinate and improve the delivery of parenting supports across Sligo and Leitrim.



Member Organisations of the Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC) Learning and Development Working Group and Sligo Leitrim Parenting Strategy subgroup

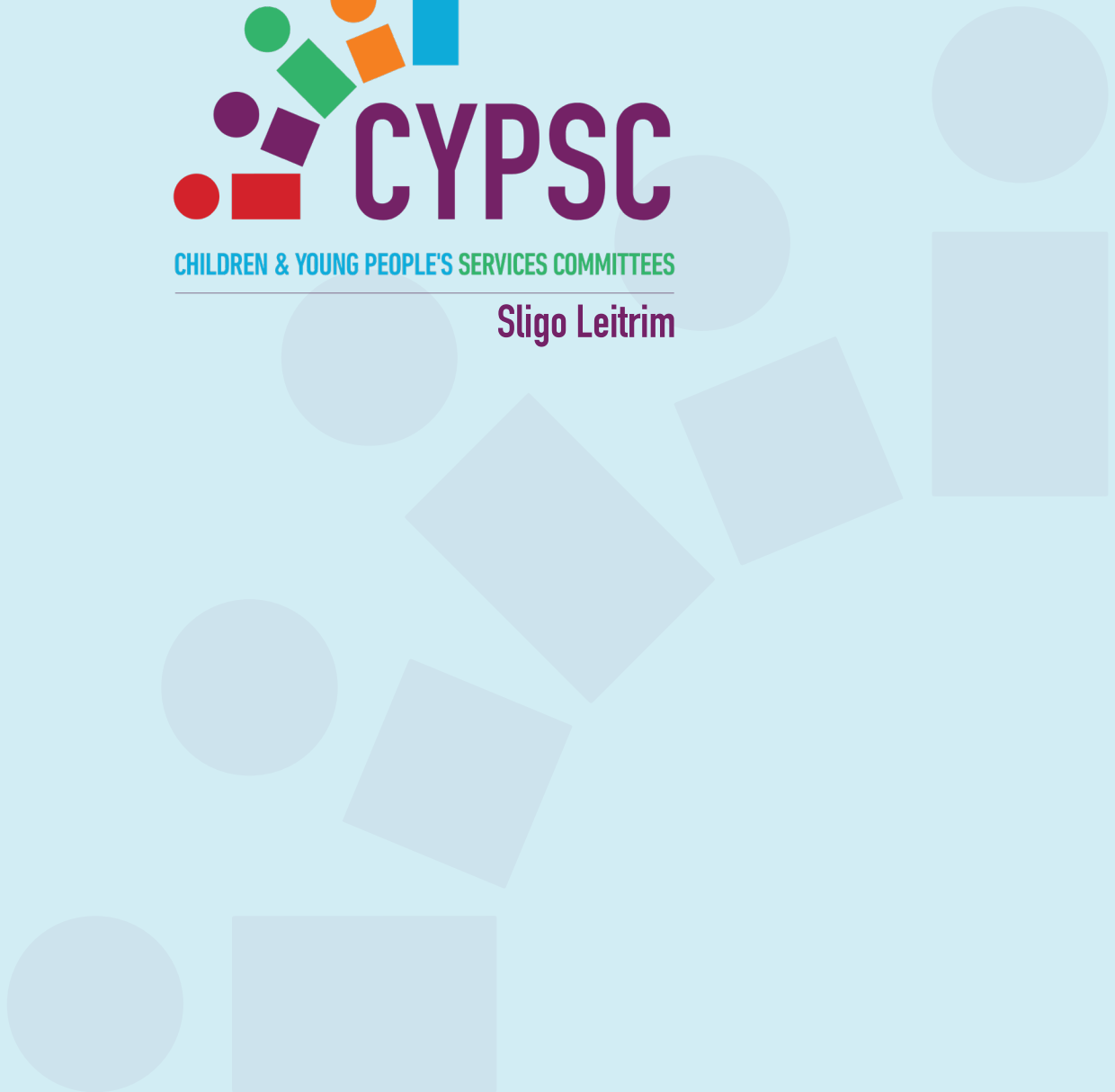






CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEES

Sligo Leitrim





Sligo Leitrim  
Parenting Support  
**Strategic Plan**  
**2022-2026**