

Waterford LEADER Partnership Clg

Annual Report 2017



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Executive Summary

Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG. (WLP) was formed in 1991 as one of the four rural-based Partnership companies under the national Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP). WLP offers economic, social and cultural services to small businesses, community groups and individuals. The Board of WLP is made up of voluntary members from community and voluntary sector, social partners, environmental interests, local government and state bodies.

Vision

Our vision is to help create Communities that are economically, socially, culturally and environmentally sustainable in which all people can reach their full potential.

Objectives

- The development of infrastructure necessary for employment and sustainable living in Rural Waterford.
- To .promote Business and Tourism through investment.
- To establish viable enterprises that utilize both the natural resources of the area and or embrace new technology that are wealth and job creating;
- To promote and source funding towards Culture/Language, Heritage, and Training that promotes local talent and new thinking to deal with contract working.
- To work contractually with Statutory and other investors to establish a variety of investment sources;

Goals

- ***To identify and compete for sources of funding which help to achieve the company objectives.***
- ***To develop a solid linkage with the Credit Union movement and other potential lenders in terms of matched finance and investment in sustainable projects.***
- ***Vibrant Villages: A programme to facilitate the growth of 15 sustainable villages within the county***

- *Engines of Growth: The development of a focused strategy for the economic development of selected areas (e.g. Blackwater Valley) where communities and local business work together on an integrated plan to create new wealth, making the rural area a more attractive place to visit or live in.*
- *Sectoral initiatives: Through Community Training, Facilitation and Scenario Planning, Set up county wide organisations /structures that are ready and willing to work quickly at community level with national programmes so that the communities have action ready strategies ready to avail of State and EU Funding opportunities as they arise.*

Contracts

WLP is contracted in the main by the Departments of State to operate and implement programmes on their behalf. We continue to receive Philanthropic Support from the Tomar Trust.

The main funders are:

- Dept. Rural and Community Development
- Dept. of Employment and Social Protection
- Dept. of Agriculture
- SOFAB
- Tomar Trust
- Waterford City & County Council

WLP operates the following programmes on contract;

- The LEADER Programme 2014 – 2020
- The Local Employment Service
- Tus
- Rural Social Scheme
- Social Farming

E.U. Programme Development W.L.P. in preparing its Vision, Objectives and Goals set as one of its principal goals the identification, competing for and sourcing of both E.U., and Philanthropic funds to underpin the company's primary objectives to action activities to sustain rural Waterford.

WLP has created the Position of E.U. Development Officer, and the Officer has become involved in a number of E.U. Applications both for the Local Councils, and also for WLP.. This officer will work on contract for Local Authorities, LDC's and indeed private organisations if the opportunity arises.

Ancillary Activities

WLP is also involved in contract work for Waterford City & County Council, and Wexford Council on the Healthy Counties Programme. WLP also supports Community Organisations

in the development of community led actions. St. Declan's Way is well on the way to be completed, as is the Villierstown looped walk.

The Company's effort to attract Philanthropic investment in Community Projects matching LEADER investment is progressing in a positive fashion.

Governance

The Board of WLP has reviewed and maintained their compliance with the Governance Code Journey. They completed this journey in March 2017, and the company is now fully compliant with the Governance Code. The Company's Annual Accounts are posted on the Website.

The Board follows good practice in terms of Board Rotation, and openness and transparency at Board and company level.

Chairman's Report



As the incoming Chairman of Waterford LEADER Partnership Clg., my focus over the coming three years is to build on the positive elements of the legacy of my predecessors with the assistance and guidance of my fellow Board Members, and the support of our Staff.

Irish Society has and continues to undergo massive change, and no more so Rural Areas with the increasing urbanisation of our population into large urban centres such as Dublin, Waterford, Cork, and Galway. Being involved in the Food Industry over many years, I accept that change is a constant and evolution is the norm, and evolving and adapting to change will be my focus over the term of my office. I intend to ensure that the services and work that WLP Clg undertake is future proofed and beneficial to all rural dwellers, with a focus on a living rural society both inside and outside the farm gate.

Our mission as WLP is to build on our expertise as champions & facilitators of Rural Development and I with our Board intend to deliver this.

Micheál Cosgrove, Chairman,

Waterford Leader Partnership C L G.

C.E.O.'s Report

2017 has been a year of consolidation, within WLP, both at Board and Staff level having adapted to the era of Commissioning, Sub Contracting and Competing actively for funding streams, while simultaneously implementing the Strategy for WLP approved by the Board that is focused on programmes that fund Rural Development Activities.

For WLP's clients, and its reason for being, 2017 has seen a focus on targeted investment in Rural Regeneration. LEADER saw the allocation of E1.9m to Rural Projects on behalf of the LCDC. Tus has assisted 200 unemployed people, and supported over 100 Community Organisations. The Local Employment Service had a placement rate of 31%. Social Farming has proven to be very successful at sampling stage. The big challenge in 2018 is to glean/gain proper contracts through the Health Providers/HSE.

The Board has taken the decision to focus on Rural Regeneration in 2018. This will be done in Partnership with the Department, WCCC, and Philanthropy. WLP Clg will target economic zones. The Board also reviewed and revised policies & procedures in order to ensure continued full compliance with the Governance Code.

The Audit Committee and the Financial Controller have guided the Company to a "Break even position" after the significant disruption of 2015/16. The focus on Strategy and Governance has led to a shift in Culture bringing the Company to a place of been very proactive, but in a focused manner. A positive open and dynamic culture is vital, as to quote the Industrial Philosopher Paul Drucker, "***Culture eats Strategy for Breakfast every time.***"

LEADER

Waterford Local Community Development Committee is the LAG for the new LEADER Programme and has engaged WLP as the Implementing Partner. Waterford City & County Council are the Financial Partner for the Programme. By the end of 2017, WLP Clg had assisted the LCDC to allocate €1.9m or over 30% of the project funds through a targeted call process. Most of the allocated monies will be paid out in 2018.

The Programme

The Local Development Strategy (LDS) which covers all of rural Co. Waterford, but excludes the area covered by the original Waterford City boundary is available to view on WLP's website.

Implementation to date

To date the LEADER Programme implementation has continued to operate smoothly, due to;

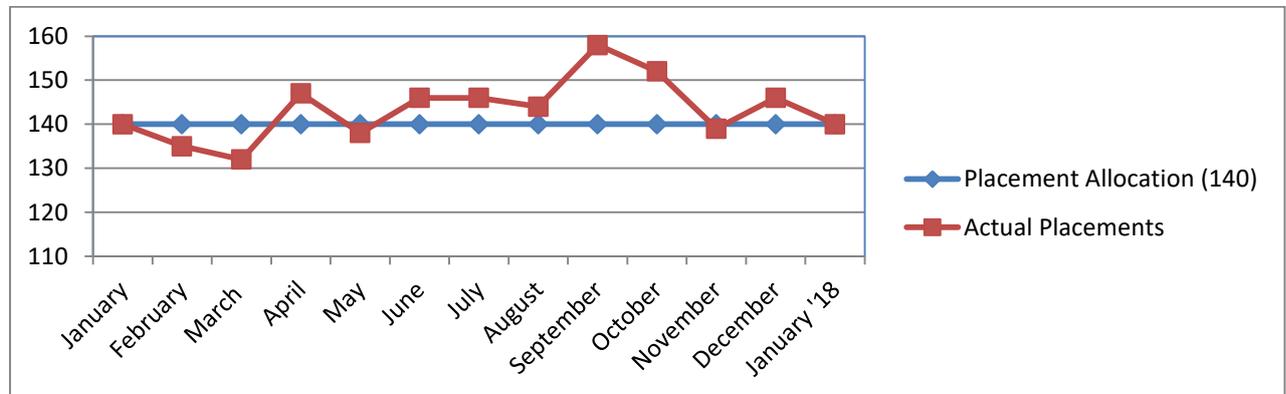
- A good working relationship between the Waterford LCDC, WC&CC, and WLP Clg.
- All parties have been careful in the steps taken to operate the programme, and promote it to the wider public in County Waterford.
- The strategic linkage between the parties is real, and hence the actions taken are based on a sound foundation.

Tus

Participant Activity 2017

Tús is operated in county Waterford on behalf of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection by Waterford LEADER Partnership (WLP) CLG. WLP currently have an allocation of 140 placements on the scheme. These are to afford those who are currently long-term unemployed the opportunity to gain suitable work experience. It also enables community organisations the opportunity to avail of skills and expertise to assist them in the delivery of their services at a local level.

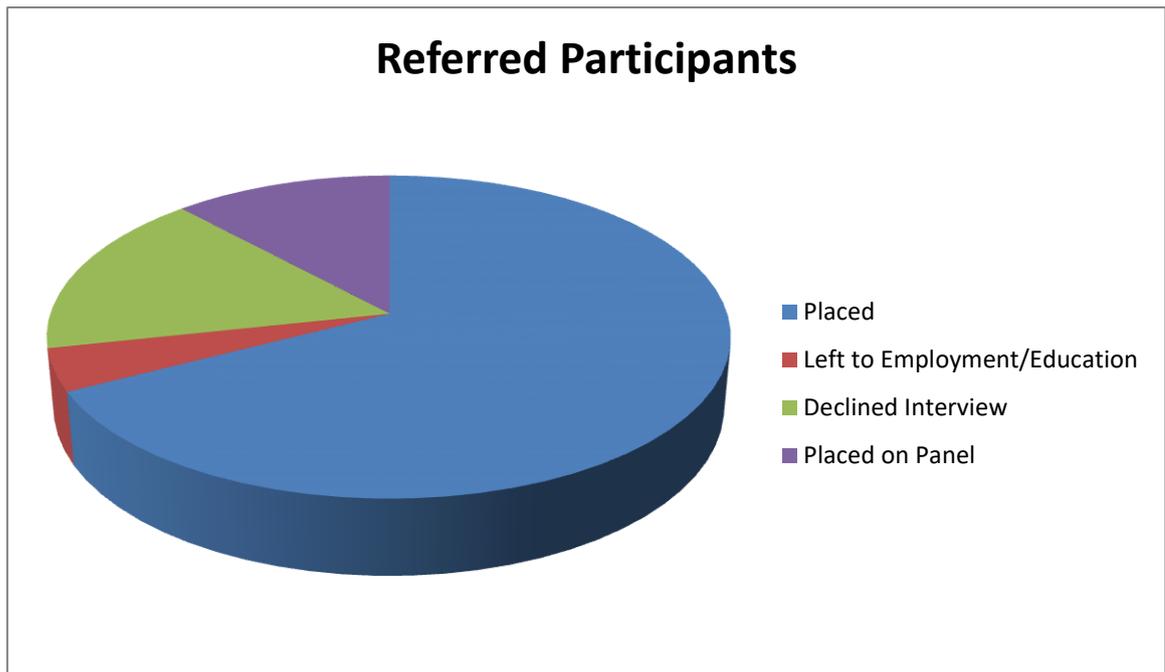
Table (Fig.1) shows WLP's monthly activity and numbers of participants placed from January to December 2017



(Fig.1- Monthly Progress 2017)

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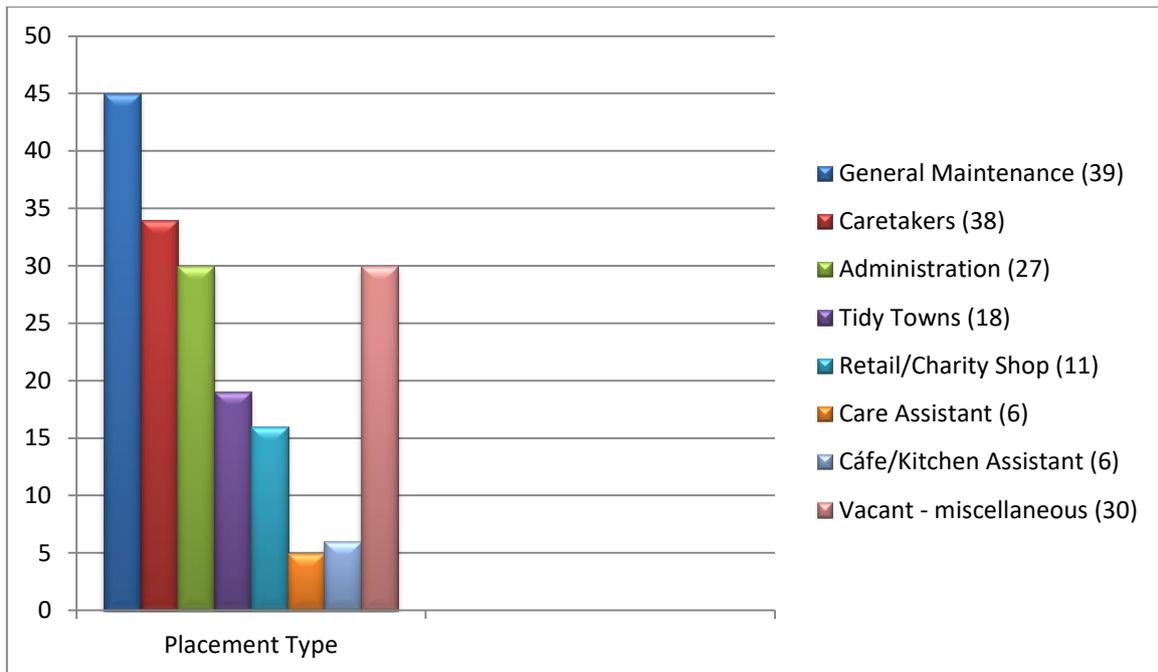
A total of 236 new clients were referred by DSP in 2017, a large number of these were afforded the opportunity to avail of positions on the scheme, along with those from the previous year's panel. The remainder were placed on the panel to fill vacancies as they will arise. Of the 236 referred, 39 (16%) declined to be interviewed for various reasons. A total of 159 contracts were issued during the year with 10 participants leaving the scheme to take up employment or to return to Education.



(Fig.2 – Participant Activity 2017)

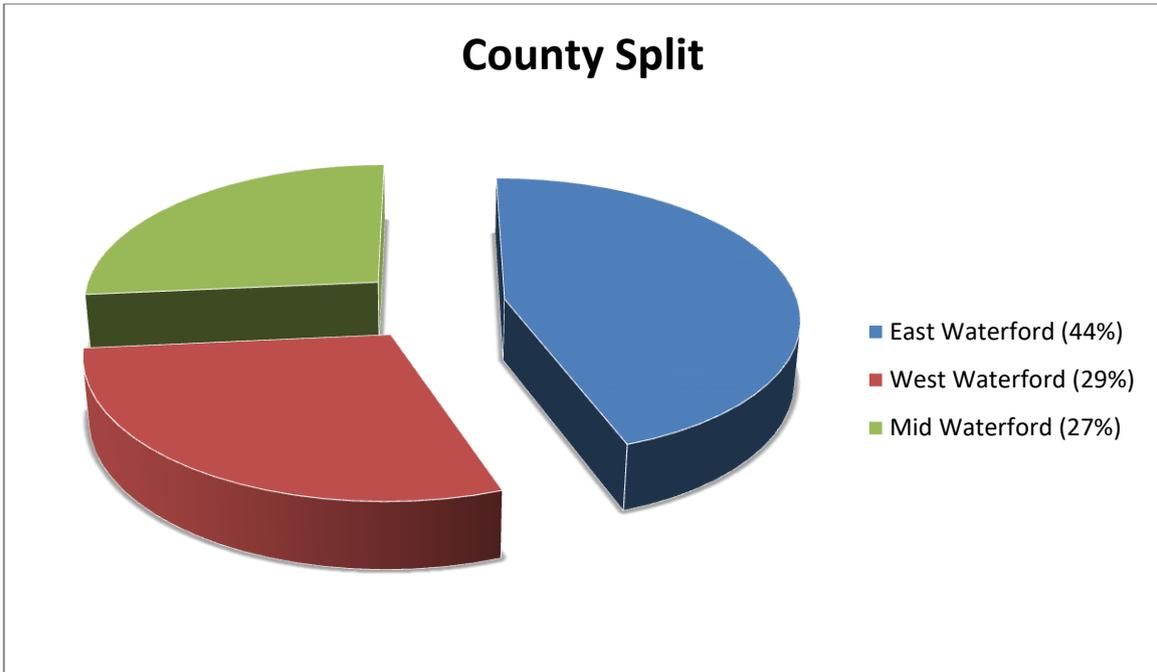
Placement Providers

WLP currently facilitates 92 Placement Providers with a further 30 vacancies which cannot be filled currently due to lack of suitable participants in their respective areas. Roles vary as can be seen in *(Fig.3)* below. All Placement Providers are supported by the programme supervisors throughout the year and advised on areas such as health & safety, work scheduling and planning. There was a total of €5,000 spent on the purchase of materials and equipment for Placement Providers throughout the year.

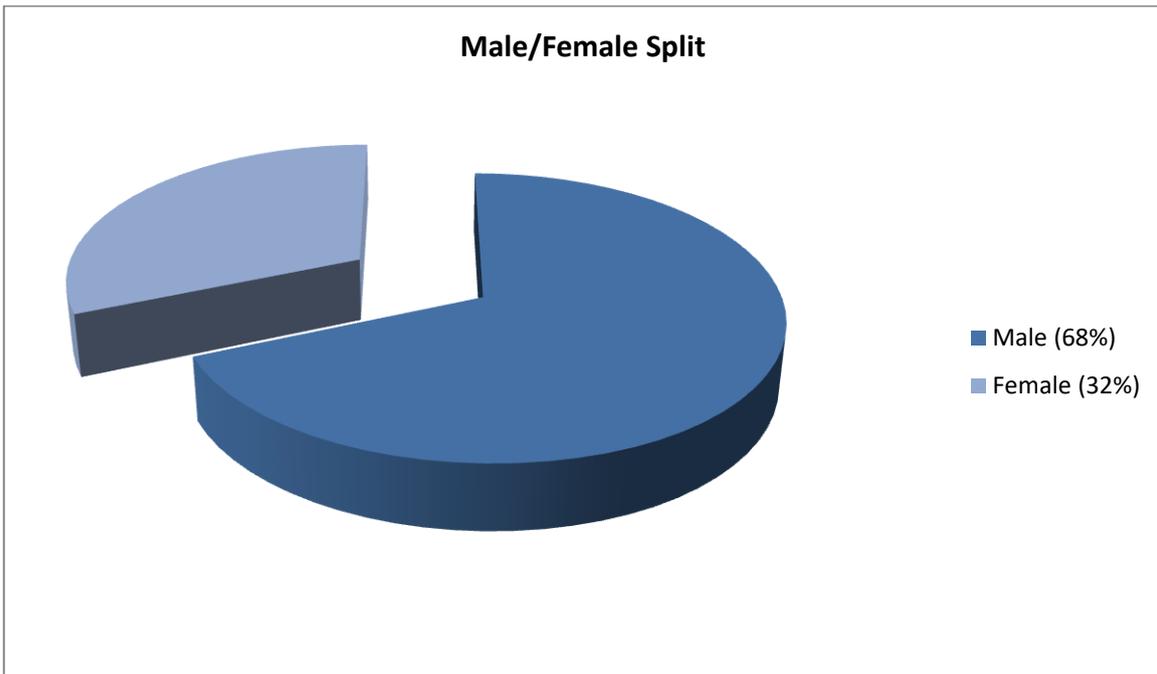


(Fig.3 – Placement Types)

Tús is delivered throughout the county and (Fig.4) & (Fig.5) overleaf detail the county split and male / female ratio of participants currently on the scheme.



(Fig. 4 – Placements – County Split)



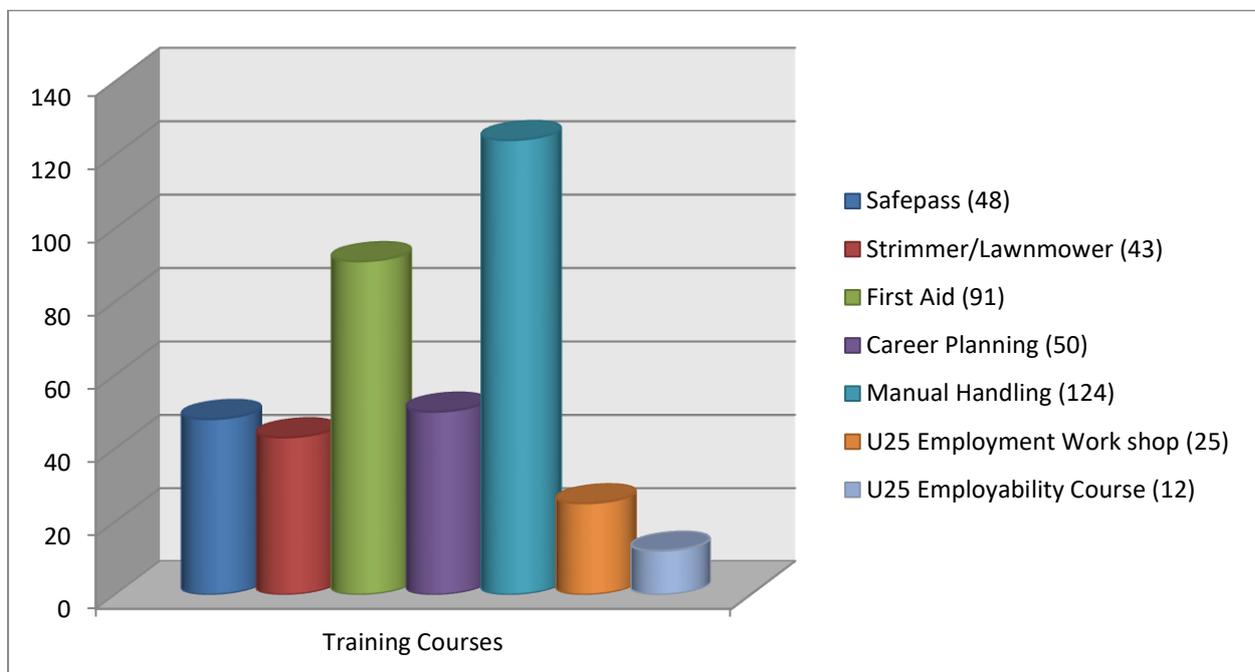
(Fig.5 – Placements – Male/Female Split)

Training Courses 2017

Participant Training:

Alongside meaningful work experience WLP continues to deliver excellent training opportunities for those who participate on the Tús Programme. Training is offered with respect to the specific needs of the various roles within the scheme. A total 393 training spaces were availed of during 2017 at a cost of €21,000 as detailed in (Fig.6) below. This training included Safepass, Strimmer/Lawnmower Courses, First Aid/Defibrillator, Career Planning and Manual Handling.

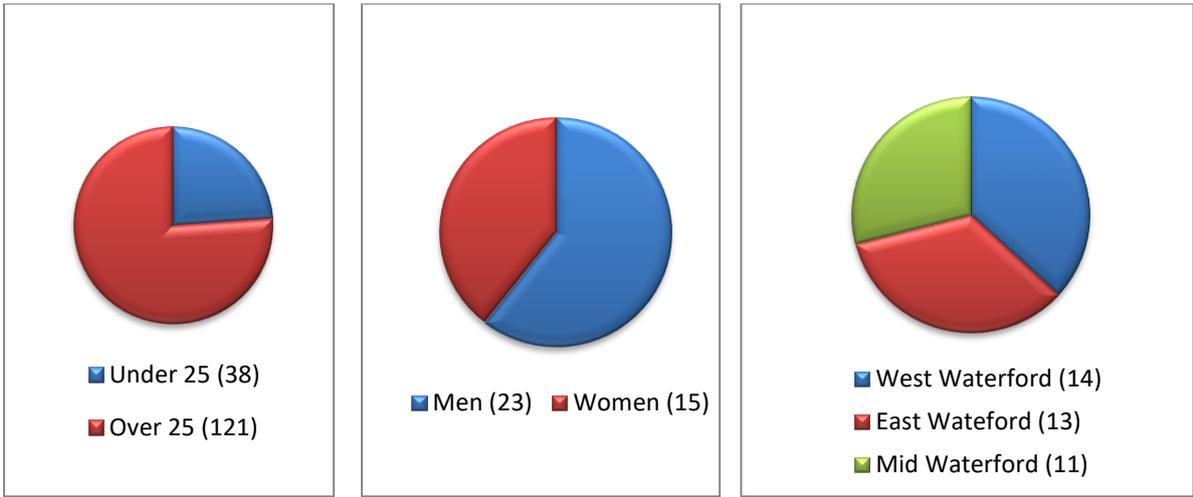
In addition to work specific training, during 2017 WLP ran various initiative’s to help assist our Under 25 Participants to become more job ready. This was done by introducing them to various employment and further training opportunities through an Employment Workshop. Following these workshops, 12 participants continued on to avail of spaces on an Employability Course run by Tús purposely designed to suit their particular needs.



(Fig.6 – Training Courses)

Under 25 Participants

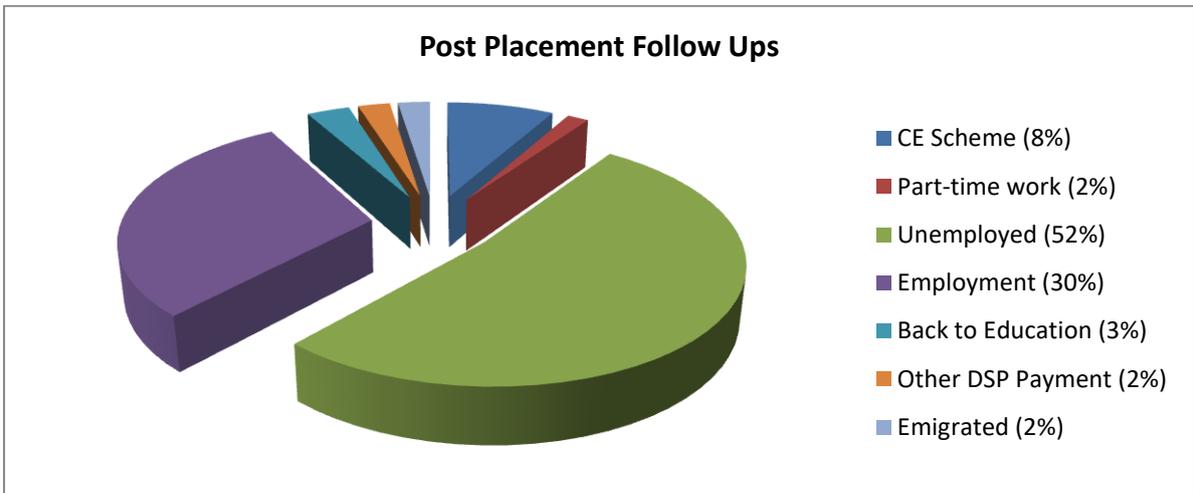
As can be seen in the table below (Fig.7) 24% of WLP’s total allocation of 140 placements were availed of by participants who were under 25 years.



(Fig.7 – Under 25's)

Post Placement Follow- Ups

WLP conduct post placement follow-ups with those who have participated on the Tús Programme, these follow-ups take place six months and twelve months after their placement has ceased. Below (Fig.8) details the outcome of these follow-ups from June '16 – June '17



(Fig.8 – Post Placement Follow-Ups)

Local Employment Service

LES Programme Achievements & Highlights 2017

Total New Client Registrations	407
Total Number of Clients on Caseload <i>currently</i>	224
<i>(DEASP agree Capacity @ 120 clients per Employment Guidance Officer)</i>	
LES Job Placement Rate (Jobs: 30+ hrs & Self-Employment <u>only</u>)	32%
<i>Calculated on the Activation Caseload Management (ACM) System:</i>	
- Number of Clients who were "Case-closed"	382
- Number of Clients Job-Placed (30+ hours per week)	122
Number of clients progressed onto Part-time jobs; CE; TUS:	121
Number of clients progressed onto Training programmes (ETB; SICAP; E-college; WIT; UCC):	274
TOTAL Number of Placements & Progressions in 2017	517
Total Number of Activation Review Meetings (ARMS) Scheduled, ytd	1,384
- Number Attended:	1,021
- Number of DNA (11%)	153
- Number of Cancelled (15%)	210
-DNA & Cancelled	26%
Total Number of Office Enquiries / Visits, ytd	4,321
- Per Month	360
- Per Week	86
LES Client Mediator Training Fund:	
- Approved & Paid (53 applications)	€12,373.90
<i>- Courses funded include: Safepass; CPC; Security; ECDL; Occupational 1st Aid; Train the Trainer; Forklift; etc. / Training Evaluations ongoing</i>	
<i>-Ongoing referral to ETB / SOLAS programmes / Training requests made</i>	
WLP CLG Website / LES page:	
- Average Number of hits on "Local Job Adverts" per month	2,675
- Average Number of hits on "Hints & Tips" (combined) per month	43
-Average Number of hits on "Employers" section per month	4
Other 2017 Highlights & Achievements:	
* LES Client Customer Surveys completed and compiled for National LESN Survey; Co Waterford LES was one of 10 LES nationally requested to participate in DEASP Indecon	

Review of LES (included Employer Surveys)

** New **Co Waterford LES Facebook** page developed / managed by LES Admin team (page "likes" has now exceeded 120!)

*** LES team participated in various Events, including Carrick on Suir Enterprise Town - Business & Community Expo; DEASP Community Employment Open Morning; South Tipp Dev CLG Education & Training event; Home Instead Recruitment Event; LESN 21st Anniversary Event and Mediator Forum Training Events (including Social Media & Job-Seeking; Narrative Approach to Career Guidance; Careers Portal).....

Rural Social Scheme

The Rural Social Scheme in County Waterford is small in comparison to those in the West of Ireland. WLP now has 15 places available on the RSS scheme in 2017 13 places were filled.

The focus of the scheme is focused on farmers or fishermen who are on Farm or Fish Assist, and who wish to contribute to their local community. It also gives the participant an opportunity to participate in the local community, as both these occupations involve a fair degree of social isolation.

The scheme is linked to Community Sponsors who take the participants in to work on the project the Community is implementing at that time. The projects vary from Community to Community, and the participants are matched to activities that they themselves would enjoy doing.

Currently the placements are located in the following areas:

Placement	Location	Type of Work
Waterford & Suir Valley Railway	Kilmeaden	Track Maintenance
Coastguard Station Tramore	Tramore	Facility Maintenance
Stradbally GAA	Stradbally	Pitch & Facility Maintenance
Cappoquin Rowing Club	Cappoquin	Facility Maintenance
Ballymacarbry Tidy Towns	Ballymacarbry	Village Maintenance
Ballysaggart Community Development	Ballysaggart	Hall & Village Maintenance
Respond Childcare	Clashmore	Childcare
Ballyduff Upper GAA	Ballyduff Upper	Pitch & Facility Maintenance
Cappoquin Community Development Co.	Cappoquin	Hall Maintenance & Bookings
Church of Ireland	Lismore	Grounds Maintenance
Ardmore Tidy Towns	Ardmore	Village Maintenance
Lismore Golf Club	Lismore	Grounds Maintenance

Social Farming

WLP secured a contract with Leitrim Development Company (LDC) to develop a Social Farming Network & run a Social Farming Programme in the South East which commenced in 2017. Social Farming is the practice of offering activity on family farms as a form of social support service. In Social Farming the farm remains a working farm at its core but invites people to participate in the day to day activities of the farm.

Social Farming provides people who use services with the opportunity for improved social inclusion, increased self-esteem and improved health and well-being.

From the Farmers perspective, it provides an opportunity for income diversification and multi functionality on the farm. It also creates the opportunity to reconnect farmers with their local communities through the opening up of their farms as part of the social support system of the community.

The farm is not a specialised treatment farm; rather it remains a typical working farm where people in need of support can benefit from participation in farm activities in a non- clinical environment.

We aim to support the development of Social Farming in the South East of Ireland including the areas of Carlow, East Cork, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford and South Tipperary.

This programme is financed by funding from LDC and the TOMAR Trust.

In 2017, the Company over achieved on its placement targets, both in terms of attracting Farmers to provide the service, and placement days on farms.

Finances

WLP employs a fully qualified accountant as Financial Controller. The Audited Accounts are posted on the Company's Website, www.wlp.ie under the Governance section of the site, once they have been approved by the Board

WLP has engaged independent auditors JBW Consultants to prepare and audit the financial statements, and prepare & file the annual company's return for the CRO.

WLP's income is classified under two headings in the financial statements;

- Restricted Funding, which is funds provided to WLP that are designated for specific purposes & cannot be allocated for any other use. Ex. RDP project funds can only be used to pay claims received from promoters for specific projects.
- Unrestricted Funding, amounts which are expendable at the discretion of the directors in furtherance of the objectives of WLP. Ex. Rental income received.

WLP has an active Audit Committee who met four times during 2017. Their main objectives in 2017 were;

- To review the annual financial statements, with the auditors and make a recommendation to the Board for their approval.
- To oversee all aspects of financial planning, management, assess internal financial controls and monitor risk management.
- To ensure that the Company attained break even position.
- Oversee the implementation of the Governance Code.