



# Child & Youth Participation Award

## Participation Officers Report

This report highlights the ways in which staff supported children and young people to increase their participation in the service using the components of the Lundy Model, space, voice, audience, and influence.

**DATE:** 09/07/2024

**NAME OF SERVICE:** Tipperary County Council

**Service Information:** Tipperary County Council's Economic, Community and Rural section team provide a broad range of Quality-of-Life initiatives and community supports for the population of Tipperary. They build the economic, community and rural infrastructure across the county.

**Summary of the Project or Participation experience being evaluated:** Consultation with Children and Young People for Quality of Life in Clonmel. To carry out the consultation Tipperary County Council sought to collaborate with TUS and the South Tipperary Arts Centre. Tus is a third level institute providing third level programmes of education across the Midlands and Midwest, they also have a campus in Clonmel. It is the Clonmel campus team who supported the delivery of the consultation from a research methodology perspective and supported capturing the consultation process through imagery to tell the story of the consultation. South Tipperary Arts Centre provides a range of arts opportunities to the community of South Tipperary. They have a range of artists that work with their centre.

### EVALUATION:

#### **SPACE:**

The consultations took the form of focus groups with varying age cohorts from a range of schools, education centres and a third level institute. In each focus group there were creative space facilitators to support a hold a space that was non-leading and playful in an age-appropriate way, a primary researcher compiling and recording the contributions throughout the focus group, and a student artist capturing the focus group through sketching the process. The focus groups were held with the young people in their location so for example in the school or in the training centre. This contributed to the young people feeling safe enough to express themselves freely. Games and icebreakers were played at the start of the group and the tone was fun and informal.

#### **VOICE:**

There was a component of a survey workshop that supported young people to develop the type of questions they would like to be asked if surveyed. In this way the survey was developed by young people for young people. The young people really made a difference here to the survey. An example of such would be for the mode of transport question they added "scooter" as a mode. They also ensured that the language used was simple and understandable. For each cohort of participants, a different method was used to harvest the information. The early years participants took a virtual bus ride around the town, stopping off at certain places that they wished to and critiquing them. They also used wands to wish for what they would like to see in the town for



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children. The primary and secondary children used postcards to document their ideas. The information from these was documented and compiled.

The young people highlighted many topics as important in Clonmel. For this report I met with three young people from the training centre. They related to me the issues that they had put forward such as housing for people with disability and town transport links being poor and inaccessible. Other issues mentioned by the children were littering and rubbish, the closing of business and dereliction in the town. One primary school participant shared that coffee shops in the town are not child friendly.

### AUDIENCE:

The children and young people knew and understood the purpose of the surveys and the focus groups. They knew that the information would go to decision makers in the county council. Some of the young people met with the Chief Executive of the county council. They read out their ideas and suggestions to him and he listened to and discussed each one individually. The CE was presented with a wand which was a prop that had been used by the early years children's focus groups. This wand takes pride of place on his desk reminding him of the importance of the perspective of children and young people in his work.

### INFLUENCE:

The children and young people's contribution to the consultation was recognised by a letter of acknowledgement that was sent to them via the service. The letter let them know that all their views had been received. Since then, several changes have been made to the town to improve the quality of life for all. The young people from the training centre informed me that the transport improvements are very noticeable. Not only are they more frequent and include more routes they are now all wheelchair accessible. Other initiatives are being introduced in response to the substance misuse issue. Planet Youth Tipperary is an initiative coming available to all secondary schools across the county of Tipperary. Planet Youth is an Icelandic Prevention Model initially aimed at decreasing substance use and misuse among young people and consequently among the wider population in the longer term. Improvements have been made to parks, sensory equipment has been added and a youth festival will now be held in the town.



### YOUNG PERSON'S COMMENTS:

"There were parts of town that were really hard to get around, with buggies or wheelchairs"

"I often thought why they don't do something with the footpaths, like if that was my mother that had fallen"

"I put on my postcard to get more disability houses"

"We haven't seen as much change as we would we like yet"

"It was brilliant, and I really enjoyed it" (in reference to form theatre carried out in a focus group)



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### FUTURE PLANS:

Continue to facilitate the subgroups (Quality of Life Alliance and Substance misuse subgroups) that are delivering the health and wellbeing initiatives for Clonmel.

Roll out of the TUS student Youth Festival in Sept/Oct 2024.

Continue to promote child and youth participation throughout Tipperary.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Keep the feedback going – go back to all participants and update on recent developments.

Consider child friendly versions of research reports for future programmes.

### CONCLUSION:

A project such as this shows us how there is real momentum gathering around child and youth participation. This project was purposeful and meant something to the children – the town where they live matters. The children and young people that took part had the space to add real value to the town plans in Clonmel and have made valuable suggestions for the whole community with the aim of improving the well being of all. Care was taken by the council to provide feedback to all participants, which can be difficult given the longer-term nature of this piece of work and I would encourage that this is carried out at least once again. This was an inclusive project and one that sets an example for policy makers and planners alike in terms of participation.

### ENDORSEMENT:

Young people's endorsement of the report completed.	Date: 01/09/2024
Comments of the young people on the report.	All approved
Received by:	02/09/2024

**Name of Participation Officer:** *Clare Redmond*

**Region:** South

**Date:** 09/07/2024



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