

Waterford LEADER Partnership Clg

Annual Report 2019



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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/SOFI
- Tomar Trust
- Waterford City & County Council
- Dept. of Justice

WLP operates the following programmes on contract;

- The LEADER Programme 2014 – 2020
- The Local Employment Service
- Tus

- Rural Social Scheme
- Social Farming
- Rural Regeneration Stage 2
- Community Sponsorship Programme

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 had created the Position of E.U. Development Officer. This Officer retired in early 2019, and there has been no direct replacement, as the position changed to focusing on the Rural Regeneration Programme Stage 11 for the Blackwater Valley. This application was submitted and was unfortunately not successful. In 2020, other avenues will be pursued to enable the project to proceed in part if not in its full iteration.

In terms of the E.U. Post, once the Rural Regeneration initiative is up and running, the resourcing of E.U. Contracts will be re-examined in the fourth quarter of 2020.

As part of that application, the Blackwater Valley is also aiming to be a sustainable energy community.

Ancillary Activities

The Company's effort to attract Philanthropic investment in Community Projects matching LEADER investment is progressing in a positive fashion. Over the last year €1,250,000 has been committed by Philanthropy to Co. Waterford (Not WLP Clg).

Governance

The Board of WLP has reviewed and maintained their compliance with the Governance Code in 2019. The company is fully compliant with the Governance Code. The Company's Annual Accounts are posted on the Website and are SORP Compliant.

The Board are now preparing for the updated Governance Code required for larger Charities in 2021.

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

Chairman's Report



2019 was a very busy year for Waterford Leader Partnership, which saw us successfully deliver projects and funding across our catchment area.

As a Board we are committed to assisting our management & staff to continue to deliver for Waterford, economically, culturally & socially.

We continue to work with our Financial Partners in Waterford County & City Council and the Local & Community Development Committee to deliver to our mutual objectives.

We are a voluntary participant in the Good Governance Code for the non-profit sector and we intend to build on this in 2020. As a registered charity we are very mindful of the need to maintain the highest levels of governance at all times. To this end we have a very active Audit Committee who ensure we fulfil best practice continuously.

Our Social Farming Programme, which is an innovative programme has continued to grow and the number of participant farms and users of the Programme have increased throughout 2019. We look forward to working with all the agencies involved and enhancing this successful endeavour further.

I would like to pay tribute to my colleagues on the Board of Waterford Leader Partnership who continue to give of their time and talents voluntarily, to help us enhance our catchment area in a very positive way.

On behalf of our Board I would like to commend the work of our committed employees who make it all happen.

I commend this 2019 Annual Report to you for your perusal and look forward to developing further projects into 2020 to allow us to remain as champions and facilitators of rural development.

Micheál Cosgrove, Chairman,

Waterford Leader Partnership C L G.

C.E.O.'s Report

2019 has seen positive progression in each area of the Company. WLP, both at Board and Staff level are delivering positive results in each operational programme, providing services, advice and accessing investment for Communities and Businesses in County Waterford by implementing the WLP Strategy approved by the Board that is focused on programmes that fund Rural Development Activities.

For clients of WLP and the Programmes it operates on contract, 2019 has seen an even greater focus on collaboration with Philanthropy, particularly Tomar Trust, Waterford City and County Council, DRCD, DEASP, the HSE, Dept. of Justice and the Gardai in ensuring investment in Rural Regeneration initiatives.

Tomar Trust has been a very important support to Communities trying to access matched monies for larger scale LEADER Projects. The Trust has shown tremendous support to projects right across the County from West Waterford to the City.

LEADER saw the allocation of €1.1m to Rural Projects on behalf of the LCDC. Tus has assisted 150 unemployed people and supported over 74 Community Organisations acting as placement providers. The Local Employment Service had a placement rate of 26%. Social Farming has proven to be very successful and 2020 will see a new application for the next five year period. The big challenge remains in 2020 to glean/gain proper contracts through the Health Providers/HSE. This has borne fruit, with Healthy County Contracts(Small in nature)in 4 of the 6 Counties.

The Stage 1 application for Rural Regeneration was submitted in early August 2019. This was not successful. The Application was considered to be good and it has been decided to persevere with a scaled down initiative in 2020. WLP Clg are also involved with Dept of Justice in the Community Sponsorship Programme where a Canadian model for integrating refugees into local communities whereby the Community becomes a sponsor for the Family rather than the current Direct Provision system.

The Board has taken the decision to continue the focus on Rural Regeneration in 2020, with the Copper Coast been the next area of development. This will be done in Partnership with the Department of RCD, WCCC, and Philanthropy. WLP Clg will target the creation of the Copper Coast Economic Development Zone.

The Board will review its policies & procedures in 2020 in order to ensure continued full compliance with the upgraded Governance Code for 2021.

The Audit Committee and the Financial Controller have continued to strengthen the Company's financial position over the last year. While the Company is far from independent financially, the focus on Strategy and Governance and the consequent shift in Culture has put the company on a platform from which it can build for the future to serve the people of Waterford and other areas that we cover in a more comprehensive manner.

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 2019, WLP Clg had assisted the LCDC to allocate €4.2m or over 70% of the project funds through a targeted call process. Most of the allocated monies will be paid out by June 2021.

The Programme

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

Conclusions of Review on Progress to Date

In February 2019, a report which was a rapid, high-level, early-cycle evaluation of the WLDS was completed.

The nature and timing of this evaluation must be borne in mind. It was not an audit; it did not seek to carry out a full review of all files and processes of the WLP and the LCDC. Its review was of the principal features of the process and included interviews with a sample of project promoters.

Overall, the evaluation has found that the implementation of the WLDS is being carried out in a satisfactory manner; the approach to project identification and selection is appropriate and the WLP and the LCDC are both carrying out their roles appropriately. The numbers of projects coming forward is giving rise to a significant number of eligible projects under most headings, though some headings do give rise to some concern. The overall profile of projects is acceptable with the exception of their geographic distribution which appears to be somewhat excessively concentrated in one Municipal District.

The levels of drawdown appear to be satisfactory when account is taken of the date of approval and the need to provide time to project promoters to bring implementation to a point where drawdown is appropriate.

Action on Recommendations

1. The potential difficulties for project promoters, particularly those from the private sector, in providing evidence of co-funding in advance of approval should be highlighted and reported to the Department. - **Done**
2. The next round of EoI calls should emphasise
 - a. That this is the last round of calls under this programme - **Done**
 - b. That not all eligible applications may receive funding - **Done**
 - c. That the rate of funding may not be the maximum possible - **Done**

3. Particular attempts should be made to promote the programme and the next call in the Comeragh and Waterford Metropolitan districts and emphasise that smaller as well as larger project proposals are welcome. - **Done**
4. Consideration should be given to providing some geographic weighting for projects arising from the Comeragh and Waterford Metropolitan districts. – **Not done. Hard to do, as it is a competitive process.**
5. Consideration should be given to running specific workshops in procurement for applicants who have been deemed eligible under the EoI process to assist them in finalising their projects in a timely manner – **Attempted. Experts could not be funded.**
6. Consideration should be given locally and nationally as to how the application process can be made simpler and less challenging for community and voluntary organisations and small businesses while retaining its robustness and transparency and/or Consideration should be given to ways in which additional supports can be given to organisations from these sectors to negotiate the application process – **Done through Philanthropy**
7. The fact that an independent architect will be appointed by the funder and paid for by the promoter to certify draw-down claims should be highlighted early in the implementation process - **Done**
8. Applicants under SA 5.1. should be asked to indicate how their proposed development will contribute to social inclusion and the actions which they will take in that regard. - **Done**
9. The likelihood of the take-up of all funding allocated to the Rural Tourism Local Objectives should be considered and re-allocations made if a significant lack of take-up is anticipated - **Done**
10. The proposed re-allocations of funding should be proceeded with as should the minor re-wordings proposed and the new SA 7.2. - **Done**
11. All project files should be checked and any required documentation which is missing from any file should be provided for the record - **Done**
12. In the light of the concerns expressed regarding the difficulties perceived by communities and smaller enterprises in completing the process and the possible barriers which this perception places in the way of applications being made by such bodies, consideration should be given to commissioning a piece of independent research to identify in more detail the nature of these perceptions, their sources and causes and ways in which the process might be modified to address the perceived difficulties while retaining its rigour and transparency. – **Not Done**

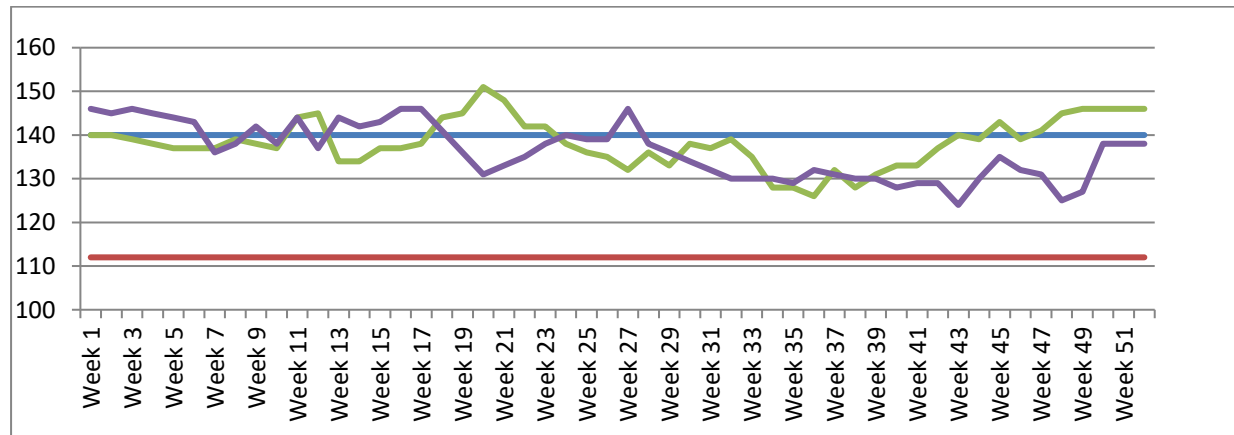
Tús

Participant Activity 2019

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 programme with 6 Supervisors. These placements 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 2019 v 2018

Placement Activity 2019 v 2018



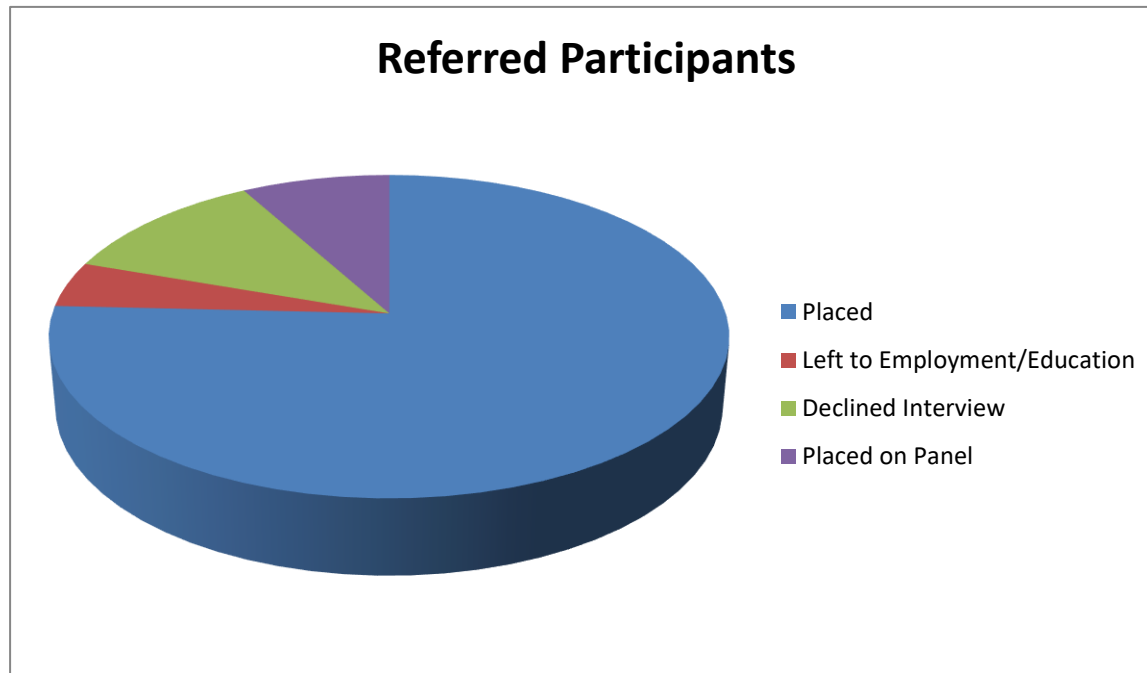
Blue Line: Allocation **Red Line:** Min. Requirement (80%) **Green Line:** 2018 **Purple Line:** 2019

(Fig. 1 – Placement Activity)

Participant Activity 2019

A total of 189 new clients were referred by DEASP in 2019, 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 189 referred, 23 (12%) declined to be interviewed for various reasons. A total of 150 new contracts were issued during the year, with 9 participants leaving the scheme early to take up employment (7) or to return to Education (2).

(Fig.2 – Participant Activity2019)

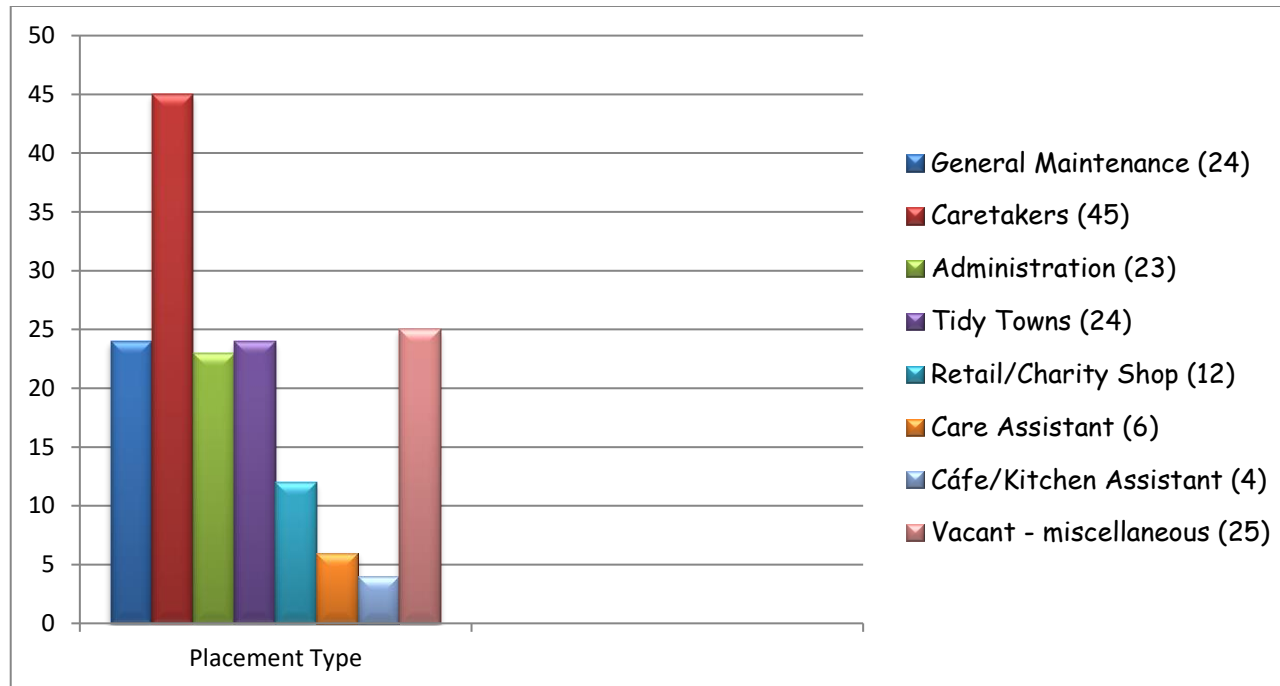


Placement Providers

WLP currently facilitates 74+ Placement Providers with a total of 138 active participants. There are a further 25 vacancies which cannot be filled currently due to lack of suitable participants in more remote areas of the county. Roles vary as can be seen in (Fig.3) below.

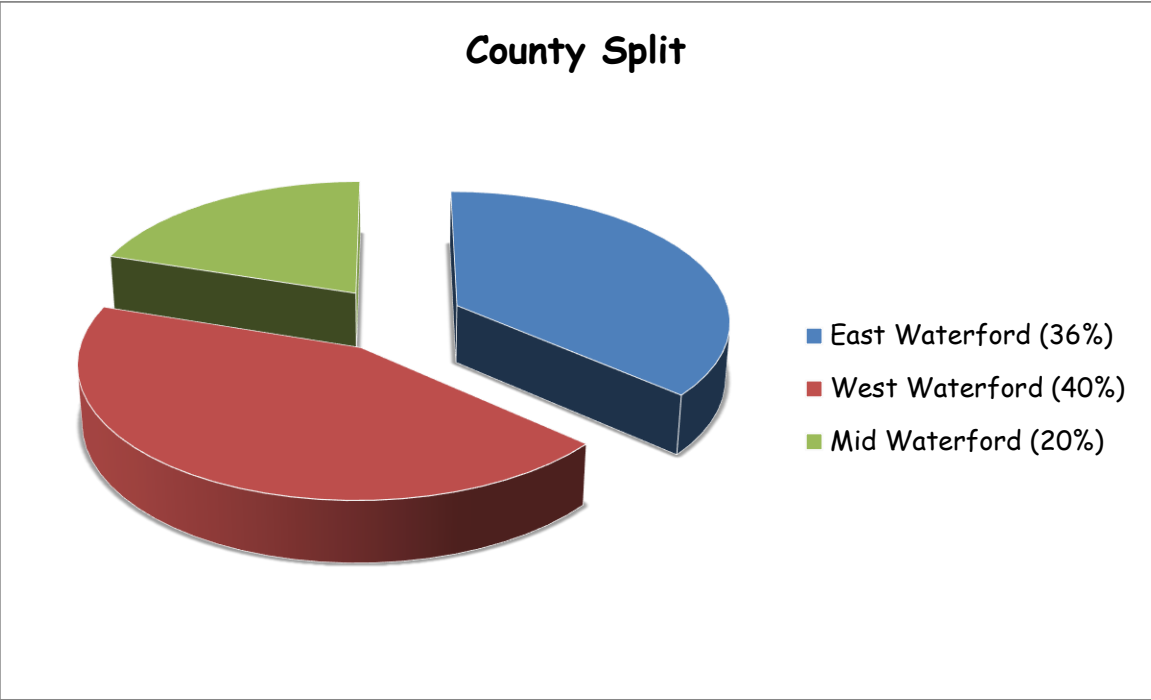
All Placement Providers are supported by the programme Supervisors throughout the year and

advised on areas such as health & safety, work scheduling and planning. There was a total of €8,000 spent on the purchase of materials and equipment for Placement Providers throughout the year.

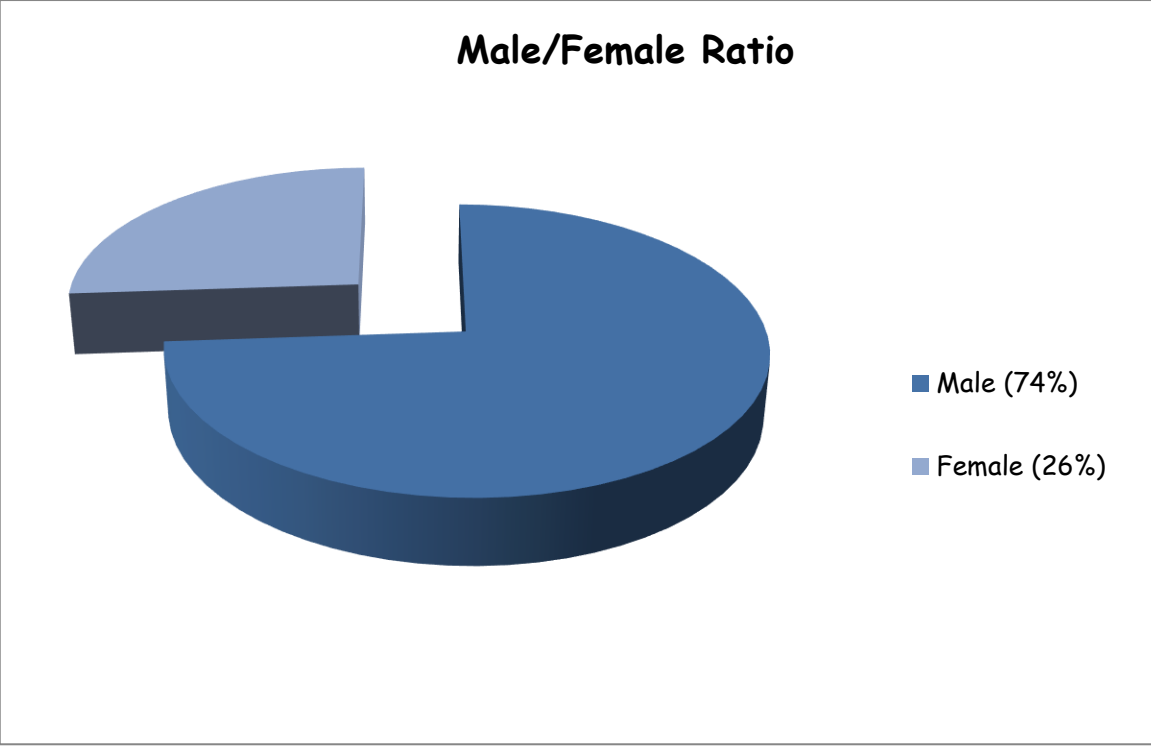


(Fig.3 – Placement Type)

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



(Fig. 4 – Placements – County Split)

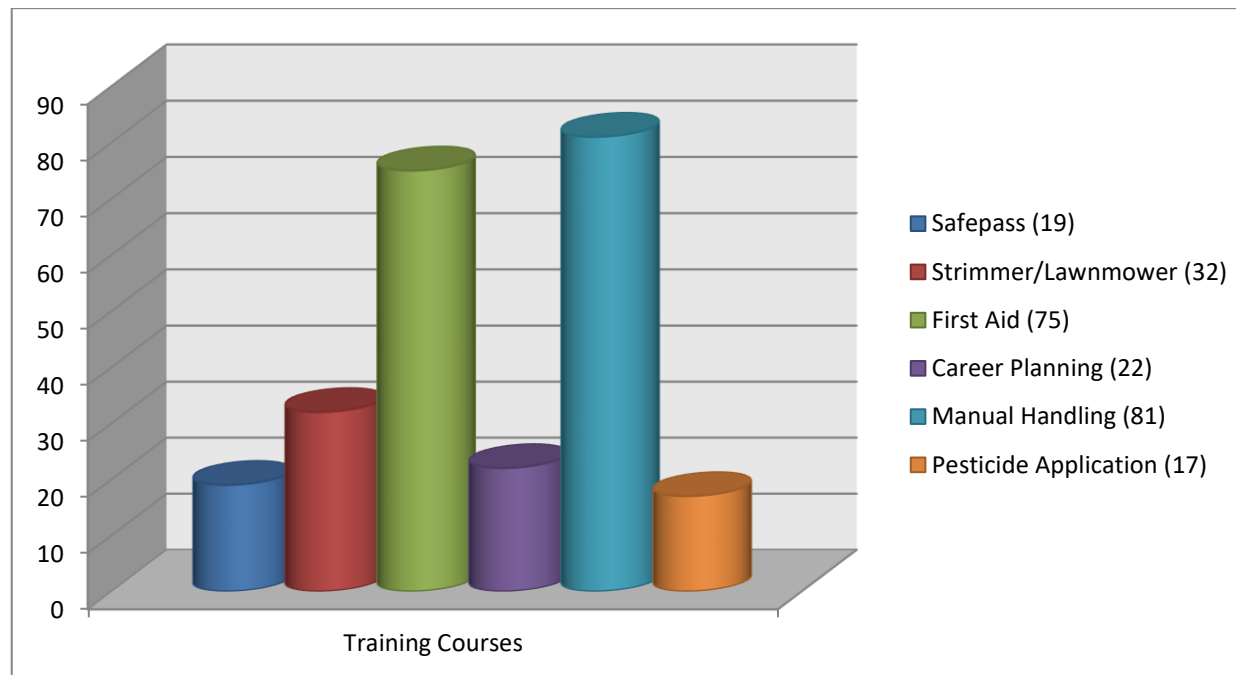


(Fig.5 – Placements – Male/Female Ratio)

Training Courses 2019

Participant Training:

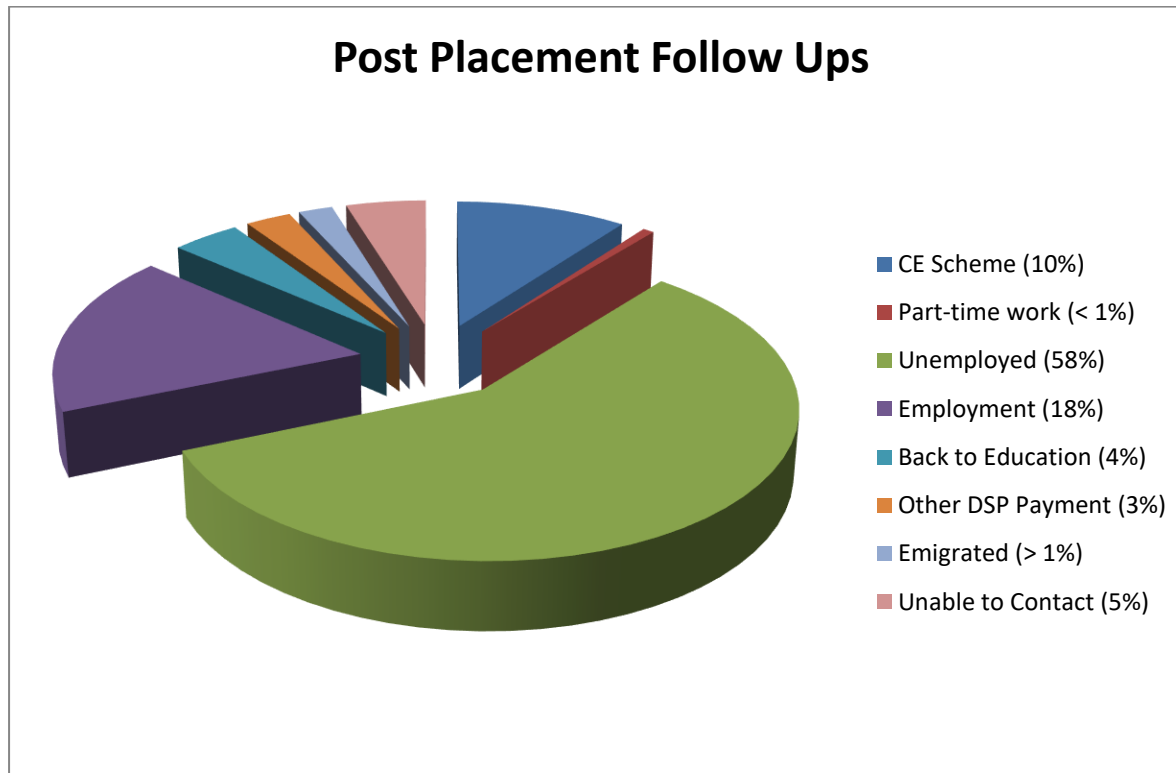
Alongside meaningful work experience WLP continues to deliver excellent training opportunities for those who participate on the Tús Programme. Training is offered with respect to the specific needs of the various roles within the scheme. A total 322 training spaces were made available to participants during 2019 at a cost of €15,500 with an uptake of 246 giving an approximate 76% attendance rate. This training included Safepass, Strimmer/Lawnmower Courses, First Aid/Defibrillator, Career Planning, Hand Held Pesticide Application and Manual Handling as detailed in (Fig.6) below



(Fig.6 – Training Courses)

Post Placement Follow- Ups

WLP conduct post placement follow-ups with those who have participated on the Tús Programme in the previous year, these follow-ups take place six months and twelve months after their placement has ceased. Below (Fig.7) details the outcome of these follow-ups from June '18 – June '19



Local Employment Service

LES Programme Achievements & Highlights, 2019

(including comparison with 2018 Activity Data)

	31 December, 2018	31 December, 2019
TOTAL NEW CLIENT REGISTRATIONS @ <u>31 December</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>DEASP Activation Referral (PTW)</i> - <i>Other Client Groups (WALK-INS)</i> 	388 346 42	418 365 55
TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS ON LES CASELOAD @ <u>31 December</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>DEASP Activation Referral (PTW)</i> - <i>Other Client Groups (WALK-INS)</i> <p><i>(DEASP agree Capacity @ 120 Pathways to Work / Activation clients per Employment Guidance Officer / 15 Walk-in clients per Officer to be registered in 2019)</i></p>	213 198 15	236 207 29
LES JOB PLACEMENT RESULTS: (Jobs: 30+ hrs & Self-Employment <u>only</u>): <i>Calculated on the Activation Caseload Management (ACM) System:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of DEASP Activation (PTW) Clients who were "Case-closed" - Number of DEASP Activation (PTW) Clients Job-Placed (30+ hours per wk) - % DEASP Activation (PTW) Clients Job-Placed (30+ hrs per week) - NOTE: DEASP Activation (PTW) Clients as a % of TOTAL CASELOAD 	367 106 29% 93%	370 103 28% 88%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of Other Client Groups (Walk-in) Clients who were "Case-closed" - Number of Other Client Groups (Walk-in) Clients Job-Placed (30+ hrs pw) - % Other Client Groups (Walk-in) Clients Job-Placed (30+ hrs pw) - NOTE: Number of Walk-in's as a % of TOTAL CASELOAD 	<p>63</p> <p>7</p> <p>11%</p> <p>7%</p>	<p>43</p> <p>5</p> <p>12%</p> <p>12%</p>
COMBINED LES JOB PLACEMENT (PTW & Walk-in) %:	26%	26%
LES PROGRESSION (SCHEMES; EDUCATION & TRAINING) @ 31 December:		
Number of clients progressed onto Part-time jobs; CE; TUS:	164	134
Number of clients progressed onto Training programmes (Mediator Fund; ETB; SICAP; E-college; WIT; UCC):	296	342
TOTAL NUMBER OF PROGRESSIONS (Schemes; Education & Training)	460	476
TOTAL NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS (JOBS) & PROGRESSIONS (Schemes; Education & Training)	573	584
TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTIVATION REVIEW MEETINGS (ARMs) @ 31 December:		
- Scheduled:	1,775	2,441
- Number Attended:	1,158	1,723
- Number of "Did-not-attend" DNA	260 (15%)	504 (21%)
- Number of Cancelled	355 (20%)	207 (8%)
- Number of DNA & Cancelled	35%	29%
TOTAL NUMBER OF MEETINGS (NEW REGISTRATION MEETINGS & ARMs ATTENDED):	1,546	2,141

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Per month - Per week (DEASP stipulate a 50 week operation) 	<p>128</p> <p>30</p>	<p>179</p> <p>42</p>
<p>LES CLIENT MEDIATOR TRAINING FUNDING @ 31 December:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approved & Paid - Number of applications approved and paid - % of Mediator Fund Budget approved and paid - Average payment made on behalf of client training - Courses funded include: Safepass (30); Forklift (8); CPC; First Aid Responder; ECDL; Children's Yoga Teacher Training; Special Needs Assistant; Artic Driving; Lean Green Belt.) - Training Evaluations ongoing -Ongoing referral to ETB / SOLAS programmes / Training requests made 	<p>€7,880</p> <p>33</p> <p>33%</p> <p>€239</p>	<p>€10,564</p> <p>54</p> <p>64%</p> <p>€196</p>
<p>TOTAL NUMBER OF OFFICE ENQUIRIES / VISITS @ 31 December:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Per month - Per week 	<p>4,062</p> <p>338</p> <p>81</p>	<p>4,423</p> <p>368</p> <p>88</p>
<p>WLP CLG WEBSITE / LES PAGE VISITS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Average Number of visits to "Local Job Adverts" per month - Average Number of visits to "Hints & Tips" (combined) per month -Average Number of visits to "Employers" section per month 	<p>2,693</p> <p>43</p> <p>5</p>	<p>2,070</p> <p>79</p> <p>9</p>
<p>Also in 2019.....:</p>		
<p>Press Releases prepared by the LES team in Quarter 4 and forwarded to local newspapers (promoting service/training options etc.)</p>		

Co Waterford LES Facebook page is being managed by LES Admin team	
Customer Survey completed as part of national LES Customer Survey <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 26 Surveys contributed to national survey- 10 Questions- Some comments: <i>“Positive and helpful”; “all positive and encouraging”; “it’s a great experience and channel for training, no matter what age, thank you”</i>	

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 2018. 14 places were filled for part of the year. In mid 2019, the RSS Participant in Stradbally retired. This retirement was followed by another retirement in Ballyduff Upper. These two retirements have been replaced by a nw participant in Dungarvan. At the end of 2019, there were 13 participants on the scheme.

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
Cunnigar Pitch & Putt	Dungarvan	Pitch & Facility Maintenance
Stradbally GAA	Stradbally	Pitch & Facility Maintenance
Cappoquin Rowing Club	Cappoquin	Facility 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
CFnDeise	Ring, Dungaravan	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. This contract has been renewed into 2019. 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 2019, the Company achieved on its placement targets, both in terms of attracting Farmers to provide the service, and placement days on farms.

Community Sponsorship

WLP is also involved in contract work for the Dept. of Justice on the Refugee Integration Programme which replicates the Canadian Model where a Local Community adopts a refugee family into their community and supports the new families integration into the Community.

WLP Clg works with an excellent group in Lismore who have helped a young Syrian Family to relocate. WLP is also working with a number of other Groups to do the same in County Waterford.

Rural Regeneration Fund

While WLP did not attain Stage 1 success in the application for the Blackwater Economic Development Zone, it has progressed the project using Philanthropic and other funds. Implementation should commence 2020.

Tomar Projects

WLP Clg is implementing a number of youth focused projects in East Waterford on behalf of the Tomar Trust.

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 re-appointed after a tender process 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.
- Un-restricted 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 2019. Their main objectives in 2019 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.

Plans for 2020

- Complete Call Process for LEADER Projects
- Attain 100% Allocation of the LEADER Funds by the end of 2020
- Ensure the successful commencement of the Blackwater Economic Development Zone
- Attain mainstream funding for the Social Farming initiative
- Retain the LES Contract for Rural Waterford
- Complete Transnational Projects
- Two more Community Sponsorship Placements
- Initiate a substantial Bio-diversity Initiative
- Completion of St. Declan's Way with NTO Approval
- Apply for and Attain the walks Scheme
- Continue to operate the existing initiatives professionally and effectively

Structure, Governance and Management

See Website <https://www.wlp.ie/corporate-governance/>

Reference and Administrative Details

Mr. Jimmy Taaffe, C.E.O.

Ms. Angeline Drennan, C.F.O. and Ass. C.E.O.

Banks: A.I.B. Plc. And Bank of Ireland Plc., both of Grattan Square, Dungarvan

Accountants: John White, Church Street, Dungarvan

Solicitors: Joseph P. Gordon, The Burgery, Co. Waterford.

WLP is also involved in contract work for the Dept of Justice on the Refugee Integration Programme which replicates the Canadian model where a Local Community adopts a refugee family into their community and supports the new families integration into the Community.