



Social Inclusion &
Community Activation
Programme

Action Progress Report

Year	2025
Lot	Waterford City & County (24-1)

Annual KPI Targets & Actuals

	Target	Actuals	%Achieved
KPI 1	79	80	101%
KPI 2	949	1278	135%
% of Supported Individuals who fall into local priority target group(s)	88.00	124.97	



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(2025) 1.1 2025 Inclusive Communities

Action Outcomes

Planned Action Outcomes

SICAP Outcome

1.1 Local areas/communities have built their collective capacity to identify and address their needs
1.2 New Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks are formed

Action KPI Targets & Actuals

KPI 1 Target	14	KPI 1 Actual	33
KPI 2 Target		KPI 2 Actual	

Action Updates

Mid-Year Update

SICAP events:

Two International Women's Day events were organised in Waterford City & Dungarvan. Women from a variety of SICAP target groups came together and were given the opportunity to connect, share ideas and network. The Waterford event had approx. 40 in attendance with creative writing, dance, meditation and chat. The Dungarvan event had 160 attendees and was a collaboration with WWETB & WC&CC Creative Waterford. Activities on the morning included a Creative arts workshop where each group designed a jigsaw piece and it resulted in a joint finished product, Breathwork Workshop, musical entertainment and a karaoke workshop. A follow-on event is being organised in Dungarvan and West Waterford to bring Women's Groups together for a networking event in the Autumn.

Partner on Connecting Communities Roadshows

SICAP supported Healthy Waterford and other organisations in delivering the Connecting Communities Roadshow initiative, which included seven community wellbeing events. These were held in Ferrybank, Waterford City (Larchville & Lisduggan), Tramore, Kilmacthomas, Ardmore, and Cappoquin. SICAP played a key role in encouraging participation from disadvantaged communities and ensuring the inclusion of individuals and families from SICAP target groups at each location.

Playful Streets to Playful Communities

SICAP actively participates as a member of both the organising and review groups for the Playful Communities initiative, which evolved from the earlier Playful Streets initiative. Playful Communities promotes the use of public spaces for community interaction and play-based engagement.

SICAP is liaising with local communities in Tramore, Portlaoise, and Dungarvan, facilitating targeted outreach to ensure meaningful participation by children and families from our target groups.

Collaborative Family Event - Sacred Heart Community

In partnership with the Waterford Community Safety Partnership, Sacred Heart Family Resource Centre, Healthy Waterford, Waterford Sports Partnership, and Active Communities, SICAP is playing an active role in coordinating a community family event planned for the Sacred Heart area.

SICAP's focus is on targeted outreach to ensure that local families, especially those at risk of social exclusion are invited, engaged, and supported to attend. This event aims to foster inclusion and strengthen positive relationships between residents and local services.

Community Connection Project

This national project, funded by DRCD and coordinated nationally by Local Development Companies Network is aimed at working with local communities on issues emerging from misinformation, discrimination and far-right rhetoric especially in communities with DPC and BOTP Centres. The project worker commenced in May with key areas identified with additional actions to support frontline workers and volunteers in building skills and resilience in their local communities.

Annual Support Plans

Community organisations identified key actions through the Annual Support Plan process which require SICAP supports. In response to this a number of activities are currently in planning stage in collaboration with some of the groups that we support and include:

- o Making the Link Event for Dungarvan
- o Autism Town Plan Workshop with Autism Friendly Dungarvan Initiative
- o Carers Information Exhibition
- o Traveller Pride & Mental Health Awareness event in Dungarvan
- o ASI Dungarvan Volunteer Group Celebration Day for Families, Individuals with Dementia and Volunteers
- o First Aid Training
- o Committee Skills information

End of Year Update

In achieving the key aim of this action – To build inclusive communities with Local Community Groups and Networks to strengthen engagement, civic pride and community spirit through collective action and community animation – we organised the following events and activities

Community Wellbeing Event in Dungarvan

A cross-goal Community Wellbeing Event took place in Dungarvan Sports Centre in collaboration with and Healthy Waterford. The event brought together over 70 people from Women's Groups across Dungarvan & West Waterford to network and participate in activities such as Breathwork, Mindfulness, Nutritional talk and Art & Craft activity.

This event was identified at the International Women's Day event to address social isolation, anxiety, wellbeing and key areas of women's health. In providing opportunities for women living in Dungarvan and surrounding rural areas to come together and network we maintain social inclusion, community engagement and build new friendships, all critical for wellbeing and belonging.

Autism Friendly Dungarvan Initiative- Autism Town Plan for Dungarvan

SICAP actively supports a number of inclusive community initiatives across Waterford City & County. This includes ongoing collaborations and supports for initiatives such as Autism Friendly Dungarvan, Autism Friendly Waterford and Dementia Inclusive Dungarvan Initiative, all of which work to remove barriers and increase awareness in the community. Supports include awareness raising, capacity building and developmental supports. In October 2025, SICAP supported the facilitation of a Workshop to aid the development of an Autism Town Plan for Dungarvan in collaboration with Autism Friendly Dungarvan. Over 30 people from a variety of Cos, agencies and organisations were in attendance on the night. A survey was made available to the public after the event to ensure the inclusion of all in the community. These initiatives contribute to more connected, informed and compassionate communities and align with SICAP's focus on supporting those who experience additional barriers to fully participate in their community.

Celebration of Dementia Inclusive Dungarvan

We hosted an event in collaboration with Friends of ASI Dungarvan and The Alzheimer's Society of Ireland to celebrate the 2nd Year of the voluntary effort in operation in Dungarvan which is aiming to make Dungarvan a Dementia Inclusive Town. Since its inception families and service users of Alzheimer's Society of Ireland's Services have been provided with many services including a Saturday day service, a monthly Memory Café and dementia awareness training for groups and businesses in Dungarvan. The Memory Café has now further expanded to Kilmacthomas and a day service in Cappoquin. The celebration day provided an opportunity for volunteers, carers, those with dementia and their families to come together for some festive treats and musical entertainment to reflect and celebrate the groups achievements over the year and to take some time away from their caring duties to meet other families and carers.

Traveller Pride Event in Dungarvan

On 27th September SICAP organised a Traveller Pride and Family Fun Day Event in Dungarvan Sports Centre in collaboration with Mincéirí Port Láirge. Up to 70 members of the Traveller Community attended with their families on the day to celebrate their heritage and to foster pride in their unique identity, traditions and culture. A number of projects were launched on the day including the SICAP 'Walk in My Shoes Creative Arts Project' which helped young Traveller Women to explore their identity and to develop a sense of pride and belonging through the medium of Art. Certificates were also presented for the participation of Traveller Men in a number of courses funded by SICAP and WWETB including Safe Pass.

Community Growers Activities

SICAP supported the planning and delivery of "Behind the Garden Fence: A Journey into Community Gardens", a series of inclusive community events activating local gardens as shared public spaces which promotes social inclusion, health and wellbeing, and community connection. The events were delivered in collaboration with community garden groups and community leaders, ensuring activities were welcoming, accessible, and responsive to both existing members and those new to community gardening, including individuals experiencing social isolation. SICAP coordinated social media and PR promotion, increasing the visibility of community gardens and reinforcing their role as inclusive community assets and informal social hubs. This resulted in increased awareness of community gardens as welcoming and inclusive spaces Renewed engagement from existing members and increased participation from new community members and the organic development of informal peer support networks, strengthening community bonds and social cohesion.

Playful Streets Events

SICAP actively participates as a member of both the organising and review groups for the Playful Communities initiative in collaboration with Healthy Waterford, which evolved from the earlier Playful Streets initiative. Playful Communities promotes the use of public spaces for community interaction and play-based engagement. SICAP co-funded and organised events in Tramore, Portlawn, and Dungarvan, facilitating targeted outreach which ensured meaningful participation by children and families from our target groups. Activities are aimed at all family members engaging which lends itself to quality time and good memories.

Basic First Aid Training

A basic First Aid workshop was offered to Community Organisations, including local Men's Sheds and Women's Groups in Lismore & Waterford City to equip members, volunteers, and staff practical, hands-on experience and the confidence to act appropriately in emergency situations that may arise during community activities, social gatherings, workshops, or group projects. The training covered essential first aid skills such as responding to heart attacks, strokes, choking, burns, wounds, and unconsciousness, as well as CPR and the use of an AED. 23 group members from 9 COs attended across the 2 workshops. A complimentary First Aid Kit was provided for each community organisation in attendance with certificates from the trainer to support compliance with Health & Safety

Basic IT Skills

A Basic IT Skills workshop took place in Tallow Enterprise Centre in October for volunteer committee members to help build confidence with everyday computer tasks, such as creating folders, saving documents, and sending email attachments or photos to help aid their committee administration work. 13 committee representatives from 6 COs completed the training on the day with certificates of participation provided.

(2025) 1.2 2025 Empowered & Sustainable Communities

Action Outcomes

Planned Action Outcomes

SICAP Outcome

- 2.1 Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks have increased capacity to support SICAP target groups and thematic focus areas
- 2.3 Local Community Groups and Social Enterprises have expanded their services to benefit SICAP target groups and thematic focus areas
- 2.4 LCGs and SEs create additional jobs and volunteering opportunities in their communities

Action KPI Targets & Actuals

KPI 1 Target	50	KPI 1 Actual	70
KPI 2 Target		KPI 2 Actual	

Action Updates

Mid-Year Update

Annual Support Plans

60 community organisations have completed their ASPs and are fully registered with a minimum of two interventions with an additional 13 with one intervention. They have identified developmental supports they require including access to and managing relevant funding, event/activity planning, AGM protocols and general day to day queries on any arising issues/challenges. Groups were supported to apply for grants such as WC&CC Local Enhancement & Supporting Communities Fund, HSE National Lottery, Age & Opportunity and SICAP Goal 1 grant.

Pre-development Supports

A number of new organisations have emerged (12) and require significant pre-development supports, guidance on establishing their committee, accessing insurance and support to access relevant funding schemes to build the capacity of the group and ensure sustainability. New groups were assisted in registering with the PPN, awareness of other services and potential collaboration.

SICAP Community Grants

61 Community organisations applied for funding under Goal 1 grants with allocations approved (will be processed and paid in early June) to support key activities to enhance their work with SICAP target groups.

Governance Supports

Organisations are provided with guidance on committee skills, Constitution (development & review), succession planning to ensure sustainability of the group in the future etc. Some groups have volunteers in shadow roles so someone new is ready to step up into the role based on the term of office. Goal 1 staff provide mentoring and guidance to community leaders who take on these roles where necessary. Other governance supports include guidance with the Charities Regulator Governance Code, templates for policies, AGM protocols, conflict resolution etc.

The People's Transition Project in Larchville & Lisduggan

Ongoing support to local community organisations to progress with the recommendations that emerged from the TASC report. The key activity being developed with the community is the Repair Café being led under Action 1.6 Social Enterprise. A presentation was made at Pobal national seminars on SICAP Climate Action and current models to inform how local development companies can integrate the new Horizontal Theme of Climate Justice within their work.

Ballybeg 50th Celebrations

SICAP is working with BRILL FRC and other local organisations to develop a calendar of events to celebrate this milestone. SICAP will organise two mental Health focused events with the first in August which will be a remembrance and reflection event in August for all those from the community who are no longer with us especially in remembering neighbours and friends who have died by suicide. The event planned for September will be a Mental Health Information Seminar/information programme, held in the Ballybeg Community, engage with all relevant agencies locally and nationally to attend. Another activity will be a history of the estate through video and speaking to older residents and young people.

Funding & Grant Applications

WAP staff continuing to support LCGs to apply for funding in support of their annual support plan goals. However, some key issues continue to emerge:

- o Some organisations are struggling with online application systems due to lack of confidence in digital skills or no access to computers. Such organisations are being supported by SICAP workers to adapt to this. It also highlighted the need for additional IT support and linked some with digital skills classes through WWETB Literacy Service.

- o A decrease in the number of organisations requiring support in applying for the Local Enhancement Programme due to the stipulation the project must be completed with the funding spent before receiving reimbursement of funds. This continues to pose financial challenges for smaller organisations who are not able to cover the costs upfront and is resulting in many not applying and missing out in vital funds. For SICAP target groups it is creating additional challenges in providing materials or organising activities critical to their needs.

End of Year Update

To achieve strong outcomes aligned with the aim of this action – Empowered & Sustainable Communities: LCGs, SEs and Networks empowered to co-design and implement actions strengthening social inclusion, community planning and governance – we delivered on the following in line with programme requirements.

SICAP Annual Support Plans

80 community organisations registered with SICAP and completed an Annual Support Plan in 2025. Through the ASPs, community organisations identified developmental supports they required including access to and managing relevant funding, event/activity planning, AGM protocols and general day to day

queries on any arising issues/challenges. Groups were supported to apply for grants such as WC&CC Local Enhancement & Supporting Communities Fund, HSE National Lottery, Age & Opportunity Grant, Community Climate Action Programme, Creative Communities and SICAP Goal 1 grant. Some groups also required support in managing these grants and reporting.

Outreach Supports

SICAP has two outreach offices, one city and another county based with staff also visiting local communities to attend committee meetings, support events and provide help with day-to-day queries e.g. online grant applications. Drop-in sessions are held in Lismore, Tallow, Cappoquin etc as required. Another community space in Larchville & Lisduggan (two adjacent very disadvantaged communities) supports community organisations to hold meetings, coffee mornings, activities etc. including the monthly Repair Café project. These approaches are embedded in our day-to-day work with staff being flexible to meet the needs and time of the community which builds trust and positive working relationships.

Developmental and Governance Supports

During 2025, developmental support was provided to registered community organisations, with a focus on assisting groups in accessing and managing funding, compliance with their Constitution, planning annual actions and event planning while answering day-to-day queries in relation to capacity building & group development. Organisations are also provided with guidance on committee skills, constitution (development & review), succession planning to ensure sustainability of the group. Some groups have volunteers in shadow roles so someone new is ready to step up into the role based on the term of office. Goal 1 staff provide mentoring and guidance to community leaders who take on these roles where necessary. Other governance supports include guidance with the Charities Regulator Governance Code, templates for policies, AGM protocols, conflict resolution etc.

Pre-Development Support

13 new organisations have emerged during the year and have required significant pre-development supports, guidance on establishing their committee, accessing insurance and support to access relevant funding schemes to build the capacity of the group and ensure sustainability. New groups were assisted in registering with the PPN, awareness of other services and potential collaboration. One new Women's Shed engaged through the SICAP Mental Health Event. Ferrybank Women's Shed are at pre-development stage and are working towards sourcing a suitable premises as they have been using rented rooms for meetings and activities.

SICAP Community Grants

61 Community Organisations availed of SICAP grants to develop their facilities and activities, organise social and cultural events and gatherings and for the purchase of small capital items to enhance their work with SICAP target groups. One barrier for new emerging LCGs is sourcing funding to support initial set up costs especially insurance and room hire costs. This is ineligible under SICAP and limits their capacity to develop their activities as they have to wait until the following year to apply under the Waterford Supporting Communities Fund.

Grow Together Programme

This programme emerged following the Community Growers events and is linked to New Arrivals action. During 2025 one of the community garden projects developed into a strong, self-organising group and, with SICAP support, progressed to delivering a structured 10-week "Grow Together" programme. SICAP supported the co-design and delivery of the programme, with volunteers actively involved in planning and facilitating weekly sessions, strengthening local leadership and community ownership. Through SICAP and New Arrivals actions the programme engaged with participants accessing migrant supports through other programmes provided by Buíon Phort Láirge, supporting social inclusion and integration through shared, practical activity in a welcoming community setting.

SICAP provided capacity-building support to volunteers, enhancing skills in facilitation, group work, and inclusive practice, contributing to the long-term sustainability of the garden as a community-led resource. Some of the positive outcomes included:

- o Increased confidence, skills, and leadership capacity among community volunteers
- o Improved social inclusion and integration for migrant participants
- o Strengthened social connections, practical skills development, and wellbeing-focused engagement
- o Foundations established for ongoing community-led programming beyond SICAP involvement

Ballybeg 50th Celebrations

Ballybeg is a local social housing community that has experienced strong challenges in its 50 years with many SICAP target groups residing in the area. As part of the Ballybeg 50th Anniversary celebrations a calendar of activities were coordinated by SICAP, BRILL Family Resource Centre, local school, sport clubs, your groups, childcare centre etc.. SICAP supported three community fun events in the planning, coordination and delivery of all events, working closely with local community groups and stakeholders. The first event took place in June at BRILL Family Resource Centre campus and was a family fun day with a Carnival Activities theme. The event was well attended and provided an inclusive, welcoming space for families to come together and celebrate the community.

The second event was held in July at St. Saviour's Soccer Pitch and focused on Old School Games, including traditional activities such as egg-and-spoon races. Running alongside this event was a 50th Anniversary boxing tournament, organised by St. Saviours Crystal Boxing Club, who welcomed a visiting club from Wexford to take part in the celebrations.

The final event took place in early September and was specifically aimed at older residents from the area. This event was very well attended and took the form of a tea dance, with live performances by the High Hopes Choir, followed by local musician Bim Connors. Feedback from attendees was extremely positive, with many expressing a wish for similar events to be held in 2026, highlighting a gap in social activities for older people in the community.

Ballybeg 50th Anniversary Video

A video is being filmed to capture the history of the estate through conversations with older residents and young people on their memories and lived experience. All interviews have now been completed and editing and preparation for the launch are currently underway. The video will trace the history of Ballybeg from 1975, explore what it was like growing up on the estate, and conclude with reflections on the present day (2025), highlighting achievements to date and future hopes for the community. The video provides significant community, social and intergenerational benefits in capturing local history and lived experience that might otherwise be lost, while giving younger people a stronger sense of identity, belonging and pride in their community. This supports social inclusion, reduces isolation among older residents, and creates a positive platform for community voices to be heard.

Community Mental Health & Wellness Event

A Community Mental Health and Wellness Event was held in Ballybeg in collaboration with HSE Connecting for Life to coincide with World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10th 2025. This event brought together services, supports and the wider community to showcase available support services and to host talks and workshops. During the event there was optional breakout sessions in another room for people to attend, with workshops from Mental Health Ireland, Connecting for Life HSE and SHINE. Also available and free of charge on the day was auricular acupuncture conducted by Waterford CBDI. This event helped to foster open conversation, reduce stigma, and connect people with mental health help, demonstrating community-focused suicide prevention helping to break down the stigma attached.

(2025) 1.3 2025 Collaborations & Networks

Action Outcomes

Planned Action Outcomes

SICAP Outcome

3.1 SICAP implementers develop collaborative initiatives with relevant stakeholders that address identified gaps

2.2 SICAP target groups are represented and participate in decision-making spaces that affect them

2.1 Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks have increased capacity to support SICAP target groups and thematic focus areas

Action KPI Targets & Actuals

KPI 1 Target	5	KPI 1 Actual	25
KPI 2 Target		KPI 2 Actual	

Action Updates

Mid-Year Update

SICAP is leading/initiating or collaborating with relevant stakeholders across the city and county on the following key projects/activities. Staff attend local and national structures to inform strategy and policy development including Waterford LCDC Migrant Strategy Sub-committee, Waterford Traveller Interagency Group, Community Work Ireland and Local Development Companies Network.

Dungarvan Community Centre Project

SICAP is undertaking a Feasibility Study into the need for a Community Centre in Dungarvan in response to a local community organisations who have ongoing difficulties in accessing suitable facilities. Over 20 local community groups, organisations and agencies are participating in a Steering Group and have engaged with the study through meetings, one-to-one interviews in person and online with a further 90 engaging with a public survey conducted online and advertised widely. A Steering Group meeting is planned with the consultants for early June to discuss the outline of the final draft report with the final publication expected by the end of June. The working group had an opportunity to meet with the Minister of State for Rural & Community Development, Minister Buttimer TD in May to discuss the urgent need for a centre in Dungarvan.

Traveller Needs Analysis in Dungarvan

Mincéirí Portlairge (Traveller CDP) is leading on this project which is co-funded by SICAP and Waterford City & County Council. The aim of the project is to engage with families and individuals living within Dungarvan and environs to establish key needs and recommendations for additional supports. The final report is due in September following consultations with the community and other stakeholders

SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities Project

WAP is contracted by SEAI to deliver on the SEC project within Waterford aimed at supporting people on energy transition. This is a direct response to the needs of the SICAP programme on Climate Justice and the People's Transition Project in Larchville & Lisduggan. The project is co-funded by SEAI and SICAP and will work collaboratively with Waterford Council Climate Action Team and South-East Energy Association.

Community Growers

SICAP initiated the development of a Community Growers Network in collaboration with our target group members. Planning meetings have been held in close consultation with community leaders to ensure activities are locally relevant and responsive to community needs. Facilitated access to funding to transform an underutilised garden into an accessible, welcoming space that will serve as a community hub for a newly forming Community Growers Network

Men's and Women's Sheds Networks

Two new Men's Sheds have emerged who are located in Dunmore East and Tramore and are pre-development stage supports and links to existing sheds within the county. SICAP provide pre-development support including guidance on governance, funding applications, and sourcing suitable premises to aid in their formal establishment.

Community Events

Men's Shed Event & Community Growers Series: A series of inclusive events has been jointly planned and delivered with local leaders and community groups, aimed at promoting social inclusion, health, well-being, and community connectivity. These initiatives have led to the organic formation of informal support networks among attendees.

End of Year Update

The following captures key actions delivered in achieving positive outcomes to the aim of 'Enhance participation on structures with strategic coordination in co-designing solutions to strengthen social inclusion interventions'

Traveller Needs Analysis Dungarvan

Mincéirí Portlairge (Traveller CDP) led on this project which was co-funded by SICAP and Waterford City & County Council. The aim of the project was to engage with families and individuals living within Dungarvan and environs to establish key needs and recommendations for additional supports. Almost 100 people took part in the consultation, including Traveller families, young people and local services. The key findings from this needs analysis demonstrate that Traveller families in Dungarvan face serious and ongoing inequalities. The study highlighted the three main areas for action as housing, health & wellbeing, education, training & employment and Leadership & Community Development. We will continue to work with Dungarvan Traveller Community Health Project, to offer relevant support through SICAP, as the project does not have enough staff or the long-term funding required to meet the current

needs.

On completion of the report a specific workshop was held to a) presentation by consultants on outcome of the report and b) discuss strategic actions aligned with the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy II. All will support the Waterford Traveller Interagency Group to develop practical actions in the coming years including supporting funding applications to strengthen resources for the Traveller Community.

SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities Project

Buíon Phort Láirge is funded by SEAI to deliver on the Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC) project within Waterford aimed at supporting people and Communities on energy transition. To strengthen this project and SICAP's horizontal principal of Climate Action SICAP has co-funded the project to ensure our disadvantaged communities are supported and is a direct response to the People's Transition Project in Larchville & Lisduggan. The project works collaboratively with Waterford Council Climate Action Team and SEAI to deliver on key actions to support local communities in energy transition and developing Energy Master Plans. During 2025, a series of energy awareness workshops were delivered to support people with information & advice on reducing household energy costs as well as practical guidance and tips on keeping homes warmer by reducing energy consumption & improving household energy efficiency. Information was also provided on available grants and supports such as the Warmer Home Scheme. These workshops were delivered in to Kilmacthomas Women's Group, Deise Women's Shed, Waterford Women's Centre, Healthy Communities, Sacred Heart Parish Centre and at the Men's Shed Gathering event.

Men's Shed Gatherings

Two specific end of year events were held to sustain networking with the Men's Shed. In December 2025, SICAP facilitated the Men's Sheds Christmas Gathering – "The Big Wrap Up 2025", bringing together Men's Shed members from across the east of the county to strengthen connections, peer learning, and collaborative working. The event provided a structured networking and reflective space, supported by a reflective practitioner, enabling participants to share experiences and explore the personal, community, and social inclusion value of Men's Sheds. Reflective discussion focused on members' motivations for joining a Men's Shed, the role of Men's Sheds in promoting wellbeing and addressing social isolation, and opportunities for enhanced collaboration across local contexts. The event strengthened inter-shed relationships and peer networks; increased shared understanding of the social inclusion impact of Men's Sheds and improved readiness among shed members to collaborate, shared learning, and engage in future collective initiatives. The event was attended by the national Irish Men's Shed Association.

The second event was organised for Men's Shed in Dungarvan, Tallow and Lismore in Ballyrafter House, Lismore. The event provided an opportunity for the Men's Shed in the West to come together and network, reflect on 2025 and share ideas for 2026. Light lunch and refreshments were provided before the Men had an opportunity to take part in some games of pool and boccea.

Dungarvan Community Centre Project

Over the past three years local community organisations have highlighted the ongoing challenges they are encountering in accessing community facilities within Dungarvan. SICAP staff facilitated a number of meetings with community organisations and service providers during this time, the outcome of which was to assess the need in Dungarvan for community facilities that are not presently, or adequately, met. In 2025, SICAP commissioned and funded a Feasibility Study in relation to the development of a multi-purpose Community Centre in Dungarvan engaging over 20 community organisations and service providers. Through detailed needs analysis, community engagement, site assessment, and business modelling, the study concluded that investment in such a facility is both viable and essential. The report maps out a clear pathway that will support Dungarvan's community groups and service providers in advancing this project to the next stage, while also identifying potential stakeholders, funding opportunities and additional supports required to help achieve these goals. A Steering Group has been established, and a strategic plan will be developed in 2026.

Local and national decision-making structures:

SICAP staff are active members of structures which impact on our target groups through policy development and implementing practical strategies. In 2025 we collaborated with Waterford City & County Council, Tusla, HSE, CYPSC, etc. on structures aimed at migrants (Waterford LCDC Migrant Strategy Working Group & HSE Social Inclusion). Traveller Community (TIG), disadvantaged

communities (Waterford UNESCO Learning City, Healthy Waterford and Healthy Communities, Waterford Volunteer Centre), families and children (West Waterford Family & Community Hub) etc. National structures include Local Development Companies Network and working groups on SICAP Social Procurement Tendering Process and SICAP Community Development QSF process.

(2025) 1.4 2025 Community Leadership & Peer Mentoring Network

Action Outcomes

Planned Action Outcomes

SICAP Outcome

2.1 Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks have increased capacity to support SICAP target groups and thematic focus areas

1.1 Local areas/communities have built their collective capacity to identify and address their needs

Action KPI Targets & Actuals

KPI 1 Target	2	KPI 1 Actual	2
KPI 2 Target		KPI 2 Actual	1

Action Updates

Mid-Year Update

A forum was held in late April to explore how to proceed with the leadership and mentoring programme. A number of emerging recommendations included a needs analysis of local volunteers and workers to identify key needs to inform the leadership programme and to research mentoring approaches similar to that of Waterford Chamber of Commerce Regional Leadership Programme where one-to-one mentoring is provided to participants.

Discussions with key leaders from SICAP target groups have proved beneficial in identifying key areas of training for their members however they are challenged with time in bringing those who may be interested together and agree that a needs analysis may help their volunteers and workers to actively engage through focus group discussions. This analysis will be initiated in September

End of Year Update

SICAP tendered for a Community Leadership Programme to engage a consultant to facilitate a needs analysis. The objectives aimed to enhance and build on the knowledge, experience, energy and skills of community leaders to empower local communities, strengthen leadership and mentoring to support succession planning and progression to employment within the sector. In identifying and creating peer-led solutions to barriers we would explore skills-based training on community development, equality and human rights approaches, governance, policy development, leadership, strategic planning, collaborative working and other identified areas. The research undertaken on existing peer-led leadership and mentoring programmes would be informed by key frameworks e.g. All Ireland Education Board Community Works Standards, Sustainable, Inclusive & Empowered Communities, A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision-Making etc.

The methodologies are underpinned by participative models of community engagement and Universal Design principles with plain English guidelines to ensure accessibility for people with low literacy, disabilities or limited digital skills. The key outcomes and output of the Community Leadership & Mentoring Programme would include a toolkit which responds to the needs of the volunteers, staff and community in strengthening skills and succession for the sector.

In advertising the tender on Activelink we received two submissions. However, they did not meet the required assessment criteria to engage a consultant. The working group will meet again in January/February 2026 to review the process.

A key observation from our discussions on this action – in discussing this action with key community leaders, CEOs/Managers of community projects and with national partners, all agreed that such a programme is a necessity. Staff, existing and new are struggling with the demands of their work in balancing delivery of critical supports with administration and governance. Sustaining our communities and community leaders (paid and voluntary) with practical supports and skills development will become more critical in the coming years as we need volunteers for committees and Companies Limited by Guarantee which is becoming increasingly challenging within the sector.

(2025) 1.5 2025 G1 New Arrivals Community Integration

Action Outcomes

Planned Action Outcomes

SICAP Outcome

1.2 New Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks are formed

1.1 Local areas/communities have built their collective capacity to identify and address their needs

Action KPI Targets & Actuals

KPI 1 Target		KPI 1 Actual	6
KPI 2 Target		KPI 2 Actual	3

Action Updates

Mid-Year Update

SICAP continues our work in supporting New Arrivals especially those living in DPCs and BOTP Centres and/or in private accommodation.

Integration through English

3-4 sessions are held each week to support New Arrivals in developing their skills in English conversation. As part of the sessions, participants are encouraged to join local libraries, hobby-based groups etc. To support familiarisation with Waterford local walks are organised to provide information on services, history, local amenities etc this supports participants with greater awareness of where they are now living.

Calendar of Events

Various events are being held and/or planned for 2025 to maintain connection with New Arrivals and in particular with those living in rural areas. These include a Chess Tournament in collaboration with the local libraries, volunteer support in collaboration with Waterford Volunteer Centre and other activities in Lismore, Dungarvan etc.

Developmental Supports to Community Organisations

SICAP supports a number of migrant based organisations including two Ukrainian organisations with pre-development support to register and avail of the supports we provide. Through regular contact we provide guidance on committee structure, annual planning, grant application support and assistance around committee meetings and roles. This support provides them with information on community structures in Ireland, building their capacity and understanding of the community and voluntary sector. Organisation members have been encouraged to attend SICAP organised events such as International Women's Day, as this provided them with an opportunity to meet other women's groups and share ideas. A member of the Ukrainian community spoke at the Dungarvan event and shared her story of integrating into Irish Society.

Community Connection Project

The project will support local communities in strengthening inclusion and building resilience when faced with misinformation and far-right rhetoric. Coordinated nationally by Local Development Companies Network the project is for 18 months and will inform local and national developments in policy and strategy. In working collaboratively with Waterford Integration Services and other partners we will identify key actions and activities for the coming months.

End of Year Update

Grow Together Programme

Following on from one of the Community Growers events, Gracedieu Growers, in collaboration with a number of programmes across Buíon Phort Láirge including SICAP Goal 1, facilitated a 'Grow Together Programme' for members of New Communities. 12 participants from diverse backgrounds participated in weekly hands-on sessions in gardening, teamwork and shared learning. This helped to build participants confidence, encouraged connections and created a stronger sense of belonging and shared purpose while learning gardening skills. The Grow Together Programme is more than just gardening. It reflects the core principles of community development including empowerment, inclusion, and sustainability, giving participants the skills and confidence to grow and contribute to their local community.

Integration through English Orientation Programme

SICAP delivers weekly sessions for New Arrivals through English language to enhance integration and inclusion. In 2025 Waterford experienced many changes in residents across our 7 IPAS Centres which has an impact on people's well-being and sense of belonging when they are uprooted for another part of Ireland. Over the initial 6-8 weeks SICAP staff host sessions to support orientation – visiting libraries. An Post, DSP offices, local amenities e.g. heritage and parks.

This programme is delivered within local communities and includes awareness of Life in Ireland including making of St Brigid's Crosses, promotion of St Patrick's Day parades, Africa Day, celebration of cultural national events etc. Weekly contact strengthens community connections and links with existing services including LAIT team and LDC internal projects e.g. IEM, Intercultural Health, Community Connection Project etc. In collaborating with local community groups and Waterford Volunteer Centre we promote community engagement activities and volunteering to support inclusion and community belonging. SICAP supports several migrant COs including Ukrainian, Sudanese and Hungarian to provide developmental support, accessing funding, participating on relevant decision-making structures and collaboration.

Developmental Supports to Community Organisations

SICAP supports a number of migrant based organisations including two Ukrainian organisations with capacity-building supports. Through regular meetings staff provide guidance on committee structure, annual activity planning, grant application support and assistance around committee meetings and roles. This support provides them with information on community structures in Ireland, building their capacity and understanding of the community and voluntary sector. Organisation members have also been encouraged to attend SICAP organised events such as International Women's Day and Community Growers Events as this provides them with an opportunity to meet other groups, network and share ideas.

Calendar of Events

A number of events and activities were held over 2025 to maintain connection with New Arrivals and in particular with those living in rural areas. These included a number of chess tournaments in Dungarvan, Tramore, Lismore and Waterford City, St. Bridget's Day Workshop, Beach Picnic at Clonea Strand, a beach clean in Tramore and a trip to Mahon Falls to name but a few. These events allowed the community to come together and support one another while participating in community activities.

Collaboration with Partners

SICAP collaborates with other partners in delivering practical and positive resources within our communities to support integration and inclusion including Waterford City & County Council, HSE, Tusla, CYPSC etc. As a member of Waterford LCDC Migrant Strategy Working Group, we are engaged in a review process on Waterford's Migrant Strategy as we await the new framework. SICAP hosted a network event for service providers to share updates on current services and supports, identify current and emerging needs within the migrant community and to strengthen connections and collaborations in 2026. Waterford City & County Council CEO opened the event with recognition of the current work being undertaken in a changing landscape of policy and the challenges of misinformation. He stated the need for all services providers to commit to collaboration as we meet the ongoing needs of migrants within Waterford.

(2025) 1.6 Social and Community Enterprise

Action Outcomes

Planned Action Outcomes

SICAP Outcome

3.1 SICAP implementers develop collaborative initiatives with relevant stakeholders that address identified gaps
 1.2 New Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks are formed
 2.1 Local Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Networks have increased capacity to support SICAP target groups and thematic focus areas

Action KPI Targets & Actuals

KPI 1 Target	8	KPI 1 Actual	11
KPI 2 Target	0	KPI 2 Actual	

Action Updates

Mid-Year Update

A part time staff member was employed in March to progress actions with Local Community Groups and Networks towards an increased awareness of the social enterprise model and National Policy, to provide support for pre-development start ups within the social and circular economy space and to support networking opportunities for groups already in or seeking to explore this space.

1. 5 social enterprises have been registered with SICAP to date. These social enterprises are diverse and at different stages of development and include a Toy Library, a coffee shop that will hire staff with intellectual disabilities and the provision of supports to families living with chronic illness
2. A social enterprise basics workshop has been developed for delivery to a number of interested organisations
3. A Repair Cafe committee of volunteers has been established to address a key outcome from The People's Transition: Larchville & Lisduggan which was to develop a Repair Cafe within that community
4. An initial Repair Cafe event was held in May which was well attended and focused on soft toy and clothes repair. Repair Cafes will now take place within that community every month which offers significant scope for development, learning, skill sharing, training and social networking within the community.
5. Additional finance has been secured to scale up from one to multiple Repair Cafe and allied events within the City & County
6. WAP/SICAP engaged with WLEO to deliver a "Profit for Purpose" workshop in Dungarvan to increase awareness of the Social Enterprise model and its potential. Collaboration with WLEO in this space is ongoing specifically with regard to engaging business mentors relating to key business development areas such as governance and finance.
7. We held our first "pitch" event in June, bringing together interested agencies and other community organisations to assist in exploring additional support pathways for one social enterprise. These will now be regular events which will ultimately support a network of existing and developing social enterprises in Waterford.
8. Support for the development of Comhar Comaraigh Network is going. The network is seeking pilot funding to develop an innovative social enterprise region within the Comeragh area to harness existing social and community enterprises towards significant state investment for the development of new and collaborative innovation and enterprise for rural regeneration.

End of Year Update

This year saw the progression of actions with Local Community Groups and Networks towards an increased awareness of the social enterprise model. Support was provided for Pre-development start ups within the social and circular economy space and to support networking opportunities for groups already in or seeking to explore this space.

11 social enterprises have been registered with SICAP to date. These social enterprises are diverse and at different stages of development and include a Toy Library, a business that supports migrants and international protection applicants in accessing training to become work ready in the home care sector, a business that supports pathways from welfare dependency to long-term, stable employment or full trade qualification for disadvantaged individuals and the provision of supports to families living with chronic illness.

We planned and delivered a 8 Module, Blended Learning Programme called 'The Social Foundry' in collaboration with Waterford Leo and The Entrepreneurs Academy. The course was designed to help

people build resilient Social Enterprises. Throughout the course participants expanded on their business idea and gained valuable knowledge in all areas of SE from Social Media Marketing, Governance and Policy Writing, Climate Action for SE's, to Procurement and Financial Fitness, how to create a lean canvas among other[LR1.1]s. 9 participants took part with 6 of them continuing on to be registered through SICAP

A part time Repair Café Co-Ordinator was employed in October this year to progress the scale up of multiple repair café's and repair events.

8 Repair Events have been held this year with approximately 64 Items repaired to date, they have so far offered significant scope for development, learning, skill sharing, training and social networking within the community.

Repair Cafe committee of volunteers has been established to address a key outcome from The People's Transition: Larchville & Lisduggan which was to develop a Repair Cafe within that community.

Additional finance has been secured to scale up from one to multiple Repair Cafe and allied events within the City & County

Buion/SICAP engaged with WLEO to deliver a "Profit for Purpose" workshop in Dungarvan to increase awareness of the Social Enterprise model and its potential. Collaboration with WLEO in this space is ongoing specifically with regard to engaging business mentors relating to key business development areas such as governance and finance.

We held our first "pitch" event in June, bringing together interested agencies and other community organisations to assist in exploring additional support pathways for one social enterprise. These will now be regular events which will ultimately support a network of existing and developing social enterprises in Waterford.

Support for the development of Comhar Comaraigh Network is ongoing. The network is seeking pilot funding to develop an innovative social enterprise region within the Comeragh area to harness existing social and community enterprises towards significant state investment for the development of new and collaborative innovation and enterprise for rural regeneration. We supported their Social Enterprise Conference held in August this year titled 'The unique contribution of Social Enterprise to Rural and Urban Regeneration' The conference saw a turnout of over 70 people.

2026 will also see further collaboration with other Buion Programmes to further develop individual Social Enterprise ideas.

- Goal 2 referred a number of interested individuals to discuss their business ideas with one individual going on to attend The Social Foundry Programme.

- Repair café volunteers were also referred from goal 2 also as well as through our collaboration with the Waterford Volunteer Centre.

A number of presentations were delivered over the course of the year including;

A presentation on Social Enterprise at a community garden event run by one of our local community development workers

and another presentation titled 'The foundations of Social Enterprise' was given to the Residents Association in St. Josephs. The aim of this presentation was to help advise them on how to go about generating a SE idea and getting it up and running. [LR2.1]

A leafleting event was run in Lisduggan Shopping centre. This was to inform people of an upcoming repair café in collaboration with Renew Enterprise. It enabled us to engage and connect with people explain the concept of a repair café and the need for one within the larchville /lisduggan area[LR3.1] [AO3.2] and draw attention to an event promoting the circular economy, connection, support and community.

We will continue to network with other agencies that deliver circular initiatives or learning opportunities such as Waterford Libraries, SETU and Waterford Learning City Team to expand circular innovation in the Lot area. We will also continue to attend the LDCN Social Enterprise Community of Practise and engage with SERI and other national networks for continued professional development and collaborative.

(2025) 2.1 2025 Lifelong Learning and Education

Action Outcomes

Planned Action Outcomes

SICAP Outcome

- 1.3 SICAP target groups at risk of early school leaving progress their formal education
- 3.1 SICAP target groups are informed about soft skill and wellbeing supports and services
- 1.2 SICAP target groups complete lifelong learning programmes
- 2.2 SICAP target groups are better prepared to enter the labour market
- 2.3 SICAP target groups progress to employment
- 1.1 SICAP target groups are informed about lifelong learning supports and services

Action KPI Targets & Actuals

KPI 1 Target		KPI 1 Actual	
KPI 2 Target	270	KPI 2 Actual	305

Action Updates

Mid-Year Update

Delivery of Lifelong Learning Programmes

In the first half of 2025, Waterford Area Partnership continued to strengthen its commitment to inclusive, lifelong learning, with notable progress in both established and emerging initiatives. One of the standout successes was the continued delivery of the Driving Ambitions Programme, which directly tackles mobility barriers experienced by individuals distanced from the labour market.

The first Driver Theory Training Programme began on February 13th, engaging 12 participants, 10 of whom successfully progressed to sit their official theory test—a powerful indicator of motivation, skill development, and readiness for further progression.

A second programme commenced on May 15th, involving 13 new learners, and concludes on June 19th.

The programme's impact extends far beyond test preparation. It opens practical pathways to greater independence and access to employment, education, and social inclusion—particularly for those in rural areas or experiencing social isolation. Participants consistently report increased confidence, renewed ambition, and enhanced agency in navigating their futures.

Advancing Strategic Collaborations

Significantly, work progressed on Waterford's designation as a UNESCO Learning City, an ambitious project which positions lifelong learning as a central pillar of inclusive and sustainable development. Waterford Area Partnership is proud to collaborate on this initiative alongside Southeast Technological University (SETU), Waterford and Kilkenny Local Authorities, and the Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB). This collaboration is helping to embed learning across all life stages and socioeconomic backgrounds, supporting the vision of Waterford as a truly inclusive and dynamic city of learning.

In addition, a new partnership was established with Children's Group Link to support their Targeted Youth Employability Support Initiative (TYESI). This collaboration will enable targeted engagement with young people furthest from the labour market, using tailored supports and meaningful learning opportunities to build confidence, skills, and employability.

Workshops & Courses for Community Groups

Informed by sustained consultation with local groups, we delivered a wide range of workshops and courses designed to meet community needs and nurture individual potential:

Craft Sewing Programme (DEIS Parents): 11 parents participated across two weeks in January, using creativity as a bridge to connection, emotional wellbeing, and peer support within a marginalised community.

Atelier Roma – Sewing & Woodwork Skills: From February to March, 17 women participated in an 8-week sewing course, while a parallel woodwork programme engaged others in foundational skills. These programmes served as entry points to empowerment, community integration, and practical skill-building.

Furniture Upcycling (Kilmacthomas & Community Space Projects): More than 30 participants took part in sustainability-focused sessions, learning to repurpose furniture while building confidence and pride in tangible, creative outcomes. The community-led session in a reclaimed schoolhouse was especially impactful, breathing new life into an underused facility.

Social Therapeutic Gardening (Multiple Locations): A series of therapeutic gardening programmes ran across John's Hill, Lismore, and Cairdeas Day Service, engaging a diverse group including individuals with disabilities. These nature-based sessions proved particularly effective in promoting mental wellness, social inclusion, and ecological awareness.

Conscious Crafting & Therapeutic Arts: 13 members of the Waterford New Communities Network took part in creative arts-based workshops fostering emotional expression and intercultural connection. Separately, 11 participants recovering from mental illness attended a therapeutic arts programme that provided a safe space for healing through creativity.

Cultural & Heritage Programming: 15 members of the Passage East Arts & Crafts Group took part in a Celtic Knots workshop, exploring Irish traditions in a meditative, tactile way that connected identity with creativity.

Smartphone Photography (Carriglea disability Services): 6 service users deepened their digital literacy and creative expression through themed photography sessions, demonstrating how inclusive access to technology can unlock new forms of participation.

International Women's Day 2025

This year's International Women's Day event brought together over 40 women from Irish and New Communities, including Ukrainian refugees, for a vibrant celebration of resilience, diversity, and empowerment. Taking place in a disadvantaged urban area, the event featured:

Personal tributes to inspirational women

Live poetry from a Ukrainian participant

A communal dance workshop

Informal intercultural networking

These activities created space for connection, joy, and healing—highlighting the value of storytelling, creative expression, and solidarity in building strong, inclusive communities.

Routes to Progression & Referral

In line with our ongoing support model, six-month check-ins were conducted with all individual beneficiaries (IBs). These follow-ups provided valuable opportunities to:

Assess individual progress

Identify emerging needs

Provide referrals to SICAP or other supports

Through close collaboration with WWETB and our Action 2.2 team, we ensured individuals had access to a broad spectrum of progression pathways, including formal qualifications, non-accredited learning, and community-based education.

We also provided five small education grants (€315–€400 each) to support upskilling in critical areas like Healthcare, Swim Coaching, and Health & Safety, directly enhancing beneficiaries' employability and capacity for economic independence.

Children & Families: Laying Strong Foundations

Over the first half of 2025, WAP engaged 152 children across four collaborative initiatives designed to support well-being, learning, and inclusion. These initiatives were delivered in partnership with Respond Housing, Foróige, Barnardos, SETU, and Waterford SCP na Siuire, and focused on children from disadvantaged backgrounds, low-income households, and International Protection communities.

Highlights include:

Creative Mindfulness Programme (Respond): 16 children in Larchville/Lisduggan and Tramore took part in sessions facilitated by “The Mindful Muinteoir.” Parents reported children being more relaxed, self-aware, and emotionally equipped after the programme.

ARTastic – Foroige (Lismore): 13 teenagers explored mental health, identity, and relationships through art, enabling meaningful dialogue in a non-clinical, youth-friendly environment.

Learning for Life – SETU/School Completion na Siuire: 60 sixth-class students from DEIS schools participated in weekly sessions at SETU. This early exposure to third-level subjects inspired ambition and broadened educational horizons for children from underrepresented backgrounds.

Easter Wellbeing Camps – WAP & Barnardos: Held in Knockanore, Lismore, and Clonea, these camps engaged 63 children—half of whom were from New Communities such as Syria, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Ukraine, and others. The camps promoted emotional well-being, intercultural friendships, and self-confidence through yoga, crafts, and breathwork.

Looking ahead, significant groundwork has been laid for:

The Summer Camp Initiative for New Communities, in partnership with Tusla, which will support children in shared accommodation settings.

The Summer Camp Access Programme (with Waterford Sports Partnership), which will provide inclusive access to mainstream summer camps for children with disabilities.

Conclusion: Building Inclusive Pathways and Community Resilience

The breadth and depth of work undertaken in the first half of 2025 demonstrates Waterford Area Partnership’s sustained commitment to addressing inequality, promoting lifelong learning, and strengthening community resilience. From grassroots skills programmes to strategic collaborations on citywide initiatives, every action undertaken reflects a clear focus on empowering individuals and communities furthest from opportunity.

Our ongoing delivery of accessible learning programmes, therapeutic initiatives, and child- and youth-focused supports has enabled meaningful engagement across a wide cross-section of SICAP target groups. The growing collaboration with partners such as SETU, WWETB, local authorities, Children’s Group Link, and Barnardos further amplifies our capacity to create sustainable, inclusive, and locally responsive pathways for social and economic development.

Importantly, our work aligns closely with the Waterford Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2023–2029, particularly under the following themes

Create a more inclusive and equitable society – Our targeted supports for migrants, long-term unemployed individuals, families in disadvantage, and people with disabilities directly promote equality and social inclusion.

Support community development and active participation – Through grassroots programmes like therapeutic gardening, cultural workshops, and creative learning initiatives, we continue to foster social cohesion, civic engagement, and stronger community networks.

Promote education, training, and lifelong learning – Our delivery of the Driving Ambitions programme, community education courses, and Learning for Life initiative for young students demonstrates our shared vision of accessible learning for all.

Strengthen health and wellbeing – Programmes such as ARTastic, Creative Mindfulness, and our therapeutic arts and gardening initiatives contribute directly to individual and community well-being, responding holistically to both mental health and social isolation.

Enhance partnership working and integrated services – Our collaborations with WWETB, SETU, local authorities, Children’s Group Link, Barnardos

End of Year Update

Throughout 2025, the Lifelong Learning and Education action has benefitted community development in Waterford, reaching 305 unique individuals through 684 interventions delivered. Dedicated teams have worked to create pathways for personal growth, with the majority of support coming through one-to-one meetings (350 in total) that build confidence, foster connections, and encourage progression into further or third-level education. A further 321 participants engaged in soft skills and wellbeing courses, while a smaller group benefited from labour market-related courses. The results speak for themselves: over 250 people successfully completed their courses, with many more achieving partial success. The overwhelming focus has been on improving soft skills and wellbeing (602 interventions under SICAP indicator 3.2.1), alongside targeted support for young people at risk of early school leaving (66 interventions under indicator 1.3.1). Total individual interventions and outputs for this Action in 2025 reached 684, comprising lifelong learning courses and workshops, labour market-related courses, one-to-one meetings, and soft skills and wellbeing initiatives.

Small education grants of up to €400 were provided to support those undertaking full-time further education courses as well as online and part-time options. Individual Beneficiaries (IBs) participated in a diverse range of lifelong learning programmes, including Social Therapeutic Gardening, Basic IT Skills, First Aid, Sustainable Crafts & Sewing, and Driver Theory Test Training. Outreach work under 2.1 was undertaken to assess what individuals required from SICAP lifelong learning programmes, after which tutors were sourced and tailored programmes developed to meet the identified needs. Transport support of up to €200 was also provided to IBs experiencing hardship due to travel costs for attending courses. Under 2.13, collaborative approaches with stakeholders were actively developed. The WAP Summer Camp Initiative strengthened partnerships by working with 9 agencies to coordinate and co-fund 450 summer camp places for children from New Communities, those with disabilities, and families in disadvantaged areas. Buíon engaged 12 local summer camp providers who offered subsidised spaces, and hired tutors to deliver bespoke programmes based on needs identified by partners. These partners included Waterford Sports Partnership, LAIT under Waterford Council, Barnardos, DEIS schools, School Completion Programme, Foroige, Tusla, Autism Support Dungarvan, and Waterford Immigration Network. By pooling resources and working together, all agencies were able to offer a variety of supports that benefited families, promoted integration, and enhanced wellbeing and a sense of community during the summer months. As part of this action, 450 children participated in the Summer Camp access programme, designed to enable children from DEIS schools and target group families—including New Arrivals—to integrate into mainstream summer activities. Additionally, 35 children with disabilities availed of Special Needs Assistance through the initiative.

Further support reached 734 children and 129 adults through eight collaborative initiatives delivered in partnership with Respond Housing, Autism Support Dungarvan, Waterford Sports Partnership, Foroige, SETU, Barnardo's, School Completion Programme, Tusla, and local summer camp providers. Activities included mindfulness programmes, art programmes, Christmas events, summer camps, and a dedicated 3rd level Learning for Life programme for 6th class students in DEIS schools facilitated through the School Completion Programme.

Challenges identified during the year included insufficient resources for children with autism or special needs during school holidays, as well as a continuing need to expand summer camp places for children within family support services such as those provided by Barnardo's and Tusla.

This action has quietly transformed lives by helping participants rediscover their potential, build resilience, and take meaningful steps toward formal education and personal fulfilment.

(2025) 2.2 2025 Employability & Labour Market Prospects.

Action Outcomes

Planned Action Outcomes

SICAP Outcome

2.4 SICAP target groups progress into self-employment and establish businesses, including social enterprises

2.1 SICAP target groups are informed about labour market supports and services

2.3 SICAP target groups progress to employment

3.1 SICAP target groups are informed about soft skill and wellbeing supports and services

2.2 SICAP target groups are better prepared to enter the labour market

Action KPI Targets & Actuals

KPI 1 Target		KPI 1 Actual	
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KPI 2 Target	360	KPI 2 Actual	572
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Action Updates

Mid-Year Update

Business and Community Support Initiatives, January–June 2025

Business Mentoring

Business mentoring services continue to be a central pillar of our support for new and aspiring entrepreneurs. Mentors are available throughout the region, working closely with case officers to assist individuals on enterprise support schemes. This includes helping clients develop business plans, access additional mentoring, and receive training tailored to their needs. Mentoring is also open to those not receiving government supports, whether they come forward independently or are referred by other organizations. Clients receive guidance through their first year in business and are supported with end-of-year accounting and tax return processes.

To date, over 150 individuals have been referred for mentoring, with more than 100 actively participating. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with clients expressing increased confidence and improved business planning skills. Specialized mentoring is available for those needing extra help in areas such as brand strategy and digital marketing, ensuring comprehensive support for every stage of business development.

Start Your Own Business Workshops

Introductory workshops on self-employment are offered in multiple locations, covering essential topics such as legal requirements, financial management, and marketing basics. So far, 30 people have attended these workshops. In partnership with a local enterprise agency, additional training places have been funded for eligible clients, with 18 individuals referred for further training. These workshops provide a strong foundation for anyone considering starting their own business.

Manual Bookkeeping

An introductory course on manual bookkeeping has been delivered twice this year, consisting of two weekly workshops and follow-up sessions. Out of 12 invited participants, 11 attended, reflecting strong interest and engagement. The course helps participants understand and maintain accurate business records, which is crucial for new business owners.

End of Year Accounts

Building on the bookkeeping course, a dedicated programme prepares clients for completing their annual tax returns. The course includes two group sessions and one-on-one support for individual questions. Of the 46 invited, 24 attended, demonstrating the value of this targeted support for business owners navigating their first year-end.

Digital Strategy Workshops

A series of workshops on digital skills has been developed, focusing on the needs of new business owners. The Social Media Bootcamp, designed for those with little or no experience, covers setting up accounts, security, basic content creation, scheduling, growth strategies, and analytics. Out of 31 invited, 11 attended—all female and mostly over 40. Feedback highlighted the practical value and increased confidence gained from these sessions.

Additional digital training will be offered throughout the year, including workshops on AI tools, graphic design, and short-form video content.

Photography for Small Business

A new hands-on workshop was introduced this year for business owners who rely on visual content for

marketing. The session covers brand identity, photography basics, lighting, background selection, mood boards, and current trends. Thirteen people attended the first session, which will be repeated later in the year. Participants reported significant improvements in their ability to create attractive visuals for their businesses.

Networking and Business Support

Networking is recognized as a key factor in business success. Quarterly 'Lunch and Learn' events are organized in collaboration with a local enterprise agency, bringing together new business owners for knowledge sharing and networking. The most recent event featured a workshop on business pitching and elevator pitch preparation, attended by 30 people. The next event will focus on content creation, further supporting professional development and collaboration.

Pre-Employment and Skills Training

Early in the year, an annual training schedule was developed to meet the needs of a wide range of organizations and community groups. Consultations were held to ensure the training offered was relevant and tailored to participants' needs. Progression routes were provided for some courses, enabling participants to gain practical skills for employment.

Sixteen pre-employment programmes were delivered, including:

Safe Pass (x2)

Manual Handling (x4)

Barista (x5)

HACCP Level II (x1)

Customer Service (x2)

CV/Interview (x2)

Grant funding was made available for training not offered directly by the organization. A total of 51 grants were applied for, with 19 awarded to date. Grants supported a variety of training, including safety, health, beauty, childcare, and vocational skills.

Disability and Inclusion Support

Continuing support for organizations working with people with disabilities has been a priority. Grant funding has enabled individuals to complete training and secure employment. Additional training in retail and hospitality skills has been allocated to specific groups, and clients have been referred for further training to enhance their employment prospects.

Support has also been extended to other community organizations, resulting in increased awareness and uptake of available services. New referrals have come from probation and traveler support services, with training focused on improving employment opportunities for participants.

Impacts and Outcomes

Increased Business Confidence: Clients report greater confidence in managing their businesses and planning for growth.

Improved Financial Literacy: Training in bookkeeping and tax returns has helped business owners maintain accurate records and comply with regulations.

Enhanced Digital Skills: Workshops on digital marketing and photography have equipped clients with essential skills for online business success.

Stronger Networks: Networking events have fostered collaboration and peer support among new

business owners.

Inclusive Community Development: Pre-employment and skills training have expanded opportunities for diverse groups, promoting social inclusion and employability.

Conclusion

The range of business and community support initiatives delivered so far this year has had a significant positive impact. By providing mentoring, training, and networking opportunities, we have empowered individuals to start and grow their businesses, enhanced their skills, and fostered a supportive environment for entrepreneurship. These efforts contribute to the broader goals of supporting local enterprise, enhancing employability, promoting digital inclusion, and fostering community wellbeing. The high levels of participation and positive feedback demonstrate the value of these initiatives in building a more vibrant and inclusive local economy.

Conclusion

The business mentoring, training, and support initiatives delivered this year have empowered local entrepreneurs, improved skills, and strengthened community networks. Feedback and participation rates highlight their positive impact.

These activities support the Waterford Local Economic and Community Plan goals by fostering local enterprise, enhancing employability, promoting digital inclusion, and encouraging social inclusion. Through collaboration and targeted support, they help build a more vibrant, resilient, and inclusive community in line with the Plan's vision.

End of Year Update

The Employability & Labour Market Prospects action has been an intensive programme in 2025, delivering 1,603 interventions to 591 individuals across Waterford. Committed teams have provided sustained, practical support that prepares people for sustainable employment and entrepreneurship. One-to-one meetings dominated the delivery (1,037 sessions), covering career guidance, mentoring, pre-start-up business advice, and new business aftercare. Over 500 labour market-related courses were completed successfully, with participants gaining the skills and confidence needed to navigate the job market or launch their own ventures. The programme has directly contributed to SICAP Goal 2.2, helping target groups become better prepared for the labour market in 1,539 recorded instances. From budding entrepreneurs receiving their first business mentoring to job-seekers refining their CVs and interview techniques, this action has been a genuine engine of economic empowerment throughout the year. A total of 305 individuals benefited from 1,810 individual interventions and outputs under this Action 2.21 in 2025, comprising group/workshop activities, labour market-related courses, and one-to-one meetings. The grant process has once again proven highly successful, enabling individuals to access training not provided under SICAP and which they would otherwise be unable to afford. In 2025, a total of 67 grants were applied for, covering a diverse range of training from forklift driving to security and beauty courses, as well as TEFL certification. Employment opportunities improved for the majority of those who received funding, with very positive feedback highlighting the transformative impact.

In terms of SICAP outcomes for this action, target groups participated in activities designed to improve their self-confidence around training and employment, including workshops on CV and interview skills held in both city and county locations with high turnout. Additionally, SICAP target groups became better prepared to enter the labour market through practical, up-to-date certifications in areas like Safe Pass, HACCP, and manual handling. Responding to the growth of coffee shops and barista roles, recognised training was also provided in this field to enhance employment prospects. Close liaison with stakeholders such as DSP, INTREO, Disability Services, Community Employment Schemes, Probation Services, Traveller Support Groups, and WWETB helped assess training needs and respond effectively. Participation in jobs fairs and direct engagement with local employers identified key training gaps, leading to initiatives like sourcing a mobile barista training company for sessions in the county. Interest in these was high, with further events and progression pathways planned for 2026.

(2025) 2.3 2025 Soft Skills and Wellbeing

Action Outcomes

Planned Action Outcomes

SICAP Outcome

3.3 SICAP target groups soft skills and/or wellbeing improved
 3.2 SICAP target groups participate in activities to improve their soft skills and wellbeing
 3.1 SICAP target groups are informed about soft skill and wellbeing supports and services
 3.1 SICAP implementers develop collaborative initiatives with relevant stakeholders that address identified gaps

Action KPI Targets & Actuals

KPI 1 Target		KPI 1 Actual	0
KPI 2 Target	150	KPI 2 Actual	299

Action Updates

Mid-Year Update

During the first and second quarters of the year, Waterford Area Partnership (WAP) successfully delivered 18 distinct programmes and hosted two major events. These initiatives provided holistic wellbeing supports to 130 individuals through targeted, caseload-based engagement, while an additional 207 participants benefited from non-caseload workshops. Our approach ensured that a diverse cross-section of the community was reached, with a particular emphasis on social inclusion, health, and community cohesion—core objectives of the Waterford Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2023–2029.

Programme Elaboration

1. Art Programmes (2)

Description:

Our art programmes offered participants a creative outlet to express themselves and explore new skills in a supportive environment. Sessions encouraged teamwork, self-confidence, and personal growth.

Impact:

Participants reported increased self-esteem and a sense of belonging. The collaborative nature of the workshops fostered new friendships and community connections.

2. Dance Programmes (8)

Description:

Dance sessions were tailored to various abilities and interests, ranging from traditional Irish dance to contemporary styles. These programmes promoted physical activity, cultural appreciation, and social interaction.

Impact:

Regular attendees noted improvements in physical health, mood, and social engagement. The inclusive nature of the sessions encouraged participation from diverse backgrounds.

3. Holistic Care Programme (1)

Description:

This programme provided a safe space for individuals to address emotional and mental health challenges. Activities included guided discussions, relaxation techniques, and peer support.

Impact:

Participants learned coping strategies and built supportive networks, contributing to overall wellbeing and resilience.

4. Yoga Programme (1)

Description:

Led by a qualified instructor, the yoga programme focused on gentle movement, breathwork, and mindfulness. Sessions were accessible to all fitness levels.

Impact:

Attendees experienced reduced stress, improved flexibility, and enhanced mental clarity.

5. Mindfulness Programme (1)

Description:

Mindfulness workshops introduced participants to techniques for managing stress and enhancing present-moment awareness.

Impact:

Individuals reported better emotional regulation and a greater capacity to handle daily challenges.

6. Fitness Programme (1)

Description:

This programme offered a range of physical activities, from strength training to aerobic exercise, designed to improve overall health and fitness.

Impact:

Participants enjoyed increased energy levels and a renewed motivation to maintain active lifestyles.

7. Cooking Together Programmes (4)

Description:

Cooking Together sessions brought people together to prepare and share healthy meals. These workshops emphasized nutrition, teamwork, and cultural exchange.

Impact:

Participants gained practical cooking skills, learned about healthy eating, and strengthened community bonds.

Target Groups and Collaborations

Our initiatives were designed to support:

People living in disadvantaged areas

People with disabilities

New communities (including Roma community members)

Survivors of Mother & Baby Homes (in collaboration with Right of Place)

Parents referred by DEIS Home School Community Liaison teachers

Social Prescribing clients

Rehab Care participants

Unemployed members of SICAP Local Community Groups

These collaborations ensured that our programmes were accessible and relevant to those most in need, fostering inclusivity and reducing social isolation.

Geographic Reach

Programmes and events were delivered across a wide range of locations, including:

Ardmore

Cappoquin

Dungarvan

Carbally

Tramore

Inner City

St John's Park

St Herblain area

This county-wide approach ensured that both urban and rural communities had equal access to opportunities for personal and community development.

Major Events

1. International Women's Day Celebration

Location: Park Hotel, Dungarvan

Attendance: 160 women registered

Collaboration: SICAP Goal 1 & 2, WWETB, WCCC Creative Waterford

Activities:

Creative Arts Workshop: Groups designed individual jigsaw pieces, culminating in a collaborative artwork symbolizing unity and diversity.

Breathwork Workshop: Focused on relaxation and emotional wellbeing.

Musical Entertainment and Karaoke: Encouraged joy, connection, and self-expression.

Impact:

Women from diverse backgrounds connected, shared ideas, and built supportive networks in a celebratory and inclusive environment.

2. Wellness Morning for Parents and International Protection Applicants

Collaboration: Healthy Cities Waterford

Target Groups: Parents of Inner City DEIS schools, Social Prescribing clients, International Protection Applicants from Birchwood IPAS

Activities:

Bollywood Dance: Celebrated cultural diversity and encouraged movement.

Mindfulness Workshop: Supported mental wellbeing.

Resistance Training: Promoted physical health.

Impact:

The event was a resounding success, fostering unity, social connection, and enjoyment. A similar event is planned for West Waterford in Autumn, further extending these benefits.

Conclusion

These activities and initiatives delivered by Waterford Area Partnership in Q1 and Q2 align closely with the objectives of the Waterford Local Economic and Community Plan 2023–2029. By focusing on social inclusion, health and wellbeing, community integration, and lifelong learning, our programmes have contributed to the creation of a more vibrant, resilient, and cohesive community. Our collaborative approach ensures that all members of the community—regardless of background or circumstance—have access to opportunities for personal and collective growth. These efforts support the LECP's vision for a sustainable, inclusive, and thriving Waterford

End of Year Update

The Soft Skills and Wellbeing action has offered a vital space for healing, connection, and personal development in 2025, supporting 299 individuals through 657 interventions. The programme has placed particular emphasis on fostering human connection—294 interventions centred on helping people feel less isolated and more supported. Soft skills and wellbeing courses proved especially popular (349 enrolments), ranging from festive crafts and dance fitness to confidence-building workshops, with most participants either fully or partially completing their courses. One-to-one meetings provided the backbone of individualised care, while the overwhelming majority of activity (646 interventions) contributed directly to SICAP indicator 3.2.1—improving soft skills and wellbeing among target groups. In a year that has demanded resilience from so many, this action has been a quiet but profound source of hope, helping people, build meaningful relationships, and strengthen their emotional foundations.

The end-of-year progress report confirms strong delivery, with 299 Individual Beneficiaries (IBs) supported through 657 interventions across 32 distinct programmes and workshops. These included Drama, Breathwork, Holistic Self Care, Cooking, Chair Mobility, Dance Fitness, Cookery, Yoga, Arts & Crafts, and Festive Crafts. Programmes were delivered in a range of locations across Waterford: Ardmore, Lismore, Dungarvan, Kilrossanty, Cappoquin, and Waterford City. Target groups reached included people with disabilities, those who are long-term unemployed (LTU), economically inactive individuals, and New Communities.

Additional highlights featured two wellbeing events delivered in collaboration with Healthy Cities (both city and county level) and one International Women's Day event held in Dungarvan. Challenges noted during the year included oversubscription to many programmes and over-achievement of targets, reflecting exceptionally high demand for these soft skills and wellbeing initiatives throughout 2025.

Through this combination of structured courses, personalised support, community events, and responsive programming, the Soft Skills and Wellbeing action has delivered meaningful, widespread benefits to emotional health, social inclusion, and personal growth in Waterford.

(2025) 2.4 2025 New Arrivals

Action Outcomes

Planned Action Outcomes

SICAP Outcome

2.4 SICAP target groups progress into self-employment and establish businesses, including social enterprises

3.2 SICAP target groups participate in activities to improve their soft skills and wellbeing

1.2 SICAP target groups complete lifelong learning programmes

3.1 SICAP target groups are informed about soft skill and wellbeing supports and services

2.2 SICAP target groups are better prepared to enter the labour market

Action KPI Targets & Actuals

KPI 1 Target		KPI 1 Actual	0
KPI 2 Target	169	KPI 2 Actual	174

Action Updates

Mid-Year Update

Community Engagement and Support – Activities and Impacts

Throughout the first half of 2025, Waterford Area Partnership deepened its commitment to fostering inclusion and wellbeing among New Arrivals through a range of high-impact community engagement initiatives.

The Thursday Coffee Mornings, delivered in collaboration with the Irish Red Cross, created a consistent and safe space where individuals could build informal social networks, receive guidance, and strengthen their sense of belonging in the community. These sessions contributed to reduced isolation and increased awareness of local supports, especially among women and parents of young children.

Outreach visits to designated accommodation centres across Waterford City and County — including Portree House, Birchwood, Shalom House, Atlantic House, and Ocean View House — provided critical

touchpoints for assessing needs and delivering immediate assistance. These visits directly supported residents in accessing healthcare, education, and essential public services, while also identifying gaps to inform future service planning.

Through its presence on the Waterford Chat Telegram channel, Waterford Area Partnership significantly enhanced communication with the wider Ukrainian and migrant community. By sharing real-time updates on courses, job opportunities, and local events, the Partnership helped hundreds of individuals make informed decisions and take up relevant supports — especially those newly arrived and unfamiliar with local systems.

In Dungarvan, Waterford Area Partnership played a key role in responding to the closure of the “360” Designated Accommodation Centre. Through three group sessions and ongoing one-to-one support, residents were empowered to manage their transitions effectively, access entitlements, and maintain continuity of education and healthcare. This intervention helped minimise disruption and prevent loss of contact with vital services.

Impact summary:

These engagement efforts have led to increased community participation, greater confidence among New Arrivals in navigating Irish systems, and improved trust between residents and service providers.

English Language Provision – Activities and Impacts

Between January and March 2025, Waterford Area Partnership delivered a wide-reaching English language support programme that addressed one of the most significant barriers to integration and independence.

23 learner groups were established across Waterford City, Tramore, and Dungarvan, with support from 21 trained tutors. The classes attracted 149 students, including 132 new learners, reflecting the strong demand and trust in the programme.

In Waterford City, 74 learners participated, while Tramore and Dungarvan supported 23 and 52 learners respectively.

Beyond language acquisition, participants reported increased confidence in applying for jobs, attending appointments, and supporting their children's education. Classes also fostered peer relationships that helped reduce social isolation and encourage mutual support among learners from different national backgrounds.

Impact summary:

English classes have significantly improved learners' access to employment, healthcare, and education, with many progressing to further training or part-time work. The programme also contributed to more cohesive and confident local communities.

Education and Exam Preparation – Activities and Impacts

To support learners with academic and professional ambitions, Waterford Area Partnership facilitated two IELTS preparation courses in collaboration with the International School of English. A total of 30 students participated.

These courses enabled participants to pursue goals such as:

Enrolment in third-level education

Qualification recognition for regulated professions

Access to employment opportunities requiring certified English proficiency

Several learners have since registered for exams, while others have used course materials to continue preparation independently.

Impact summary:

These targeted supports empowered learners to take active steps toward their long-term education and career goals, positioning them for higher-skilled employment and enhanced self-sufficiency.

Training and Skills Development – Activities and Impacts

Waterford Area Partnership coordinated a series of short-term training programmes designed to directly increase employability:

1 CV and Interview Preparation Workshop equipped participants with the tools and confidence to engage with the job market.

5 Manual Handling Courses and 2 HACCP Courses provided essential certification in areas with local employment demand, particularly in hospitality, warehousing, and retail.

Courses were delivered inclusively, with bilingual facilitation where needed, ensuring accessibility for learners at various stages of language development.

Impact summary:

Many participants have since secured part-time work, entered work experience placements, or registered for further training. These interventions provided immediate, tangible improvements in employment readiness and confidence.

Grants and Employment Pathways – Activities and Impacts

Waterford Area Partnership awarded two targeted grants to support individuals pursuing tailored pathways to employment and self-employment:

One grant enabled enrolment in a Coaching Licence Course, supporting a recipient with prior experience in sport to take up a community coaching role.

The second supported participation in a Flex and Stretch Fitness Instructor Course, with a view to launching a wellness micro-enterprise.

Both recipients are now actively working toward income-generating roles aligned with their skills and aspirations.

Impact summary:

These small but strategic grants played a transformative role in unlocking individual potential, supporting entrepreneurship, and contributing to long-term economic self-reliance.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Mid-Year Impact

As of June 2025, Waterford Area Partnership has provided targeted, outcomes-focused support to 81 individuals, across all programme areas. These engagements reflect not just service delivery, but progress toward improved independence, employability, and integration into Irish society.

End of Year Update

The New Arrivals programme has provided essential support to 174 individuals settling in Waterford during 2025, delivering 387 interventions that recognise both the challenges and the contributions of people new to Ireland. Teams have offered a warm and practical welcome, with career guidance (119 sessions) and labour market-related courses (143 enrolments) helping newcomers translate their skills into Irish opportunities. Intensive English language classes, literacy support, and confidence-building activities have been particularly valued, while one-to-one meetings have addressed everything from CV preparation to cultural orientation. An impressive 160 courses were completed successfully, contributing strongly to both labour market preparation (264 interventions under SICAP 2.2.1) and soft skills/wellbeing development (116 interventions under 3.2.1). More than just integration, this action has been about genuine belonging—helping new residents plant roots, find work, and begin building their future in Waterford with dignity and hope.

A major pillar of the programme has been the continued delivery of the BUÍON/Fáilte Isteach English Language Programme, which offered beginner, intermediate, and advanced English classes with a strong emphasis on practical conversational skills, grammar, and vocabulary. These classes specifically targeted Temporary Protection Applicants (TPAs), International Protection Applicants (IPAs), and representatives of new community groups across the area.

In 2025, a total of 284 students attended classes across Waterford city, Tramore, and Dungarvan. The programme was delivered by 27 dedicated tutors who formed 32 separate groups: 15 tutors in Waterford running 20 groups, 6 tutors in Dungarvan running 8 groups, and 6 tutors in Tramore running 4 groups. Participation was distributed as follows: 188 students in Waterford, 64 in Dungarvan, and 32 in Tramore. Of the 284 participants, 248 were from Ukraine and 29 from other nationalities including Syria, Pakistan, Brazil, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Egypt. The cohort comprised 206 women (194 Ukrainian and 12 from other nationalities) and 78 men (61 Ukrainian and 17 from other nationalities).

The outcomes achieved in 2025 were particularly encouraging: 76 students gained employment, 8 enrolled in college or professional courses, and these successes represented 30% of the total participants supported through English language learning. By combining structured language education with practical employability support, the New Arrivals programme has not only helped individuals overcome language barriers but has also opened doors to meaningful work, further education, and deeper community connection throughout the year.