

**DARNDALE**  
*Together* 

**2024**

Darndale Implementation  
Oversight Group (DIOG)  
**Report**



DARNDALE  
Together

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## Message from the Chairperson



**Dr Jack Nolan**  
Chairperson

### As Chairperson, it gives me great pleasure to report on the fourth year of activity of the Darndale Implementation Oversight Group (DIOG).

The group meets on a monthly basis and is composed of senior representatives of many of the statutory agencies and groups providing services in the area, including the HSE, Dublin City Council, An Garda Síochána, Northside Partnership, the Department of Justice, the City of Dublin Youth Services Board, Darndale Belcamp Village Centre, local schools and elected local City Councillors.

Crucially, its membership includes decision makers who are in a position to advance the recommendations of the underpinning report, 'Darndale - A Long View of an Enduring Challenge'.

It is accepted that improvements in the area are encouraging, and while I am heartened by the progress achieved, I am acutely conscious of how much remains to be done to make the area safer and attractive.

The latest Pobal Deprivation Index provides sober reading and it continues to categorise the general area as very disadvantaged.

#### Despite this, there has been considerable achievements in the past year including:

- Community safety improvements – reductions in crime continue
- The local Community Policing Unit maintains weekly Garda Clinics
- Community representation and esteem has been enhanced through various community groups and action on environmental and public realm initiatives
- Dublin City Council sponsored community festivals in the Summer and at Halloween contribute significantly to the rise in community esteem
- Community engagement with individuals with issues has been maintained through the HSE Drug Outreach Programme and City of Dublin Youth Services Board Sphere 17 youth outreach projects
- Problematic childhood issues are being addressed through the ACE (Assessment of Comprehension and Expression) Programme in primary schools; an increased number of teachers have been trained through the UCC Trauma Programme
- Community leadership is being progressed through the second edition of the Place Based Leadership Programmes through Northside Partnership
- Community health and well-being remains a high priority, with significant health related programmes run by the HSE
- The Darndale U-Forest Project, in collaboration with TCD and Our Lady Immaculate School, has been completed
- Third-level educational opportunities for school going children from the area are being further developed through the TCD student access programme (TAP)
- Sporting and recreational opportunities continue to develop, with Darndale FC, Coolock Running Club, Park Run, Darndale Boxing Club and O'Toole's GAA Club, among others, engaging directly with youth in the area
- Dublin City Council continue to advance a solution to the long-standing illegal dumping problem
- Environmental and public realm progress continues, with Dublin City Council clean-ups, pocket gardens, planting, painting, waste removal, etc
- Community engagement continues to develop through dedicated social media platforms, [DarndaleTogether.ie](https://www.darndaletogether.ie) and community information leaflet drops

These verifiable improvements must continue and develop to fruition, and the guiding hand of the Oversight Group is essential to maintaining progress.

We need commitment, support and participation from central government departments and agencies to build on progress achieved and create a community which can look forward to the future with expectation, rather than just hope.

To this end, the Implementation Oversight Group, through Dublin City Council, has commissioned a review of its work to ensure the vitality, durability and focus of our objectives remain crystal clear in years ahead.

I wish to thank all the Implementation Board members and staff of the various agencies, especially our administrator Ms Dymphna McCann, for their efforts throughout the year, and look forward to continued progress.

**Dr Jack Nolan**  
Chairperson



Message from  
Dublin City Council



**Bruce Philips**  
Executive Manager  
Dublin City Council

**As Executive Manager of Dublin City Council for the North Central area, it has been a most interesting and challenging experience to be part of the Darndale Implementation Oversight Group. The Group is tasked with implementing the recommendations of the Report, 'Darndale - A Long View of an Enduring Challenge'.**

I am now moving on from my position on the Board and wish to thank every member for their unstinting efforts throughout the past year.

I have observed the energy, commitment, and desire of the Group to achieve progress towards making the area a better place to live, work and socialise.

As our Chairperson states, progress is discernible, and Dublin City Council is fully committed to maintaining this by addressing the historically complex and diverse challenges associated with the Darndale, Belcamp and Moatview areas.

We have confronted many of these challenges in a meaningful way throughout 2024, committing significant finances, resources and expertise.

We have seen progress regarding crime and public disorder. We see the emergence of community leadership groups committed to improving the area, and we will support these groups further.

We see major improvements in cleanliness and visual presentation and we are addressing the problem of illegal dumping.

We have supported a communication programme, educational programmes and social inclusion and community engagement programmes, together with various initiatives of the Implementation Oversight Group.

Our commitment is to find solutions to day-to-day problems, while at the same time strategically ensuring many long-term and ingrained issues are finally resolved.

Overall, I am enthused by the progress evident and the potential for the community to become self-sufficient and responsible for the area.

I am committed to helping community leadership to develop and grow so the daily lives of all residents of Darndale and the surrounding area can be improved.

I compliment the work of the Implementation Oversight Group, and look forward to its continued growth and development.

**Bruce Philips**  
Executive Manager  
Dublin City Council

Objective 1

Control Crime  
Effectively Narrative

**The prevalence of crime, drugs, violence and intimidation is being addressed for the long-term safety and viability of the community.**

The area's long-standing image and reputation, while improving, remains poor on account of the visible manifestations of drug usage, drug dealing, intimidation and gang culture.



PROGRESS TO DATE

- › An Garda Síochána (AGS) had a very busy year working in and with the community
- › AGS continued to collaborate with the Implementation Oversight Group, working for the betterment of the community
- › AGS looks forward to nurturing existing relationships and fostering new ones in 2025
- › New, difficult challenges were presented to all stakeholders in 2024, most notably well-publicised activities around the Crown Paints site. With the assistance of the Implementation Oversight Group and in co-operation with our partners in the community, important interventions were made for the better
- › AGS had several significant successes during the year, assisted with several re-locations, and conducted several operations, patrols, and other activities



- › AGS was involved in the late-night soccer leagues, school programmes and with local groups; it looks forward to continuing these relationships and supporting everyone in the community in 2025
- › AGS continued to be involved in the planning and successful running of several events; it will continue to build relationships with stakeholders through the co-ordination of future events
- › AGS was again delighted to be involved in the Placed Based Leadership program, which has commenced for the second time. Our members will actively participate and continue to foster new relationships - developing great ideas and initiatives - with all participants having an equal and important voice
- › The most notable event of the year in which this group played an integral part was the Coolock Garda District Christmas Community Event, which took place in the grounds of Malahide Castle for the second year in December 2024



## Objective 2

### Dismantle And Dilute Gang Culture

**The presence of gangs of youths who sell and supply drugs, intimidate, and cause community fear, remains a feature.**

These gangs must be educated, neutralised, and dismantled before they become any further entrenched.

This requires an inter-agency and collaborative approach, together with experienced management, and appropriate funding.

The engagement, appreciation and education of the youth population is a priority consideration for the DIOG.

Youth services in the area play a significant role in disrupting the prevalent gang culture.

### PROGRESS TO DATE



#### Get the Message Out (GTMO)

‘Get the Message Out’ (GTMO) continued to engage young people with the purpose of getting a message out during a time of crisis, particularly in relation to drug and violent crime.

#### Woodale Youth Diversion Project - Darndale

The Department of Justice continues to support Woodale Youth Diversion Project (YDP), which is operated by Sphere 17 Regional Youth Service in Darndale.

The project operates alongside four main centres overseen by Sphere 17 and an Out ‘N’ About detached youth service which covers Darndale, Moatview, Priorswood and Bonnybrook.

The majority of young people are referred to the Woodale YDP by the Garda Liaison Officer following a formal caution in the local Garda station.

To address offending behaviour in the area, Woodale YDP provides programmes targeting 12-17 year olds, early intervention targeting 8-11 year olds, family support interventions and programmes targeting harder-to-reach young people.

- At the start of 2024, Woodale YDP received funding amounting to approximately €247,220
- An additional request to employ one full-time early intervention worker, one full-time family support worker, and one part-time harder-to-reach worker was subsequently approved in principle by the Department of Justice before year-end, 2024
- The Department also supports special initiatives to tackle recruitment of children by criminal gangs
- In addition to community-based initiatives, the Criminal Justice (Engagement of Children in Criminal Activity) Bill 2024, which was signed into law on March 11, 2024, and commenced on May 23, 2024, creates specific offences where an adult compels, coerces, induces, or invites a child to engage in criminal activity
- The Act specifically recognises the harm done to a child by drawing them into a world of criminality and the detrimental effects grooming of children by adults for the purposes of committing criminal acts can have on their development and behaviour



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
Department of Justice



#### Another Way 5K

The annual Another Way 5k, Darndale was supported by Dublin City Council’s Community and Social Development Section and Coolock Running Club, alongside a number of local organisations and groups.

The race was held on April 27 in Darndale Park. Great fun was had by all who attended, ran, and helped out on the day. This fantastic event is growing year-on-year with over 500 runners completing.

The intention is for Coolock Running Club to take the lead on the Another Way 5Km in the coming years. The group has over 150 registered members and its first anniversary was celebrated in September, 2024.



## Objective 3

### Enhance Community Esteem

Enhancing local community esteem is considered vital to resolving problems in the long-term. This can only be achieved by enhancing and developing local structures, engendering trust, goodwill, good governance, and community participation.

#### PROGRESS TO DATE

- › The Darndale Implementation Oversight Group has been established and meets monthly
- › A significant communications programme has been initiated to keep the community informed of progress and developments
- › Organisations throughout the area have come together to form Darndale Together, and the website, darndaletogether.ie and the #darndaletogether social media platforms are at the heart of all that is happening in Darndale, Belcamp and Moatview
- › Two Darndale Newsletters were produced in 2024 and reflected a very strong message of positivity – each was disseminated to all households
- › The Community Representative Forum has now amalgamated with the Darndale Together Safety Forum which includes representatives from all agencies working in the area; it continues to meet quarterly
- › The Community and Social Development Section (CSDS), Artane-Whitehall Local Electoral Area (LEA) continues to meet and support a wide range of community and residents' groups across the LEA, including the Darndale area

#### Climate Action Fund

- › €1.9m was awarded to Dublin City Council for 51 community groups across the city under the Government's Climate Action Fund
- › The funding will benefit sports clubs, residents' associations, community centres, community gardens, religious institutions, and others

- › Nine local organisations/groups have been successful with their applications with a total of €308,932 awarded within the Artane-Whitehall LEA
- › Amongst the nine successful groups were organisations within the Darndale area, which included: Doras Bui, Darndale FC, Moatview Early Education Centre, Northside Partnership, New Life Centre, and Sphere 17

#### Summer Projects

- › The Community and Social Development Section contributed funding to two Darndale summer projects, Sphere 17 and New Life Centre
- › This specific funding assisted both groups to cover costs of the day-to-day running of their summer programmes for young people

#### Bealtaine Arts Exhibition

- › As part of this year's Bealtaine Festival, the Community and Social Development Section, in conjunction with Coolock Library Art Group, organised an arts exhibition at Northside Shopping Centre
- › The exhibition was open to the public each weekday morning from May 1 to May 10
- › The exhibition displayed works from Coolock Library, Golden Years, St Luke's, Lorcan, Bonnybrook, Santry, Priorswood Men's Arts Group and North Dublin Artist Club



#### Darndale Together After Dark Festival 2024

The Darndale Together After Dark Halloween Festival continues to grow year-on-year with another fantastic festival in 2024.

- › Many thanks to the members of the Darndale Together After Dark Festival Committee and the community itself for their ongoing support
- › This year, the community enjoyed free fairground rides, a variety of stage entertainment, Bubble Guy, stilt walkers and complementary refreshments; Sphere 17's amazing haunted youth centre, a spectacular firework display, spooky story telling and canvas workings in the square
- › There were also artist workshops in the local primary schools in the lead up to the event
- › The canvases created by the pupils were displayed around the square on the night





**Our Lady of Immaculate Junior National School, Darndale**

At the beginning of the new school year, Our Lady Immaculate (OLI) Junior National School (JNS) began the process of making improvements to its outside area.

- › To assist with planned improvements, the Dublin City Council (DCC) Community and Social Development Section (CSDS) provided paint for outdoor benches, outdoor classroom, fencing and fascia
- › The section also supplied the school with planters for both entrances at the school
- › This project is ongoing and is being managed by the school and its Parents Committee
- › Well done to all involved
- › Our Lady Immaculate (OLI) has taken a lead on several projects seeking to address the objectives laid out in the plan 'Darndale - A Long Term view of an Enduring Challenge'
- › While these projects have their roots in Our Lady Immaculate SNS, many have been expanded to other schools and community agencies
- › In 2024, an interagency project between Sphere 17 and OLI Senior School worked with a small number of children to help them develop skills on how to better cope with dysregulation (inability to control or regulate one's emotional responses) thereby enabling them better cope with transition to second-level
- › Also in 2024, the school engaged with Archways and Dublin City Council to look at an evidence based anti-bullying programme, KiVa
- › This programme, developed in Scandinavia and being used in a limited number of schools in Ireland, has a heavy focus on building empathy
- › A lack of empathy has been noted by the Archways team in their work in the area
- › The school was happy to engage, and hosted a meeting of local school leaders in May, 2024
- › This led to a rollout in Autumn, 2024 of the KiVa programme in all five Primary Schools in Dublin 17
- › A member of school staff engaged with the Placed Based Leadership programme as part of objective three of the plan 'Enhance Community Esteem'

- › The school has committed to continue to engage with ongoing reruns of the programme as new rollouts commence
- › It also engaged with the local community and agencies to screen a film on resilience, which was shown in the Bell Building
- › A staff member also made a presentation at national level on the journey towards becoming a Trauma Informed School
- › As part of Objective Two of 'Darndale - A Long View of an Enduring Challenge' - 'Dismantle and Dilute Gang Culture' schools were asked to implement a Restorative Practice (RP) approach
- › Teachers were trained in using RP following connections formed with Coolock Community College
- › RP fits neatly alongside the Trauma Informed Approach used in the school, and with the KiVa programme
- › It should also assist with building empathy and with young people taking responsibility for their actions
- › In light of Department of Education reluctance to support the delivery of Trauma Informed Practice in the area, the school has actively worked in conjunction with schools in similar areas of socio-economic disadvantage to sway the Department's understanding of the need for a trauma informed approach
- › Meetings with schools in West Tallaght and Ballymun over the past number of years has resulted in media uptake of the idea
- › During 2024, a group of principals had meetings with officials from the Social Inclusion Unit of the Department of Education, and with officials from the recently formed Child Poverty Unit at the Department of the Taoiseach
- › One outcome of this was a multi-Departmental conference held in 2024 at which the school was represented and further made the case for resourcing to assist children living with intergenerational trauma
- › The Group also presented to TDs, Senators, and Councillors in Dáil Éireann prior to the 2024 general election
- › It should be noted all political parties included the promotion of DEIS+ in their general election manifestos
- › DEIS+ has become the all-encompassing title for developing a more trauma informed approach in schools

- › While there is a long way to go, there is now a much clearer understanding of the need for this type of approach than when the DIOG first sought to engage the Department in 2021
- › This group has looked at the success of the Northeast Inner City (NEIC) projects, providing enhanced counselling and therapeutic supports to children in the school setting, as well as providing supports for trauma, through dedicated nurture spaces and staffing
- › This is the core ask of the extra support to be provided through any DEIS+ programme and is considered crucial to the successful development of children in the area.
- › In conjunction with Northside Partnership, the school has access to a play therapist who can work with up to four children

- › This has been greatly beneficial to those children in receipt of the service, but has also highlighted the critical need for this type of therapeutic support to be extended to many more children in our schools
- › We have also teamed up with Northside Partnership to engage a Community Employment worker tasked with developing and maintaining a Community Nurture Space in the environs of our Nurture Area
- › The school continues to maintain links forged with Trinity College Dublin (TCD) during the tree-planting event in the area
- › In 2024, a group of fifth class students visited TCD and we are now connected with the Trinity Access Programme (TAP)
- › It is hoped that this connection with TAP will expand to other local schools in 2025





Environmental Projects

Special Clean-ups

- › Numerous clean-ups of the Darndale Area were carried out and green spaces at Buttercup, Snowdrop, Tulip and the Spine Site were all included



Planters

Planter boxes have been installed at various locations, rewarding resident clean-ups and environmental groups working with DCC to keep the area clean.

- › New planters were placed at Buttercup Close, Court and Drive
- › The Public Domain Team organised a big clean up of the Spine Site in advance of First Holy Communion
- › This was a big undertaking as the area was extremely littered through illegal dumping and burned materials
- › Illegal and indiscriminate dumping of household refuse remains a persistent problem in the area
- › The Public Domain Team is working with Buttercup Buzzbees Environmental Group and has provided it with paint for the walls and railings in the cul-de-sac
- › What a difference it made, the area looks so much brighter and cleaner
- › The team is also working with residents in Buttercup Court and Close who are currently painting and cleaning-up their section of the Buttercup area



Environmental Initiatives



Team Dublin Clean-up

- › Team Dublin Clean-up took place on Saturday, April 27 with a large number of residents, volunteers and community groups taking part
- › It was great to see Buttercup Buzzbees featured on Dublin City Council social media pages. Well done to all of them for their hard work cleaning Buttercup Drive

City Neighbourhoods Competition

- › 2024 marked 20th Anniversary of the City Neighbourhoods Competition
- › North Central encouraged many groups to enter the City Neighbourhoods Competition
- › It was delighted to see new entries from Belcamp Grove and Moatview Avenue
- › It is wonderful to see these areas enhanced with flowers, hanging baskets, and wishing wells

National Spring Clean

- › 2024 proved to be another fantastic year of community cleanups, coinciding with the 25th anniversary of #NationalSpringClean







### North Central Area Awards

- North Central Area Awards night took place on Thursday, September 12 at the Dublin Airport Hilton Hotel, Malahide Road
- The aim of the competition is to bring about a cleaner, greener environment and to make local areas more attractive for the benefit of residents and visitors
- The competition recognises the great work of communities and businesses to improve and enhance their neighbourhoods, keeping them clean and well presented
- Measures taken to control litter and graffiti, organise socially inclusive community events and work in partnership with Dublin City Council, all contribute to high marks
- Buttercup Buzzbees from Buttercup Drive won first place in the North Central Area Residential Competition 1-150 Dwellings Category and went on to represent the North Central Area at the Dublin City Competition
- It competed against winners from the other four Dublin City Council administrative areas and managed to win joint second place - an amazing achievement
- The Lord Mayor of Dublin, James Geoghegan, presented their award at the Dublin City Neighbourhoods Awards night in Croke Park on Friday, October 4
- This group has completely transformed their area over the last year

- It has power-hosed walls and the cobble area, painted railings, and walls, got involved in Team Dublin Clean-up and does regular litter picking and street cleaning with children
- It waters and weeds its planter boxes and hosts fun days for the children to thank them and celebrate their hard work
- It has created beautiful artwork with the name of their group and gorgeous handprints of local children which they have erected on the walls in Buttercup Drive
- Belcamp Grove Environmental Group also did extremely well
- It won third place in the 'Best New Entry' category of the North Central Area Residential Competition and was subsequently nominated for the Dublin City Council Chief Executive's Special Award
- Belcamp Grove and the adjacent green space has been the site of illegal dumping for several years
- The Dublin City Council Area Office encouraged residents to get involved in street cleaning in 2023 and it was advised the Area Office to alert to any large-scale illegal dumping in the area so that it could assist with removal
- It monitors the area and this year decided to officially register with the North Central Area Office Public Domain Team as Belcamp Grove Environmental Group
- It carries out regular street cleaning and has transformed its cul-de-sac
- It has used wood from the illegally dumped materials on its green space to make wall boxes and tree surrounds



- It regularly cuts grass verges and has plans to further enhance its area
- Belcamp Grove Environmental Group is currently working with the Dublin City Council Environmental Liaison Officer and the Sláinte Care Healthy Communities Officer to devise a suitable plan for the space
- The Public Domain Team at DCC continue to work closely with groups in the Darndale Area to enhance it and will continue to remove illegal dumping and graffiti as speedily as it can to ensure the area looks well
- Our focus going into 2025 is to further develop our relationship with established environmental groups and to encourage and support new groups in their endeavours

For information on how to register as a new environmental group or for information about how to enter the City Neighbourhoods Competition in 2025 please

**email:** [northcentral@dublincity.ie](mailto:northcentral@dublincity.ie)  
or  
**phone:** 01-2228870



**Special mention to Moatview Avenue Environmental Group and Buttercup Court Environmental Group which also entered the City Neighbourhoods Competition for the first time this year.**

We look forward to seeing them develop and enhance their areas further over the next few months, and will support them to re-enter the City Neighbourhoods competition next year.



Objective 4

Develop A System Of  
Collaborative Service Delivery

The responses to the social challenges of supporting the multiple strands of the community require coordination, collaboration, and innovation.

The social and families' services will continue to have a vital role in maintaining family cohesion. Drug treatment centres will be required to continue and add to their services to treat the area's problems.

PROGRESS TO DATE

- › The HSE provides a significant suite of programmes throughout the area designed to improve health and wellbeing. These programmes and their progress are outlined below

HSE Health Promotion & Improvement Update

- › In 2024, the Sláintecare Healthy Communities (SCHC) Programmes continued to provide increased health and wellbeing services in the area

HSE Sláintecare Healthy Communities  
Darndale Team

- › Throughout 2024, HSE Health Promotion and Improvement Officers continued to build relationships with community partners and HSE colleagues to support delivery of Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programmes



2024 Sláintecare Healthy Communities  
programme updates

Parenting Programmes

Sixty participants attended workshops and 63 enrolled in the full 'Triple P' parenting programmes.

- › The recruitment officer for the Preparing for Life parenting programme attended the Paediatric Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting at Coolock Primary Care Centre
- › The programmes were also promoted through in-person stands at Coolock Primary Care Centre
- › Preparing for Life hosted the first in-person peer meeting for parent programme facilitators
- › The 'Parenting: Talk IT Out' podcast episode, launched in January, 2024, featured Parenting Facilitators, from Bray Area Partnership and Northside Partnership
- › The podcast covered how the parenting peer group can be a safe, non-judgemental place, where day-to-day experiences such as mealtimes, screentime and 'Saying No' are discussed



Healthy Food Made Easy

Seventeen Healthy Food Made Easy programmes were completed in the Darndale region in 2024.

Eighty-six percent of the participants were more aware of their health in general following the programme.

We Can QUIT

We Can QUIT is a free, friendly and supportive group programme for people who smoke and want support to quit.

The programme offers free stop smoking medications, a weekly stop smoking group and one-to-one support. It is offered online and in person.



- › Four courses commenced in the area with 18 participants completing courses
- › Promotion took the form of in person stands, local radio and social media

HSE one-to-one Stop Smoking Service

- › Ninety-three individuals had an introductory conversation with the HSE Darndale/Coolock stop smoking service
- › Ninety-seven per-cent attended an initial appointment, set a quit date, and agreed to take part in the National Stop Smoking Programme

- › Thirty-one per-cent remained quit at 12 weeks
- › Supported research began at the end of 2024 on the smoking behaviours of people living and working in Darndale
- › The research was at the planning stage in 2024 and included the formation of a research project group, made up of local community partners, DCU and the HSE
- › The group will host their first focus group session in February, 2025, with the full report due later that year

Community Food Club

The Community Food Club Pilot started on April 11, 2024 at Doras Bui, in collaboration with Northside Partnership's Community Food and Nutrition Worker.

The project aimed to support families with a wraparound approach to food over a 10-week period.

Social Prescribing

The Kilmore/Priorswood social prescribing service received 251 new referrals in 2024.

There is currently a three-week waiting list in the Kilmore/Priorswood area, which is being monitored.

Empowering Communities Community  
Health Team

The Empowering Communities team is now made up of four community health workers and one coordinator.

- › Walking Challenge, March, 2024: In 2023, a walking challenge was piloted to improve health and wellbeing
- › It was so successful it was held again in 2024
- › Plans are in place to encourage Darndale Belcamp Village Centre to take this initiative on as an annual event as part of the ongoing Health and Wellbeing strategy for staff





**Cancer awareness campaign**

- On March 14, the Empowering Communities Team organised for a Cancer awareness mobile unit to visit the Darndale Belcamp Village Centre, in collaboration with Social Prescribing Day, to raise awareness of the importance of screening
- The Team will continue to provide similar opportunities on an ongoing basis

**Community Fair**

- On May 15, the Empowering Communities Coordinator and team hosted a community engagement event at the Village Centre
- The intention was to inform the community of the various supports and services available locally
- Over 32 exhibitors took part. It was agreed to make this an annual event
- Over 300 people from the community and surrounding areas attended the Fair
- Empowering Communities and Coolock Library, in partnership with the local social prescriber, expanded storytelling sessions for adults to four courses in 2024, with 40 attendees
- There are plans for the Library to fully manage the programme going forward into 2025
- A Swap Shop in collaboration with the Darndale Belcamp Village Centre, and Golden Years on July 18 fostered social connections for local residents and promoted awareness of climate action through the circular economy
- Approximately 50 people attended, and any remaining items were donated to a local homeless hub
- The aim of the Swap Shop was to host a day to show gratitude and support for the elderly population of our community



**Living Well**

- The Living Well with Chronic Health Conditions programme took place in the Priorswood Centre over a six-week period
- Through interactive workshops, participants learned to tackle fatigue, stress, and emotional challenges while adopting healthier habits and effective communication strategies
- Ten participants completed the course



**Dementia Workshop**

- As part of Positive Ageing, week our Health Promotion Improvement Officers collaborated with Priorswood Parish Centre and St James's Hospital Dementia Services Information and Development Centre to bring a Dementia Awareness Workshop to the area

**Northside Partnership Empowering Communities Project**

Northside Partnership's Empowering Communities Programme (ECP) is delivered in the Darndale, Belcamp and Moatview area and focuses on three main objectives:

- To support a community development approach to area-based poverty and social exclusion
- Building leadership within communities, supporting, and enhancing collaboration between existing community structures to develop and help implement tailored community work responses to specific challenges faced locally
- To empower local communities to craft their own response to tackling community challenges



**Aramark Back-to-School Funding**



Aramark volunteers assembling back to school kits for Our Lady Immaculate Junior National School, Darndale



Creative  
Places



Taryn De Vere,  
Creative Places Darndale Coordinator

Taking control leadership for life course

The purpose of this training was to engage participants with limited or no community leadership skills or experience and involve them consciously and actively in their own development and the development of their community and society.

Leadership Development - Place Based  
Leadership (PBL) Development

- › The Place-Based Leadership Development Group met every two months, with the ECP Coordinator and Team Leader hosting the meetings

Onboarding of New Participants for a new  
PBL programme

- › A subgroup was formed to coordinate the on boarding of new participants
- › The original model, involving staff from statutory bodies, agencies, residents, and community organisations, has been applied, and participants will remain part of the wider PBL group once training is complete
- › An introductory session took place in the Conference Room, Darndale Belcamp Village Centre, in November to attract individuals to the programme

- › The application process involved completion of a form and a one-to-one meeting where participants outlined how this programme would benefit them
- › Twenty-two participants have been selected to join the programme

Our Lady Immaculate SNS Darndale  
Enhancement Project

The development of a garden will be a long-term project which will develop over time.

Women of Worth (WOW) Group

- › Throughout 2024, the Empowering Communities team continued to support the WOW women's group with various projects
- › It organised a local artist to facilitate art sessions with the group over a six-week period, as this was an area of interest for the group

Sphere 17 Christmas Fair



- › Sphere 17 invited Empowering Communities to collaborate in organising their December 4 Fair which took place at the Village Square
- › Despite the weather, the event was a great success

Supporting Local Community Groups

- › The Empowering Communities Coordinator and team leader met with 12 local Community groups at the beginning of the year to co-create their work plans for 2024
- › Mid-year reviews and end of year reviews were carried out with each group to identify areas needing support
- › The Empowering Communities team maintain ongoing communication with the groups, offering support and

inviting them to events and forums, and providing them with training opportunities

- › The groups participate in the Northside Community Forum
- › Empowering Communities National Network Group



Minister Joe O'Brien and ECP Teams at a Showcase Event in Athlone

Empowering Communities is funded by:





Objective 5

Enhance Education Uptake And  
Community Entrepreneurship

Overcoming the economic hurdles in the area requires long-term and sustained effort on behalf of the State, Dublin City Council, local entrepreneurship and the community itself.

The unemployment rate within the Darndale, Belcamp, Moatview area is significantly outside national parameters.



- › Objective five of the plan is to ‘Enhance Education Uptake and Community Entrepreneurship’
- › A key action of this was to pilot the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) Programme in the area
- › Despite an unwillingness by the Department of Education to engage with the plan, the two schools in Darndale engaged with the INTO training programme on ACEs
- › This laid a foundation for understanding the impact of trauma on children
- › Subsequently, a group of teachers from Our Lady Immaculate Senior National School engaged with University College Cork to undertake a Diploma in Trauma Informed Practice
- › This led to the development, alongside Marino Institute of Education, of a Summer Programme for Teacher Professional Development

- › This programme ran in July, 2023 and July, 2024
- › The core element of the programme is to provide teachers with an insight into trauma, intergenerational trauma and how to address trauma in our schools
- › Teachers from all five local primary schools have engaged with this programme, and are actively promoting Trauma Informed Practice in their school settings
- › Engagement with Trauma Informed Practice in the school community is now the focus of a Research Project being completed by one of our teachers through University College Cork and supported by Dublin City Council
- › Other community organisations have also had training in Trauma Informed Practice

PROGRESS TO DATE

Progress to date is encouraging and the engagement of the community in the myriad of programmes available offers significant hope for the future. The programmes include the following:

Home visiting

The Preparing for Life (PFL) Home Visiting team is currently working with 100 families in Darndale, Priorswood, and Kilmore.

Thirteen children have graduated from the programme in 2024 and have started school.

During 2024, we saw an increased number of families dealing with very complex needs, including domestic violence, addiction and physical and learning disabilities.

- › Despite these challenges, families demonstrate significant resilience and coping strategies to ensure the best possible futures for their children
- › 2024 saw a major investment in Home Visiting with a new Office for Home Visiting established in Tusla to support expansion of services around the country
- › This has led to increased interest in PFL, and we are working with 13 communities across the country to implement the programme
- › During the year, the team also worked closely with University College Dublin to reconnect with the original participants in the PFL longitudinal study who are now aged 13-14
- › Findings from this research will be published in May, 2025

Playful Parenting

Playful Parent Mornings were designed to empower parents create playful learning experiences at home.

During these sessions, parents and their children participate in interactive workshops at Coolock Library.

In 2024, a total of six Playful Parent Mornings were held, covering the following topics:

- › Sensory Play
- › Social Skills
- › Language through Play
- › Music and Movement

Across the sessions, 66 families attended. Additionally, two extra sessions were delivered at one of the Early Years (EY) settings, with 13 families in attendance.

Parenting Programmes

PFL delivers a range of evidence based parenting programmes, ranging from one-off sessions to nine-week group programmes.

The Triple P programme provides useful strategies and tips to support building routines, good sleep habits and improved relationships.

Circle of Security sessions help parents understand their own experience as a child and how that impacts on their own parenting style

Evaluation of the programmes shows statistically significant improvements in key areas including:

- › Improved emotion and affection between parent and child
- › Improved empathy and understanding between parent and child
- › Improved mental health for parents

Additional Supports

Working with Worries Group

In July and August, a play therapist facilitated a ‘Working with Worries’ group in Darndale.

This group involved four children aged six-eight who were referred by local schools due to concerns about anxiety.

Feedback from both the children and their caregivers was overwhelmingly positive.

Summer Programme 2024

The annual summer programme at NZone in Kinsealy ran throughout July and saw the participation of 49 children - all selected by local Drug and Alcohol Task Force Projects.

A daily bus service from four areas: Coolock, Darndale, Donnycarney, and Kilbarrack was provided.

The programme offered a variety of activities, including sports, games, arts, outings, and daily hot meals.

Staff training on trauma-informed care ensured camp staff were equipped to handle complex needs.





### Early Years

Building Big Futures is a coaching and professional development programme for local early years educators and managers.

This programme is trauma aware and provides clear guidance and information on best practice in early years education, while recognising and valuing the experience, expertise and insight of early years educators themselves.

**Over the course of 3 cycles in 2024, services engaged in the following components:**

- › Learning through Play
- › Partnership with Parents
- › Outdoor Environments
- › Planning and Assessment



### Speech and language supports

An important component of the Early Years programme is a comprehensive set of interventions to support speech, language and communications skills in young children.

These have been developed under the PFL Senior Speech and Language Therapist and are evidence based and informed by best practice.

The experience of the team is that speech and language delays are a significant problem in the Darndale area and the team is working closely with the HSE to improve the situation.

#### These interventions include -

##### Small Talkers

A fun and interactive parent-child group which introduces strategies which supports a child's communication development.

The group helps guide parents and caregivers to feel confident in their ability to support their child's communication skills by introducing practical tips, strategies and ideas which can be used during play and everyday routines.

Twenty-nine families with children in the age range of eight weeks to two and a half years participated in the Bell Building, Early Years settings and Coolock Library.

##### Walk and Talk Groups

Working in collaboration with local Early Years settings, the senior speech and language therapist (SLT) developed and piloted Walk and Talk groups. These allow the SLT to model strategies for educators and caregivers to promote language and communication skills while children are on a regular walk in the outdoors.

A total of 35 children attended with nine early years educators, as well as four parents. Following each Walk and Talk group, a summary of the walk, strategies used and vocabulary introduced was provided for parents and caregivers.

##### Early Talk Boost (ETB)

Early Talk Boost is a manualised intervention delivered in Early Years settings which has proven results in improving speech and language skills. PFL has trained 81 educators to deliver the programme and has supported seven settings to implement the programme. Fifty-five children have benefitted from the programme so far with further delivery to take place in 2025.

### Agencies



An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta  
agus Coimirce Sóisialaí  
Department of Employment Affairs  
and Social Protection



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
agus Comhionannais  
Department of Justice  
and Equality



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,  
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive







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