

SICAP Annual Report 2021



Social Inclusion &
Community Activation
Programme



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BTWEA	Back to Work Enterprise Allowance
CRIA	Child Rights Impact Assessment
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DC	Development Coordinator
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
DSP	Department of Social Protection
DTT	Distance Travelled Tool
ESF	European Social Fund
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
ETB	Education and Training Board
EU	European Union
HAP	Housing Assistance Payment
HSE	Health Service Executive
IRIS	Integrated Reporting and Information System
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LCG	Local Community Group
LDC	Local Development Company
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LES	Local Employment Service
LLL	Lifelong Learning
LMS	Learning Management System
LTU	Long-Term Unemployed
PEIL	Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PPN	Public Participation Network
PUP	Pandemic Unemployment Payment
SE	Social Enterprise
SECOP	Social Enterprise Community of Practice
SERP	Social Enterprise Regeneration Programme
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
STEA	Short-Term Enterprise Allowance
STU	Short-Term Unemployed

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COVID-19, and its associated public health restrictions, continued to have a significant impact on Irish society in 2021. This impact was particularly pronounced for the more vulnerable and marginalised groups that SICAP works with such as Roma, Travellers, and disadvantaged children and families, amongst others.

The findings in this report indicate that all SICAP stakeholders learned from their experiences of implementing SICAP during COVID-19 in 2020 and brought this flexibility, experience, and understanding to bear in 2021. LDCs reports and case studies show nuanced and targeted approaches and supports delivered to vulnerable individuals, community groups, social enterprises, and families. The number of people engaged with SICAP increased, and progression rates for individuals have started to climb towards pre-pandemic levels. There is evidence of growing and intensive engagement with Roma and Traveller groups as well as other more disadvantaged groups. The main achievements for 2021 are outlined below.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

1. SICAP Key Performance Indicator (KPI) targets were exceeded in 2021

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the SICAP targets were exceeded by the end of 2021, with a total of **2,646 Local Community Groups (LCGs)** and **26,483 individuals** supported. As can be seen below, SICAP has almost reached pre-pandemic levels of engagement with individuals.

Table 1 Key Performance Indicators 2021

Key Performance Indicator	Original 2020 KPI ¹ Target	2021 KPI Target	Actual 2021 results	Percentage achieved
KPI 1: Number of LCGs on the caseload	2,266	2,197	2,646	120%
KPI 2: Number of individuals on the caseload	27,073	23,484	26,483	113%
Disadvantaged ² communities: % of individuals living in disadvantaged areas	29%	29%	30%	N/A

2. There was an increased focus on and engagement with harder-to-reach groups

The SICAP 2020 Annual Report flagged that for the first time there were more short-term unemployed (STU) people than long-term unemployed (LTU) supported through SICAP. This trend switched in 2021

¹ Pre-pandemic target

² This row relates to KPI 2, but is not a KPI in its own right

with 29% of clients supported being LTU and 26% STU. The proportions of Travellers and Roma on the caseload has also increased, with Travellers now 3% of the caseload having comprised 2% of the caseload every other year of SICAP. Roma numbers have increased from less than 1% to 1%.

IRIS data also shows that LCGs supporting Travellers and/or Roma receive a greater intensity of supports than other groups. Using the median as average, LCGs supporting Travellers and/or Roma received 13 support interventions in 2021, whereas the average number of interventions for LCGs as a whole is five.

SICAP uses a Multiple Barriers Measure tool to help identify individuals who face multiple barriers to social and economic inclusion³. There was a slight increase in the proportion of individuals (28%) supported in 2021 who experienced two or more barriers (27% in 2020). Overall, though, this proportion is up from 24% in 2018. This demonstrates a small but positive trend for the programme over the past four years as LDCs continue make efforts to increase their engagement with this cohort.

3. SICAP beneficiaries achieved positive rates of progression

A significant drop was seen in outcomes for individuals in 2020. While progression rates started to rise in 2021, they are still some way off pre-pandemic levels. There was a 3% rise in individuals taking part in lifelong learning activities, up to 38% from 35% in 2020. There was an increase in the proportion of people receiving pre-start up self-employment supports (19%) in 2021.

In 2021, 6% of the caseload got a job, a small increase on 2020, where the equivalent figure was 5%. The majority (92%) of jobs were in the open labour market and only 8% were state-supported employment schemes. Two-thirds (67%) of jobs were full-time. This is the highest rate for both open market employment as well as full-time jobs since the start of SICAP. Almost three-quarters (72%) of people who got a job, and were contacted after six months⁴, were still in employment.

4. The one-year SICAP extension and mid-programme review process enabled LCDCs and LDCs to determine the focus of SICAP 2022-2023

Following the announcement in July 2021 of the one-year extension to SICAP until 2023, LCDCs and LDCs were asked to undertake a mid-programme review, reflecting on SICAP delivery to-date at Lot level as well as the focus into the future. As part of this process, LDCs and LCDCs were asked to consider five programme priority groups⁵ identified by the Minister and the Department, as well as their

³ These barriers are disability, ethnic minority (including asylum seekers and refugees), experience of homelessness/housing exclusion, living in a jobless household, lone parent and/or having a transport barrier.

⁴ A total of 5,154 (72%) who got a job to date (7,109) were followed-up with.

⁵ The five programme priority groups are New Communities with a particular focus on those living in Direct Provision, Mental Health (including Youth), Long Term Unemployed, Travellers and Roma, & Older People and Isolation.

own local priorities, and examine where SICAP could support these. In most Lots three priorities were selected and 11 Lots also identified a specific local priority group.

5. SICAP secured its European Social Fund financial claim

In 2021, the financial claim submitted to the European Social Fund for co-financing SICAP was accepted. To date, 90% of the value of the claim has been reimbursed to DRCD. The remaining 10% is due for reimbursement following completion of the EU audit in 2022. The work of LDCs and LCDCs in supporting/completing the process is commended.

1. INTRODUCTION

This end of year report provides an overview of the implementation and progress of the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) between 1 January and 31 December 2021. SICAP is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) with co-funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) under the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014–2020. The programme aims to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality in Ireland through supporting communities and individuals via community development, engagement, and collaboration. SICAP is managed locally by 33 Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), with support from local authorities. SICAP actions are delivered by 46 Local Development Companies (LDCs) across 51 Lot areas.

This report outlines key information about SICAP in 2021 and describes its overall performance, as compared to previous years⁶. The report also provides an overview of how SICAP adapted and responded to the second year of living through the COVID-19 pandemic. It includes the following:

- An overview of the supports provided by Pobal and DRCD during the year.
- A summary of the characteristics of the beneficiaries supported, types of activities conducted, as well as outputs and outcomes achieved.
- A detailed financial report is included in Annex B.
- National level maps of the geographical distribution of individuals and Local Community Groups (LCGs) supported by SICAP to date are presented in Annex C.
- A list and description of SICAP case studies produced by LDCs in 2021 are included in Annex D.

The data was drawn from multiple sources, including progress data recorded on the IRIS System by LDCs; LDCs' Annual Progress Reports; a sample of the LDCs' case studies; and feedback from the Annual Engagement Meetings with LCDCs and LDCs in 2021. While the analysis identified key trends emerging during the year, these may not capture the experiences of all LDCs, due to differing local contexts and approaches across the country. A detailed methodology is provided in Annex A.

2. CONTEXT

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a significant impact on lives in Ireland in 2021. The year started with severe national restrictions aimed at curtailing the spread of the pandemic by limiting social movement and activity. The COVID-19 Adjusted Measure of Unemployment, counting claimants of the Pandemic Unemployment Payment, showed an unemployment rate of 27.1% in January 2021⁷.

⁶ Note: some figures as reported in previous years' Annual Progress Reports have been updated in this report to take in account corrections made to the live database during 2021.

⁷ CSO (2022) "Impact of COVID-19 on our Society and Economy: Two Years On"

Restrictions included the closure of schools, closure of most hospitality businesses, work from home orders, restrictions on travel outside the home, and the curtailment of almost all in-person activities. The pandemic, and its associated restrictions, had a substantial impact on vulnerable groups who work with SICAP and on all stakeholders involved in SICAP implementation.

2.1 Operational context

DRCD and Pobal maintained their flexible response to supporting LDCs to deliver SICAP through the pandemic. Practically all the changes that DRCD and Pobal had agreed to the programme rules and requirements in 2020 were extended into 2021. Targets were also maintained close to 2020 revised levels rather than reverting to pre-pandemic levels.

2.2 SICAP Extension and mid-programme review

On 19 July 2021 Joe O'Brien, TD and Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development with special responsibility for Community Development and Charities, announced a one-year extension to SICAP, bringing the programme delivery up until the end of 2023. As part of this extension, Minister O'Brien and DRCD requested that each LCDC and LDC in each Lot area complete a mid-programme review to consider priorities for the remainder of SICAP.

This process was supported by Pobal. LDCs and LCDCs were asked to complete a statement of priorities detailing the priority groups selected, with a supporting rationale. LCDCs and LDCs were specifically requested to focus SICAP work on national priority groups (listed below). The national priority groups reflect current national policy, learning from SICAP to date, low representation of certain target groups on the caseload, and acute needs highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. LCDCs and LDCs could also choose additional priority groups for their Lot(s).

National priority groups were:

1. New Communities with particular focus on those living in Direct Provision (*Selected by 32 Lot areas*)
2. Mental Health (including youth) (*Selected by 32 Lot areas*)
3. Long Term Unemployed (*Selected by 31 Lot areas*)
4. Travellers /Roma (*Selected by 19 Lot areas*)
5. Older People and isolation (*Selected by 25 Lot areas*)

In most cases, three priorities were selected for each Lot. 11 Lots selected a local priority group, outside of the five groups named above. These local priorities are wide-ranging and reflective of local needs.

3. SUPPORTS PROVIDED BY DRCD AND POBAL

3.1 Annual engagement meetings

In total, 30 engagement meetings between Pobal Development Coordinators (DCs), LCDCs and LDCs took place in September/October 2021. The primary focus of the annual engagement meetings was to support

the mid-programme review and the process of agreeing the priorities groups for the Lot(s). Significant work was carried out by LDCs and LCDCs for the mid-programme review and discussing priorities in advance of the engagement meetings. It was evident where LCDCs and LDCs worked with each other to discuss the review and the priorities prior to the engagement meetings, agreement and conclusions were reached at the engagement meetings. In a small number of cases further discussions post the engagement meeting were required between the LCDCs and LDCs to agree the programme priorities.

Following the engagement meetings, Pobal issued a survey to attendees to get feedback on the approach and content. Overall, the feedback was very positive, with 82% of respondents stating that one of the benefits to the meeting was the space to reflect and discuss programme achievements and challenges. Over three-quarters (77%) said the benefit was the opportunity to discuss Lot level priorities for the next two years. Several comments were received welcoming the opportunity to discuss challenges and future priorities, and being able to have open and frank discussions, with input from various stakeholders to allow for effective forward planning.

The 2021 Social Inclusion Analysis Project report for each Lot area or county, covering 1 January 2018 to 31 May 2021, was also presented at the engagement meetings and updates on SICAP were also provided. These updates included key outcomes from 2020, the Distance Travelled Tool, case studies, research in relation to leverage of funding and gender analysis, process for the revision of KPI targets for 2021, likely targets for 2022, and a broad outline of timelines for the development of the new programme and consultation process.

3.2 Programme Guidance and Resources

Guidance and templates for LCDCs were developed and issued in reviewing mid-year and end-of-year finance and non-finance reports, and on the technical reviews of 2021 and 2022 annual plans. Guidance was also issued to LCDCs on the process for the revision of targets for 2021.

The SICAP FAQ document was updated as required and disseminated to all LDCs and LCDCs in 2021. This provided clarification on the scope of flexibility to the programme during the pandemic including changes to the eligibility of expenditure. Pobal and DRCD continued to issue a series of COVID-19 specific communications providing advice, guidance, and updates to all funded organisations, including LCDCs and LDCs.

3.3 SICAP Forum

The SICAP Forum continued to meet during the year, bringing together the key stakeholders involved in SICAP. It comprises representatives from DRCD, Pobal, LCDCs, and LDCs. It creates a space for stakeholders to come together to work collaboratively on key programme developments and to inform the ongoing enhancement and strengthening of the current programme, and of any subsequent programme. A sample of topics discussed in 2021 include the following:

- Extension to SICAP

- Mid Programme Review process
- SICAP Learning Products

3.4 IRIS supports and training

Several IRIS supports were developed and delivered for LDC staff and LCDC support staff. Three separate IRIS training sessions were delivered to LDC IRIS super users, one on refresher training on the IRIS system, one on advanced IRIS training and another to new LDC IRIS super users. An induction to the IRIS system training was delivered to new LCDC support staff in June, with additional training delivered to new LCDC support staff in October. A number of IRIS User Guides were updated and developed for LDC staff and LCDC support staff, including a new guide on *How to Run a VAT Charged Report*. The IRIS user group met three times in 2021, with the focus of these meetings being on updates on system development, and addressing any technical issues identified by the LDCs.

3.5 Case studies

The Case Study Working Group met twice in 2021, with representation from DRCD, Pobal, LCDCs, LDCs, and ILDN. The working group continued to focus on strengthening the case study process and improving the demonstration of SICAP work. Pobal issued a guidance document to the LDCs in April 2021. A summary description of all 2020 case studies, including webpage links, was produced, and circulated to the LDCs and LCDCs. The Working Group also reviewed the Annual Progress Report template and recommended further amendments to capture the work of LDCs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Case studies were reviewed, and feedback given directly to LDCs. Overall, the quality of the 51 case studies was very good and the variety of focus and format has continued to expand. The majority (48) highlighted work in response to COVID-19. The use of videos as a medium continued to grow, with 27 case studies submitted as videos, 16 of which had an accompanying narrative. Only two LDCs submitted audio case studies, while 22 were in a traditional narrative format.

The Unemployed (11) were the largest primary target group focused on within the case studies, followed by New Communities (10) and the Emerging Needs groups in specific lots (9).

Case studies were identified for inclusion in SICAP and Pobal Annual Reports and 12 were presented at the SICAP Thematic Support Workshops. The video case studies from seven LDCs were also incorporated into the #SICAPStories social media campaign in May. This was a new co-ordinated promotional initiative between ILDN, DRCD, Pobal, and Changing Ireland, highlighting the SICAP response to the needs of vulnerable adults, families, and children because of COVID-19.

3.6 My Journey: Distance Travelled Tool

The disruption to the implementation of the My Journey: Distance Travelled Tool⁸ (DTT) continued in 2021. The final two online 'Train the Trainer' events were run in January and March. This meant a total of 89 DTT Champions from all 46 LDCs have participated and were provided with knowledge and resources to deliver training in their own companies.

Pobal Development Coordinators followed up with the DTT Champions to identify implementation barriers and further support needs. The need for an online version was the key finding and a Microsoft Forms version was developed and used by a small number of LDCs while a broader scoping for an online version was conducted. The second support identified was the desire for Communities of Practice/Peer Learning opportunities. This could not happen due to COVID-19 but is included in the Implementation Plan for 2022. Despite the challenges faced, a total of 575 DTT interventions were provided by LDCs to SICAP clients in 2021. Since piloted in 2019, 762 individuals have used the DTT. A process also started with DCEDIY to establish a collaborative DTT pilot project beyond SICAP in 2022.

3.7 Support Events

Three on-line SICAP thematic support events took place in March 2021, focusing on the SICAP response to the pandemic. The themes were:

- Supports to Disadvantaged Children and Families
- Combating Social Isolation for vulnerable target groups
- Social Enterprises/Enterprise and Employment Support

DRCD provided programme updates while 12 LDCs and 3 LCDCs presented examples of collaborative work under the Local Authority Community Call. These included inputs on foodbanks, remote supports and outreach to disadvantaged families and children, older people, and the long-term unemployed. There were 365 attendees on-line over the three events and 215 individuals attended at least one of the support events.

3.8 ESF Funding

In 2021, the financial claim submitted to the European Social Fund for co-financing SICAP was accepted and 90% of the value has been reimbursed to DRCD. The remaining 10% is due for reimbursement following completion of the EU audit in 2022. This process was critical in securing €40 million from the EU for the Irish state and involved the submission and review of information regarding eligible costs and supporting documentation. The collaboration of LCDCs and LDCs with verification exercises and audit was vital to this success.

⁸ The My Journey: Distance Travelled Tool (DTT) is a validated tool developed for SICAP which measures soft skills relevant to employment, education and training, and personal development. It measures five soft skills areas: literacy and numeracy confidence, confidence, goal setting and self-efficacy, communication skills, connection with others, and general work readiness.

Reporting on the monitoring data for SICAP was ongoing in 2021 and involved both the LDCs and LCDCs updating ESF exit data for clients, a verification process, and transfer of the data to the eCohesion system. The work of LDCs and LCDCs in supporting and completing the process is commended.

Work has also begun on the new round of ESF+ funding and SICAP is applying to secure co-funding of around €70million for 2021–2027. Minor regulatory changes are anticipated once the ESF+ Operational Programme is approved (due Q2 2022), and these will be communicated to LCDCs and LDCs in the latter half of 2022.

4. KPI REPORT SUMMARY

In 2021, 2,646 Local Community Groups (LCGs) were supported by SICAP, leading to an achievement of 120% on this Key Performance Indicator (KPI). In total, 26,483 individuals were supported in 2021, and this represents an achievement by LDCs of 113% of the target.

In 2020, each KPI target was revised downwards due to the impact of COVID-19 in Ireland. Targets in 2021 were marginally reduced from the revised 2020 targets. However, in both 2020 and 2021, LDCs engagement with LCGs significantly exceeded all targets set. This is an indication of the strength and depth of connections that LDCs have with LCGs through SICAP.

There was a small decline in individuals on the SICAP caseload through the pandemic, though overall engagement remained strong overall throughout. In 2021, LDCs supported 26,483 people, equating to 111% of the revised target and almost 98% of the last pre-pandemic target set for 2020. LDCs have particularly noted that the flexibility around the programme requirements was vital to attaining these levels of achievement.

Table 2 Key Performance Indicators 2021

Key Performance Indicator	Original 2020 KPI ⁹ Target	2021 KPI Target	Actual 2021 results	Percentage achieved
KPI 1: Number of LCGs on the caseload	2,266	2,197	2,646	120%
KPI 2: Number of individuals on the caseload	27,073	23,484	26,483	113%
Disadvantaged communities: % of individuals living in disadvantaged areas	29%	29%	30%	N/A

⁹ Pre-pandemic target

5. 2021 FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY

1. SICAP budget vs costs charged

The budget vs spend results under each of main budget categories of SICAP are set out below:

Table 3 SICAP Budget and Spend 2021

	Total 2021 Budget €	Total Cost Reported €	Cash on Hand/Overspend against budget €
Goal 1	12,389,830	12,528,367	-138,537
Goal 2	17,237,630	17,409,376	-171,746
Administration Costs	9,540,970	9,453,569	87,401
Total Budget 2021	39,168,430	39,391,312	-222,882
2021 Cash on hand c/f	1,865,247	-	1,865,247
Total amount available to spend 2021	41,033,677	39,391,312	1,642,365

2. Payments

The payments made under SICAP for the year to 31 December 2021 are set out below:

Table 4 SICAP Payments 2021

	Lot payments excluding VAT made to Pls €	VAT payments made to Pls €
Total	39,148,753	594,260

3. Remedies

No remedies were applied under the programme for 2021 as all Pls achieved their KPI 1 and KPI 2 targets and all Pls reported administration spend within the 25% of total budget threshold.

For a more detailed breakdown of figures in relation to the above and commentary on same, please see Appendix B of this report.

6. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMME BENEFICIARIES

SICAP provides supports to Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises, and Individuals as well as Children and Families. It also provides non-caseload supports to Event Attendees and there is a strong focus on collaboration throughout SICAP. A snapshot of the supports recorded on IRIS in 2021 against all these categories is shown in Table 3 below. This chapter provides a detailed description and analysis of the supports provided, the outcomes and progression achieved, as well as trends to monitor in the future.

Table 5 Numbers of beneficiaries supported by SICAP in 2021

Total number of SICAP beneficiaries in 2021		
2,646 <i>Local Community Groups</i>	501 <i>Social Enterprises</i>	26,483 <i>Individuals</i>
22,626 <i>Event Attendees</i>	35,942 <i>Children and parents</i>	495 <i>LDC Collaborations</i>



Local Community Groups (LCGs)

2,646

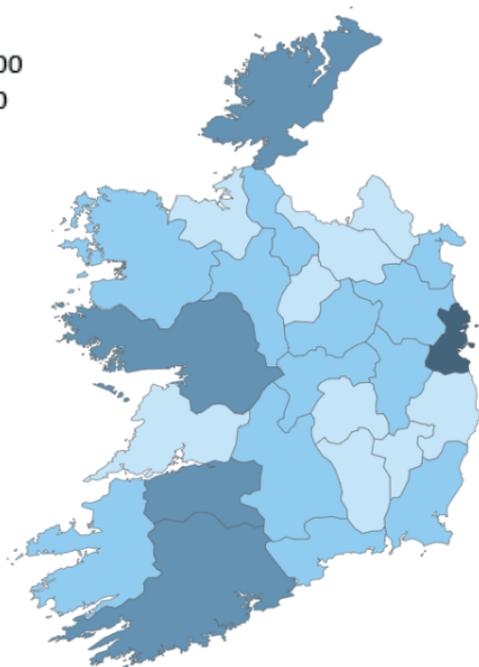
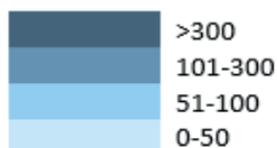
Local Community Groups supported in 2021

542 of these groups were new to SICAP

2021 target exceeded by 20%



Number of LCGs:



- On average, an LCG received five interventions in 2021
- 48% of LCGs targeted people living in disadvantaged communities
- 12% of LCGs targeted disadvantaged children and families

335

LCGs received grants

€336,988

total amount of grant funding allocated

25% ↓

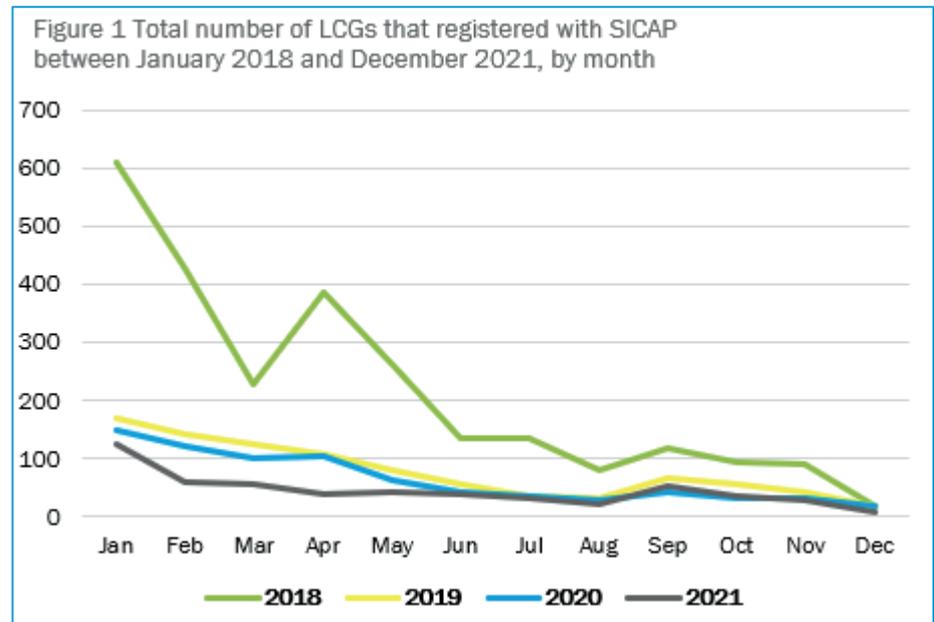
in total grant funding versus 2020

6.1 Local Community Groups (LCGs)

A total of **4,844** Local Community Groups have been supported by SICAP since 2018. In 2021, **2,646** groups were supported. This is 40 groups fewer than in 2020, a slight decrease of 1.5%. The national key performance indicator target was exceeded by 13%.

6.1.1 LCG Profile

In 2021, 79% of local community groups supported were existing groups that were already working with SICAP. A total of 542 (21%) were new registrations which is down from the figure for 2020 (744, 28%). Interestingly, 41% of new registrations were at pre-development stage compared to 25% of existing groups. It is encouraging to see new groups forming in areas and being supported to progress through



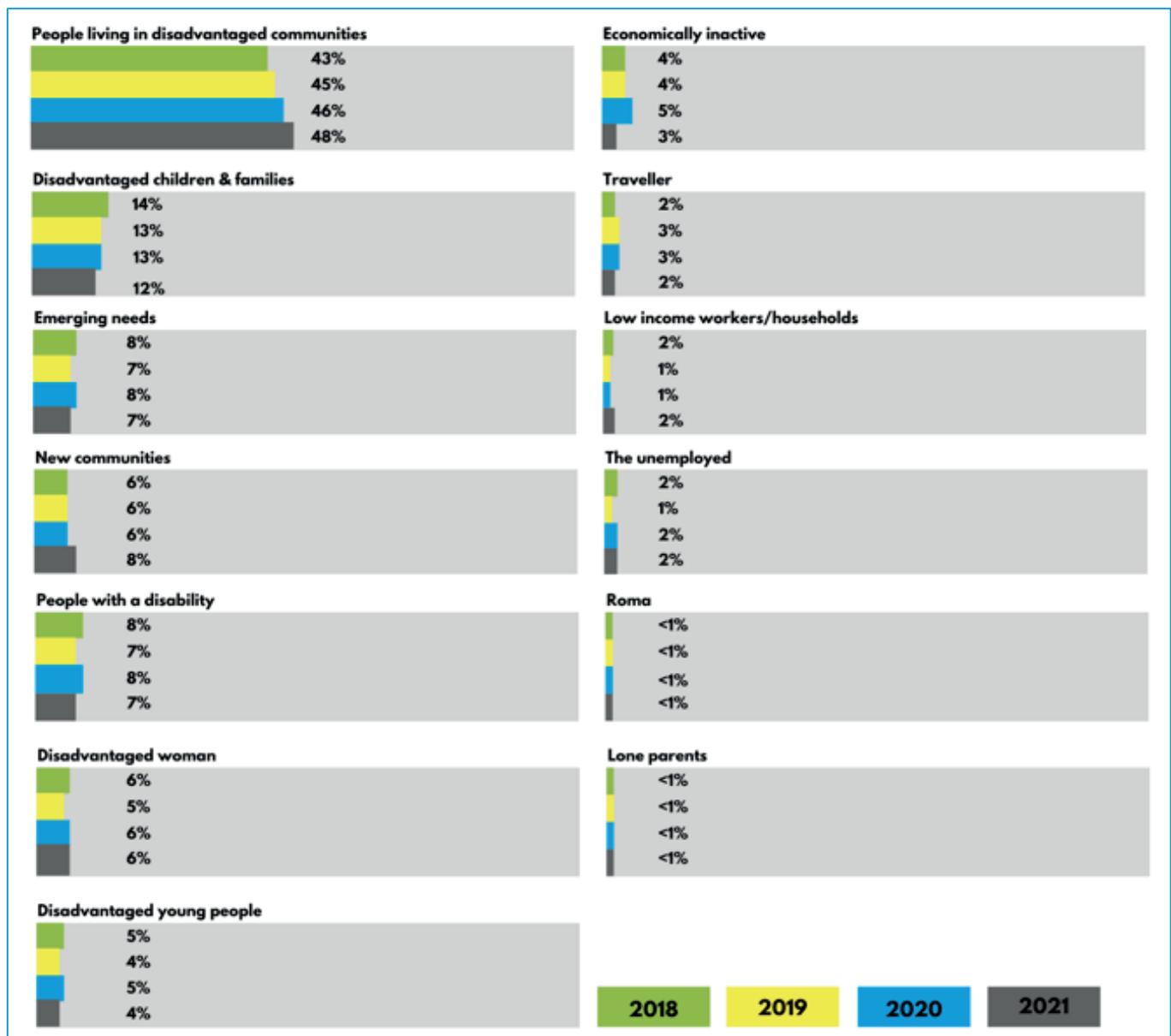
SICAP. Over half (60%) of new registrations in 2021 were not members of the Public Participation Network, however, given LCG trends in SICAP, it is envisaged that this will change as LCGs develop and progress. Since 2018, 24% of LCGs who registered as not being a member of PPN have gone on to join the PPN.

The primary target groups of LCGs supported by SICAP has remained broadly consistent since 2018. *People living in disadvantaged communities* remains the primary focus of the majority of SICAP-supported LCGs, with **48%** of LCGs supporting this target group. The proportion of LCGs supporting this target group has grown year on year, starting at 43% in 2018. The share of LCGs targeting the remainder of SICAP groups has been almost static since 2018, with variations of plus or minus 1 percent each year.

The only exceptions to this in 2021 were LCGs supporting *New Communities*, which increased from 6% to 8% and LCGs targeting the *Economically Inactive* which dropped from 5% in 2020 to 3% in 2021. It is possible that the 2020 numbers for LCGs supporting *Economically Inactive* were related to sudden shutdown of a large proportion of Ireland's economy and the ensuing community initiatives that sprung up to meet this need. This need may not have been as high in 2021. LDCs have highlighted greater needs for *New Communities* since the start of the pandemic. It is probable that new LCGs have emerged in response to this need, or that existing LCGs have started to engage with SICAP to meet these growing needs. Supporting this theory, it is notable that 10% of new LCG registrations are comprised of groups supporting *New Communities*.

Groups primarily supporting Travellers and/or Roma continued to have low representation on the caseload. However, IRIS data shows that groups supporting Travellers and/or Roma receive a **greater intensity of supports** than other groups. Using the median as average, LCGs supporting Travellers and/or Roma received 13 support interventions in 2021.

Figure 2 LCGs on the 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 caseloads, broken down by primary target group



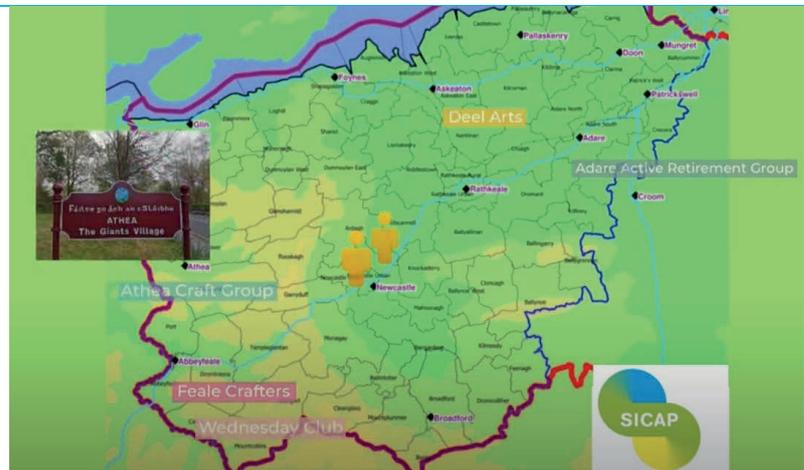
6.1.2 LCG Identified needs and challenges

LDCs identified a range of support needs and challenges identified by LCGs during 2021. Broadly, these needs and challenges were as follows:

- Support to counter **the loss of momentum and motivation** among LCGs because of the changing requirements, varying restrictions, and mixed capabilities to meet and engage online.
- Struggles to **retain and recruit volunteers**.

- Challenges to find **suitable spaces and venues** to meet safely, thus limiting ability for activities and social engagement.
- **Loss of income** due to reduced fundraising opportunities.
- Support with **governance and compliance**. For LCGs who are registered charities, many needed support around compliance with the Charities' Governance Code. 2021 was the first year that charities were required to report on compliance with the Code.
- **Health and safety guidance** around re-opening and/or maintaining operations safely.
- Support with **sourcing funding** and completing funding applications.
- Concerns among LCGs around **mental health issues** in the wider community and **increasing loneliness and social isolation**, particularly among vulnerable people.
- **Digital connectivity issues**, such as poor broadband connectivity, lack of IT equipment, or limited IT proficiencies.

CONNECTING RURAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH CRAFTS IN WEST LIMERICK



2021 started with another wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. People were restricted from travelling beyond 5 kilometres of their homes. Schools closed. Community activities stopped. Vulnerable people were once again at risk of becoming increasingly isolated. WLR's SICAP team decided to develop a creative response to addressing these issues.

To this end, they teamed up with five LCGs widely dispersed throughout West Limerick (see map) to deliver the *Signs of Positivity* project. WLR also targeted their existing individual clients and in total, 30 people took part. Participants in the project were aided by a written booklet, YouTube clips, weekly facilitated sessions and group chat support. WLR SICAP staff provided considerable 'tech supports' to the participants to ensure they could access and fully participate. *Signs of Positivity* offered a tangible way for people to connect and engage during a bleak time. It acted as a catalyst to reinvigorate the community groups involved, re-establish lost connections – and make some new ones - and helped create a sense of hope and bonds within communities.

6.1.3 Interventions and supports provided

The majority (59%) of LCGs received capacity building supports through SICAP in 2021, down from 62% in 2020. These supports were guided by the needs and challenges identified by LCGs as outlined previously. Approximately a third (32%) of LCGs received supports with community planning, the same percentage as in 2020. **Inishowen Development Partnership** led out a large-scale community planning exercise, *EnVision Inishowen*, across the Inishowen peninsula. This process engaged 84 representatives from LCGs across 40 towns, villages, parishes, and townlands. A total of 55 hours of conversations took place during this process, and while the original plan had been to hold in-person meetings, COVID meant that the process needed to move online. The community planning process led to the publication of the *EnVision Inishowen Series Summary Report* which set out wide ranging community priorities across the 10 localities in the peninsula, as well as establishing cross-cutting themes common to all localities.

CAPACITY BUILDING - SUPPORTING COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHARITIES GOVERNANCE CODE

Supporting LCGs with governance and compliance is a recurring need reported annually by LDCs through SICAP. The pandemic brought forth several specific challenges, namely how could groups ensure good governance and adapt policies and procedures to COVID restrictions. SICAP staff worked through these challenges with groups.

2021 was the first year that groups who were registered charities were obliged to report on compliance with the Charities Governance Code. Many SICAP-supported LCGs (and SEs) are registered charities and required additional supports from LDCs in 2021 to ensure they could report satisfactorily on their compliance. LDCs generally met this need in several ways:

- One-to-one mentoring and reviews with SICAP staff
- Dedicated external mentor funded through SICAP to work with groups on specific issues
- Group training and mentoring sessions.

Mayo North East used SICAP funding to employ a temporary governance advisor for 10 months to directly support 22 small charities to implement, maintain and sustain good governance practices. These charities were widely dispersed throughout the Lot. A programme of supports was delivered including one-to-one meetings, weekly workshops with trustees, network workshops and provision of specialised support, for example, around updating Constitutions / Memorandum and Articles of Association, on a needs-led basis.

Since 2018, there has been a 5% decline in SICAP supports provided to LCGs around *participation in decision making structures*, from 14% in 2018 to 9% in 2021. This may be due to COVID-19 and the re-focus of SICAP supports in response to emerging needs.

There has also been 5% decline in supports recorded as *collaboration to address social inclusion and inequality issues*, at 15% in 2018 down to 10% of supports in 2021. Given the level of collaboration that LCGs have carried out to support target groups in the wider community, it seems probable that this support has been underreported, perhaps with supports being recorded under capacity building. There has also been a decline in supports to LCGs to *improve social inclusion & equality issues*, down from 30% in 2018 to 27% in 2021. It is unclear why this is the case, and it is worth monitoring in the future to see if this trend continues and to explore reasons for these declines.

Figure 3 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 LCGs broken down by the types of supports they received through SICAP

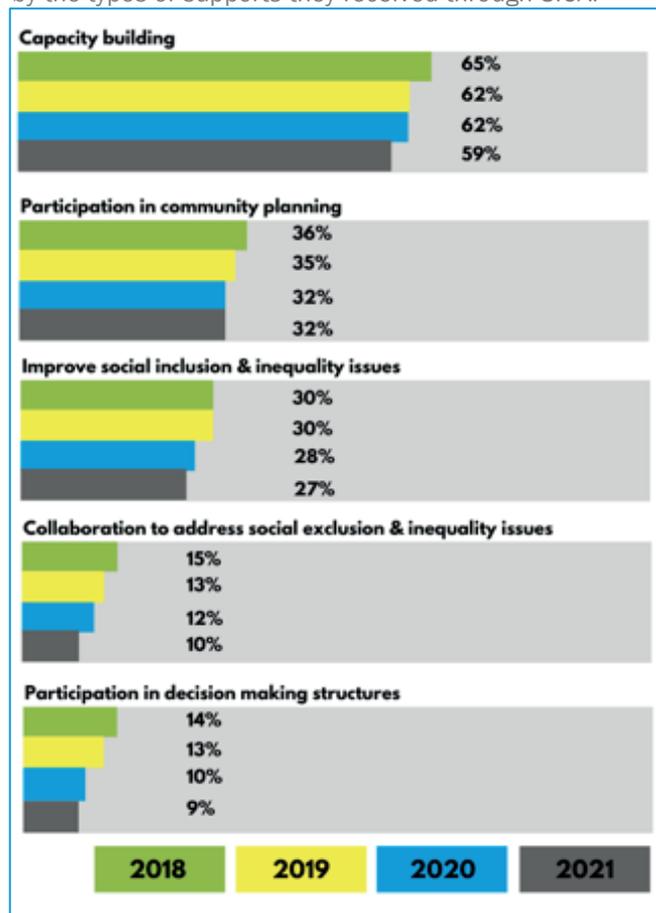
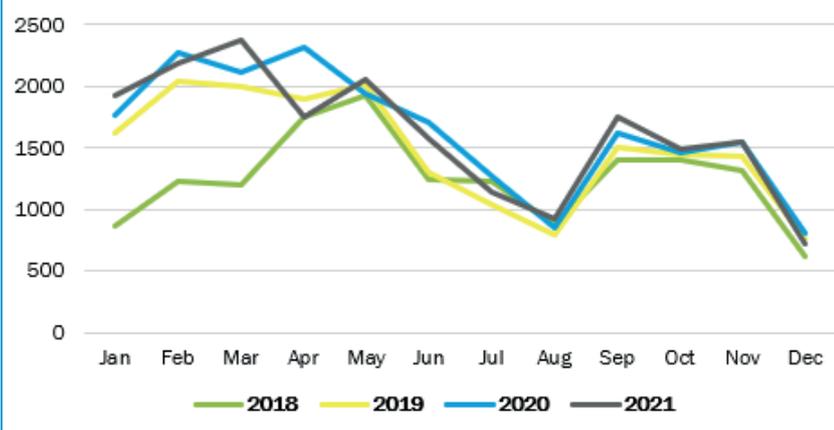


Figure 4 Total number of interventions delivered to LCGs on the 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 caseloads, by month



and re-form.

SICAP also provides financial support to LCGs in the form of grants which can reach a maximum of €2,500, up from €1,500 pre-pandemic. **Fewer LCGs (335) availed of grant funding in 2021** compared with 2020 (408), which resulted in a lower total amount allocated (€336,988 versus €449,433 in 2020). The level of

¹⁰ The 2020 APR reported a median of 4 interventions, but additional data input resulted in an updated figure of 5.

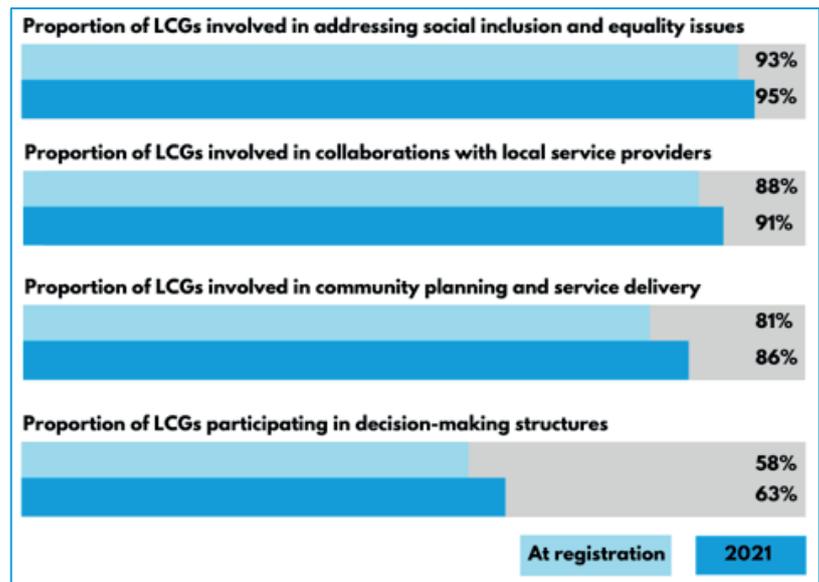
On average, LCGs in 2021 received five interventions, which is on par with previous years (2019 and 2020¹⁰). The peak of LCG registrations was in March, followed by a sharp fall in April, before rising again in May. From May, the pattern of support continued in the same fashion as previous years, that is, a steady decline in support during the summer months before rising again in September as LCGs started to form

funding to LCGs peaked during 2020 due the increased emphasis on LCG grants to meet the needs of communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the allocation for 2021 is still significantly higher than in pre-pandemic years (2018-2019). This suggests that while demand dropped off, LCGs, and the communities they support, were still in need of financial support due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19. The average grant amount allocated per LCG was higher in 2021 (€1,006 vs €964 in 2020).

6.1.4 Outputs achieved

There were small improvements in the activity levels of LCGs across the four key areas measured in the annual support plan (Figure 5)¹¹ following engagement with SICAP. These improvements are similar to those noted in 2020. The proportion of LCGs involved in community planning and service increased from 81% to 86%, while the proportion participating in decision-making structures increased from 58% to 63%. Another area of improvement was LCG membership of the Public Participation Network (PPNs), with 25% (286) of groups who were not members when they registered with SICAP progressing to PPN membership by the end of 2021.

Figure 5 Change in status of LCGs' activity levels from registration to 2021



¹¹ The analysis of LCG progression is based on self-reported changes in activity levels of the LCGs that completed an annual support plan for 2021 but registered between 2018 and 2020 (78%, 2,064).



Social Enterprises (SEs)

Social Enterprises supported in 2021

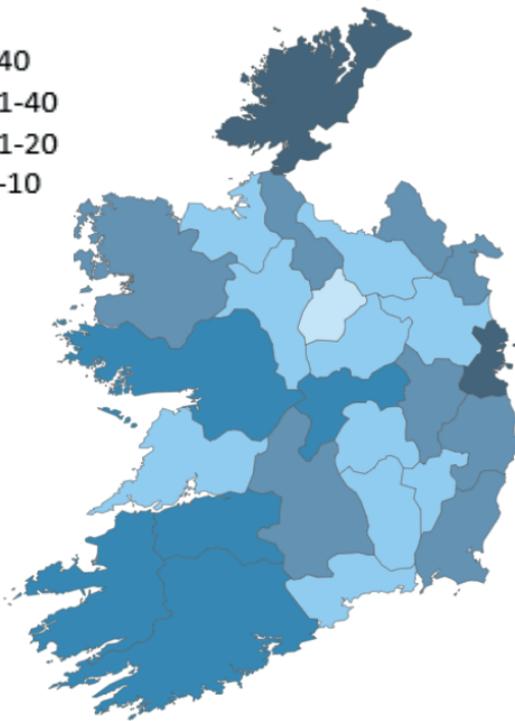
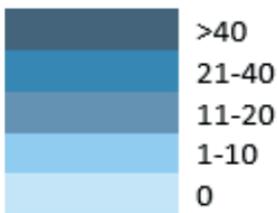
501

154 of these SEs were new to SICAP

12% increase on the SEs supported in 2020



Number of SEs:



- On average, an SE received three interventions in 2021
- 38% of SEs were focused on Economic and Community Development
- 93% of SEs provide training, volunteering or employment opportunities for SICAP target groups

81

SEs received a grant in 2021

€122,016

total amount of grant funding awarded

44% ↑

in total grant funding versus 2020

6.2 Social Enterprises (SEs)

To date, SICAP has supported **815** Social Enterprises. In 2021, the programme supported **501** SEs, which is a 12% increase on the total number supported in 2020. As seen in previous years, a high proportion (31%) of SEs were new registrations during 2021. There have been steady increases in supports to new and established social enterprises year on year, suggesting that SICAP is playing a growing role in social enterprise development nationally.

6.2.1 Profile

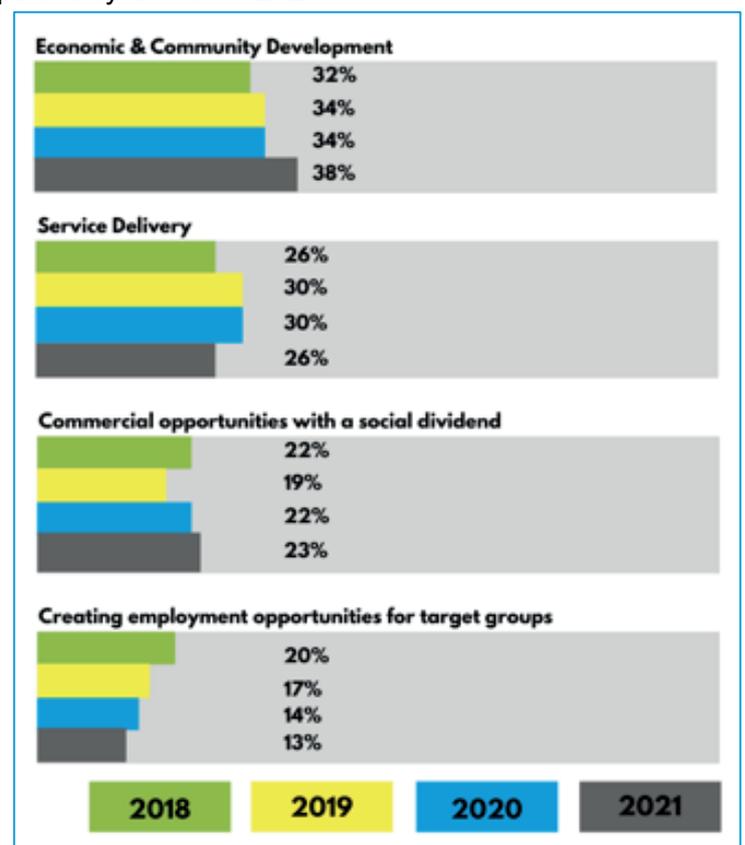
Through SICAP, LDCs provide supports to a wide range of SEs. Like previous years, SICAP continues to reach a high proportion of SEs in early stages of development. 34% of new registrations in 2021 were at the pre-start-up phase or operating for less than one year. However, SICAP continues to engage with long-established SEs also. Almost half (45%) of SEs that registered in 2018-2019 have continued to engage with SICAP in 2021. This indicates that SICAP is successful at pitching SE supports to meet varying needs across the social enterprise spectrum.

Figure 6 2018 - 2021 SEs,
broken down by type

There were some differences in the type of SEs supported by SICAP in 2021 in comparison to previous years. There was a 4% increase in SEs working in economic and community development and this group now comprises 38% of SEs supported, a 6% increase from 2018. There has been a 4% decrease in the number of SEs supported that are focussed on service delivery, down from 30% to 26%, and a slight increase in supports to SEs working on commercial opportunities with a social dividend, up to 23% from 22%.

The decrease in supports to SEs creating employment opportunities for target groups has continued in 2021, with these SEs only making up 13% of those receiving supports under SICAP, in comparison with 20% in 2018.

There has been little change in the sectors of operation compared to 2020. The proportion of SEs involved in the community enterprise sector remains at 25%, and community facilities/infrastructure shows a slight decrease at 23% (25% in 2020). There was some movement in the other sectors e.g., Environment, Health and Sustainable Food (9% in 2021 vs 7% in 2020) and Employment (5% in 2021 vs 7% in 2020).



Most SEs (93%) were providing training, volunteering, or employment opportunities for SICAP target groups in 2021, which is up slightly from 2020 (92%).

6.2.2 SE Identified needs and challenges

SEs identified a range of needs and challenges during 2021 and many are the same as those identified by LCGs. Additional broad needs and challenges identified were as follows:

- Varying levels of **commercial experience** among SEs.
- Staff and volunteer **burnout**, particularly among SEs who were responding to increased needs due to the pandemic.
- Many SE's who were not in receipt of state funding **struggled to stay solvent**.
- There was a good range of online training options for SEs, but as the year went on there was an increasing amount of '**online fatigue**' and **disengagement**.

6.2.3 Interventions and supports provided

SEs received an average¹² of three interventions which is similar to previous years. LDC approaches to SEs needs were broadly comparable to those provided to LCGs, that is, one-to-one guidance, specialised mentoring and group supports. However, LDCs were able to greatly expand the levels of supports they could provide to social enterprises in 2021 through additional resources coming through from various funds, such as the Social Enterprise Regeneration Programme (SERP)¹³. This dedicated training and mentoring programme for SEs was delivered by 12 LDC regional consortia, covering the entire country. Many LDCs have reported that SICAP SE staff supported the rollout of SERP out locally. SERP actions particularly focussed on four areas: strategic planning/income diversification; digital innovation; capacity building; and governance support.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES NETWORKING FOR SUCCESS

The Social Enterprise Regeneration Programme, led out in the main by SICAP SE staff, is a strong example of networking and collaborating to benefit social enterprises locally. However, there are other examples throughout the country of SICAP using networks as a tool to support and sustain social enterprise.

- **Donegal Local Development Company (DLDC)**, through SICAP, created the Social Enterprise Network Donegal (SEND) to act as a support structure for social enterprises in Donegal. 49 social enterprises have actively engaged with SEND in 2021. SEND support includes intensive one-to-one support, a monthly newsletter, specialised training, and a structure to support

¹² Median was used to calculate the average.

¹³ The Social Enterprise Regeneration Fund was announced by Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys TD, in February 2021. It was an €800,000 training and mentoring programme designed to help SEs recover from the impact of COVID-19. It was administered by the Irish Local Development Network and was delivered by LDCs throughout the country on a regional basis.

networking and collaboration. SEND support has also leveraged in €189,000 to support SEs in 2021.¹⁴

- Through SICAP, a **Social Enterprise Community of Practice (SECOP)** formed in 2019 between Northside Partnership, Dublin South City Partnership, Dublin Northwest Partnership, Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership, Dublin Inner City Community Co-operative, and Empower Local Development Company. Initially SECOP was formed to apply for Dormant Accounts funding to support social enterprises and this project ended in March 2021. SECOP proved successful, both in term of benefits to SEs and for the LDCs. LDCs reported that by working together through SICAP they were able to create connections with a wider group of social enterprises, who in turn benefitted from the combined resources and expertise on offer. SECOP is continuing to operate, using SICAP resources, into 2022 under a new strand of funding.

A total of 81 SEs received grant funding through the programme to support their work in 2021. This is an increase of 27% on the number of SEs that received a grant in 2020. The **total grant amount** allocated also **increased significantly** from €84,753 to €122,016, however there was a decrease on the average grant amount allocated (€1,506 in 2021 vs €1,884 in 2020). This overall increase may be explained by the additional needs of SEs re-opening after long closures due to COVID-19 restrictions. The majority of grant funding (70%) was used to purchase equipment and supplies – most likely to address COVID health and safety requirements – and a further 12% was used for professional services.

6.2.4 Outputs achieved

There was an increase in the number of social enterprises that created jobs in 2021, with 18 SEs creating a total of 54 jobs (32 full-time and 28 part-time) compared to 2020 (28 jobs, 14 full-time and 14 part-time). This is a positive achievement, particularly considering the challenging labour market in 2021.

¹⁴ In 2022, Pobal will be working with LDCs on a comprehensive research paper examining the role of SICAP in leveraging in additional funding.



Individuals

26,483

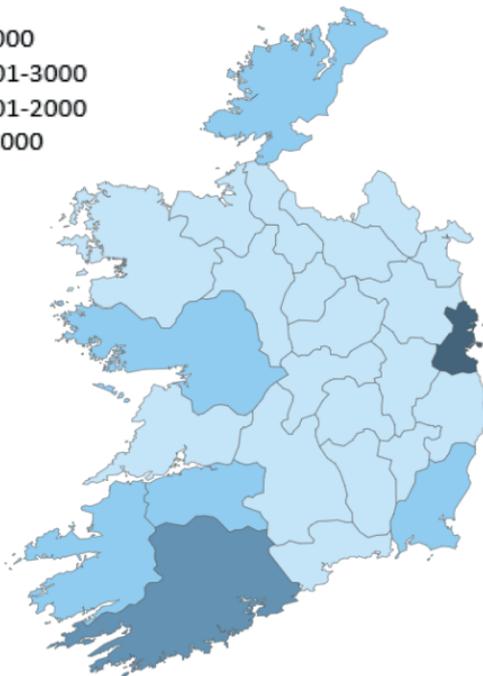
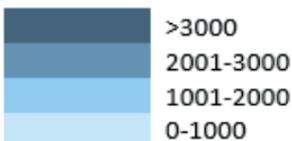
Individuals supported in 2021

1% increase on people supported in 2020

2021 target exceeded by 13%



Number of individuals:



- On average, an individual received three interventions in 2021
- More long-term than short-term unemployed people supported in 2021
- 13% were lone parents
- 3% were Travellers

38%

participated in a lifelong learning activity

6%

succeeded in finding employment

7%

set up their own business

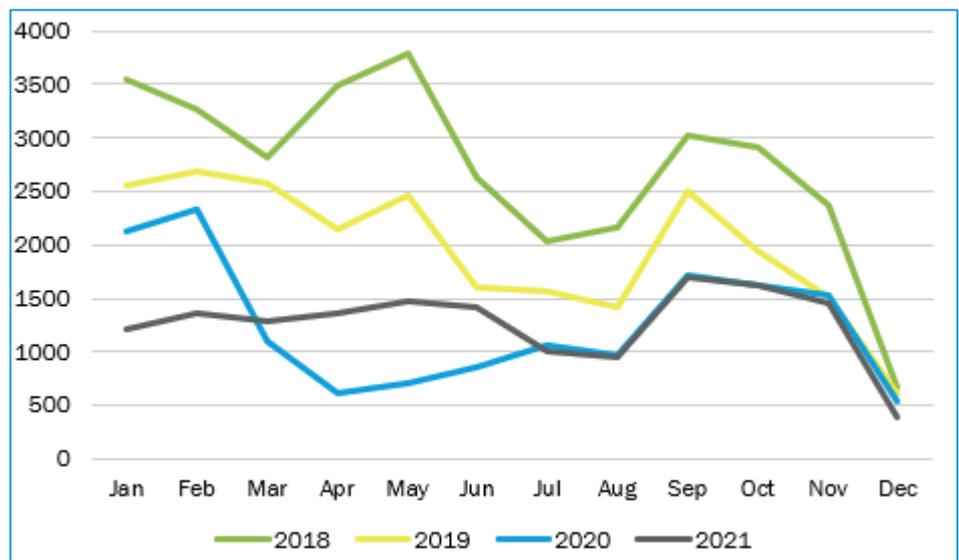
6.3 Individuals

Since SICAP started in 2018, 86,640 people have been supported in total. In 2021, 26,483 were supported through SICAP, exceeding the KPI target by 13%. This was a small increase (108) in the number of individuals supported in 2021 in comparison with 2020¹⁵.

6.3.1 Profile

Over half of people (58%) on the 2021 caseload registered with SICAP during the year. This is an increase on new registrations from 2020 (56%) but remains significantly lower than the pre-pandemic period (75%). This suggests that many individuals (42%) already on the caseload for one or more years continued to need supports throughout the duration of pandemic. As Figure 7 shows, there was a near

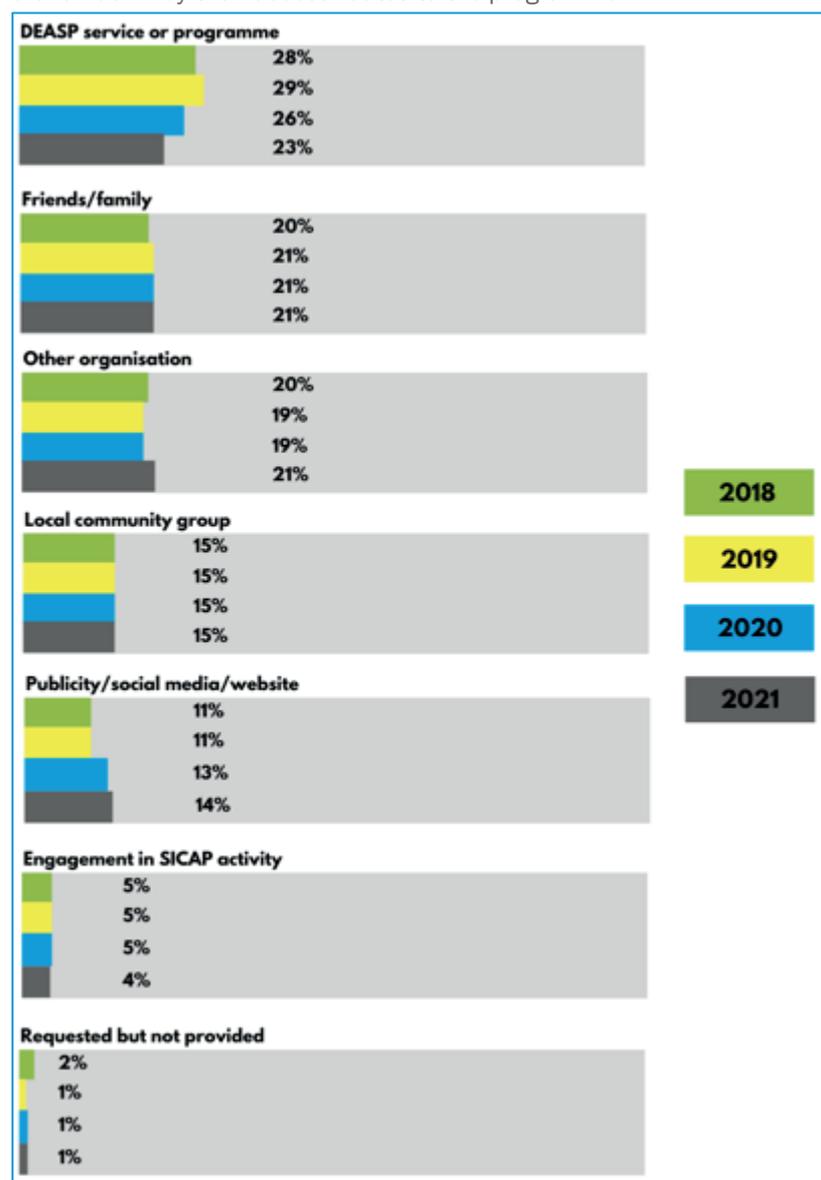
Figure 7 Total number of people that registered with SICAP between January 2018 – December 2021



constant stream of people registering for SICAP supports from January to June. This contrasts with previous years, particularly 2020, when individual registrations dropped dramatically in March and April with the emergence of COVID-19. This strong, steady level of SICAP engagement with new individuals is impressive, considering the severe societal restrictions that were in place. It suggests that LDCs, aided by the flexibility afforded by DRCD and Pobal, came into 2021 prepared to deal with and work through whatever level of public health restrictions were in place. As is the norm, registrations fell during the summer months before rising again in September. The pattern of individual registrations for the latter half of the year follows almost the exact same pattern as 2020.

¹⁵ Based on updated KPI 2 of 26,377 for 2020.

Figure 8 Proportion of individuals on the 2018-2021 caseloads broken down by their access routes to the programme



The proportion of individuals who registered in 2021 that were referred to SICAP from DSP remains lower than before the pandemic (23% in 2021 vs 29% for 2018-2019) while referrals from publicity/social media/website have increased, particularly for women (14% vs 11%). This reflects the changes in engagement strategies by LDCs to deal with the impact of COVID-19.

The participation of women in the programme continues to increase year on year. Women make up 51% of the total caseload to date but account for 56% of the 2021 caseload and 55% of new registrations in 2021.

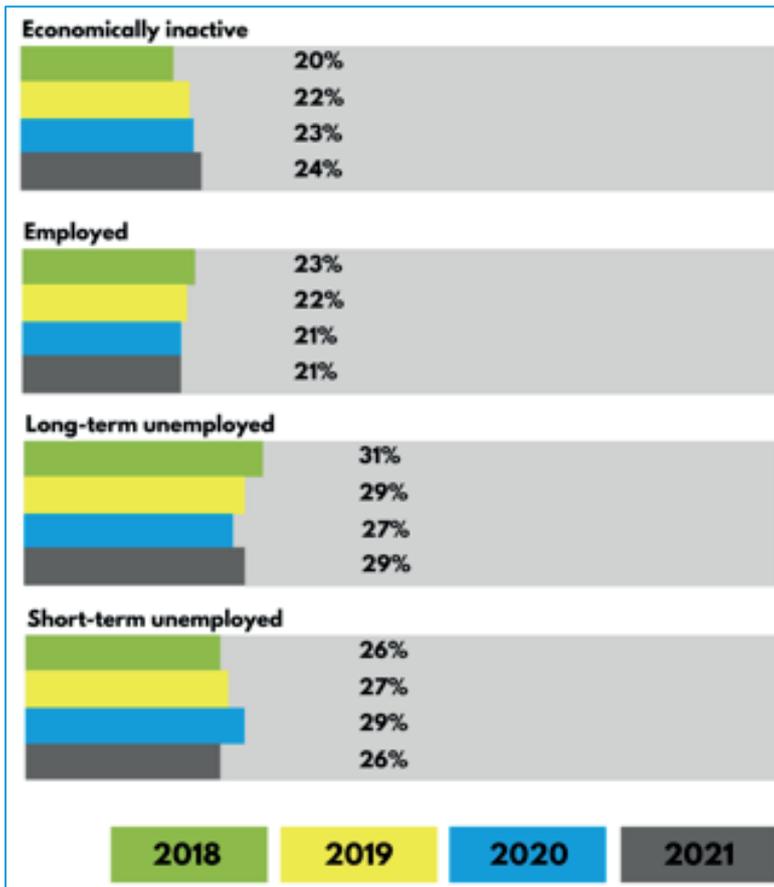
Focus groups of LDCs for the Gender Learning Brief¹⁶ reported that more women were engaging with SICAP due to their willingness to engage in online activities, their demand for health and wellbeing supports, and the increased availability of flexible employment options due to COVID-19. Whereas the reduction in employment opportunities (e.g., in

hospitality and construction), the precarious labour market, and the movement to online supports led to a reduction in men engaging with SICAP. Similar to 2020, a total of 31 individuals (0.12%) who registered as non-binary were supported in 2021.

There were no significant changes in the overall age profile of individuals supported in 2021. However, the age profile of new registrations in 2021 shows that they were more likely to be younger (15-24 years) and less likely to be in over 55 years than those who were already on the caseload.

¹⁶ The learning brief *A Comparison of Women and Men Supported by SICAP* is due to be published by Pobal in 2022.

Figure 9 Proportion of individuals on the 2018-2021 caseloads broken down by principal economic status at registration



As in previous years, unemployed people made up most of 2021's caseload, at 54%¹⁷. This is slight decrease from 2020, a reduction of 157 people. The economically inactive make up a smaller proportion of new registrations (23% vs 26%) than the rest of the caseload in 2021. Unemployed people on the SICAP caseload accounted for over 7% of all unemployed people in Ireland in December 2021, including those in receipt of the COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP)¹⁸.

The proportion of long-term unemployed on the caseload has increased to 29% (28% in 2020) and the proportion of short-term unemployed has dropped to 26%. This is a welcome development as SICAP requires a focus on those furthest from the labour market. Through SICAP, LDCs are asked to

prioritise support for people in that category. Long-term unemployment has been identified as a national priority for SICAP and has been selected as a priority area for the remainder of SICAP in 31 Lots.

While there has been little change overall in the proportion of **people experiencing educational disadvantage** (61% vs 60% in 2020), there is a trend developing regarding a decreasing proportion of lower educational attainment levels amongst new registrations since the start of the pandemic. Those with a lower educational attainment level (secondary or below) account for 60% of new registrations; the percentage of other clients – registered prior to 2021 - with this level of education is 63%.

SICAP target groups have continued to engage with LDCs in approximately the same proportion each year, with relatively marginal increases and decreases. The trend of the year-on-year increase in the number of economically inactive people on the caseload continued in 2021, up from 20% in 2018 to 24% in 2021. Overall, the number of unemployed people declined, both proportionately and in absolute terms.

Previous annual reports have noted the low numbers and static proportions of Travellers and Roma on the overall caseload. It is heartening to see that 19 Lots selected Travellers and Roma as a priority group for the remainder of SICAP, and 2021 data shows a small increase in the proportion of Travellers who

¹⁷ This figure is rounded down. The total unemployed is 14,410 (7,628 long-term unemployed & 6,782 short-term unemployed)

¹⁸ The COVID-19 Adjusted Measure of Unemployment in December 2021 indicated that there were 195,313 people unemployed. This was sourced from the CSO, Monthly Unemployment, January 2022. By contrast, the same measure of unemployment in December 2020 showed that there were 469,695 people unemployed.

received supports through SICAP. Travellers now make up 3% of the overall SICAP individual caseload, up from 2% in each previous year. Similarly, Roma numbers increased too, up from 0.42% in 2020 to 0.78% in 2021, rounded to 1%. While this small increase is welcomed and indicates the effort that SICAP nationally has made to engage with hard-to-reach groups during COVID-19, it remains to be seen if this trend continues through the remainder of SICAP.

There were some strong engagement strategies examples reported by LDCs to support work with Travellers and Roma. Four Lots submitted case studies in 2021 on their work with these target groups¹⁹ and these are summarised below. Pobal is planning to conduct action research in 2022 on LDC's good practice with Travellers and Roma and exploring ways that this could be replicated consistently through SICAP. Engagement with both Travellers and Roma individuals is slightly more intensive than with other client groups, though the trend is not as pronounced as it is with LCGs. Travellers and Roma clients, on average²⁰, received over five interventions in 2021, while the remainder of the caseload received less than four.

2021 CASE STUDIES WITH TRAVELLER AND ROMA GROUPS AS PRIMARY BENEFICIARIES

- **Longford Community Resources** showcased their work with the Roma community in Longford. The video case study, with interviews from Roma people in Slovak, shows how the COVID-19 pandemic led the SICAP team to explore new ways of engaging with this particularly vulnerable community. The case study highlights the communication challenges because of language barriers and the frustration trying to overcome these challenges online. It shows the length that the SICAP team went to build trust with the community and provides a glimpse into the challenges, including extreme poverty, which the Roma community face.
- **Empower's** 2021 case study highlighted collaborative engagement strategies to ensure a community-development approach that supports those most affected by health inequalities. There is an explicit focus on Roma and Traveller health and a range of strategies to address this. These include a Traveller Food Bank, a Roma Food Bank, a Roma Women's project, and a peer-led Roma Intergenerational project as well as various health focussed programmes and activities.
- **South Tipperary Development Company** detailed the lead role of SICAP in enabling and facilitating collaboration between the partners in the Wallers Lot Working Group which aims to improve the lives of the Traveller community residing in the Wallers Lot Halting Site, Cashel. The emphasis of SICAP work was on creating the conditions for sustaining interagency dialogue between the Travellers and statutory bodies, the establishment and provision of support to the working group/advisory group and financial resources.
- **Wexford Local Development** focused on the relationship and synergies between SICAP and the Primary Health Care for Travellers Programme in working with the Traveller community in Co.

¹⁹ See Annex D for a full list of the 2021 case studies

²⁰ Not median in this instance

Wexford before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. It draws out the benefits to Travellers of both teams operating within the context of a larger team and organisation. The role of SICAP in engaging with Travellers is explored through an integrated approach to support participation in education and training, health and wellbeing and employment focused activities.

SICAP recognises that people can face different barriers to social inclusion in Ireland. SICAP uses a Multiple Barriers Measure tool to help identify individuals who face multiple barriers to social and economic inclusion. These barriers are disability, ethnic minority (including asylum seekers and refugees), experience of homelessness/housing exclusion, living in a jobless household, lone parent, and/or having a transport barrier. Individuals who are affected by two or more of the barriers are likely to need more interventions and more intensive supports. There was a slight increase in the proportion of individuals (28%) supported in 2021 who experienced two or more barriers (27% in 2020). This demonstrates a small, but positive trend for the programme over the past four years as LDCs continue making efforts to increase their engagement with this cohort (up from 24% in 2018).

THE ROLE OF SICAP IN SUPPORTING NEW COMMUNITIES

In 2021, Pobal published a Learning Brief on *The Role of SICAP in supporting New Communities*. Joe O'Brien TD, Minister of State at the Department of Rural and Community Development launched the report on 23 March 2021. The report findings indicate that SICAP is strongly aligned with national and international integration frameworks and includes clear examples of good practice specifically contributing to five key factors of integration: employment, education, access to services, social connection, and political participation²¹.

New Communities, with a particular focus on those living in direct provision, has been selected as a national priority target group for the remainder of SICAP. A review of the LDC's Annual Progress Reports and case studies for 2021 continues to show a strong focus of SICAP work on this target group. A sample of broad areas of work, informed by the Learning Brief and an analysis of SICAP Case Studies and Annual Progress Reports, along with specific examples, is provided below.

Theme

General trend

LDCs identified community events, often designed around food or culture, as a useful tool for introducing new communities to SICAP, after which necessary supports can be provided.

LDC initiative

In 2021 **South West Mayo Development Company** created the Diverse Food Mayo project during the COVID19 shutdown. Migrants living in Mayo created short videos preparing traditional dishes which were then posted on a Facebook page. The project immediately struck a chord with the wider public, with thousands of views and overall positive engagement. The project steering group saw the potential to reach an even-wider audience through an interactive recipe book, with hand-drawn illustrations by one of the project participants. This book was launched in December to coincide with International Migrants' Day. *(Hand-drawn illustration from SWMDC's Diverse Food Mayo cookbook available via [Diverse Food Mayo International Migrants Day - \(southmayo.com\)](#))*



Community integration

General trend

Children and families' activities, such as sport, summer camps, and recreational activities, were recognised by LDCs as a useful tool for bringing people from different cultures together. During COVID-19, some LDCs delivered arts and craft packs to families living in direct provision and organised regular activities.

LDC initiative

Following the school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, **West Cork Development Partnership (WCDDP)** worked with a primary school in Bandon to set up English language classes on an afterschool basis. 50% of the children in that primary school are from New Communities and the school closures delayed English language acquisition and hindered integration into the local community. The classes ran weekly, from February to March 2021 online, and then until July in person. In total, 17 children were supported, and 25 parents were directed to Fáilte Isteach English classes, also co-ordinated through SICAP. Other young people were also referred to SICAP for English language support, primarily young people who were waiting for a space in secondary school. This support was provided on a one-to-one basis, primarily through volunteers coordinated through SICAP.



(West Cork Development Partnership providing English language afterschool support)

Children & family supports

²¹ Pobal (March 2021) *The Role of SICAP in Supporting New Communities Learning Brief*

General trend

The Learning Brief on New Communities found that members of New Communities were more likely than other SICAP clients to take part in lifelong learning activities, with 53% taking part in contrast to 48% of other clients. This is especially the case for asylum seekers, where 65% of asylum seekers participated

LDC initiative

Lifelong learning for integration

Southside Partnership (SSP) has a dedicated SICAP-funded Women's programme which particularly engages with women from New Communities in the Dun Laoghaire–Rathdown area. The Women's programme supports networking, capacity building, personal development, and education, engaging in a two-way integration process and in taking on leadership roles. Courses and events include Personal Development, Job Seeking Skills, Health & Wellbeing, Leadership Skills, and Arts and Crafts, including sewing, upcycling, and many art forms. The women who participate in the programmes are encouraged to share their skills. At the time of writing the SICAP 2021 case study, SSP had provided individual supports to 42 women from New Communities through the Women's programme that year.



(SSP Multicultural Women's Mini-Festival, June 2021 via [Multicultural Women's Mini Festival](#))

General trend

The Learning Brief found that asylum seekers were more likely than all other clients to receive labour market supports, highlighting what LDCs have described as an eagerness amongst asylum seekers to participate in economic and social life in Ireland.

Labour market supports for integration

LDC initiative

SICAP in **Leitrim Development Company** worked with the Food Hub in Drumshanbo (which is also managed by Leitrim Development Company) to support people living in direct provision to access hospitality related training. This involved recruiting people for the courses in line with personal action plans and ensuring transport barriers were overcome. When training moved online due to COVID, SICAP loaned laptops to ensure those living in direct provision could access the course and made sure all had suitable equipment and ingredients to do the course remotely.

General trend

A key finding in the Learning Brief on New Communities was that collaborative and coordinated approaches with partner organisations were an effective way of ensuring that New Communities could access a comprehensive suite of supports.

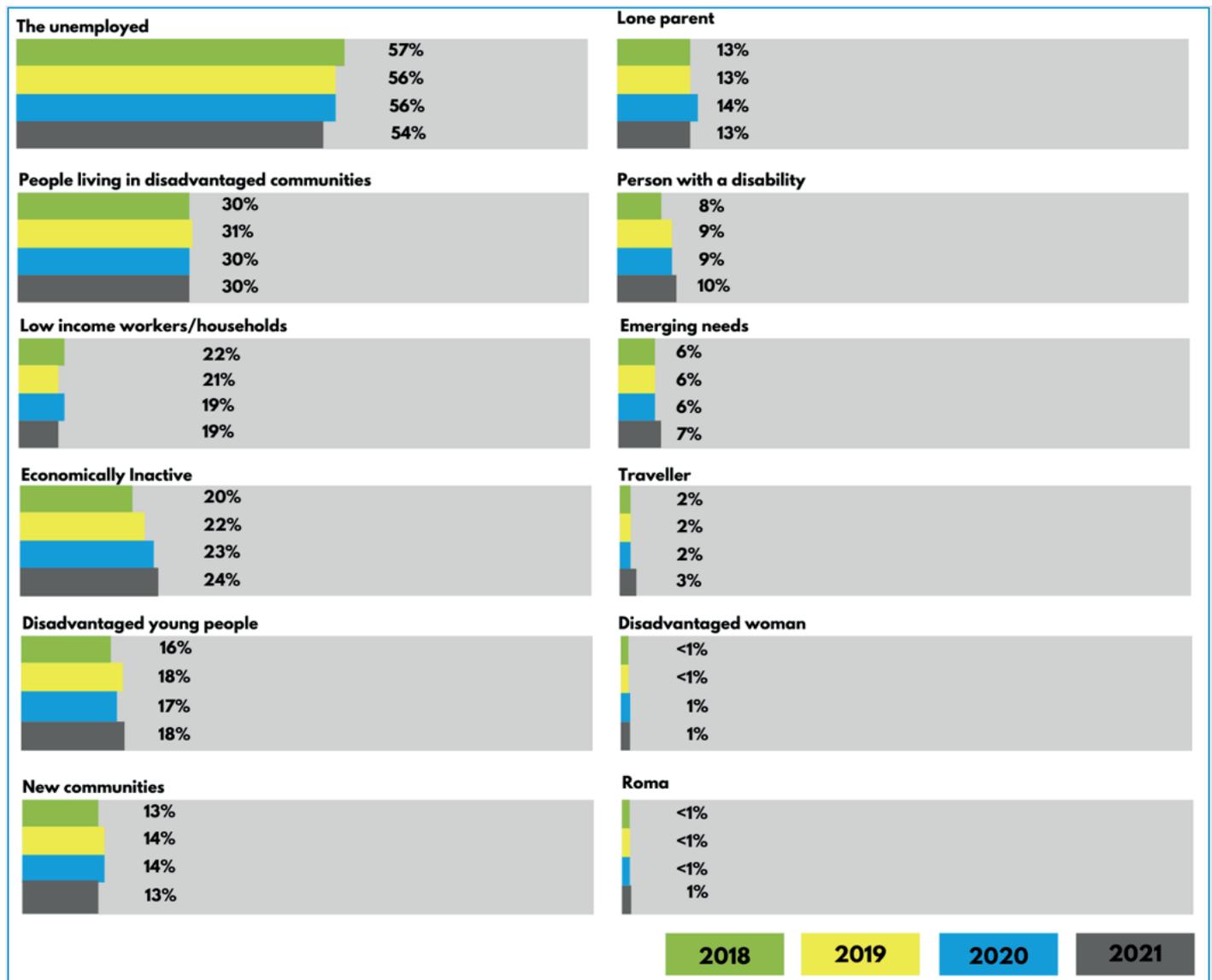
LDC initiatives

Collaborative & Coordinated Approaches

Roscommon LEADER Partnership's (RLP) 2021 case study focussed on the lead role that RLP's SICAP team has taken in developing an interagency response to social exclusion in Ballaghaderreen, with a particular focus on New Communities in the town. Ballaghaderreen has a diverse population and is also home to over 100 Syrian refugees living in an Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre (EROC) in the town.

The case study demonstrates the measures SICAP has taken to identify needs through research, consultations and networking. It has highlighted how SICAP has taken the findings of this research and worked with local groups and Tusla to secure dedicated funding for a Family Resource Centre. RLP also worked with Roscommon County Council, the ETB and Roscommon County Childcare Committee to provide space for a crèche to support the Syrian community to engage in English classes and SICAP personal development courses and community education, whilst also providing for the social and developmental needs of the children.

Figure 10 Proportion of individuals on the 2018–2021 caseloads broken down by target group at registration



6.3.2 Individual identified needs and challenges

LDCs identified a wide range of needs and challenges presenting from individuals from SICAP target groups in 2021, the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Broadly, these needs and challenges were as follows:

- An increase in the number of people looking for **health and wellbeing** supports and/or presenting with **mental health** issues, particularly high levels of anxiety.
- Support to **maintain motivation** in individuals in a quickly changing environment with few certainties.
- Some LDCs reported that hard to reach target groups, including Travellers and Roma, became harder to reach due to **fewer opportunities for in-person engagement**. However, there are variances between LDCs around this. As previously noted, national IRIS data shows a small increase in the proportion of Travellers and Roma who received supports through SICAP in 2021.
- **Language barriers** made it particularly difficult to work with vulnerable migrants online. Even when face-to-face meetings were possible, LDCs reported challenges trying to communicate wearing a mask and maintaining social distance.

- Advice and guidance supports were needed to help people **access mainstream services**, including social welfare, online.
- Need to support people in **precarious employment/self-employment situations**, and those looking to reskill in a **changing labour market**.
- **Isolation, loneliness**, and the need for **social connection** was commonly reported by LDCs.
- **Overcrowded accommodation** was reported as an issue, particularly amongst Roma, Travellers, and migrants working in precarious jobs.
- The **digital divide** remained an issue – broadband connectivity was a challenge in some areas, there was a lack of access to IT devices, and basic digital skills remained out of reach for many.

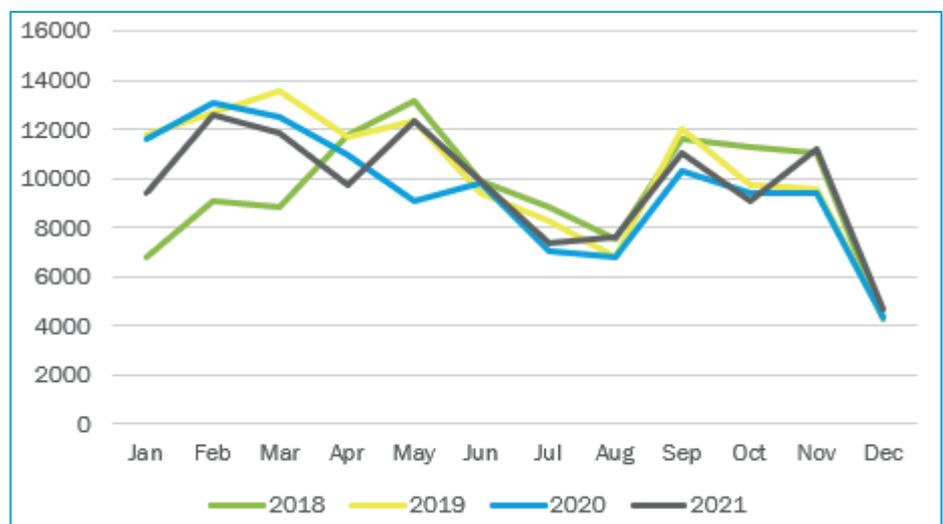
6.3.3 Interventions and supports provided

Individuals engage with SICAP for a wide range of reasons. This can include personal development needs, a desire to be more engaged in the community, support with getting a job, or assistance with becoming self-employed. SICAP is designed to work with people on a needs-led basis, supporting them to develop and follow through on their own goals. On average²², individuals supported by SICAP received

three interventions during 2021 which is similar to previous years. The delivery of interventions does not appear to have been impacted much by COVID-19 restrictions compared with pre-pandemic years.

There was no change in the proportion of individuals receiving **labour market supports** (27%) but it is still below the pre-pandemic levels (31%). As observed in 2020, LDCs continued to support those who lost their jobs due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, due to the economic climate and the significant impact on some sectors (e.g., retail and hospitality), LDCs reported a change in the type of employment supports required by clients. There was an increasing need to support people's self-confidence and there was a marked shift to support employment within construction. This is reflected in Table 5 where the percentage of people who took part in a construction course in 2021 was 28%, up significantly from 2020 when the equivalent figure stood at 13%. The percentage of people taking part in personal development courses also increased, up from 29% in 2020 to 37% in 2021.

Figure 11 Total number of interventions delivered to people on the 2018-2022 caseload by month



²² Median was used to calculate the average.

The gender analysis²³ focus groups also found that more women, particularly those with caring responsibilities, were engaging with SICAP to explore the more flexible labour market options available as a result of COVID-19 which removed some barriers such as transport and childcare.

There was an increase in the proportion of people receiving **pre-start up self-employment supports** (19%) in 2021 which was a positive development, but it is still below the pre-pandemic levels (22% in 2019). **South West Mayo Development Company** reported that heightened fears of another shut down during the last quarter of 2021 resulted in many SICAP clients pausing their enterprise plans until they could project into the future with more certainty. Some LDCs also reported a decline in referrals from DSP, which could have an impact on the numbers accessing enterprise supports. As the overall decline in referrals was only 3% however, it seems likely that there were considerable local variances.

The increased awareness of, and need for, mental wellbeing and self-care supports was highlighted by LDCs during the pandemic. This supports the findings of the *Healthy Ireland Survey 2021* which interviewed a representative sample of the population (approximately 7,500 people) between October 2020 and March 2021. Of the respondents, 81% reported feeling less socially connected during COVID restrictions while 30% said that their mental health had declined during the pandemic. The proportion of people identified as having a probable mental health problem rose from 10% in the 2016 survey to 15% in 2020/2021²⁴.

These findings are reflected in SICAP through the ongoing higher uptake of **personal skills and wellbeing supports** (28% in 2021 vs 19% in 2018). This was particularly amongst women, who are more likely than men to avail of these types of supports²⁵. LDCs responded to this demand through a variety of means including through community education-type programmes such as gardening, cooking, crafts, and yoga, as well as helping participants build resilience and confidence, improve their wellbeing, and deal with some of the personal impacts of COVID-19. Examples reported in 2021 include **IRD Duhallow** delivering 'Forrest Bathing' sessions, where SICAP clients learned about self-healing through nature in an outdoor space. **West Cork Development Partnership** held 'walk and talk' sessions with parents, particularly aimed at parents living in small apartments with limited space. The goal of these sessions was to increase wellbeing and to provide a support and focus to positively think about future opportunities. **Sligo LEADER Partnership** provided life coaching to foster self-confidence, especially for women.

Some LDCs delivered programmes with a more explicit focus on mental health: **Donegal Local Development Company** delivered a *Mind Wellness* programme in the Gaeltacht area, while **SECAD** developed a *Personal Development and Wellbeing* programme and made it available as a reusable learning class on their Learning Management System (LMS). **SECAD** also reported an additional renewed support via a new Occupational Therapist (OT) in the Midleton area towards the end of the year.

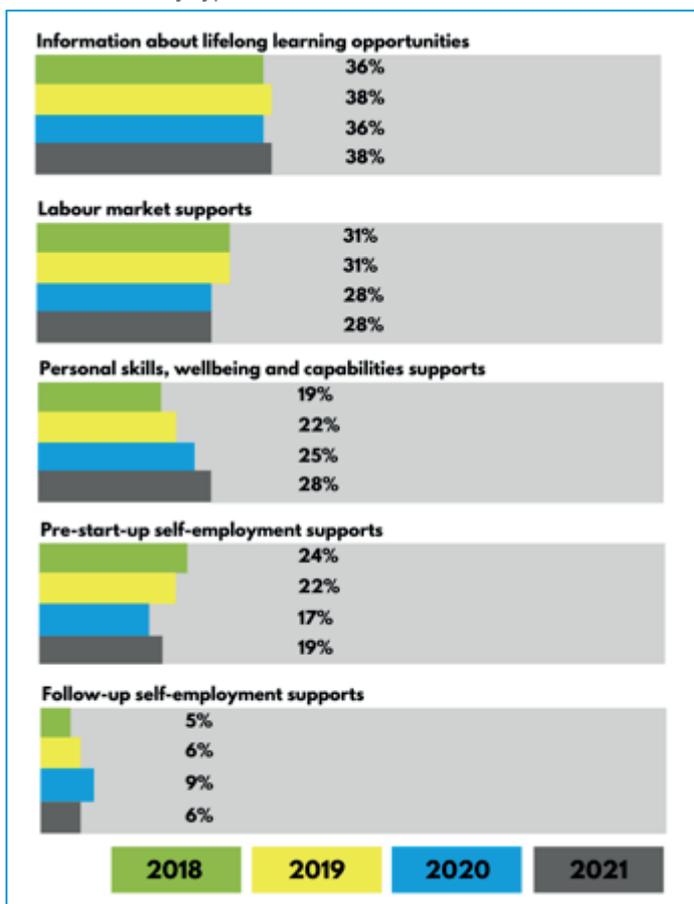
²³ The learning brief *A Comparison of Women and Men Supported by SICAP* is due to be published by Pobal in 2022.

²⁴ Institute of Public Health (16th February 2022) "Blog: Impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of people living on the island of Ireland"

²⁵ The learning brief *A Comparison of Women and Men Supported by SICAP* is due to be published by Pobal in 2022.

The roll out of the My Journey: Distance Travelled Tool, which was hampered by COVID-19 restrictions, will also likely lead to more personal development supports addressing some of the areas for improvement identified by participants. It should be noted that 66% of people who get personal wellbeing supports are female. The LDC focus groups for the gender learning brief reported that this is in part due to a demand for confidence building, particularly from those who are caring for children/family or have been out of the workforce for extended periods, as well as the demand for personal development activities from women. As outlined previously, national research indicates that there has been an overall decline in psychological and mental wellbeing through the pandemic. It is also notable that younger adults and those living in the most disadvantaged areas have been identified as populations most vulnerable to decline²⁶. Given this, it is important that LDCs develop strategies over the next two years of SICAP to increase the uptake of mental wellbeing supports by a broader range of target groups, including vulnerable men.

Figure 12 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 individual caseloads broken down by types of interventions received



level or below.

As seen in previous years, the **economic status of individuals at registration** is a factor in the types of supports provided, reflecting the tailored and person-centred approach taken by LDCs. Individuals who are economically inactive are more likely than all other groups²⁷ to receive personal skills and wellbeing supports (39%) and/or information about lifelong learning opportunities (34%). Individuals who were short-term unemployed (33%) were more likely to receive labour market supports and the long-term unemployed (46%) were more likely to receive pre-start up self-employment supports. The **education level** of individuals is a factor regarding pre-start up self-employment supports. Individuals with above secondary level education (67%) were much more likely to receive this type of support compared to those with a lower level. For all other types of supports, the proportions are in line with the overall caseload, that being, one third above second level and two-thirds second

²⁶ Institute of Public Health (16th February 2022) "Blog: Impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of people living on the island of Ireland"

²⁷ Principal Economic Status at registration is grouped into four categories: Economically Inactive, Employed, Long-term Unemployed, and Short-term Unemployed.

SICAP also provides grants to individuals to support participation in lifelong learning and the setting up of new businesses. A total of 912 individuals received grants towards lifelong learning; this is down slightly from 2020 (955). The total amount awarded for lifelong learning was €274,112 which is marginally less than last year (€277,943). The maximum grant amount is €800, which was increased from €500 during the pandemic²⁸. Only 32 individuals (3.5%) received a grant of more than €500.

A further 72 people received an enterprise start-up grant, which is lower than in 2020 (104). The maximum grant amount available for enterprise start-ups is €2,500. The overall total grant amount awarded was €44,617. The vast majority (82%) was used for equipment and supplies. While fewer people were awarded a grant compared to 2020, the total grant amount was only marginally smaller (€48,505). This resulted in a higher average grant amount per person of €619 (versus €462 in 2020).

6.3.4 Outputs and outcomes achieved

The first year of the pandemic saw a significant drop in outcomes for individuals, however the progression rates started to rise in 2021. This is a very positive result given the ongoing and changing COVID-19 restrictions that were in place throughout the year. The next section presents these results for individuals on the 2021 caseload with comparable data for the previous three years of the programme²⁹.

Lifelong Learning

Table 6 Number and proportion of individuals on the 2018–2021 caseloads who participated in lifelong learning

Outputs	2018 caseload	2019 caseload	2020 caseload	2021 caseload
Participated in a lifelong learning activity (i.e., course, work experience or apprenticeship)	15,016 (47%)	14,183 (47%)	9,076 (35%)	10,003 (38%)

To date 42,528 (49%) individuals on the SICAP caseload participated in a lifelong learning (LLL) activity³⁰. The total number of participants (10,003 or 38%) in 2021 has increased compared to 2020. However, it is still significantly lower than in the pre-pandemic years (47%). Where possible, LDCs continued to offer courses online. LDCs reported that there has been a lot of learning over the last two years as to what worked well in this context for the participants e.g., recording or making courses available at a time that

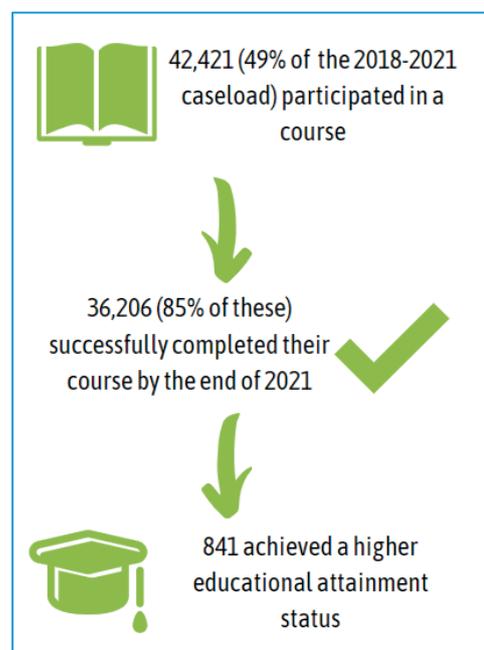
²⁸ This increase to €800 is subject to evidence stored on file that confirms an increase in cost for the individual as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

²⁹ It should be noted that the number of 2021 outputs could increase as outputs may not be recorded for some individuals until later in 2022. The outcome data refers to all individuals on the 2018-2021 caseload who achieved longer-term outcomes and is presented as a proportion of those who LDCs followed up with. LDCs follow up with individuals who got a job or set up their own business to record whether they are still in employment or self-employment. This follow-up takes place six months after an individual starts their job or 12 months after an individual sets up their business. As such, not all individuals were due a follow-up in 2021 and proportions are calculated based on those who did.

³⁰ Lifelong learning activities include course placements, apprenticeships, and work experience.

suits participants. This flexibility was very beneficial to parents or carers who may not otherwise be able to participate in lifelong learning activities. Some LDCs also supported clients completing courses with phone check-ins to help maintain momentum and engagement.

Figure 13 Course outputs achieved by individuals on the combined 2018-2021 caseloads



The majority of LLL activities are courses with 9,988 people participating in courses in 2021. This represents 38% of the total annual caseload. Two-thirds (66%) of participants were new registrations in 2021. This reflects the importance of education and training for beneficiaries within SICAP. Twenty people undertook work experience and eight participated in an apprenticeship/traineeship programme. Women (40%) are more likely than men (35%) to participate in a LLL course. This is a continuing trend within SICAP.

The economic status of participants showed some differences which most likely relate to their different needs and personal objectives. Almost half (46%) of employed people participated in a course which may suggest a demand for upskilling. Interestingly, the employed were more likely to participate in a course than all other groups, with economically inactive course participation at 43%, LTU 35%, and

STU 31%.

Almost two-thirds (61%) of participants³¹ availed of unaccredited courses, one third (31%) industry certified courses and 14% accredited courses. The most common sectors for course placements are set out in Table 5. The types of courses and sectors are similar to previous years however, as previously noted, the percentage of unaccredited personal development courses has increased, as has industry certified construction courses (29% and 13% respectively in 2020).

Table 7 Top three course placements in 2021, by course type

Unaccredited courses	Industry certified courses	Accredited courses
Personal development (37%)	Health & Safety (70%)	Health & Welfare (34%)
Business (21%)	Construction (28%)	Services (18%)
Health & Welfare (19%)	Business & Accounting (5%)	Education (14%)

To date, 42,421 people have taken part in a total of 66,151 course placements through SICAP and similarly to previous years, the vast majority of course participants (85%) successfully completed their course(s). In

³¹ Individuals could take more than one course and more than one type of course.

addition, a small cohort (841) achieved a higher educational status by the end of 2021 (see Figure 13 above).

Employment

Table 8 Number and proportion of individuals on the 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 caseloads who got a job

Outputs	2018 caseload	2019 caseload	2020 caseload	2021 caseload
Progressed into employment	2,318 (7%)	2,090 (7%)	1,254 (5%)	1,489 (6%)

A total of 7,109 people supported by SICAP to date have progressed into employment. Employment in this context includes progression into state-supported employment schemes as well as the open labour market. In 2021, 6% (1,489) of the caseload got a job, a small increase on 2020 (Table 6). This suggests that there were some improvements in the labour market as COVID-19 restrictions eased. Analysis of the data shows that the number of people who started jobs was low between January and April. There was a sharp increase in May coinciding with the re-opening of non-essential retail, personal services, and construction sites etc. There was a levelling off during the rest of the summer and autumn months.

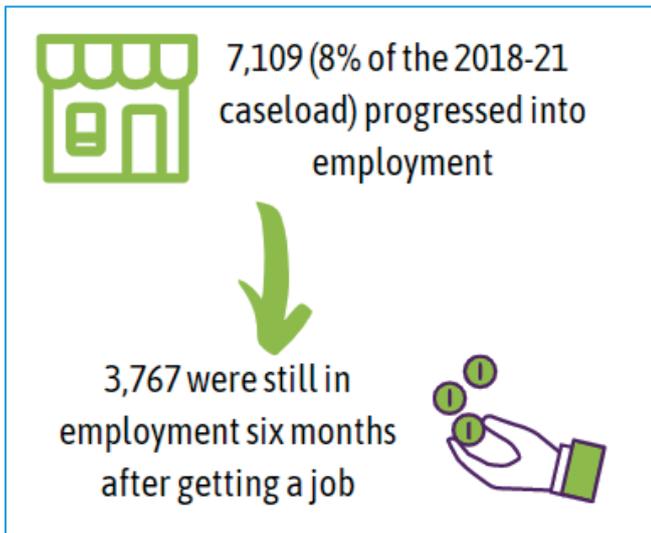
As observed since 2018, men (7%) are more likely to progress into employment than women (5%) and men are also more likely than women to get a full-time job (67% vs 33%). Over half (54%) of people who got a job were new registrations in 2021 and 47% of all jobs were taken up by the people who were short-term unemployed. This is most likely due to COVID 19 and the drastic increase in unemployment and the corresponding need for those newly unemployed to gain skills in different sectors of the economy. New registrations to SICAP may have been more job-ready and engaged with LDCs for specific employment-related supports.

One of the SICAP's planned outcomes is to support clients to move into more sustainable and better-quality employment. The majority (92%) of jobs were in the open labour market and only 8% were state-supported employment schemes. Two-thirds (67%) of jobs were full-time. This is the highest rate for both open market employment as well as full-time jobs since the start of the programme and a positive development, particularly if these jobs are of good quality and sustainable.

There are two possible reasons which may help to explain the lower rate of progression into schemes and the high rate of progression to open market. In relation to schemes, some LDCs reported that intake onto employment schemes was drastically reduced during the pandemic. This was due to a combination of factors; changing COVID restrictions which affected community and voluntary groups, reduced activity and thus labour needs, and a reluctance from community and voluntary groups to take on additional and/or new

people in a precarious time. There were also several extensions for existing scheme participants, which led to a reduction in spaces available for new participants.

Figure 14 Employment outputs and outcomes achieved by individuals on the combined 2018-2021 caseloads



The high progression rate in the open market may be due to staff shortages in many areas, particularly hospitality. Recent Fáilte Ireland research suggests that there are 40,000 vacancies in the tourism and hospitality sector, and that 42% of tourism and hospitality workers did not return to their pre-pandemic employers³². This need for staff may explain the high rate of full-time open market employment attained through SICAP in 2021. This is also reflected in the occupational groups of jobs reported for SICAP 2021. The food and drink industry is now the most popular sector (12% vs 10% in 2020), followed by clerical and office work (11%), health related work (11%), and

building and construction work (10%). It is interesting to note that the higher uptake of construction courses detailed previously is not yet reflected in the jobs obtained by SICAP clients.

Almost three-quarters (73%) of people who got a job and were contacted after six months³³ were still in employment.

Self-employment

Table 9 Number and proportion of individuals on the 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 caseloads who set up their own business

Outputs	2018 caseload	2019 caseload	2020 caseload	2021 caseload
Progressed into self-employment	3,397 (11%)	2,592 (9%)	1,416 (5%)	1,733 (7%)

To date, 9,255 (11%) people supported by SICAP have set up their own business. Figure 16 shows the breakdown between target groups of people who received pre-start up self-employment supports in 2021. The proportion of people **progressing into self-employment**, which has been decreasing since 2019 (9%), is now showing an increase in 2021 (7%) from its lowest point in 2020 (5%). This is in line with national trends. National data also showed that Ireland's new company start-up levels reached the highest

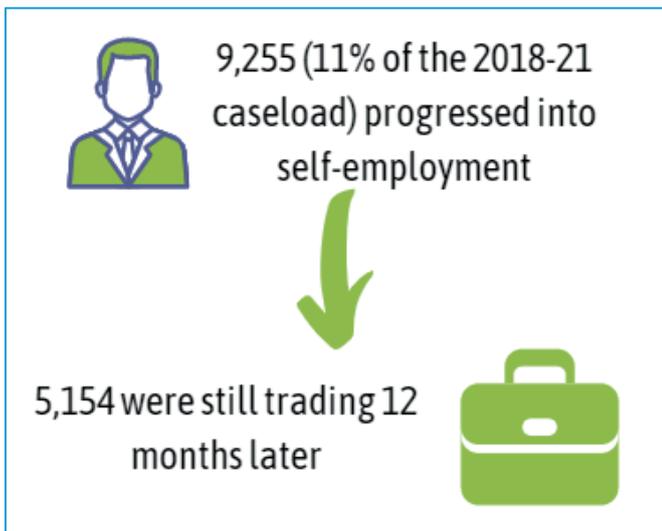
³² Fáilte Ireland (February 2022) 'Tourism Careers: Labour Research'

³³ A total of 5,154 (72%) who got a job to date (7,109) were followed-up with.

number on record in 2021, while the number of companies going under fell by 6%³⁴. This is very positive and demonstrates that the pandemic opened new opportunities for businesses despite the challenging economic environment. It also shows that LDCs, through SICAP, were well positioned to support clients to exploit these new opportunities.

This is evidenced by the change in the sectors for new businesses set up with SICAP support. The most common sector is that of 'other personal services'³⁵ (21%) which exceeds the usual top sector (construction, 18% in 2021) for the first time in the four years of SICAP.

Figure 15 Self-employment outputs and outcomes by individuals on the combined 2018-2021 caseloads



Most people who progressed into self-employment accessed either the BTWEA (74%) or STEA (17%), while 9% were not eligible as they were not in receipt of the relevant social welfare support. This demonstrates the positive impact that operation of these schemes by LDCs has for potential and budding entrepreneurs from SICAP groups.

The gender difference for progression into self-employment is similar to previous years, where men (8%) are more likely than women (5%) to set up a new business. As expected, the unemployed (11%) were more likely to set up their own business than the

economically inactive (1%) or the employed (1%), as they were also more likely to seek and receive self-employment supports. Educational attainment is a significant factor in progression into self-employment and 71% of people who set up a new business in 2021 had above secondary level education. By contrast only 35% people who got a job and 39% of the overall caseload are educated to this level. Almost three-quarters (72%) of people who set up a new business in 2021 were new registrations. This would suggest that people came to SICAP in 2021 ready to progress their ideas and looking for specific supports for business.

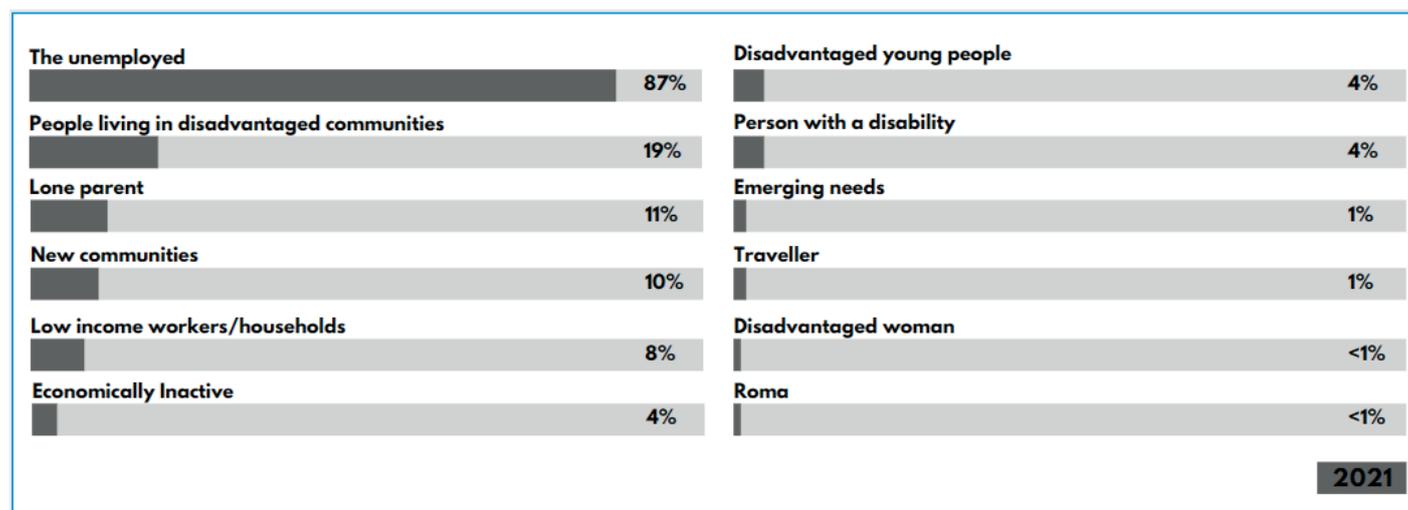
Follow-up and aftercare can be vital for new start-ups. Some LDCs reported that they needed to provide a significant amount of additional follow up support to existing clients who had established businesses prior to the pandemic. SICAP provided follow-up supports to 1,468 individuals in 2021. It is also positive to see that 77% of new businesses³⁶ contacted after 12 months were still trading.

³⁴ RTÉ New Online (24th January 2022), 'Start-up figures surpass pre-pandemic levels to high new high'.

³⁵ 'Other personal services' include activities such as animal grooming/training, cleaning services, and interior decorating.

³⁶ A total of 6,666 (72%) people who set up new businesses to date (9,255) were followed up with.

Figure 16 Self-employment supports by Target Group on the 2021 Caseload



Referrals to other services

To date, a total of 9,123 (10%) people have been referred from SICAP to other organisation and services to avail of various supports. In 2021, 7% (1,998) of people **received a referral** which is slightly lower than in 2020 (8%). Similar to previous years, the Education and Training Boards received the highest proportion of referrals in 2021 (22% vs 17% in 2020). This was followed by the Department of Social Protection (18% vs 15%) and Local Enterprise Offices (13% vs 15%). People were also referred to a wide variety of other services including Local Employment Services, Citizens' Information, and other government services.

6.4 Event attendees

SICAP has supported the delivery of 2,038 events to date. In 2021, 479 (23%) events took place and over 22,626 people participated.³⁷ The number of events and participants is still below pre-pandemic levels (503 events/27,416 people in 2019) but there was an increase compared to 2020 (349/23,953). This increase is positive, but LDCs continued to be limited in their ability to delivery of group-based activities and large-scale events due to COVID-19. Half (51%) of all events were lifelong learning information events, 35% supported participation in community planning, and the remainder (14%) were labour market/enterprise information events. A third (33%) of events targeted the local 'emerging needs groups', many of which were particularly relevant to the impact of COVID e.g., wellbeing and mental health, social/rural isolation, newly unemployed, food poverty, older people). A quarter (25%) of events targeted disadvantaged communities and 9% targeted the unemployed.

³⁷ People can attend community engagement meetings, lifelong learning and/or labour market information events (e.g., education or careers fairs) that are organised throughout the year. These participants are referred to as non-caseload individuals in the Programme Requirements as they do not need to be registered with the programme to attend the events.

6.5 Children and families

6.5.1 Overview

To date, SICAP has delivered 2,536 activities for children and families, 527 (21%) of which were delivered in 2021. This represents an increase of 9% from 2020, and a decrease of 27% from 2019. This seems reflective of the difficulties that LDCs faced in organising supports and activities during the pandemic. A total of 4,550 parents and guardians, and 31,392 children and young people were supported in 2021.

Examples of children and family initiatives in 2021 included afterschool support, online cooking programmes, workshops for parents, Easter and Summer camps/activities, and the provision of food packages. Almost half (48%) of all activities focused on children aged below 13 years, and 62% of activities targeted disadvantaged children and families. One fifth (20%) of activities focussed on social/recreation/culture, 18% on welfare and wellbeing, and 17% on family supports. Some of the activities delivered by LDCs in response to COVID-19 (e.g., food supports) may not have been recorded as they do not fit with existing SICAP indicators but were included in the narrative reports.

In January 2022, the Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) published a Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) on 'The impact of school closures on children's rights in Ireland'. It focused particularly on five groups of children; those experiencing mental health difficulties, children who are homeless, children living in Direct Provision, children with disabilities, and Traveller and Roma children. The CRIA found that the rights of these children were disproportionately impacted by the school closures due to COVID restrictions³⁸.

As well as the impact on children's education, particularly those who were already educationally disadvantaged, the CRIA found that school closures impacted negatively on the mental health and wellbeing of children and their social and emotional development. It also found that school closures increased children's risk of experiencing harm and abuse, including domestic violence. The CRIA findings are in line with the issues and challenges reported by LDCs around children and families.

6.5.2 Issues and challenges identified

Many of the issues and challenges detailed under the individuals' section are also applicable to this section. LDCs also reported the following as issues and challenges for children and families in 2021:

- **Food poverty** remained consistent issue for many households.
- Households experienced challenges with **home-schooling**.
- **Loss of existing supports** during lockdowns such as homework clubs, specialised supports, and afterschool supports. This especially affected vulnerable children.

³⁸ Ombudsman for Children (January 2022) "The impact of school closures on children's rights in Ireland – A Pilot Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA)"

- Challenges accessing **suitable spaces for group activities**. The social distancing requirements meant that even when a suitable space was available, reduced numbers of children could attend and activities were often scaled back.
- Complex issues were also reported, such as **domestic abuse** in homes, an increase in **challenging behaviours** in children, **disengagement** from schools when they opened, and an overall rise in **mental health problems and anxiety**.

FOOD INSECURITY AND FOOD POVERTY ISSUES PERSISTED IN 2021

LDCs continued to report food insecurity and food poverty as being pressing issues for vulnerable groups in 2021. Unsurprisingly, the peak of this demand seems to have been in the first half of 2021 and correlated with the closure of many businesses and school shutdowns. However, it is notable that LDCs reported a level of **sustained demand for supplementary food throughout the year**, particularly from Roma, New Communities, isolated older people, and lone parent households. LDCs, through SICAP, delivered a variety of responses to this need, including referrals and signposting, supporting LCGs and SEs in providing food and LDCs directly providing food. Some examples are provided below:

- **Dublin Inner City Co-op** delivered food to vulnerable families and individuals identified through referrals from local schools, hospitals, and charities. In 2021, they provided 9,000kg of food, while in 2020, the amount provided was 43,000kg.
- **PAUL Partnership** in Limerick city, hosted **Limerick Food Partnership (LFP)**, a strategic collaboration between voluntary organisations, community organisations, and statutory agencies. LFP is managed through SICAP. Since the start of the pandemic SICAP community development staff worked closely with LFP to bring together agencies and community organisations to co-ordinate the delivery of food supports and to identify and support particularly vulnerable families.
- In early 2021, when the schools were closed, **Dublin Northwest Partnership (DNP)** identified food poverty for school-going children as a pressing need. DNP continued to deliver food hampers and educational resource packs in Finglas and Cabra until schools opened in March.
- **County Kildare LEADER Partnership** continued to deliver food and medicine to isolated people, including older farmers.
- In Cavan, through **Cavan County Local Development**, food parcels continued year-round to families who needed it, with referrals for the support coming from St. Vincent DePaul, domestic abuse services and Cavan Cross Cultural Community (4C).
- Following an initial mapping exercise carried out in 2020, **Donegal Local Development Company (DLDC)** established a **Donegal Food Response Network**. The network is led by

SICAP, and members are from 15 community and voluntary organisations who provide support to families and individuals in Donegal experiencing food poverty.

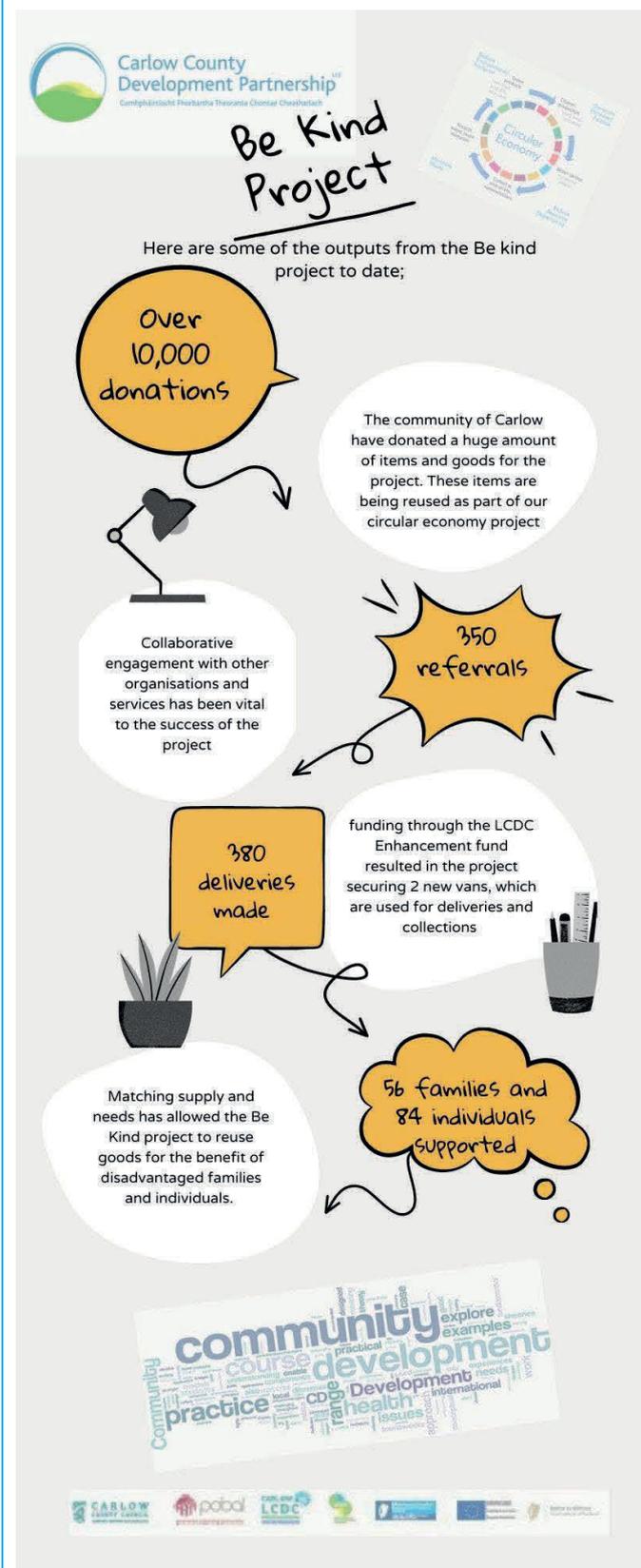


6.6 Collaborations

SICAP is rooted in collaboration, and this has been demonstrated throughout this report. LDCs continue to work with a range of partners to identify local responses and deliver co-ordinated responses. This was particularly evident through the COVID-19 pandemic.

To date, LDCs reported engagement in 1,634 collaborations with a range of statutory and community partners to support social inclusion and service provision locally. Local authorities, the HSE, local community groups, and Education and Training Boards were the most common partners involved in LDC collaborations. There was a notable 42% increase in the number of collaborations reported in 2021, 634 in contrast to 446 in 2020. Two-thirds (67%) of collaborations in 2021 were focussed on addressing social exclusion and inequality issues and one fifth (20%) focussed on working with employers to promote more inclusive approaches to recruitment and sustainable jobs. One quarter (25%) of collaborations worked to support people living in disadvantaged communities, 14% worked with disadvantaged children & families and 10% worked with new communities.

BE KIND – TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER’ – COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE GROUPS DURING COVID19



This project is an example of collaboration between the Carlow County Development Partnership, Carlow LCDC, and Carlow County Council. In early January 2021 Carlow Older Persons Forum (OPF) and Carlow County Development Partnership (CCDP) as well as others became aware of the need for furniture, basic household items etc. which were not available due to the COVID pandemic, and an increased level of poverty and new vulnerabilities. CCDP appealed for items on social media and were inundated with offers. Such was the response, a storage space was required and with the assistance of the Council and LCDC the ‘Be Kind’ project was born and is operated through SICAP. The main aim of the project is to match what people do not need with those who do, through referral.

Referrals come from a number of stakeholders: Carlow Older Persons Forum, An Garda Síochána, Amber Refuge, and community groups among others. Through the Be Kind Project families have been provided with necessary household appliances and items ranging from kitchen appliances such as a fridge and washing machine as well as other large items such as kitchen tables and chairs, sofas, and a TV, to smaller items such as cutlery, cups, and glasses. As a knock-on effect of this engagement, families then also availed of other supports through SICAP. In total, 56 families supported in 2021.

“A lot of the things that we are now using in our home came from the Be Kind project. It meant that we could sit and have food as a family, we could look after ourselves and stand alone ... Because of the project we made contact with Fáilte Isteach and this means we have improved our English and has helped me to be able to go on to a PLC course.” Comment from a SICAP beneficiary

While this project started out to support the vulnerable while living alongside COVID-19, its potential has grown to address other issues including a circular economy model and an innovative way of addressing climate change. Its future will move towards a new phase of collaboration and engagement to exploit its full potential.

7. CONCLUSION

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018–2023 aims to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality in Ireland through supporting communities and individuals using community development approaches, engagement, and collaboration. It is Ireland's foremost social inclusion intervention with coverage across the country and engages with a wide range of marginalised groups and communities. COVID-19 continued to have a significant impact in 2021. Schools shut for a significant amount of time; businesses closed and there were restrictions on travel. Food insecurity persisted as an issue for households, albeit at a lesser level than 2020, and was pronounced among particular target groups. LDCs reported several complex issues presenting in clients such as anxiety, financial insecurity, social isolation, and the digital divide among others.

There was a tremendous amount of learning regarding SICAP in 2020. The data and reports show that all stakeholders applied this learning in 2021 to deliver targeted and nuanced responses in a quickly changing environment. As has been shown throughout this report, SICAP continued to support individuals and groups progress their goals and objectives using person-centred, collaborative, and community development approaches. SICAP targets were exceeded by the end of 2021, with a total of **2,646 Local Community Groups (LCGs)** and **26,483 individuals** supported – almost pre-pandemic levels.

Though still some way off pre-pandemic levels, there was an overall increase in activity levels from 2020 as well as outcomes for SICAP clients, with increases in people taking part in lifelong learning, receiving self-employment supports, progressing into self-employment and employment. There was also evidence that SICAP has increasing engagement with harder-to-reach groups, with small increases in the numbers of Travellers, Roma, and people with multiple barriers on the caseload. Notwithstanding this, there is trend developing regarding a decreasing proportion of lower educational attainment levels amongst new registrations since the start of the pandemic. This warrants monitoring in future years.

SICAP continued to play an important role in responding to the needs of communities and building the capacity of local community groups and social enterprises. Its on-the-ground presence through the LDCs and strong connections and relationships with communities of place and of interest means that SICAP was well placed to identify local needs and participate in collaborative, innovative responses.

The 2020 SICAP Annual Report concluded with a note of hope around Ireland moving into a COVID-19 recovery period. As 2021 progressed, it was clear that this recovery was still some way off. Despite the challenges, SICAP, and SICAP staff especially, worked creatively and diligently to maintain and grow SICAP engagement with all target groups and to ensure meaningful outcomes and progression. COVID-19 has highlighted SICAP's strong attributes, its collaborative and responsive approach, its person-centred ethos, and its deep connections with communities. This 2021 Annual Report also ends on an optimistic tone. Whatever challenges 2022 brings, SICAP will continue to be a vital, flexible, and responsive tool working to ensure that no-one gets left behind.

ANNEXES

Annex A: Methodology

The report has drawn on multiple sources of data including progress data recorded on the IRIS³⁹ system by LDCs; LDCs Annual Progress Reports submitted in January 2022; a sample of case studies produced by LDCs in 2021; and feedback from the Annual Engagement Meetings with LCDCs and LDCs as well as feedback from LDC focus groups for the Gender Learning Brief in 2021.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis was conducted by Pobal's Monitoring, Analysis, and Outcomes Unit (MAOU). Analysis is supported by external reports, studies, and briefings. The quantitative analysis was mainly descriptive in nature, comparing 2021 caseload profile, intervention, and output data with previous years. The following methodological limitations should be noted:

- The individual and organisation-level data used in this report is self-reported.
- The report uses static 2018-2021 IRIS data that was extracted from the system on 26 January, 2022. IRIS is a live system and changes are made on an ongoing basis. Changes made since January 2022 have not been reflected in this report.
- As the 2018-2021 data was extracted from the system on 26 January, 2022, some records have been updated with new information since the 2018-2020 Annual Reports. As such, the 2018-2020 data contained in this report varies slightly from the previous reports. This is particularly evident in relation to output information as output data for some of the 2018-2020 caseloads was not available at the time of previous reporting.

³⁹ IRIS is a customised Customer Relationship Management database developed by Pobal in 2010, adapted for SICAP in 2015 and re-designed for SICAP 2018-2022 in 2017.

Annex B: Financial report 2021

This financial report was prepared using figures extracted from IRIS, where they were recorded by Programme Implementers (their actual spend) and LCDCs (the payments made to PIs)⁴⁰.

SICAP costs charged summary report –2021

The table below details the total budget and total costs reported, under the various cost categories, for the 51 Lots for 2021.

Table 10 Costs charged summary report 2021

		Total 2021 Budget €	Total Cost Reported €	% of Total Action Cost Reported
Goal 1	Non-Salary	1,566,198.91	2,064,858.59	41.85%
	Direct Salary	10,823,631.57	10,463,508.45	
	Total Goal 1	12,389,830.48	12,528,367.04	
Goal 2	Non-Salary	3,166,111.30	3,636,996.77	58.15%
	Direct Salary	14,071,518.25	13,772,379.81	
	Total Goal 2	17,237,629.55	17,409,376.58	
<i>(Each Goal Cost % reported is recommended to be between 40% and 60% of Total Actions Cost reported, unless otherwise agreed)</i>				
		Total 2021 Budget €	Total Cost Reported €	% of Total available to spend
Total Actions Cost		29,627,460.03	29,937,743.62	-
Total 2021 Cash on Hand carried forward		1,865,247.06	-	-
Total Action Costs Available to Spend		31,492,707.09	29,937,743.62	95.06%
		Total 2021 Budget €	Total Cost Reported €	% of Total Budget
Total Administration Cost		9,540,969.97	9,453,568.72	24.14%
<i>(The Administration Cost cannot exceed 25% of the Total Budget)</i>				
		Total 2021 Budget €	Total Cost Reported €	% of Total available to spend
Overall Budget 2021		39,168,430.00	39,391,312.34	-
Total 2021 Cash on Hand carried forward		1,865,247.06*	-	-
Total Amount available to spend 2021		41,033,677.06	39,391,312.34	96.00%

* Includes adjustment to 2020 spend made by one Lot for the amount of €1,214.54

⁴⁰ Payments made by the Department to the LCDCs are not represented in this report as these figures are not reported on IRIS.

Commentary on above Table

The total costs reported at the year end of the 31 December 2021 were €39,391,312.34 which equates to 96.00% of the total available amount to spend.

Schedule A is an appendix to the contract between the LCDC and the PI and it represents the budget of the Lot for a particular period, i.e., from the 1 January to 31 December 2021. This budget is comprised of Action Costs and Administration Costs.

Certain financial rules are required to be complied with as per Schedule A of the SICAP funding agreement and as per the SICAP 2018-2022 programme requirements document, and these are as follows:

- It is recommended that the total of each Goal Cost should be between 40% and 60% of the Total Actions Cost reported, unless otherwise agreed between the respective LCDC and the LDCs.
- The total Administration Cost cannot exceed 25% of the total budget cost.
- Both of the above rules must be complied with prior to the LCDC approving the budget.
- LDCs must also ensure that these financial parameters are met when reporting spend for the period.

Administration Costs

As per the parameters of Schedule A, total administration costs reported for the year cannot exceed 25% of the total SICAP budget.

The amount reported for Administration Costs is €9,453,568.72. This amount represents 24.14% of the total budget and therefore demonstrates that the programme overall is compliant with the parameters of Schedule A.

Actions Costs

- As per the SICAP programme requirements, it is recommended that the amount reported for each Goal should be between 40% - 60% of the total action costs reported, unless otherwise agreed between the respective LCDC and the Local Development Company.

Goal 1

The amount reported for Goal 1 is €12,528,367.04. This represents 41.85% of the total action costs reported and therefore demonstrates that Goal 1 is compliant with the parameters as set by the programme requirements.

Goal 2

The amount reported for Goal 2 is €17,409,376.58. This represents 58.15% of the total action costs reported and demonstrates that Goal 2 is compliant with the parameters as set by the programme requirements.

Annex C: Geographic mapping showing national distribution of beneficiaries

Figure 17 Map of Ireland showing the geographic distribution of the SICAP 2018-2021 individual caseload

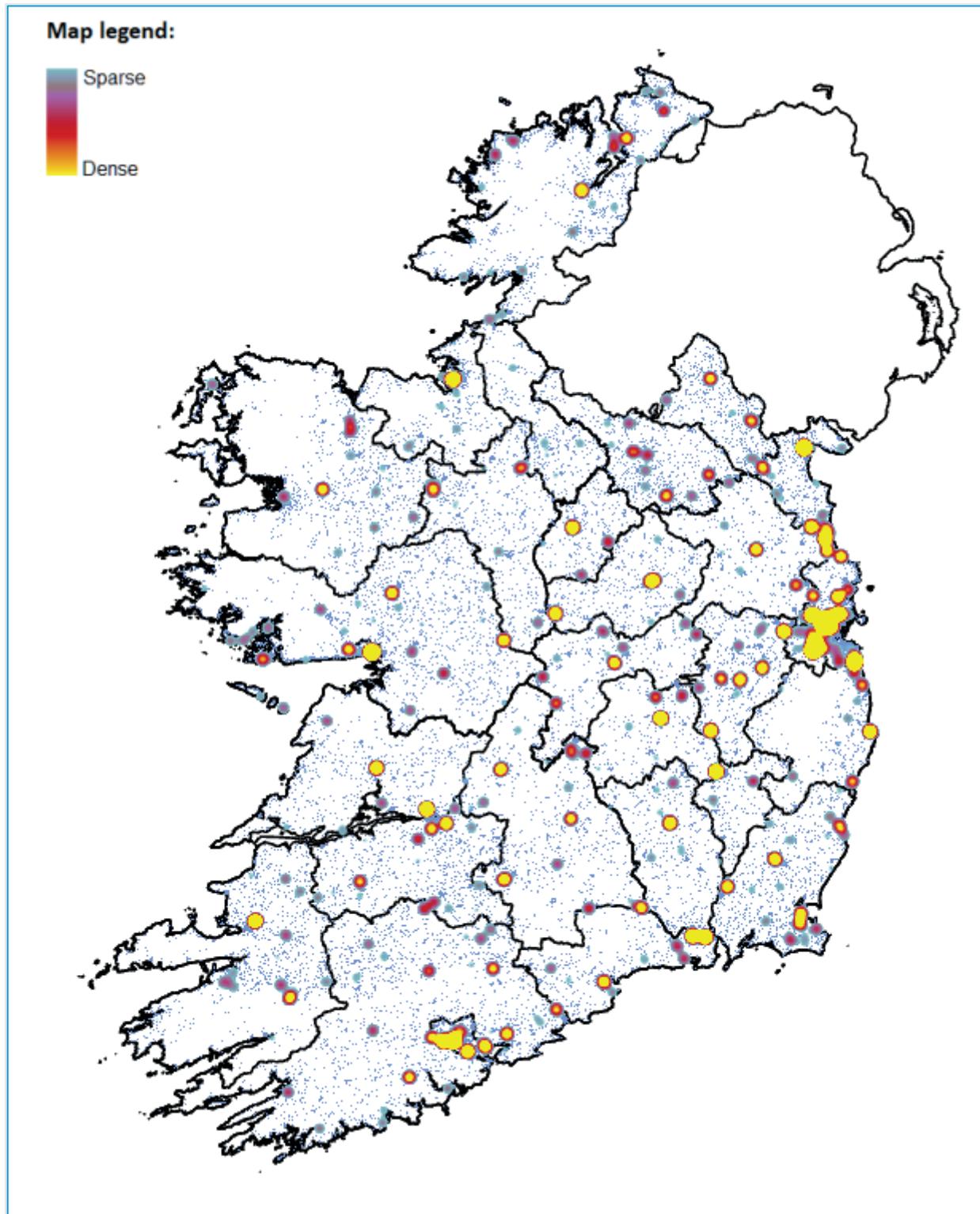


Figure 18 Map of County Dublin showing the geographic distribution of the **SICAP 2018-2021** individual caseload living in the county

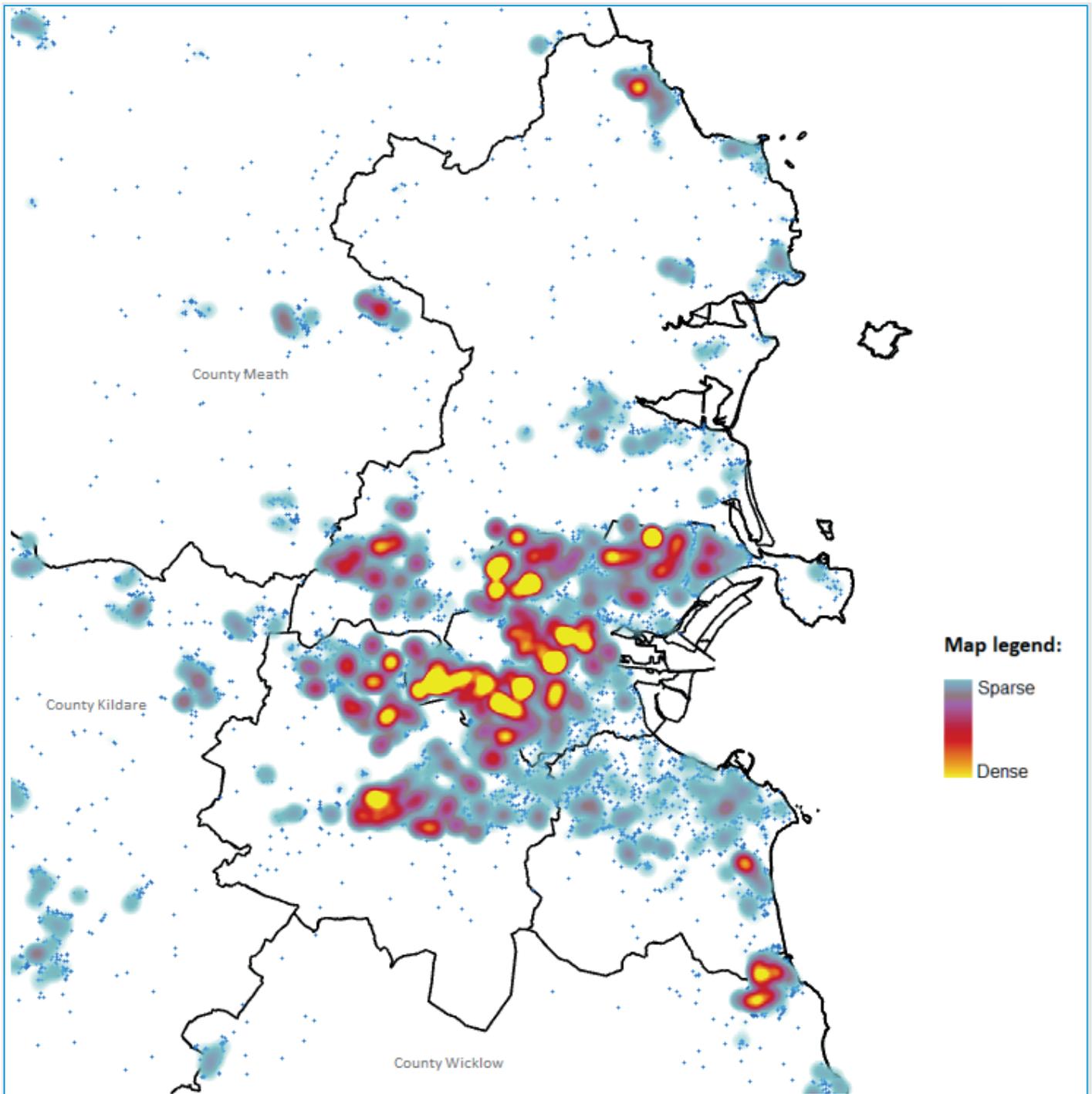


Figure 19 Map of Ireland showing the geographic distribution of **new registrations** on the individual caseload in 2021

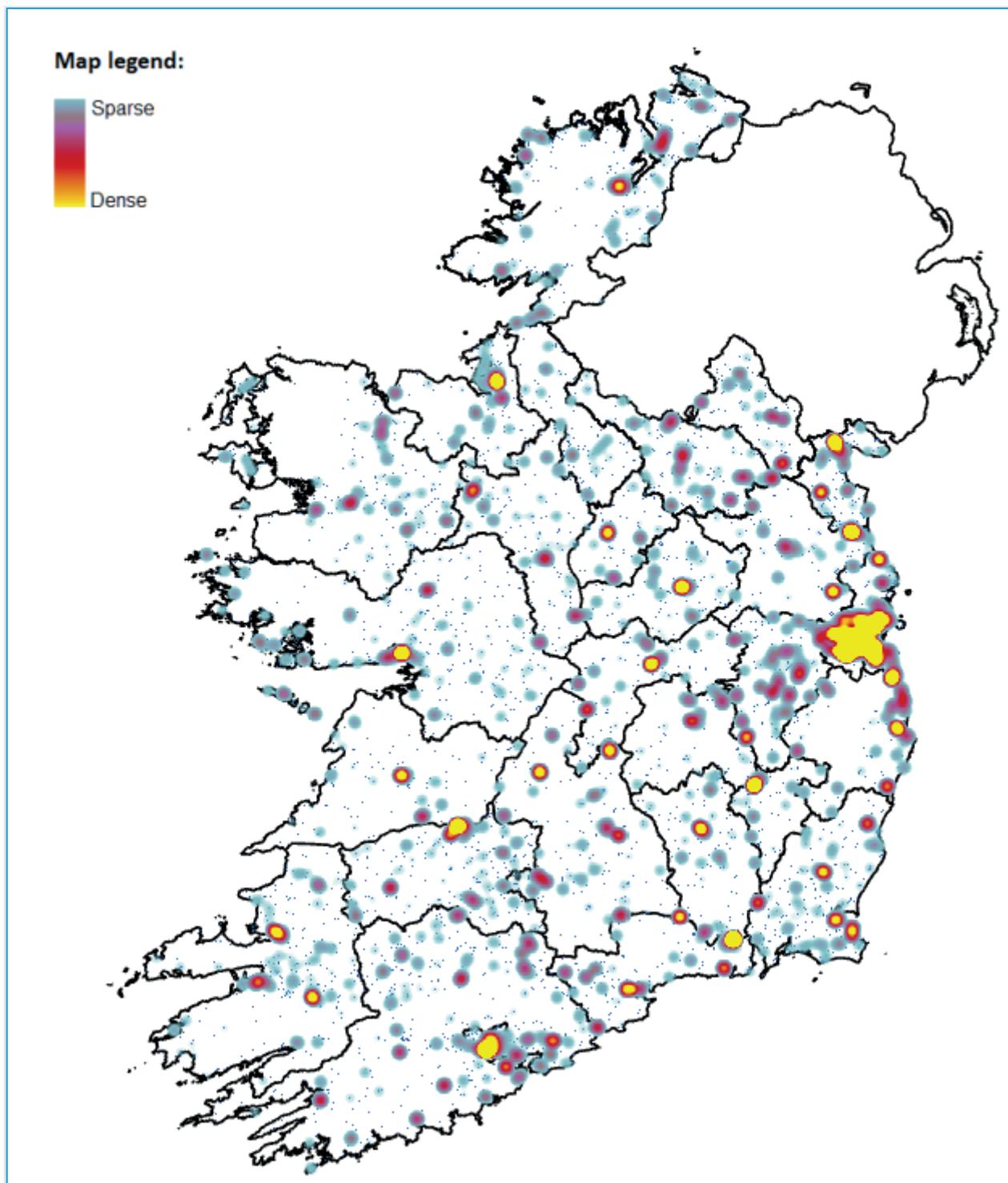


Figure 20 Map of County Dublin showing the geographic distribution of **new registrations** on the individual caseload in the county in 2021

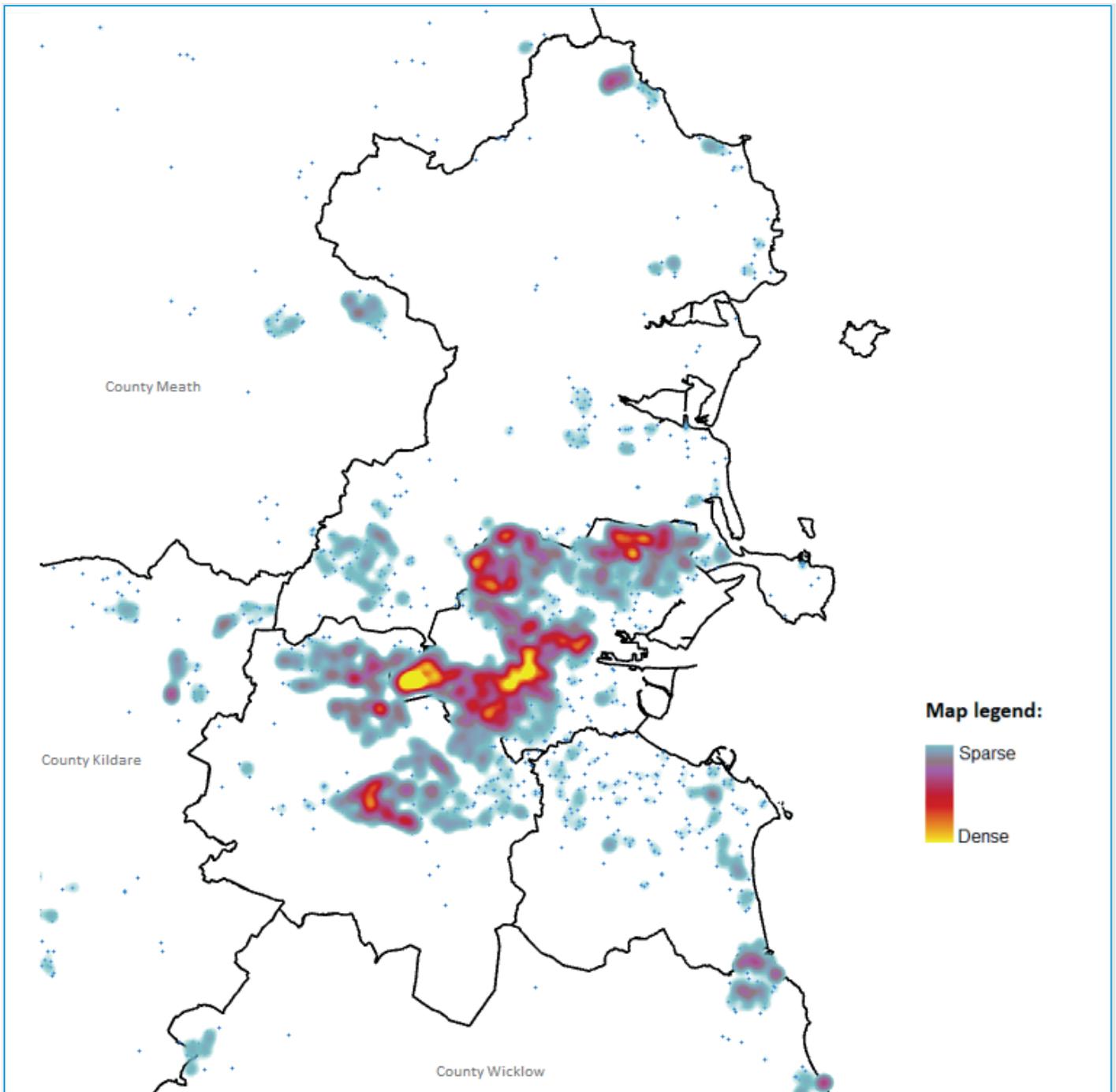


Figure 21 Map of Ireland showing the geographic distribution of the SICAP 2018-2021 LCG caseload

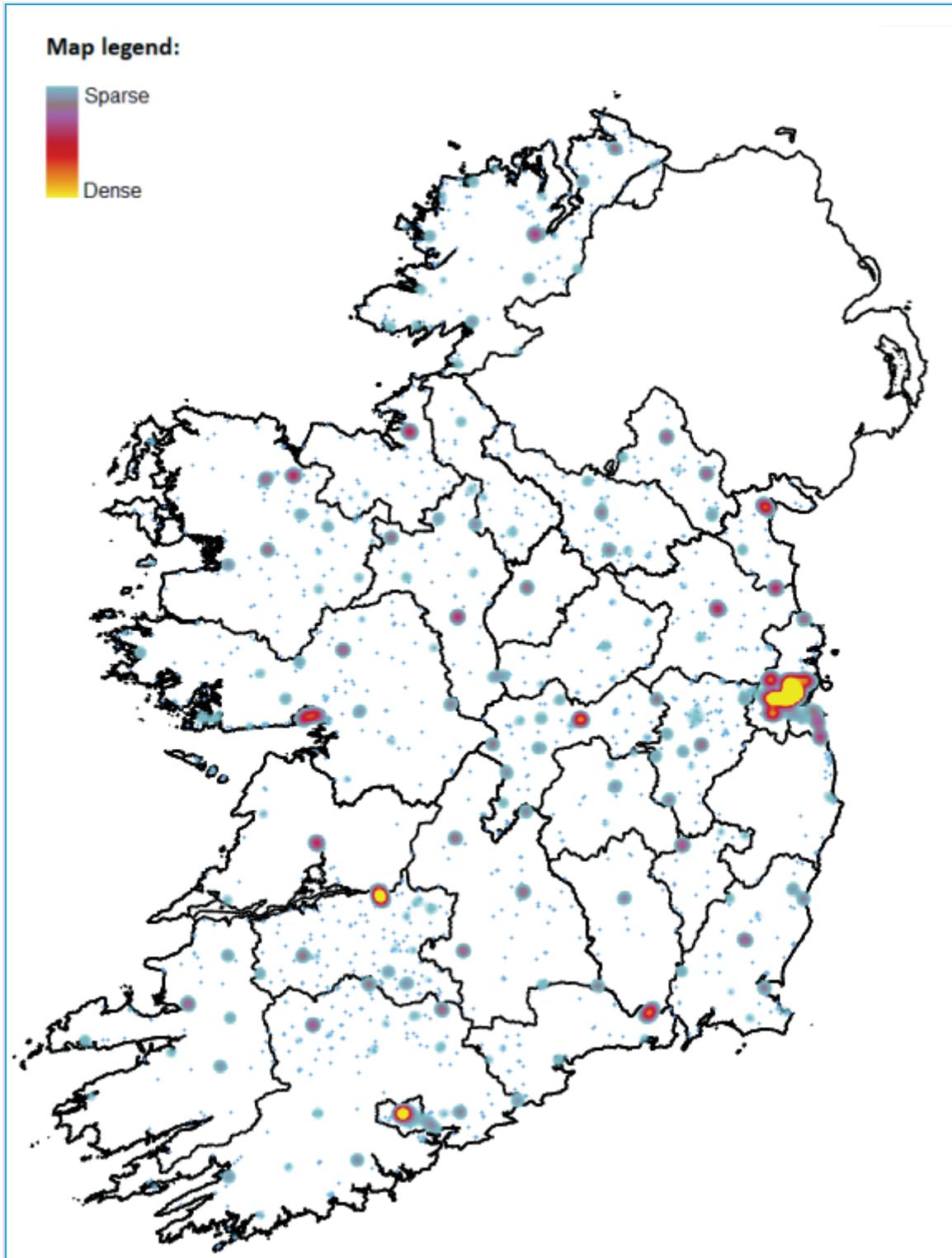
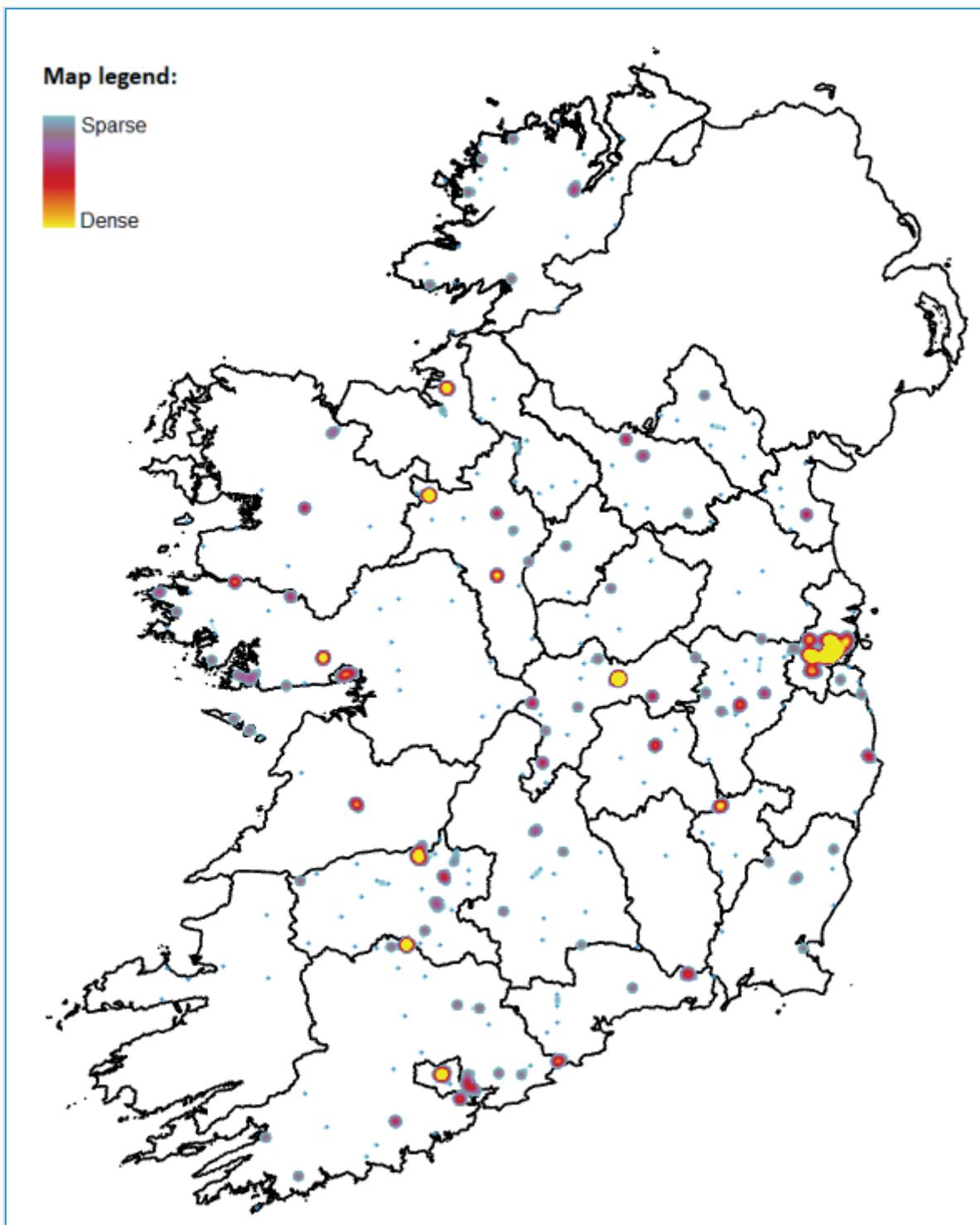


Figure 22 Map of Ireland showing the geographic distribution of new registrations on the LCG caseload in 2021



Annex D: List and description of 2021 SICAP case studies

<p>Carlow County - Carlow Development Partnership (1-1)</p> <p>The case study demonstrates the importance and impact of working together to build capacity and empower individuals and communities to make positive changes.</p> <p>Contact: Dylan Thomas Email: dthomas@carlowdevelopment.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Cavan County - Breffni Integrated (32-1)</p> <p>This video case study describes supports provided to New Communities during the COVID pandemic focusing on two key issues: English language learning and domestic violence. It describes delivery of online Failte Isteach English language classes for new communities during the pandemic and the setting up of the Violence against Women group which provided access opportunities for people from New Communities experiencing domestic abuse.</p> <p>Contact: Terry Hyland CEO Cavan County Local Development Email: thyland@cclid.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Clare County - Clare Local Development Company (16-1)</p> <p>Online Easter and Summer Camps</p> <p>Contact: Darina Greene Email: DGreene@CLDC.IE Link: Website</p>
<p>Cork Bandon & Kinsale - West Cork Development Partnership (18-6)</p> <p>The Case Study tells the story of developing English Language supports for young children attending a primary school and who do not have English as a first language. It showcases the important role of collaboration in development of supports.</p> <p>Contact: Fergal Conlon, West Cork Development Partnership Email: fergal@wcdp.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Cork Charleville & Mitchelstown – Ballyhoura Development Company (18-2)</p> <p>The Case Study focuses on the support SICAP gave to develop the Wednesday Active Group from 15 members meeting once a week into the Mitchelstown Social Hub with over 150 members who meet at least 3 times a week. It showcases the impact of the capacity building support provided and shows how, with SICAP support, the group overcame COVID lockdown and successfully moved all of their activities online, which garnered even more members.</p> <p>Contact: Eileen O'Keeffe, Ballyhoura Development CLG Email: eokeeffe@ballyhoura.org Link: Website</p>
<p>Cork City - Cork City Partnership (17-1)</p> <p>The Case Study profiles how Cork City Partnerships Explore Programme evolved over time from being a response to intergenerational unemployment to an emphasis on supporting people with mental health issues.</p> <p>Contact: Jacqui Sweeney, Cork City Partnership Email: JSweeney@partnershipcork.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Cork Kanturk, Newmarket and Millstreet - IRD Duhallow (18-1)</p> <p>The Case Study showcases the evolution of the LDCs SICAP supported Jobs Club, the array of supports provided, profile of clients, marketing, and engagement approaches and how they ensure to be up to date, upskilled and relevant. It also showcases how COVID 19 impacted on the unemployed and the need for support.</p> <p>Contact: Triona Murphy, IRD Duhallow Email: triona.dennehy@irdduhallow.com Link: Website</p>
<p>Cork Mallow & Fermoy - Avondhu Blackwater Partnership (18-3)</p> <p>The Case Study is about the development and roll out of online supports to older people during COVID 19, namely</p>

Guided Life Story project, Crochet for beginners and IT Training. It tells the story of how the need was identified, who was involved and the overall impact on participants.

Contact: Mary Gubbins, Avondhu Blackwater Partnership CLG

Email: maryg@avondhublackwater.com

Link: [Website](#)

Cork South & East Cork - SECAD Partnership (18-4)

The Case Study profiles the development of SECAD's supports to New Communities, including Asylum Seekers and Refugees, since 2017 and how these have evolved over time. It focuses on some of the key engagement strategies used, in particular Food and Outdoor Activities, and a community champion.

Contact: Toni McCaul, SECAD

Email: TMcCaul@secad.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Cork West District – West Cork Development Partnership (18-5)

The Case Study focuses on supports to New Communities, particularly Asylum Seekers and Refugees and facilitating their participation in the local community. There is a particular emphasis throughout the Case Study on collaboration with local agencies and structures.

Contact: Kathryn Kingston, West Cork Development Partnership

Email: kathryn@wcdp.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Cork West Islands - Comhar na nOileán Teoranta (18-7)

This Case Study focuses on an innovative response to challenges arising from COVID-19 for an island community. Cape Clear relies on mainland deliveries for their food supplies, which was further heightened during COVID, as well as local farmers and fishers experiencing economic challenges. Arising from this, a farmers' market was developed selling only local produce and crafts, which was driven by the LDC.

Contact: Daithi O Briain, Comhar na nOileán

Email: daithi@oileain.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Donegal Inishowen - Inishowen Development Partnership (33-1)

This Case Study tells the story of the role and contribution of SICAP in collaborating and engaged communities. It captures how IDP opened the conversations when consulting with communities and has been listening to those across our coastal communities – engaging, adapting, and responding to existing and emerging needs.

Contact: Patricia Lee

Email: patricia@inishowen.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Donegal Gaeltacht – Donegal Local Development Company (33-2)

The case study focuses on a four-week employment training programme aimed at 10 students from three local schools in the Donegal Gaeltacht area.

Contact: Kathleen McGowan

Email: kmcgowan@donegalcoco.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Donegal - Donegal Local Development Company (33-3)

This case study provides a detailed overview of the SE Network developed in the county and provides a description of the types of supports the SE's received and some examples of the SE work undertaken.

Contact: Kathleen McGowan

Email: kmcgowan@donegalcoco.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Dublin Ballyfermot Chapelizod – Ballyfermot/Chapelizod Partnership Company (2-1)

REFOHCUS (Reimagining the Future, One Health, Covid & Us) is a project established for the inclusion of marginalised communities in a conversation about science education in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and Ireland's response to it.

Contact: Triona O'Sullivan

Email: tosullivan@bcpartnership.ie

<p>Link: Website</p>
<p>Dublin Ballymun, Whitehall and Tolka – Dublin North West Area Partnership (2-2)</p> <p>The case study focused on a care and repair initiative that provides affordable maintenance services to older and vulnerable people in the community and also to community facilities. The service is based on referrals from social workers and links with Tús and SAS.</p> <p>Contact: Paul Hennelly Email: Paul.Hennelly@dublinnorthwest.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Dublin Canal Rathmines & Pembroke – Dublin South City Partnership (2-4)</p> <p>This case study looks at Frontline Bikes Inchicore, and how through the provision of SICAP social enterprise supports, the business has been able to thrive, and create real and meaningful outcomes for those recovering from addiction.</p> <p>Contact: Una Lowry, CEO Email: ulowry@dscp.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Dublin Inner City - Dublin Inner City Co-op (2-5)</p> <p>The Co-op 2021 case study highlights and celebrates examples of lifelong learning opportunities delivered under SICAP Goal 2.</p> <p>Contact: Noel Wardick Email: NWardick@dublincitycommunitycoop.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Dublin Northside - Northside Partnership (2-3)</p> <p>This case study focuses on the development of a community of practice for six Social Enterprises. The purpose of this initiative was to build on existing delivery and offer a higher level of support to Social Enterprises across the Dublin region by providing mentoring supports to Social Enterprises in their identified areas of need.</p> <p>Contact: Niamh McTiernan Email: Niamh.McTiernan@nspartnership.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown - Southside Partnership DLR (5-1)</p> <p>It outlines how its SICAP funded Women's Programme has engaged women and particularly women from New Communities in the DLR area in networking with other women, capacity building, personal development, education, engaging in a two-way integration process and in taking on leadership roles. It will demonstrate some of the challenges women and migrant women in DLR face including during periods of COVID restrictions.</p> <p>Contact: Louise Kinlen, Southside Partnership Email: Louise.Kinlen@sspship.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Fingal - Empower (4-1)</p> <p>This case study highlights collaborative engagement strategies to ensure a community-development approach that supports those most affected by health inequalities. Those affected include SICAP target groups such Roma, Travellers, Disadvantaged Children and Families and Lone Parents.</p> <p>Contact: Felix Gallagher, Empower Local Development CLG Email: fgallagher@empower.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Galway City - Galway City Partnership (26-1)</p> <p>Providing technology and training with ACORN tablets to older people to stay connected and combat isolation.</p> <p>Contact: Declan Brassil Email: declan@gcp.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Galway County - Galway Rural Development Company (27-1)</p> <p>An audio with an accompanying narrative on personal development courses to support health and wellbeing</p> <p>Contact: Sue Clarke Email: info@grd.ie Link: Website</p>

Kerry East and West - North and East Kerry LEADER Partnership (19-1)

This Case Study showcases the collaborative efforts in developing and implementing effective Mental Health Supports. It also showcases the range of mental health supports provided, with a particular emphasis on the Kerry Mental Health Festival.

Contact: Robert Carey, North and East West Kerry Development

Email: RobertCarey@newkd.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Kerry, Rathmore & Gneeveguilla - IRD Duhallow (19-2)

The Case Study showcases the evolution of the LDCs SICAP supported Jobs Club, the array of supports provided, profile of clients, marketing, and engagement approaches and how they ensure to be up to date, upskilled and relevant. It also showcases how COVID 19 impacted on the unemployed and the need for support.

Contact: Triona Dennehy, IRD Duhallow

Email: triona.dennehy@irdduhallow.com

Link: [Website](#)

Kerry South and Killarney - South Kerry Development Partnership (19-3)

The Case Study profiles the establishment of two Lone Parent groups in South Kerry, the impact of them on the participants, the role SICAP had as well as collaboration with other agencies and leveraging other resources.

Contact: Noel Spillane, South Kerry Development Partnership CLG

Email: nspillane@skdp.net

Link: [Website](#)

Kildare County – County Kildare Leader Partnership (6-1)

A Case Study focuses on the SICAP funded Certificate in Youth Work Studies developed in collaboration with ETB, In Syn and Foróige.

Contact: Pat Leogue, County Kildare Leader Partnership

Email: pat@countykildarelp.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Kilkenny County – Kilkenny Leader Partnership (7-1)

The case study focuses on a number of Men's Sheds across County Kilkenny using a community development approach and includes inputs from its members.

Contact: Martin Rafter, County Kilkenny Leader Partnership

Email: martin.rafter@cklp.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Laois County- Laois Partnership Company (8-1)

Enterprise Support for a burrito business

Contact: Liam Ramsbottom

Email: liamramsbottom@laoispartnership.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Leitrim County- Leitrim Development Company (28-1)

This video case study documents the experiences of individuals supported by SICAP onto employment focussed training programmes in Co. Leitrim. It describes the experiences of participants, facilitators and SICAP workers. It focuses on how these initiatives enhance and augment prospects for employment, self-employment, and further study in the context of COVID-19 challenges.

Contact: Bernie Donoghue, Social Inclusion Manager, Leitrim Development Company

Email: bernie@ldco.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Limerick East Rural - Ballyhoura Development Company (21-3)

This Case Study tells the story of a rural community that experienced rural decline, its impact on mental health with 5 people in the parish having died by suicide, and the journey of a community coming together to address this by developing a "Local Hub" - social space for people of all ages to meet each other.

Contact: Eileen O'Keeffe

Email: eokeeffe@ballyhoura.org

Link: [Website](#)

Limerick Urban - PAUL Partnership (21-2)

This Case Study focuses on the collaborative efforts to support Food related structures to address Food Poverty across Limerick City particularly during COVID 19. It focuses on the support to the Social Enterprise Discussion Group and Food Partnership Limerick in addressing food poverty issue.

Contact: Rozi Perez Goodbody, Paul Partnership

Email: rperezgoodbody@Paulpartnership.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Limerick West Rural - West Limerick Resources (21-1)

This Case Study is on a community arts project that the LDC delivered online with 5 LCGs. It showcases the role of the LDC and SICAP in initiating and implementing the project, their hands-on support to participants on technology capacity building and the impact the project had on ensuring connectivity and minimising isolation caused by COVID.

Contact: Dearbhla Conlon Ahern, West Limerick Resources

Email: dconlon@wlr.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Longford County - Longford Community Resources (9-1)

This video case study focusses on the Roma Community in Co. Longford. It includes an overview of challenges facing this community. Interviews with beneficiaries outlines how SICAP interventions and supports addressed these challenges and resulted in positive outcomes for the Roma Community.

Contact: Adrian Greene CEO Longford Community Resources

Email: agreene@lcrli.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Louth County - Louth Leader Partnership (10-1)

Using a life cycle approach the video tracks a sample of lifelong learning and employment supports provided by Goal 2 staff in Louth LEADER Partnership supporting disadvantaged women for the purposes of the case study. Louth LEADER Partnership are fully committed to the values and principles of equality by promoting the equality statement for the organisation.

Contact: Maeve Harkin, County Louth Leader Partnership

Email: maeve.harkin@cllp.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Mayo Islands - South West Mayo Development Company (29-1)

SWMDC SICAP Mayo Islands' case study focusses on one client's journey with and through SICAP. It showcases lifelong learning, employment and self-employment supports. Through availing of the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA) scheme the case study describes how the client is exploring the possibility of opening a creative business on Clare Island.

Contact: Sabina Trench

Email: strench@southmayo.com

Link: [Website](#)

Mayo, Ballina & Mayo West - Mayo North East Leader Partnership (29-2)

This case study describes targeted support to Charities focussed on social inclusion in the Mayo North East SICAP delivery area. It outlines the approach taken and the engagement strategies used.

Contact: Anne Finn, Mayo North East SICAP Social Enterprise Co-ordinator

Email: annefinn@mayonortheast.com

Link: [Website](#)

Mayo, Castlebar & Claremorris - South West Mayo Development Company (29-3)

This case study focuses on three elements of South West Mayo's digital inclusion programme; the equipment loan scheme, bespoke IT skills development supports and the online delivery of the flagship youth programme Foundation 4 Life. It outlines the ongoing challenges of COVID in the delivery of SICAP services and the need for digital inclusion and skills development.

Contact: Sabina Trench

Email: strench@southmayo.com

<p>Link: Website</p>
<p>Meath County - Meath Partnership (11-1)</p> <p>This case study sets out to showcase the possible effects and outcomes for women arising from SICAP support for the development and facilitation of local Teach Mná groups (or women's sheds) particularly where they are based in disadvantaged and/or rural locations, throughout Co Meath.</p> <p>Contact: Lorraine Owens Email: lorraine.owens@meathpartnership.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Monaghan County- Monaghan Integrated Development (34-1)</p> <p>LINC (Linking Irelands New Communities). The LINC project aimed to address access issues arising between new communities' members and state services. The project resulted in the establishment of a social enterprise to address this issue.</p> <p>Contact: Gabriel O'Connell Email: goconnell@midl.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Offaly County - Offaly Local Development Company (12-1)</p> <p>The case study highlights the use of a virtual youth festival.</p> <p>Contact: Siobhan Broderick Email: sbroderick@offalyldc.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Roscommon County - Roscommon Leader Partnership (30-1)</p> <p>Ballaghaderreen; The Future is Bright</p> <p>A case study showcasing the power of collaboration in a small rural town can support new communities to integrate with the local community</p> <p>Contact: Linda Sice, SICAP and Social Inclusion Lead Co-ordinator Email: linda@ridc.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Sligo County - Sligo Leader Partnership Company (31-1)</p> <p>This case study is a collaborative project between Sligo Leader Partnership and Family Resources Centres, Disability Groups, Diversity Sligo, Sligo Traveller Support Group, and many Women's Groups throughout the County. The study describes the process involved in designing and delivering a series of workshops targeted at marginalised women to promote health & wellbeing, and lifelong learning supports. The emphasis of the workshops was on supporting healthy ageing amongst disadvantaged women experiencing perimenopause, menopause, and post menopause.</p> <p>Contact: June Murphy, Sligo LEADER Partnership Email: jmurphy@sligoleader.com Link: Website</p>
<p>South Dublin County - South Dublin County Partnership (3-1)</p> <p>The video case study builds on the work on the Community Call and last year's video. It focuses on responding to the needs of Lone Parents & their mental health wellbeing. The case study captures the work of the SICAP funded Senior mental Health & Wellbeing Manager and how the teamwork with and collaborate with other teams within South Dublin Co Partnership such Counsellor (partly SICAP funded), Roma Housing & Health Workers and the Social prescribing Co-ordinator.</p> <p>Contact: Amanda McGrath, South Dublin County Partnership Email: amanda.mcgrath@sdcpartnership.ie Link: Website</p>
<p>Tipperary North - North Tipperary LEADER Partnership (22-1)</p> <p>This case study explores the engagement strategies, collaboration, language barriers, participation throughout COVID and online engagement, feedback from participants, and an analysis of new communities' participation across SICAP actions. It showcases the experience in North Tipperary and where creative solutions have built meaningful engagement with new communities.</p> <p>Contact: Maedhbh Gordon, North Tipperary Development Company Email: mgordon@ntdc.ie</p>

Link: [Website](#)

Tipperary South - South Tipperary Development Company (23-2)

The case study focuses on the lead role taken by SICAP in enabling and facilitating collaboration between the partners in the Wallers Lot Working Group to improve the lives of the Traveller community residing in the Wallers Lot Halting Site, Cashel.

Contact: Isabel Cambie, South Tipperary Development

Email: isabelcambie@stdc.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Waterford City and County - Waterford Area Partnership (24-1)

The Case Study focuses on work undertaken by WAP/SICAP with Waterford Local Economic Development Company and its Social Enterprise, Cill Barra (Community Sports and Leisure Centre), during 2021. It explores the value of SICAP social enterprise focused interventions.

Contact: Pat Wallace, Waterford Area Partnership

Email: pwallace@wap.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Westmeath County - Westmeath Community Development (13-1)

The case study focuses on the supports provided to Athlone Access awareness to engage with agencies to ensure there is access for people with disabilities to services in the town.

Contact: Frank Murtagh

Email: FMurtagh@Westcd.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Wexford County - Wexford Local Development (14-1)

This is a 15-page narrative with 4 videos to illustrate different aspects of the work with the Traveller community. An exploration of the relationship and synergies between SICAP and the Primary Health Care for Travellers Programme in engaging with the Traveller community in Co. Wexford before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Contact: Clare Ryan, Wexford Local Development

Email: cryan@WLD.ie

Link: [Website](#)

Wicklow Bray and Greystones - Bray Area Partnership (15-1)

The case study focuses on the role that BAP and SICAP has played within the social enterprise sector locally. The work has involved facilitating the needs of local groups and individuals to identify and develop new social enterprise projects through bespoke training, mentoring and networking supports.

Contact: Jennifer D'Arcy, Bray Area Partnership

Email: jenniferdarcy@brayareapartnership.ie

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Wicklow Arklow & Baltinglass – Co. Wicklow Community Partnership (15-2)

This case study showcases some of the clients the LDC has supported to avail of the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance Scheme (STEA) and Back To Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme (BTWEA) available from the Department of Social Protection (DSP).

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