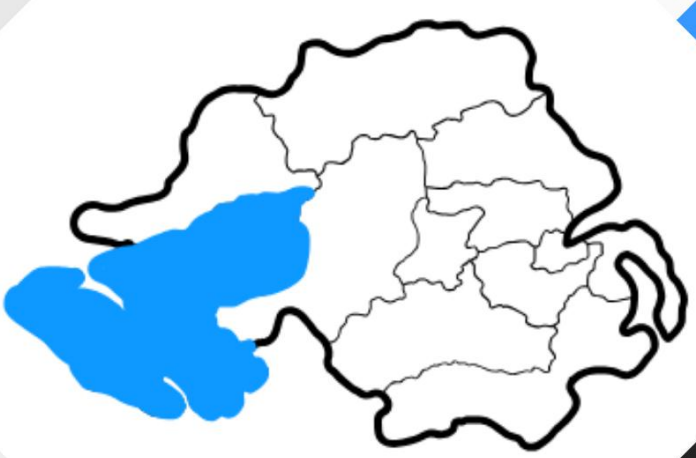
Education Authority

2026 - 2029



FERMANAGH & OMAGH

LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF NEED

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Introduction

The Education Authority (EA) Youth Service Local Assessment of Need is a key document outlined in the Department of Education's (DE) Youth Work Policy Priorities for Youth (2013) as it requires the Education Authority to ensure 'Planning, funding and the delivery of youth work will be based on the EA composite (local and regional) assessment of need.'

The wider requirements and purpose of undertaking the assessment of need process is outlined in detail within the Regional Assessment of Need 2026-2029. This regional document provides further detail on the EA's statutory duty, other policy requirements and links to Northern Ireland Government strategies. It also sets the context within which these documents are being completed as well as the key purpose and functions the effective youth provision provides for children and young people. The regional document can be found here.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Regional Assessment of Need. Its key objective is to establish the level of need for Youth Service provision for children and young people aged 4-25 years in Fermanagh and Omagh It brings together data, evidence and local insight to help identify the needs and barriers children and young people in Fermanagh and Omagh face. Listening to and understanding, the voices and opinions of children and young people is an important part of this process.

Methodology

Following on from the methodology of the regional assessment of need process, there were six parts to developing the local assessment of need for in Fermanagh and Omagh. The tools used to gather essential information and data for the regional document had the ability to be filtered at a local level and this supplied Education Authority with an excellent resource to listen to and understand the direct voices of children and young people. Details of how this was achieved are laid out in the regional document.

Part One – Children and Young People's Survey

A survey for all children and young people aged 4-25 years was designed and developed by a project team set up within the Education Authority Youth Service based on the eight strategic outcomes of the children and young peoples' strategy 2020-2030. A total of 5,451 children and young people responded to the survey. From those figures, 550 children and young people responded to the survey in Fermanagh and Omagh.

Part Two – Children and Young People's Focus Groups

The Education Authority Youth Service participation team, working with young people from the Small Grants panel, designed a resource allowing facilitators to manage and record the focus group sessions. Focus groups with children and young people were facilitated by youth workers. These were based on the policy age group bands and including specific groups of young people, within the section 75 grouping or those who may be at greater risk of social exclusion, marginalisation or isolation because they experience a combination of barriers to learning. A total of 138 focus groups, involving 1,630 participants, were facilitated throughout Northern Ireland. A total of 10 focus groups, involving 151 participants, were facilitated throughout Fermanagh and Omagh.

Part Three – The Development of Area Profiles

Area Profiles using all available statistical data and information about the needs of children and young people have been produced using a range of data and information from the Northern Ireland statistics and research agency. These reports focused on demographic information and reflected wider social, economic and environmental determinants which negatively impacted children and young people. The area profile report for Fermanagh and Omagh can be found here.

Part Four – Embedding Findings from Key Research

The Education Authority Youth Service's Information and planning team conducted a significant literature review under the key outcome areas used in the survey and focus group materials. They also had access to all research and stakeholder engagement event reports conducted by the Youth Service as well as other research completed by academics and youth organisations relevant to the assessment of need.

Part Five – Parents and Organisation Survey

A survey for parents and other relevant organisations was designed and developed by a project team set up within the EA Youth Service based on the eight strategic outcomes of the Children and Young Peoples' Strategy 2020-2030. Logic branching was incorporated into the survey to tailor questions based on previous responses and made the survey more relevant to different age bands and groups.

Likert scales were used so that the data could be analysed to measure attitudes. There 90 were responses to this survey.

Part Six – Wider Stakeholder Engagement

Additional engagement included local advisory group feedback along with Fermanagh and Omagh youth voice and the voice of local voice groups across Fermanagh and Omagh. Policing community safety (Fermanagh and Omagh) and both Fermanagh and Omagh children's diversionary engagement forums were also consulted on the needs of children and young people across the region.

A key principle of consultation was the importance of the voice of children and young people in the assessment of need across Fermanagh and Omagh. This allowed Youth Service planners to understand children and young people's lived experiences, hear their views and circumstances. Surveys formed the initial part of this process and focus groups followed for more in-depth discussion about attitudes, feelings and experiences that included local advisory group feedback along with Fermanagh and Omagh Youth voice and the voice of local voice groups across Fermanagh and Omagh.

Meaningful engagement offered opportunities for children and young people to reflect on their needs and ensured that interventions were responsive to these needs.

Council in Numbers

The population of Fermanagh and Omagh local government district is 116,994 people.

37,791 children and young people are aged 0-25 years live in Fermanagh and Omagh.

32,029 children and young people are aged 4-25 years live in Fermanagh and Omagh.

Age bands population

- 5,765 aged 0 – 3 years (15.3%) (NI Average – 14.6.%)
- 7,801 aged 4 – 8 years (20.6%) (NI Average – 20.1%)
- 8,090 aged 9 – 13 years (21.4%) (NI Average – 20.9%)
- 7,606 aged 14 – 18 years (20.1%) (NI Average – 19.0%)
- 8,532 aged 19 – 25 years (22.6%) (NI Average – 25.4%)

The age distribution shows that the region has a higher percentage of children and young people in most age (0-18) groups compared to the Northern Ireland average, except for the 19-25 age group, which is slightly lower.

Here is a summary of the gender distribution for the youth population (0-25 years) in Fermanagh and Omagh compared to the Northern Ireland average:

Gender Distribution (Fermanagh and Omagh):

- Male: 51.5%
- Female: 48.5%

Gender Distribution (Northern Ireland Average):

- Male: 51.3%
- Female: 48.7%

In Fermanagh and Omagh 4,349 children and young people aged 0-25 years (11.5%) live in deprivation.

28,308 children and young people (74.9%) live in a rural community in Fermanagh and Omagh (NI Average 34.5).

20.9% of children and young people aged 0-24 years old in Fermanagh and Omagh come from a lone parent family (NI Average 25% - NISRA).

1,019 Newcomers attend schools in Fermanagh and Omagh (3.7%) – NI Average 5%.

200 Irish Traveller children and young people.

4,859 (37%) of all pupils in Fermanagh and Omagh are eligible for Free School Meals. 2023/24 (NI average 28%).

4,552 pupils (20.9%) who attend school in Fermanagh and Omagh 2022/23 have a Special Education Need or Disability Stage 1-3. (NI average 19%).

Special Education Needs (SEN) Statemented Pupils by Gender

Fermanagh and Omagh (Percentage of Statemented Pupils: 7.4%)

- Female Statemented Pupils: 29.4%
- Male Statemented Pupils: 70.6%

Northern Ireland Average (Percentage of Statemented Pupils: 7.0%)

- Female Statemented Pupils: 27.7%
- Male Statemented Pupils: 72.3%

Higher Percentage of Statemented Pupils: Fermanagh and Omagh have a slightly higher percentage of statemented pupils (7.4%) compared to the Northern Ireland average (7.0%).

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C (incl. equivalent qualifications) including GCSE English and maths in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2022/23 is 83.3% compared to the NI average of 76.1%.

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed and/or unknown in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2022/23 is 0.8% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.

4.3% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.7%).

The proportion of Primary 1 pupils identified as obese or overweight in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2022/23 is 18.9% (NI average 20.4%). This represents 22% of girls (NI 24%) and 16% of boys (NI 17%).

The proportion of Year 8 pupils identified as obese or overweight in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2022/23 is 27.4%, higher than the NI average of 26%. This represents 28% of girls (NI 26.2%) and 26.7% of boys (NI 25.8%).

Suicide rates in Fermanagh and Omagh recorded 14 suicides in 2023. This is a 22% decrease from 17 suicides in 2022. However, the current suicide rate is 27% higher than in 2019 (11 suicides).

There were 58 incidents with a sectarian motivation in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2023/24.

There were 32 incidents with a racist motivation in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2023/24. This is a 20% decrease from the previous year of 40 racial motivated incidents.

There has been a 10.8% (1,353) rise in incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24 to year 2022/23 (1,221) in Northern Ireland.

Daily Irish language users Fermanagh and Omagh have witnessed rapid growth in Irish language knowledge and daily usage. This rural area is an important site for heritage, future language revitalisation and community growth.

Summary:

- Census: Strong trend, knowledge increased from 14.5% ➔ 17.8%; daily usage at 2.81%.
- Education: Growth across early years and primary settings (Bunscoil an Traonaigh: 37 ➔ 57).

- Youth Services: New and expanding services (Pobal an Ghleanna +22), highlighting rural demand and resilience.

There was a total of 804 domestic abuse crimes in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2023/24. This is a 11% decrease from the previous year. The average rate for domestic abuse crimes in Fermanagh and Omagh DEAs is 115 (NI average 250).

There was a total of 1,947 anti-social behaviour incidents in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2023/24. This is a 7% decrease from the previous year. The average rate for anti-social behaviour incidents in Fermanagh and Omagh DEAs is 279 (NI average 567).

Northern Ireland Data:

The Executive Office Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: Experiences and Attitudes of 16-year-olds in Northern Ireland in 2024 Report:

In the last year, almost a fifth of 16-year-olds had experienced online violence (19%). Psychological violence was experienced by 18% of respondents. Just over one in ten had experienced sexual violence (11%) and 7% had experienced physical violence.

Of those respondents experiencing violent acts or behaviour in the last year, the most usual places where they occurred were online (42%), at school (35%) and a public outdoor space (26%).

Key Trends/Highlights

Growing Youth Population: The increase in younger populations (especially in the 4-13 age bands) will lead to a higher number of 14-18-year-olds over the next few years.

Economic Disadvantage and Deprivation: Within the Fermanagh and Omagh area, 11.5% of children and young people in deprivation. This highlights the socio-economic challenges faced by many in the area. With 74.9% of young people living in rural communities (highest across NI and based on the average of 34.5%) and 20.9% coming from lone-parent families, there are interconnected challenges of limited access to resources, social isolation and increased vulnerability to poverty-related issues. Additionally, 4,859 (37%) of all pupils in Fermanagh and Omagh are eligible for Free School Meals in 2023/24 much higher than that of the NI average, at 28%.

Mental and Physical Health Concerns: The obesity rates across Fermanagh and Omagh raise concerns, with 18.9% of Primary 1 pupils and 27.4% of Year 8 pupils identified as overweight or obese, higher than the NI Average at 26%. These overall figures closely mirror the Northern Ireland average, highlighting the need for health initiatives aimed at preventing obesity among children and young people. This trend not only affects general well-being but contributes to deeper emotional health and well-being issues in later life.

Rising Incidents of Hate, Anti-Social Behaviour and Domestic Abuse: Hate crime and sectarianism remain pressing concerns in Fermanagh and Omagh. There was a 10.8% increase in racially motivated incidents from 2022/23 to 2023/24, alongside 58 sectarian incidents in 2023/24. There were 32 incidents with a racist motivation in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2023/24. This is a 20% decrease from the previous year of 40 racial motivated incidents.

There has been a decrease in in domestic abuse crimes, with a total of 804 domestic abuse crimes in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2023/24. This is a 11% decrease from the previous year. The average rate for domestic abuse crimes in Fermanagh and Omagh DEAs is 115 (less than half of the NI average of 250). Although an 11% decrease from the previous year, the rate and numbers are very worrying. This is particularly concerning given the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people's safety and mental health. Children and young people are affected by domestic abuse, with the trauma often spilling over into their school and social environments, further complicating their emotional and mental well-being.

Good Relations and Equality: There has been a 10.8% (1,353) rise in incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24 to year 2022/23 (1,221) in Northern Ireland. This suggests a need for increased efforts in promoting racial harmony and addressing the underlying causes of these incidents. Furthermore, daily Irish language users in Fermanagh and Omagh is 2.81% of people that use the Irish language daily, greater than the NI Average at 2.3% that indicates the area of Fermanagh and Omagh with a higher proportion of Irish speakers.

Educational Achievement and Employment Concerns: In Fermanagh and Omagh, 83.3% of school leavers achieved at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C, above the Northern Ireland average of 76.1%. Additionally, 4.3% of young people aged 20-24 are neither employed nor qualified, which is close to the Northern Ireland average of 4.9%. This situation highlights the need for career guidance, better access to vocational training and employment support for all children and young people, especially those from marginalised and vulnerable groups**.** Furthermore, 20.9% of pupils in the Fermanagh and Omagh area

have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND), slightly higher than the Northern Ireland average of 19% and highlights the challenges faced by these young people and the barriers, they may encounter in accessing support and opportunities.

Violence against young women and girls in Northern Ireland is a growing concern in across the area with 18% of 16-year-olds reported experiencing psychological violence, 11% sexual violence and 7% physical violence. These incidents are most commonly occurring online (42%), in schools (35%) and in public spaces (26%). Young women and girls are particularly vulnerable to these forms of violence, which negatively impact their mental health and safety. Domestic abuse crimes are high in Fermanagh and Omagh with 804 incidents reported in 2023/24. This suggests that young women often face violence both in their homes and in public spaces.

Overall, these trends suggest that young people in Fermanagh and Omagh face socio-economic challenges that affect their mental health, educational attainment and employment prospects, alongside rising community tensions and violence against women and girls.

Key Priorities for Young People across Fermanagh and Omagh:

Below are the top ranked priorities for young people highlighted within the Fermanagh and Omagh Area consultation with key stakeholders and Young People (812 in total from all focus groups and online consultations):

1. **Your Future**: This encompasses career aspirations, opportunities for personal growth and the support needed to achieve long-term goals.
2. **Play, Hobbies and Interests**: This includes recreational activities, sports and hobbies that young people enjoy.
3. **Health and Wellbeing**: This involves their emotional health and wellbeing, physical health and overall wellbeing.
4. **Safety**: This covers physical safety, emotional security and feeling safe in your community**.**
5. **Your Rights**: This includes understanding and advocating for their rights as a young person.
6. **Equality:** Ensuring equality in Youth Services is crucial for fostering an inclusive environment where all young people can thrive. Here are some key aspects and recommendations for promoting equality:
    - ***Inclusiveness***: Ensuring all young people, regardless of background, have access to Youth Services.
    - ***Diversity***: Celebrating and respecting the diverse backgrounds and cultures of young people.
    - ***Rights***: Upholding the rights of young people and ensuring their voices are heard and valued.
7. **Education**: This covers access to quality education, educational resources and support for learning.
8. **Citizenship** - Citizenship education aims to equip young people with the skills and confidence to participate actively in society, make informed decisions and contribute positively to their

communities. This education is crucial for developing self-confidence, a sense of agency and the ability to handle life changes and challenges such as bullying and discrimination.

The Findings

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Key facts

4,552 pupils (20.9%) who attend school in Fermanagh and Omagh 2022/23 have a special education need or disability stage 1-3 (NI average 19%).

Approximately 7,500 children and young people aged 0-25 years have a mental health need.

1,405 children and young people aged 0-24 years have autism.

The proportion of Primary 1 pupils identified as obese or overweight in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2022/23 is 18.9% (NI average 20.4%). This represents 22% of girls (NI 24%) and 16% of boys (NI 17%).

The proportion of Year 8 pupils identified as obese or overweight in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2022/23 is 27.4% (NI average 26%) This represents 28% of girls (NI 26.2%) and 26.7% of boys (NI 25.8%).

17.6% of children and young people aged 0-24 years have a long-term health condition (NI 19.8%).

There were 2.81 births per 1,000 births to young mothers aged under 20 years (NI average 5.83%).

There were 0 births per 1,000 births to young mothers aged under 17 years (NI average 0.75%).

According to the most recent census, 315 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.

Suicide rates in Fermanagh and Omagh recorded 14 suicides in 2023. This is a 22% decrease from 17 suicides in 2022. However, the current suicide rate is 27% higher than in 2019 (11 suicides).

Stakeholder input/feedback

Staff, adults (parents, key stakeholders and key partners) were also consulted on the needs of young people across Fermanagh and Omagh (620 in total).

Being healthy is not only about physical fitness but also mental and emotional well-being. A healthy lifestyle boosts confidence, fights illness and improves happiness. When children and young people face mental health challenges, it can affect schoolwork, friendships and overall well-being. A balanced diet, regular exercise and enough sleep are essential for maintaining health and emotional resilience.

Across Fermanagh and Omagh, children and young people have voiced concerns about both their mental and physical health. Approximately 7,500 children and young people aged 0-25 years have a mental health need. Many young people have reported stress, anxiety, bullying and body image as issues. Stakeholders agree that there is a need to address these concerns. Excessive phone use, particularly through social media, was also identified as contributing to emotional difficulties, with concerns over screen time's impact on mental health.

More than 30% of young people in the area reported feeling they have nowhere to go for help with their emotional well-being. Many suggested the creation of safe spaces for relaxation, discussing feelings and mindfulness activities. Young people also raised concerns about vaping, substance misuse, lack of exercise and poor eating and sleeping habits. Almost 30% of young people expressed that there are no local opportunities for physical activities to support health and well-being. Stakeholders agree that promoting both physical and emotional well-being, including exercise and healthy habits, is important.

In terms of special education needs, Fermanagh and Omagh have 4,552 pupils (20.9%) with a Special Education Need or Disability at stages 1-3, which is slightly higher than the NI average of 19%. There is also a high prevalence of autism, with 1,405 children and young people aged 0-24 years diagnosed with autism.

Obesity rates among young people in Fermanagh and Omagh are a mixed picture. For Primary 1 pupils, the obesity rate is 18.9% (girls: 22%, boys: 16%), which is lower than the NI average of 20.4% (girls: 24%, boys: 17%). For Year 8 pupils, the obesity rate is 27.4% (girls: 28%, boys: 26.7%), which is slightly higher than the NI average of 26% (girls: 26.2%, boys: 25.8%).

Support for LGBTQI+ youth is growing in Fermanagh and Omagh, with 315 young people aged 16-24 identifying as such. This is essential for fostering an inclusive and supportive community. Organisations like Fermanagh Pride are actively working to provide resources and support for LGBTQI+ individuals.

Suicide rates in Fermanagh and Omagh recorded 14 suicides in 2023. This is a 22% decrease from 17 suicides in 2022. However, the current suicide rate is 27% higher than in 2019 (11 suicides). This highlights the need for earlier intervention and support to young people going through challenging issues in their lives.

Based on feedback from focus groups, young people feel they have spaces where they can relax and feel calm. They also have opportunities to engage in physical activities, including Outdoor Learning Service activities and residentials, which help improve their social skills in a positive environment. Additionally, they benefit from physical health and fitness activities, sleep and relaxation therapy and healthy eating.

From the additional feedback across the 11 focus groups that young people were involved in (192 young people took part in this) the majority of young people across the Fermanagh and Omagh fed back that they were feeling cheerful and in good spirits, mostly calm and relaxed, feel active and vigorous, wake up feeling fresh and rested and spend their time doing things that interest them. Young people feel that there are plenty of opportunities for them to do physical activities in their area. Young people feel that they can get help with their emotional needs if they need it. Young people also highlighted in discussion with staff as part of the consultation, the need for a space in centre that focus on physical health for people that may not have the confidence to attend a gym or sports club etc. the youth centres could develop a space with low level physically activities to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

The above needs identified would be similar to that identified within the Regional Assessment of need that also included addressing bullying (programmes to combat bullying, both in-person and online and support for those affected by bullying), Access to facilities and social media and internet safety.

Access to play and Leisure

Key facts

97% of teachers agree that outdoor play is critical for a child to reach his/her potential.

88% of teachers agree that children are happier after playing outdoors.

86% of teachers agree that playing outdoors gives children a better understanding of the environment.

There were 22,715 pre-school placements in Northern Ireland in 2022/2023.

Fermanagh and Omagh

2022/2023: There were approximately 1,200 pre-school placements available.

2023/2024: The number of pre-school placements remained stable, with around 1,210 placements.

36,556 children aged 0-3 were registered with Sure Start projects in 2023-2024. Across Fermanagh and Omagh there was approximately 1,037 0-3 aged children registered.

There are more than 700 council registered playparks in Northern Ireland. In Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, there are 110 play parks managed and maintained throughout the district.

There are 67 council-managed leisure and recreational centres in Northern Ireland. Within Fermanagh and Omagh District Council there a Total of 4 Leisure Centres listed below:

- *Omagh Leisure Complex*
- *Bawnacre Centre, Irvinestown*
- *Castle Park Leisure Centre, Lisnaskea*
- *Fermanagh Lakeland Forum, Enniskillen*.

Stakeholder input/feedback

The survey results from staff, adults (parents, key stakeholders and key partners) regarding the needs of young people in Fermanagh and Omagh reveal a mixed perception of the availability of fun activities in the area.

The survey results indicate that while there is a positive perception of the availability of safe spaces for young people to hang out with friends, there is a notable concern about the adequacy of fun activities in the area. Addressing these concerns by increasing the availability of provision and youth related activities and ensuring safe spaces can significantly enhance the overall well-being of young people in Fermanagh and Omagh. This approach will help create a more supportive and enjoyable environment for the youth in their area.

These findings highlight the importance of community amenities and safety in contributing to overall wellbeing. While many individuals feel satisfied with the fun activities and safe spaces available, there is still a notable portion of the population that feels these areas could be improved. Addressing these concerns could lead to a more engaged and secure community.

Access to play and leisure was something the young people had strong feelings about from the feedback within the focus groups and the importance this theme had towards their emotional health and well-being.

More than half of the young people in Fermanagh and Omagh surveyed feel that there are not plenty of fun things to do in their area and a strong majority felt that there are safe spaces for them to go to hang out with their friends.

Young people across the district felt that youth provision was important to all in the group, as somewhere they felt was their space to be themselves. Although sports clubs are important to them, they did reflect on the importance of enjoying the relaxed nature of youth club, as they felt that sports clubs can be quite regimental and demanding.

Young people have stated there is a lack of fun activities in rural areas with more than half of young people feel there are not enough fun things to do in their area. Over 65% believe there are safe spaces to hang out with friends and that youth clubs / area projects are valued as spaces where young people can be themselves, while sports clubs are important, youth clubs offer a more relaxed environment.

Young people, especially in rural areas, want more access to leisure facilities and opportunities for social and personal development. Young people believe youth clubs help with socialising, making friends and improving emotional health and well-being and there is a strong Interest in more inter-club activities and programmes.

Learning and achieving

Key facts

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C (incl. equivalent qualifications) including GCSE English and maths in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2022/23 is 83.3% compared to the NI average of 76.1%.

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed and/or unknown in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2022/23 is 0.8% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.

4.3% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification. (NI average 4.9%).

1,019 Newcomers attend schools in Fermanagh and Omagh (3.7%) – NI Average 5%.

200 Irish Traveller children and young people.

4,859 (37%) of all pupils in Fermanagh and Omagh are eligible for Free School Meals. 2023/24 (NI average 28%).

4,552 pupils (20.9%) who attend school in Fermanagh and Omagh 2022/23 have a Special Education Need or Disability Stage 1-3. (NI average 19%).

249 children and young people were suspended from school in Fermanagh and Omagh.

The attendance rate for post-primary schools was 92.6%. (NI average 96%).

According to the most recent census, 315 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.

Stakeholder input/feedback

Fermanagh and Omagh demonstrates a strong educational performance, with 83.3% of school leavers achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English and maths, compared to the Northern Ireland (NI) average of 76.1%. This indicates effective educational support and resources in the region.

Fermanagh and Omagh also has a lower percentage of young people aged 20-24 who are not in employment and without qualifications, at 4.3%, compared to the NI average of 4.9%. This highlights the effectiveness of local initiatives aimed at supporting young people in their educational and career aspirations. However, the post-primary school attendance rate in Fermanagh and Omagh is 92.6%, which is lower than the NI average of 96%. This indicates a need for initiatives to improve school attendance and ensure that students remain engaged in their education.

Fermanagh and Omagh's diverse student population includes 3.7% (1,019) newcomers, slightly than the NI average of 5%, with 200 Irish Traveller children and young people also across the area.

The eligibility rate for free school meals in Fermanagh and Omagh is 37%, much higher than the NI average of 28%. Additionally, the percentage of pupils with special education needs at stages 1-3 in Fermanagh and Omagh (20.9%) is slightly higher to that compared to the NI average of 19%.

Support for LGBTQI+ youth is growing in Fermanagh and Omagh, with 315 young people aged 16-24 identifying as such. This is essential for fostering an inclusive community where all young people feel supported and valued.

Staff, adults (parents, key stakeholders and key partners) were also consulted on the needs of young people across Fermanagh and Omagh (620 in total). From the data collated from the stakeholder consultation, below were the key findings:

Many young people (79%) feel they learn a lot through their youth work programmes, indicating the effectiveness of these programmes in providing valuable educational experiences.

A significant portion of young people (81%) feel they can get qualifications through their youth work programmes, highlighting the importance of these programmes in supporting academic and career achievements. Almost half of the young people (46%) feel they have barriers that hold them back from succeeding, indicating a need for targeted support to help them overcome these challenges. Many young people (75%) feel supported during substantial changes in their lives, like moving schools, suggesting that more support is needed with transitioning from primary to post primary.

Overall, the feedback from key stakeholders would suggest that youth work programmes are highly valued for their educational benefits and ability to provide important and relevant qualifications. Barriers to success is a notable concern among young people requiring focused interventions from Youth Services and schools and good support systems are effective, especially during major life changes such as transitioning from primary school to post primary school. Many young people across the Fermanagh and Omagh area believe that they learn a lot through their youth work programmes however one quarter of respondents feel that they do not. Many feel that they can get qualifications through their youth work experience. Approximately 25% of the young people felt that there was nothing holding them back in terms of barriers in their life and when it came to transitioning between schools the majority of those surveyed felt there was support there for them.

Additional issues highlighted within the focus groups were bullying and lack of guidance in schools were noted as concerns and youth workers were seen as a crucial support within this process. Developing interview skills, expanding young volunteer programmes with certification and making accredited programmes more accessible for ages 14-18 was also concerns across the area.

Living in safety and stability

Key facts

In Fermanagh and Omagh 4,349 children and young people aged 0-25 years (11.5%) live in an area of deprivation.

28,308 children and young people (74.9%) live in a rural community (34.5% NI Average).

According to the most recent census, 315 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.

19.5% of children and young people aged 0-24 years old in Fermanagh and Omagh come from a lone parent family.

There were 58 incidents with a sectarian motivation in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2023/24.

There were 32 incidents with a racist motivation in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2023/24. This is a 20% decrease from the previous year of 40 racial motivated incidents.

There has been a 10.8% (1,353) rise in incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24 to year 2022/23 (1,221) in Northern Ireland.

There was a total of 804 domestic abuse crimes in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2023/24. This is a 11% decrease from the previous year. The average rate for domestic abuse crimes in Fermanagh and Omagh DEAs is 115 (NI average 250).

There was a total of 1,947 anti-social behaviour incidents in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2023/24. This is a 7% decrease from the previous year. The average rate for anti-social behaviour incidents in Fermanagh and Omagh DEAs is 279 (NI average 567).

Suicide rates in Fermanagh and Omagh recorded 14 suicides in 2023. This is a 22% decrease from 17 suicides in 2022. However, the current suicide rate is 27% higher than in 2019 (11 suicides).

Stakeholder input/feedback

Fermanagh and Omagh faces challenges and opportunities in addressing the needs of its young population. With 11.5 % of children and young people aged 0-25 years living in deprivation, slightly higher than the Northern Ireland (NI) average of 13.2%, there is a clear need for targeted support and resources to address these socioeconomic disparities. The rural nature of the community is also significant, with 74.9% of children and young people living in rural areas, compared to the NI average of 34.5% - the largest population across Northern Ireland living in rural areas.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents in Fermanagh and Omagh have seen a 7% decrease from the previous year, with 1,947 incidents recorded in 2023/24. This is part of a broader trend observed across various District Electoral Areas (DEAs) within the region. Despite this decrease, there were still 58 sectarian incidents and 32 racist incidents recorded in the same period.

Domestic abuse crimes in Fermanagh and Omagh have decreased by 11% from the previous year, with 804 abuse crimes recorded in 2023/24. This suggests that local interventions are having a positive impact, but continued support is necessary. The prevalence of gender-based violence among 16-year-olds across Northern Ireland further underscores the importance of creating safe and supportive environments for young people. Ensuring the safety of women and girls remains a prominent issue, with 66% of girls and over 50% of boys expressing concern about their safety in their local communities.

Lastly, the rising suicide rates in Fermanagh and Omagh, with 14 suicides recorded in 2023, suggesting progress is being made in tackling mental health crises. However, stakeholders communicated that work is needed to further reduce mental health-related challenges.

Staff, adults (parents, key stakeholders and key partners) were also consulted on the needs of young people across Fermanagh and Omagh (620 in total). From the data collated from the stakeholder consultation, below were the key findings and summary of opinions.

Many young people (82%) in Fermanagh and Omagh feel safe in their local area, indicating a sense of security within the community. However, 37% of young people feel that social media negatively impacts their mental health and well-being. While 23% are worried about crime, 59% do not feel significantly concerned, suggesting varying perceptions of safety. Concerns about the safety of women and girls are prevalent, with 46% expressing worry, indicating a need for focused efforts to address gender-based safety issues. Additionally, 22% of young people feel pressure to engage in dangerous activities, highlighting the need for interventions to promote safe and positive choices.

Young people aged 9-13 have noted specific risks, such as feeling unsafe walking home in the dark and the dangers associated with fireworks. They feel safe at youth clubs and schools, where they can speak to youth leaders and adults about any issues. They believe Youth Services can enhance their safety by developing supportive programmes and providing information on how to stay safe. The involvement of young people in planning these programmes is seen as valuable, promoting a sense of ownership and support within the community.

Economic and environmental stability

Key facts

In Fermanagh and Omagh 4,349 children and young people aged 0-25 years (11.5%) live in an area of deprivation (NI Average 18%)

28,308 children and young people (74.9%) live in a rural community. (NI Average 34.5%)

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed and/or unknown in Fermanagh and Omagh in 2022/23 is 0.8% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.

4.3% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification. (NI average 4.9%).

4,859 (37%) of all pupils in Fermanagh and Omagh are eligible for Free School Meals. 2023/24 (NI average 28%).

Stakeholder input/feedback

Economic well-being plays a significant role in determining the overall quality of life, including income, job opportunities, access to basic needs like food and housing and overall happiness. For children and young people, a family's financial situation directly impacts their educational performance, health and overall life satisfaction.

Fermanagh and Omagh faces some challenges and opportunities in various aspects of socioeconomic conditions. Although the region has a lower percentage of children and young people living in deprivation (11.5%) compared to the Northern Ireland (NI) average of 18%, stakeholders still feel this is a worrying statistic for young people and their future. Additionally, and notably, Fermanagh and Omagh rural community is significantly larger, with 74.9% of children and young people living in rural areas, compared to the NI average of 34.5%.

4.3% of young people aged 20-24 in Fermanagh and Omagh are not in employment and do not have a qualification, which is slightly better than the NI average of 4.9%. The slightly lower NEET rate in Fermanagh and Omagh compared to the NI average suggests that the region is performing well in terms of keeping young people engaged in either employment or education. However, there is still a small percentage of young people who are not in employment or education, indicating a need for targeted interventions to support this group.

37% of all pupils in Fermanagh and Omagh are eligible for Free School Meals, significantly higher than the NI average of 28%. The higher percentage of pupils eligible for Free School Meals indicates a greater level of socioeconomic disadvantage in Fermanagh and Omagh compared to the NI average. This suggests that a significant portion of the student population may be facing financial challenges, which could impact their overall well-being and educational outcomes. Addressing these socioeconomic disparities is crucial for ensuring that all young people have equal opportunities to succeed.

Staff, adults (parents, key stakeholders and key partners) were also consulted on the needs of young people across Fermanagh and Omagh (620 in total). A significant portion of young people in Fermanagh and Omagh are concerned about climate change, with 58% strongly agreeing that they are worried. However, 30% are not really worried about this. Most young people feel they have the opportunity to learn about climate change, with 69% agreeing, though 25% feel they don't really have this chance and 10% disagree or strongly disagree. Over half (59%) of the young people surveyed said they were worried about climate change and an overwhelming majority felt that more needs to be done to prevent it.

Young people are optimistic about their career prospects, with 56% strongly agreeing and 19% agreeing that there will be plenty of career options. However, 22% are not confident. A majority feel equipped to apply for and secure a job, with 75% agreeing, though 23% do not feel entirely equipped or prepared. Most young people feel their families can afford the activities they want to do, with 83% strongly agreeing, but 13% do not really feel this way. Additionally, 80% of young people agree that poverty is affecting more children and young people than ever before.

Young people have identified several barriers to their future success, including stress, overthinking, poor mental health and fear of judgment. Some young people noted a lack of opportunities and educational choices at some schools and the need for money/part-time jobs versus schoolwork. They also mentioned that parents can influence their future, which can have both benefits and drawbacks due to pressure and fear of disappointment. Most young people said they would not be ready to live on

their own and would be fearful of living by themselves. They suggested that Youth Services could help with money management organisation skills and overall well-being, as well as providing safe, warm spaces.

Making a positive contribution

Key facts

The attendance rate for post-primary schools was 92.6%. (NI average 96%).

1,019 Newcomers attend schools in Fermanagh and Omagh (3.7%) – NI Average 5%.

200 Irish Traveller children and young people.

249 children and young people were suspended from school in Fermanagh and Omagh.

In Fermanagh and Omagh 4,349 children and young people aged 0-25 years (11.5%) live in an area of deprivation (NI Average: 18%).

28,308 children and young people (74.9%) live in a rural community in Fermanagh and Omagh (NI Average 34.5%).

According to the most recent census, 315 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.

Stakeholder input/feedback

Staff, adults (parents, key stakeholders and key partners) were also consulted on the needs of young people across Fermanagh and Omagh (620 in total). Making a positive contribution helps children and young people grow, build confidence and develop skills to face challenges. Participation in activities strengthens connections, encourages independence and builds resilience.

Fermanagh and Omagh post-primary school attendance rate of 92.6% is lower than the Northern Ireland (NI) average of 96%, indicating a need for initiatives to improve school attendance. Stakeholders have noted that tackling these barriers is essential to improving overall participation rates and ensuring young people can engage fully in education and community activities. It is not just about being heard; it is about making a real impact in their communities and feeling respected for their efforts.

Although Fermanagh and Omagh has a lower percentage of newcomers in schools (3.7%) compared to the NI average (5%), there is still evidence to suggest the region has a diverse student population. Half of the young people (49%) feel they have opportunities to make a difference in their school or community, but 31% feel they do not. A majority (58%) feel they can express their opinions, though 19% feel they lack this opportunity. Additionally, 49% feel listened to and taken seriously, while 29% do not. These numbers indicate a need for more inclusive initiatives and better platforms for youth voices.

Additionally, there are 200 Irish Traveller children and young people in Fermanagh and Omagh. The number of suspensions from school, totalling 249, points to behavioural challenges through the school system.

Deprivation affects 11.5% of children and young people aged 0-25 years in Fermanagh and Omagh, slightly lower than the NI average of 13.2%, indicating a need for targeted support and resources. The vast rural nature of the community is significant, with 74.9% of children and young people living in rural areas, overwhelmingly greater than the NI average of 34.5%, highlighting the need for accessible opportunities for all young people especially those from rural areas. Stakeholders agree that encouraging positive participation is important and ensuring these opportunities are available to all children and young people is key to achieving this.

Furthermore, Fermanagh and Omagh has 315 young people aged 16-24 identifying as LGBTQI+, reflecting a growing recognition and need for support for LGBTQI+ youth. For young people to succeed, they need to feel valued and respected. Having the ability to express their opinions in schools, youth centres and communities is essential for their growth and confidence. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of creating safe environments where young people's voices are heard, promoting their development and sense of belonging. Young people said that engaging in community activities helps them learn and grow, preparing them for future challenges. They explained that it helps them develop essential skills like leadership, communication and problem-solving.

When children and young people are involved in decisions, it helps them grow as individuals and prepares them to contribute meaningfully to their communities. Participation encourages responsibility and helps them develop socially, personally and even politically. However, various factors like financial worries, where someone lives or societal expectations can create barriers to involvement. Fermanagh and Omagh, 4,349 children and young people (11%) live in areas of deprivation, making it harder for them to participate in community activities. Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may face additional challenges. It is important that every

young person, regardless of their circumstances, can participate and make a difference. Stakeholders agree that support needs to be tailored to these challenges to ensure no one is excluded.

Children and young people also expressed that they value Youth Services because it provides safe spaces where everyone is welcome and offers opportunities to take on leadership roles and to engage in a range of activities. They would like to see an increased variety of activities to offer new learning opportunities and cultural experiences. However, many young people feel they are not always included in decision-making for their communities and youth activities. Almost 40% of young people surveyed said they feel they are not taken seriously when it comes to making a positive contribution, highlighting the need for more inclusive platforms for their voices to be heard. In Fermanagh and Omagh, 200 Irish Traveller children and young people could benefit from more inclusive decision-making platforms because it would give them a voice in shaping the services and policies that affect their lives. It would also promote a sense of belonging and inclusion within the wider community, ensuring their unique needs and perspectives are considered.

Young people also stated they believe participating in youth work activities not only helps others but also makes young people feel heard, respected and valued. Many young people agree that when involved, they can improve their communities. They would like more opportunities to get involved, particularly in decision-making processes that directly impact their lives and communities. They believe that when adults or politicians are making decisions, their input should be taken into consideration, as they know what works best for them. Stakeholders agree that young people's perspectives are invaluable in shaping policies and decisions that affect their lives.

Furthermore, young people are passionate about social and political issues such as climate change, education and justice. They want to be educated on these topics to participate in discussions that will shape their future. Young people shared that by volunteering and joining community projects provide excellent opportunities for young people to learn new skills and meet new people.

From the focus group feedback and summary, the majority of the young people consulted within Fermanagh and Omagh believed that they had opportunities to make a difference in school or in the community and a large majority felt they had opportunities to tell people what they thought, however, just over 50% felt that what they had to say was actually taken seriously but a strong majority of young people felt that young people could change things for the better in their area. Young people felt that they can do this by providing meaningful projects that benefit their own community.

Young people feel that they have the power to change things by suggesting ideas to schools and youth workers as different ideas can not only improve things but more importantly, no to do the things that they do not want to do or feel it isn't important to them. Young people feel that providing more progression to platforms for young people, to share ideas and be involved in decision-making and encouraging participation in surveys and projects to enhance youth clubs and local communities can enhance their voice and ideas to improve Youth Services across the Fermanagh and Omagh area.

Respect for young people's rights

Key facts

According to the most recent census, 315 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.

Approximately 7,500 children and young people aged 0-25 years have a mental health need.

28,308 children and young people (74.9%) live in a rural community in Fermanagh and Omagh (NI Average 34.5%).

In Fermanagh and Omagh 4,349 children and young people aged 0-25 years (11.5%) live in an area of deprivation (NI Average 18%).

1,019 Newcomers attend schools in Fermanagh and Omagh (3.7%) – NI Average 5%.

200 Irish Traveller children and young people.

4,859 (37%) of all pupils in Fermanagh and Omagh are eligible for Free School Meals. 2023/24 (NI average 28%).

4,552 pupils (20.9%) who attend school in Fermanagh and Omagh 2022/23 have a Special Education Need or Disability Stage 1-3. (NI average 19%).

Stakeholder input/feedback

Staff, adults (parents, key stakeholders and key partners) were also consulted on the needs of young people across Fermanagh and Omagh (620 in total).

Children and young people have rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ensuring protection and respect regardless of religion, race, gender or disability. Approximately 50% of the young people consulted in Fermanagh and Omagh believed that they were not listened to, were not valued and were not respected. Over 60% of young people felt that they knew what their rights were however a large number also were unsure about their rights and where to find information on the subject. Due to the rural nature of Fermanagh and Omagh, Young people feel they must work harder at getting their voices heard.

Over 70% however felt that when attending youth work programmes, they had their rights respected and felt confident enough to fight for their rights if they had to. Most said they felt the rights they did know about such as, non-discrimination, right to feel safe, right to privacy were all respected.

Some children and young people face barriers to enjoying their rights, particularly those transitioning to adulthood. In Fermanagh and Omagh, 4,349 (11.5%) children and young people live in areas of deprivation, limiting access to rights and opportunities. Additionally, 4,859 (37%) of all pupils in Fermanagh and Omagh are eligible for Free School Meals, reflecting the economic challenges they face. Stakeholders highlighted the need to address these disparities for equal opportunities.

Marginalised and vulnerable young people are more likely to experience violence, discrimination and poor outcomes in education and health. While over 60% stated they are aware of their rights they expressed more accessible information is needed to help them understand and exercise these rights, especially for vulnerable groups. Stakeholders agree that clearer guidance is essential for empowerment.

Young people expressed a desire for better education on their rights, greater freedom of expression and more leadership opportunities. Fermanagh and Omagh, 200 Irish Traveller children and young people and 1,019 (3.7%) newcomers face unique challenges in having their rights fully recognised. Children and young people noted that Youth Services play a key role in respecting and supporting young people's rights. Over 70% of young people feel their voices are heard in youth work programmes. However, many suggest more could be done including more engagement and revising policies.

4,552 (20.9%) students have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, with many facing challenges. This can make it more difficult for them to do well in school, make friends and feel good about themselves, which can affect their future happiness and success.

In summary, some young people stated they would stand up for their rights, if they had more knowledge of what they are. Young people also discussed how they enjoyed being given a voice in Youth provision to help shape activities and this made them feel respected. Young people feel that providing workshops to educate young people on their rights and continue offering spaces where young people feel heard and included can help that also includes more access to programmes to increase awareness and inclusivity, including cultural education and better understanding of special needs. Young people feedback that they appreciate having trusted adults to listen, support and help them navigate challenges.

Good Relations and equality

Key facts

28,308 children and young people (74.9%) live in a rural community in Fermanagh and Omagh (NI Average 34.5%).

1,019 Newcomers attend schools in Fermanagh and Omagh (3.7%) – NI Average 5%.

200 Irish Traveller children and young people.

4,859 (37%) of all pupils in Fermanagh and Omagh are eligible for Free School Meals. 2023/24 (NI average 28%).

4,552 pupils (20.9%) who attend school in Fermanagh and Omagh 2022/23 have a Special Education Need or Disability Stage 1-3. (NI average 19%).

In Fermanagh and Omagh 4,349 children and young people aged 0-25 years (11.5%) live in deprivation.

According to the most recent census, 315 young people aged 16-24 years old identify as LGBTQI+.

Stakeholder input/feedback

An equal society treats everyone fairly, regardless of their background or identity. Good relations are built on kindness, respect and understanding, recognising diversity and ensuring everyone feels welcome. The United Nations emphasises that all children should be treated equally, regardless of culture, language or abilities, to ensure they have equal opportunities to succeed. In Northern Ireland, the “Good Relations” initiative aims to promote understanding and cooperation between people from different backgrounds, addressing issues like racism, bullying and disrespect. Despite progress, stakeholders, including children and young people, note that challenges persist, particularly in areas where divisions remain across the Fermanagh and Omagh area.

Young people have voiced strong support for the establishment of safe spaces where inclusion is promoted and differences are celebrated. They emphasise the need for environments where everyone is treated fairly, bullying is minimised, discrimination is reduced and vulnerable groups, such as children with special educational needs, disabilities and those from the LGBTQI+ community receive more support.

Across Fermanagh and Omagh, approximately 28,308 (74.9%) of children and young people live in rural communities, with 1019 being newcomers to Northern Ireland, just slightly below the NI average. The area also has 200 children from the Irish traveller community. 37% of children receive free school meals, hugely above the NI average, while 20.9% have special educational needs or disabilities, above the NI average of 19%. However, 11.5% of young people live in deprived communities with limited opportunities. The most recent census data also shows that 315 young people aged 16-24 identify as LGBTQI+, highlighting the diverse nature of the youth population. Stakeholders have expressed the importance of creating safe, inclusive spaces where all children and young people can feel supported and celebrated for who they are, further promoting equality and acceptance within the community.

Despite the efforts of the community relations equality and diversity policy (CRED), parts of Fermanagh and Omagh continue to experience division. Although there has been notable progress towards peace, the challenges mentioned underscore that much work is still needed to build a genuinely inclusive society where everyone feels equal, respected and supported. Regarding inclusivity, 40% of young people agree that everyone is included, and no one feels left out, while 32% believe all children and young people in their area respect others who are different. 49% feel that youth work programmes are accessible for everyone and 55% feel these programmes support young people from other backgrounds. Furthermore, 52% agree they get the chance to spend time with people who are different from them. These findings underscore the importance of creating inclusive and supportive environments for all young people, regardless of their background or abilities.

The feedback from young people indicates that 70% of young people strongly agree and agree that they respect others who are different. This highlights the need for cultural awareness programmes, including celebrations of various cultures and anti-discrimination events and awareness sessions in schools and youth programmes. Some local district electoral areas (DEAs) have reported an increase in issues around prejudice and discrimination, emphasising the importance of addressing these concerns. Language barriers can be a significant issue for newcomers, necessitating increased awareness and respect/understanding programmes across the district.

Young people have voiced the need for more accessibility with quotes like "everyone deserves to be treated equally" from Fermanagh and Omagh12 to 13-year-olds. However, there are significant issues

around prejudice and discrimination, including racism, sectarianism, homophobia, transphobia and sexism, particularly among 14 to 18-year-olds. The Youth Service is seen as a welcoming place that provides a safe environment for self-expression and promotes acceptance and tolerance through awareness-raising events. Nonetheless, there is room for improvement in services for non-native speaking young people, as language barriers may prevent them from accessing available resources.

Additional issues were highlighted with transport and accessibility, particularly in rural areas, with calls for better financial support for educational trips and accessing Youth Services with limited provision. The need for campaigns and workshops to combat discrimination and prejudice, including racism, sectarianism, homophobia and transphobia. Young people want their voices to be heard and to have a say in decisions that affect them.

Overall, the data suggests a positive perception of equality, inclusion, respect, accessibility and support within youth work programmes, with many respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with these statements. However, there are still notable percentages of respondents who feel these areas need improvement.

Summary Conclusion of Needs across Strategic Themes

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

- Lack of safe, inclusive spaces for support, connection with others.
- Poor emotional health and well-being fostered by anxiety, stress, depression and academic pressure.
- Bullying, body shaming and low self-esteem affecting confidence and healthy relationships.
- Lack of Physical activities / Outdoor education experiences.
- Healthy eating and education.
- Bounce-back-ability and resilience.
- Screentime, online activity and fear of missing out.

Access to Play and Leisure:

- Play, Leisure & Fun
- Physical activities to develop self.
- Safe accessible inclusive and educational spaces
- Secure environments in which to express themselves.

Learning and Achieving:

- Educational underachievement and school refusals.
- Staying engaged in formal education / further education.
- Accessible, inclusive educational experiences and pathways to employment.
- Early intervention, especially for vulnerable groups.
- Support to overcoming barriers and ensuring success.
- Careers advice and guidance support.
- Young people from farming backgrounds and the impact this has on their education and career opportunities.
- Opportunities to widen experiences for the future.
- New exciting challenges to improve skills and abilities.

Living in Safety and Stability:

- Lack of safe, inclusive spaces for support, advice and guidance.
- Violence against women and girls.
- Anti-social behaviour.
- Exposure to Domestic abuse.
- Exposure to substance misuse.
- Bullying and peer pressure (face to face and online).
- Online abuse and negative impact of social media.
- Impact of poverty on young people's access to basic needs and opportunities.
- Experiences of racism and discrimination amongst communities and minority ethnic young people.

- Exposure to unsafe driving behaviours and limited road safety awareness, especially in rural areas.

Economic and Environmental Stability:

- Environmental concerns.
- Socio-economic disadvantage affecting young people's well-being, aspirations and life chances.
- Economic hardship increases anxiety and mental health issues.
- Isolation and inequality caused by rural poverty, affecting inclusion, mobility and opportunity.
- Climate change.
- Low aspirations and limited belief in future opportunities / impact on farming backgrounds.

Making a Positive Contribution to Society:

- Being respected and valued by peers and adults.
- Secure environments to express and explore feelings and opinions.
- Political Engagement.

Respect for Your Rights

- Rights to be valued and respected.
- Knowledge and confidence to defend their rights (employment, education, their voice).
- Participate in decision making (locally and regionally).

The findings – Identification of priorities/DEA profiles

Erne West

Key facts

There is 4,759 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old in Erne West DEA.

Erne West DEA is predominantly rural, with a significant portion of its population living in rural areas.

2,003 falls within the key youth service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.

4.1% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 2.9% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 85.9% (NI average 76.1%).

46 newcomer pupils in Erne West DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.

Below are the top ranked priorities for young people highlighted within the DEA.

1. **Your Future**: This encompasses career aspirations, opportunities for personal growth and the support needed to achieve long-term goals.
2. **Play, Hobbies and Interests**: This includes recreational activities, sports and hobbies that young people enjoy.
3. **Safety**: This covers physical safety, emotional security and feeling safe in your community.
4. **Health and Wellbeing**: This involves their emotional health and wellbeing, physical health and overall wellbeing.
5. **Your Rights**: This includes understanding and advocating for their rights as a young person.
6. **Education**: This covers access to quality education, educational resources and support for learning.

Erne West Stakeholder input/feedback.

The data from Erne West DEA provides insight into the lives of children and young people in the area, highlighting issues related to health, well-being, safety, education and their future aspirations. There are 4,759 children and young people aged 0-25 in Erne West DEA, with 2,003 falling into the key youth service priority age groups of 9-13 years and 14-18 years. A key concern for children and young people in this area is their rural isolation that impacts on key areas such as their emotional health and well-being, safety and the lack of accessible support systems to help them manage these challenges. Stakeholders also agreed and supported that there is a need for services to assist young people with these ongoing issues.

Mental health issues such as anxiety, stress and body image were reported among young people. Young people also discussed the pressures of comparing themselves to others, particularly on social media, which can contribute to feelings of insecurity. Some young people believe that a bit of stress is good for personal development, while others express concern that stress can lead to negative mental health outcomes like self-harm. Stakeholders also agreed and supported the idea that stress around academic performance remains an issue that requires attention.

Staff, adults (parents, key stakeholders and key partners) were also consulted on the needs of young people across Erne West. 88% of young people feel cheerful and in good spirits, are calm and relaxed, feel active and vigorous, wake up feeling fresh and rested and spend their time doing things that interest them. 76% of young people feel that there are plenty of opportunities for them to do physical activities in their area. 75% of young people feel that they can get help with their emotional needs if they need it with 63% of young people stating they could get help if required.

Mental health issues are exacerbated by rural isolation. Young people in Erne West experience higher rates of anxiety, depression and behaviour problems compared to their urban counterparts. The shortage of mental health professionals in rural areas means that many young people have limited access to necessary support and services. This lack of access can lead to untreated mental health conditions and increased rates of suicide.

A significant issue identified by young people is vaping, with mixed opinions on whether it is a problem. Some young people view it as a coping mechanism for mental health or a way to fit in with peer groups, while others see it as harmful and linked to deeper personal issues. Stakeholders also agreed that vaping remains a growing concern among young people, with rising rates of use and increasing evidence linking it to potential health risks. Many expressed concerns over the accessibility of vaping products, the influence of social media marketing and the widespread normalisation of vaping culture, which often glamorises it as a harmless or trendy activity. Young people also noted that having a voice coming from a rural area is extremely important.

50% young people surveyed believed that they had opportunities to make a difference in school or in the community. 69% believed that they had opportunities to tell people what they thought but only half felt that what they had to say was taken seriously however many young people felt that young people could change things for the better. 45% of the young people surveyed believed that they were not listened to, were valued or respected. 75% of those surveyed felt that they knew what their rights were. 69% however felt that when attending youth work programmes, they had their rights respected and felt confident enough to fight for their rights if they had to.

Safety is another key area of concern for children and young people in Erne West DEA. Many young people (70%) in Erne West feel safe in their own area, with 65% feeling safe in their local area and 22% strongly agreeing. However, there are still some who feel less secure, with 9% disagreeing and 2% strongly disagreeing. Concerns about the negative impact of social media are significant, with 41% of young people feeling it affects them negatively, while 17% agree and 17% disagree.

Crime is another area of concern, with 41% of young people worried about it, 26% agreeing and 15% disagreeing. The safety of women and girls is a particularly pressing issue, with 46% expressing worry, 28% agreeing and 22% strongly agreeing. Additionally, 37% of young people feel pressure to engage in dangerous activities, with 22% agreeing and 22% disagreeing.

Overall, while many young people in Erne West feel safe locally, there are significant concerns about social media, crime and the safety of women and girls. Addressing these issues through targeted interventions and support systems is crucial for enhancing the overall well-being and safety of young people in the community.

When it comes to their future, many young people express uncertainty. Economic hardship and rising living costs are sources of anxiety. While 4.1% of young people aged 20-24 are not in employment and do not have qualifications (slightly below the NI average of 4.9%), group discussions revealed that young people worry about money, the ability to afford education and the potential challenges of living independently. Some participants are hopeful about their future careers, particularly those who are already working or involved in personal and social development activities. However, others feel trapped by financial limitations, a lack of self-confidence and others feel rurality and lack of opportunities hinders their aspirations and careers.

Young people also talked about the need to get qualifications because it helps them get better jobs and can even lower the number of people without jobs, especially those from very rural areas. Rurality in Erne West significantly impacts career opportunities for young people. Limited access to diverse job markets and career pathways often means fewer employment options. Many young people face challenges in finding local jobs that match their skills and aspirations.

Isolation is a significant issue for young people in Erne West. The geographic spread and limited public transportation options make it difficult for them to connect with peers and participate in social activities. This isolation can lead to feelings of loneliness and social exclusion, impacting their overall well-being. Additionally, the expectation for young people to take on family responsibilities, such as caring for siblings or working on family farms, further limits their social interactions.

Access to essential services is a major challenge in rural areas like Erne West. Young people often struggle to access healthcare, educational resources and recreational facilities. The infrequent and expensive public transportation exacerbates these issues, making it difficult for them to attend school, seek support or participate in extracurricular activities. This lack of access can hinder their personal development and limit their opportunities for growth and success.

Young people in Erne West also show significant concern for global issues like climate change, which they view as a threat to their future. Many expressed feelings of fear and uncertainty about the long-term impacts of environmental damage, emphasising how climate change could affect their livelihoods, health and the overall quality of life. Discussions around climate anxiety reveal worries

about the environment, wildlife in nearby woodlands and local forests and the impact of human actions on the planet and locally.

Overall, the data from Erne West DEA highlights the multifaceted challenges faced by young people in the area. Addressing mental health issues, substance misuse, rural safety concerns and economic hardships, while also providing educational support and addressing environmental anxieties, is crucial for fostering a supportive and thriving environment for the youth in Erne West.

Erne West Summary

- Rural isolation and limited access to services.
- Lack of accessible and relevant pathways into employment, training further education.
- Poor mental health and emotional wellbeing, influenced by stress, isolation and lack of support.
- Limited access to inclusive, safe and welcoming spaces for connection, support and recreation due to rurality and limited provision in the area.
- Inequality in access to opportunities, driven by poverty, social exclusion and rurality.

Erne North

Key facts

There is 4,781 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old in Erne North DEA.

2,022 falls within the key youth service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.

4.6% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 2.9% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 77.7% (NI average 76.1%).

29 newcomer pupils in Erne North DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.

There were 5 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is a 25% increase from the previous year of 4 racial motivated incidents.

Below are the top ranked priorities for young people highlighted within the DEA.

1. **Your Future**: This encompasses career aspirations, opportunities for personal growth and the support needed to achieve long-term goals.
2. **Play, Hobbies and Interests**: This includes recreational activities, sports and hobbies that young people enjoy.
3. **Safety**: This covers physical safety, emotional security and feeling safe in your community.
4. **Health and Wellbeing**: This involves their emotional health and wellbeing, physical health and overall wellbeing.
5. **Your Rights**: This includes understanding and advocating for their rights as a young person.
6. **Education**: This covers access to quality education, educational resources and support for learning.

Erne North Stakeholder input/feedback

Young people in Erne North report significant mental health issues such as anxiety, stress and body image concerns. Social media heightens these issues by fostering comparisons to celebrities that creates unrealistic expectations and insecurity. While 88% of young people feel cheerful and in good spirits, rural isolation contributes to higher rates of anxiety and depression due to limited access to mental health services. Stakeholders agree that stress around academic performance remains an issue that requires attention. The responses indicate that many young people feel active and vigorous most of the time, with 16 out of 47 respondents feeling this way. Many also feel calm and relaxed more than half the time, though a smaller number wake up feeling fresh and rested regularly. Daily life is filled with interesting activities for most, with 22 respondents feeling this way most of the time. In terms of access to provision and support, 51% agree there are plenty of opportunities for physical activities and 57% feel they can get help for their emotional health needs if required. However, there are still notable portions who feel these areas could be improved.

Safety is a major issue, with 70% of young people feeling safe in their own area, but concerns about crime, social media and the safety of women and girls persist. 41% of young people worry about crime and 70% are concerned about the safety of women and girls. Additionally, 38% feel pressure to engage in dangerous activities, with 38% agreeing and 13% disagreeing. Overall, while many feel safe locally, there are still concerns about social media, crime and safety, particularly for women and girls.

Economic hardship and rising living costs cause anxiety among young people. While 4.6% of young people aged 20-24 are not in employment and do not have qualifications, rurality limits career opportunities and access to higher education. This isolation impacts their ability to connect with peers and participate in social activities. Regarding financial support, 49% agree their family can pay for the things they want to do, with 30% strongly agreeing. However, 57% believe poverty is affecting more children and young people, with 26% strongly agreeing. Young people also talked about the need to get qualifications because it helps them get better jobs and can lower the number of people without jobs, especially those from very rural areas. Many respondents, 51%, agree that they learn a lot through their youth work programmes and get some qualifications that can help them with their careers and education journey. The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 77.7% (NI average 76.1%), slightly above the NI average. This positive outcome indicates that students in Erne West are performing well academically, surpassing the NI average.

Access to essential services is a major challenge in rural areas like Erne North. Young people often struggle to access public services, educational resources and recreational facilities due to infrequent and expensive public transportation. Almost half of the young people in Erne North, 43%, agree that there are plenty of fun things to do in their area, while 26% agree. This lack of access hinders their personal development and limits opportunities for growth and success. Key stakeholder stated that by developing and maintaining youth facilities can promote physical activity and social engagement between young people. This includes creating safe spaces and fun and educational programmes for young people. Addressing these needs can help foster personal development and create more opportunities for growth and success for young people in rural areas.

Young people across the area also show concern for global issues like climate change, which they view as a threat to their future. Many expressed feelings of fear and uncertainty about the long-term impacts

of environmental damage, emphasising how climate change could affect their livelihoods and quality of life. 36% feel enough is being done to prevent climate change, while 28% agree and 17% disagree with this.

Erne North Summary

- Emotional health and well-being challenges caused by anxiety, exam stress and the pressures of academic and life challenges.
- Bullying, body shaming and low self-esteem affecting confidence and healthy relationships.
- Limited access to education, training and career opportunities due to rural isolation.
- Lack of safe, inclusive spaces for support and connection.
- Online bullying and negative images.
- Limited public transport restricting participation in activities and services.
- Violence against young women and girls.
- Road safety concerns and exposure to unsafe driving practices in rural communities.
- Social isolation and reduced opportunities for recreation and peer connection in rural communities.

Enniskillen

Key facts

There is 5,449 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old in Enniskillen DEA.

2,239 falls within the key youth service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.

5.3% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 0% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 76.4% (NI average 76.1%).

436 newcomer pupils in Enniskillen DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.

There were 10 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is a 11% increase from the previous year of 9 racial motivated incidents.

Below are the top ranked priorities for young people highlighted within the DEA.

1. **Your Future**: This encompasses career aspirations, opportunities for personal growth and the support needed to achieve long-term goals.
2. **Health and Wellbeing**: This involves their emotional health and wellbeing, physical health and overall wellbeing.
3. **Play, Hobbies and Interests**: This includes recreational activities, sports and hobbies that young people enjoy.
4. **Education**: This covers access to quality education, educational resources and support for learning.
5. **Safety**: This covers physical safety, emotional security and feeling safe in your community.
6. **Your Rights**: This includes understanding and advocating for their rights as a young person.

Enniskillen Stakeholder input/feedback

The data from Enniskillen DEA highlights several significant challenges faced by children and young people in the area, particularly in terms of education, employment, health, safety and well-being. There are 5,449 children and young people aged 0-25 years old in Enniskillen DEA, with 2,239 falling within the key youth service priority age bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years. However, 5.3% of young people aged 20-24 are not in employment and do not have a qualification, above the Northern Ireland (NI) average of 4.9%. Approximately 19% of primary and post-primary pupils in Enniskillen DEA have a Special Education Need (SEN 1-3), which aligns with the Northern Ireland average. This can impact their academic performance, social integration, emotional well-being and future employment prospects. Stakeholders expressed that these statistics reflect the growing educational and employment challenges faced by young people in the Enniskillen DEA.

The area is home to 436 newcomer pupils in primary and post-primary schools for 2023/24. There were 10 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is a 11% increase from the previous year of 9 racial motivated incidents and remains a concerning issue. Rurality in Enniskillen DEA includes the town of Enniskillen and its surrounding rural areas. This is a mix of urban and rural settings that presents unique challenges and opportunities for children and young people accessing Youth Services educational and social settings. The rural parts of Enniskillen DEA are characterised by lower population density, agricultural activities and limited access to certain services compared to Enniskillen Town.

Enniskillen DEA recorded 52 youth justice referrals in 2023/24, which is significantly higher than the Northern Ireland average of 17. This indicates elevated levels of youth crime and anti-social behaviour in the area, indicating elevated levels of youth crime and anti-social behaviour in the area. Stakeholders highlighted that these figures underscore the need for more effective community-based early interventions to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in criminal activity and to provide alternative pathways for young people.

In Enniskillen DEA, school suspensions have been a significant concern. In the 2023/24 Academic Year, there were 147 school suspensions in Enniskillen DEA, which is more than double the Northern Ireland average of 65. This indicates substantial challenges within schools and the wider community in addressing behavioural issues and supporting young people in their education. Data for the 2024/25 academic year is still being compiled, but early reports suggest a continuing trend of high suspension rates Another issue raised by stakeholders is the high number of school suspensions.

Enniskillen DEA recorded 493 incidents with a domestic abuse motivation in 2023/24, which is notably higher than the Northern Ireland average of 260. Stakeholders have emphasised that children and young people in homes affected by domestic violence are particularly vulnerable. They require access to safe spaces and specialised support to mitigate the impact on their emotional and physical well-being.

Furthermore, young people living in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs), which are areas of severe multiple deprivation, tend to have lower educational outcomes compared to their peers. Enniskillen DEA contains one NRA (Enniskillen Town that includes 9 areas) where these challenges are particularly prevalent. Stakeholders confirmed that this demographic requires support to address the issues of poverty and educational underachievement.

In terms of health and well-being, young people identified several factors impacting their physical and emotional health, including drugs, drinking, smoking, poor diet and the lack of free sports activities. Bullying, social media and school-related pressures were also highlighted as significant influences on their emotional health. Many young people said they tend to seek support from youth leaders, youth clubs and wellbeing teams in schools, often avoiding discussing their concerns with family members.

Safety remains a considerable concern, with young people highlighting risks such as violence, drugs and alcohol and peer pressure. It was expressed that these issues also have a broader impact, affecting siblings and family members who may experience additional stress or fear for the safety of their relatives. Stakeholders agreed with these concerns and reported that measures are needed to address these safety issues. Young people highlighted the importance of having a strong sense of safety, security and trust in their surroundings to thrive. They stressed the need to feel safe at home, in school and within their communities, as well as the value of building trusting relationships with adults, peers and support systems.

When discussing their future, some young people felt hopeful, while others expressed concerns about not getting qualifications or finding employment. Stakeholders reported that poverty is a key factor affecting young people's aspirations, with many stating that it can drive motivation but also lead to feelings of inequality, especially when comparing possessions with peers. Additionally, young people also highlighted that exam stress, lack of local opportunities and the widespread presence of drugs and alcohol are barriers that may prevent them from reaching their full potential.

There continues to be signs of prejudice and discrimination in Enniskillen DEA, particularly in how young people are treated based on their age, appearance and background. Some young people shared that adults do not take them seriously. Stakeholders also stated that efforts are needed in promoting respect and better relationships between communities and they supported the implementation of more inclusive community initiatives.

Finally, the cost of living is becoming an increasing concern, with young people reflecting on how it impacts their everyday lives and future opportunities. Many voiced worries about rising costs, particularly for education and essential needs, which creates additional stress as they strive for independence. This financial strain is often linked to growing concerns about crime rates in their communities, as some believe economic hardship can lead to higher levels of criminal behaviour. Additionally, young people also expressed concerns about how the increasing cost of living and the effects of climate change may make their futures more difficult.

Overall, the data suggests that while many young people feel there are fun activities and safe spaces available, there are still notable portions who feel these areas could be improved.

Enniskillen Summary

- Low educational attainment and limited support for learning, especially among those facing disadvantage.
- Lack of clear, career guidance, accessible pathways into employment, training, and volunteer development that includes CV and interview skills support.
- Poor Emotional health and wellbeing, impacted by online bullying, exam stress and limited support networks.
- Experiences of racism, prejudice and exclusion among minority ethnic and newcomer young people.
- Exposure to domestic abuse, violence and unsafe environments at home and in the community.
- Poverty and financial hardship restricting access to essentials, opportunities and long-term aspirations.
- Limited availability of safe, inclusive spaces where young people feel heard, supported and connected.
- Ongoing peer pressure and substance misuse with few positive alternatives or protective influences.
- Rurality and access to services.

West Tyrone

Key facts

There is 5,626 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old in West Tyrone DEA.

2,341 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.

2.8% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).

788 pupils in West Tyrone DEA have a special education need. This includes 256 pupils (5.6%) with a SEN Statement Stage 3 and 532 pupils (11.6%) SEN Stage 1-2.

West Tyrone DEA recorded a total of 1,042 incidents of anti-social behaviour in 2023/24.

West Tyrone DEA reported 211 incidents with a domestic abuse motivation in 2023/24.

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 84.7% (NI average 76.1%).

38 newcomer pupils in West Tyrone DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.

Below are the top ranked priorities for young people highlighted within the DEA.

1. **Play, Hobbies and Interests**: This includes recreational activities, sports and hobbies that young people enjoy.
2. **Your Future**: This encompasses career aspirations, opportunities for personal growth and the support needed to achieve long-term goals.
3. **Safety**: This covers physical safety, emotional security and feeling safe in your community
4. **Health and Wellbeing**: This involves their emotional health and wellbeing, physical health and overall wellbeing.
5. **Equality:** Ensuring equality in Youth Services is crucial for fostering an inclusive environment where all young people can thrive. Here are some key aspects and recommendations for promoting equality:
   - ***Inclusiveness***: Ensuring all young people, regardless of background, have access to Youth Services.
   - ***Diversity***: Celebrating and respecting the diverse backgrounds and cultures of young people.
   - ***Rights***: Upholding the rights of young people and ensuring their voices are heard and valued.
6. **Education**: This covers access to quality education, educational resources and support for learning.
7. **Your Rights**: This includes understanding and advocating for their rights as a young person.

West Tyrone Stakeholder input/feedback

Young people living in rural areas like West Tyrone DEA face several challenges. Limited access to education and career opportunities often requires long distances, while the lack of public transportation forces reliance on personal vehicles. Social isolation is common due to fewer recreational spaces and activities, which can contribute to mental health challenges.

Children and young people continue to report experiencing bullying, with body shaming and concerns related to self-esteem being significant issues. Many express feelings pressured by societal expectations of appearance and the constant comparisons seen on social media, which can affect their mental health also. These issues not only contribute to feelings of isolation and anxiety but also impact their sense of self-worth, leading to a lack of confidence and difficulties in forming healthy relationships. Emotional health and well-being responses varied, with some young people feeling active and vigorous most of the time, while others felt calm and relaxed less than half the time. Access to provision and support was mixed, with 67% agreeing there were plenty of opportunities for physical activities, but only 52% felt they could get help for their emotional health needs. There is a strong demand for more programmes both during the day and at night and free access to accreditation to help manage external pressures such as exam stress and career support.

Substance misuse, particularly vaping, smoking and drug use, is rising among young people. They reported peer pressure to engage in these behaviours and concerns about the availability of drugs on the streets and the associated risks.

Family issues, including domestic abuse, affect many young people. In 2023-2024, there were 211 incidents with a domestic abuse motivation across the area, below the Northern Ireland average of 260. These experiences often contribute to mental health challenges.

Children and young people in West Tyrone DEA also expressed concern about dangerous and careless driving, particularly on rural roads. They highlighted the need for more education on safe driving practices for new young drivers, especially regarding responsible driving and substance misuse. This concern is even more visible in rural areas, where they feel that the risks of unsafe driving are due to fewer traffic regulations and the isolation of rural roads. Safety concerns, social media impact and worries about crime and the safety of women and girls were also prevalent among the youth. The rurality and access to local provision were also highlighted as barriers.

Sexual health, drug and alcohol misuse and vaping were significant concerns. The feedback emphasised the need for independent living programmes. Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) was identified as a major priority, especially in rural areas. Stakeholders suggested timely projects that consider rurality to enhance safety for young people at night or when walking alone.

Academic performance and the fear of not reaching full potential were other key issues. Young people requested support to enhance their careers and prospects and to understand other life challenges they might not be aware of at this stage of their lives. Social action projects were proposed to engage young people and allow them to contribute through youth voice initiatives and contribute to their own community. Notably, 48% of young people felt listened to, valued and respected, while 41% knew their rights and 74% felt their rights were respected in youth work programs.

Prejudice and discrimination were significant issues in the area, with language barriers affecting newcomers and occasional clashes of cultures. There were 8 incidents with a racist motivation in

2023/24, a 167% increase from the previous year of 3 racially motivated incidents. Additionally, with a high population of Irish Traveller families and over 300 newcomer pupils in West Tyrone DEA primary and post-primary schools in 2023/24, there is a clear need for more support around inclusion and prejudices toward others, with a better focus on acceptance and celebration of cultures.

In West Tyrone DEA, 788 pupils have a Special Education Need. This represents 256 pupils (5.6%) with a SEN Statement Stage 3 and 532 pupils (11.6%) SEN Stage 1-2. Respect and understanding programs were deemed necessary to address these challenges. Additionally, 37% felt confident fighting for their rights if necessary, highlighting the need for empowerment and support in advocacy.

Almost 75% of the young people surveyed in West Tyrone believed that they had opportunities to make a difference in school or in the community, as well as having opportunities to tell people what they thought. Three-quarters felt that what they had to say was taken seriously and a strong majority of young people felt that they could change things for the better in West Tyrone. The responses indicate that 74% of young people agree they are listened to, valued and respected. However, 16% disagree.

West Tyrone Summary

- Limited access to safe, welcoming public spaces for socialising and recreation due to rural isolation.
- Lack of inclusive, affordable leisure opportunities that support wellbeing and reduce stress and anxiety.
- Social exclusion linked to poverty, affecting participation in school and community life.
- Fears of personal safety amongst young girls.
- Sexual health, vaping and drugs / alcohol misuse.
- Good Relations.
- Road safety in rural areas.
- Bullying and peer pressure influenced by appearance, status and social media comparison.
- Uncertainty about the future, with some young people lacking confidence in reaching their potential.
- Concerns about feeling safe in public spaces.
- Poor Emotional health and well-being due to social isolation, lack of connection, substance misuse and negative online images and information.

Omagh

Key facts

There is 5,552 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old in Omagh DEA.

2,225 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.

6.8% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (above the NI average 4.9%).

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 0% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 73.1% (NI average 76.1%).

356 newcomer pupils in Omagh DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.

There were 12 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is a 14.3% decrease from the previous year of 14 racial motivated incidents.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents in 2023/24 within the DEA were 729, above the NI average of 708.

1.9% of 0-24 population in Omagh DEA lives within a one-person household compared the NI Average of 0.9%.

28.5.% of 0-24 living in lone parent families which is above the NI Average of 25.7%.

Omagh is the highest-ranking DEA across Fermanagh and Omagh with the percentage of household deprivation in the educational dimension of 28.5% - NI Average of 23.9%.

Omagh is the highest-ranking DEA across Fermanagh and Omagh with the percentage of household deprivation in the employment dimension of 19.5% - NI Average of 16.5%.

Omagh is the highest-ranking DEA across Fermanagh and Omagh with the percentage of household deprivation in the health dimension of 49.1% - NI Average of 45.0%.

Omagh DEA is below the NI Average of 8.4% of school leavers into training (NI Average 12.3%).

Omagh DEA, for ages 16-24 (1884) is the only DEA across Fermanagh and Omagh that is above the NI Average (13.9%) for NO qualifications at a rate of 16.7%.

Pupils suspended Omagh DEA is the highest across Fermanagh and Omagh in 22/23 of 113 pupils (Above the NI Average of 65).

Emotional, psychological or mental health condition for 0-15 years and 16-24 years olds – Omagh is the highest DEA across Fermanagh and Omagh (rate per 000 of population) of 0-15 (13.7) and 16-24 (123.2) (compared to NI Average of 0-15 (13.9) and 16-24 (84.2).

Below are the top ranked priorities for young people highlighted within the DEA:

1. **Your Future**: This encompasses career aspirations, opportunities for personal growth and the support needed to achieve long-term goals.

2. **Equality:** Ensuring equality in Youth Services is crucial for fostering an inclusive environment where all young people can thrive. Here are some key aspects and recommendations for promoting equality:
    - ***Inclusiveness***: Ensuring all young people, regardless of background, have access to Youth Services.
    - ***Diversity***: Celebrating and respecting the diverse backgrounds and cultures of young people.
    - ***Rights***: Upholding the rights of young people and ensuring their voices are heard and valued.
3. **Play, Hobbies and Interests**: This includes recreational activities, sports and hobbies that young people enjoy.
4. **Safety**: This covers physical safety, emotional security and feeling safe in your community**.**
5. **Education**: This covers access to quality education, educational resources and support for learning**.**
6. **Health and Wellbeing**: This involves their emotional health and wellbeing, physical health and overall wellbeing.
7. **Your Rights**: This includes understanding and advocating for their rights as a young person.

Omagh Stakeholder input/feedback

Omagh DEA is home to 5,552 children and young people aged 0-25 years, with 2,225 falling within the key Youth Service priority age bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years. Among young people aged 20-24, 6.8% are not in employment and do not have a qualification, which is higher than the Northern Ireland average of 4.9%. However, the percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or whose status is unknown in 2022/23 is 0%, compared to the NI average of 4.7%. Additionally, 73.1% of school leavers achieved at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and maths, slightly below the NI average of 76.1%.

In the 2023/24 academic year, there are 356 newcomer pupils in Omagh DEA primary and post-primary schools. The area recorded 12 incidents with a racist motivation, a 14.3% decrease from the previous year. Notably, 1.9% of the 0-24 population lives within a one-person household, above the NI average of 0.9%and 28.5% live in lone parent families, again above the NI average of 25.7%.

Omagh DEA ranks highest across Fermanagh and Omagh in household deprivation in several dimensions: 28.5% in education (NI average 23.9%), 19.5% in employment (NI average 16.5%) and 49.1% in health (NI average 45.0%). The area is below the NI average for school leavers entering training, with 8.4% compared to the NI average of 12.3%. For ages 16-24, Omagh DEA has the highest rate of no qualifications at 16.7%, above the NI average of 13.9%.

In the 2022/23 academic year, Omagh DEA had the highest number of pupil suspensions across Fermanagh and Omagh, with 113 pupils suspended, compared to the NI average of 65. The area also has the highest rates of emotional, psychological or mental health conditions for 0–15-year-olds (13.7 per 1,000) and 16–24-year-olds (123.2 per 1,000), compared to the NI averages of 13.9 and above the NI Average of 84.2, respectively.

Emotional health and well-being are rising concerns for young people in Omagh DEA, with various issues contributing to increased stress and anxiety. Bullying, whether in-person or online, remains a significant challenge, often leading to feelings of isolation, low self-esteem and depression. Peer pressure also plays a critical role, as many young people feel compelled to conform to social expectations or engage in risky behaviours to fit in. A notable 63% feel that poverty is affecting more children and young people and 69% believe that young people can change things for the better. However, only 49% feel they have a safe space to hang out with friends.

Emotional health responses show varied levels of well-being, with 6% feeling active and vigorous all the time, while 19% feel this way most of the time. Similarly, 6% feel calm and relaxed all the time, but 13% feel this way more than half the time. They noted that this pressure is often increased by the influence of social media, where the constant comparison to others can create unrealistic expectations and intensify mental health issues. Additionally, the use of substances such as vaping, drugs and alcohol has become a coping mechanism for some, further impacting their emotional well-being. These factors combined create many new and existing challenges that can have short, medium and long-term effects on young people's mental health, potentially leading to issues such as anxiety, depression and substance misuse.

Additionally, it was reported that prejudice and discrimination are prevalent in Omagh DEA, particularly affecting newcomer populations. With 356 newcomer pupils in Omagh DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24, language barriers and cultural clashes are common, with Omagh ranking in the top

areas across Northern Ireland for newcomer children and young people. Young people have shared that language barriers often make them feel isolated and frustrated. They struggle to keep up with their peers in school and social settings, which can make them feel disconnected and left out. This sense of disconnection means they cannot fully join in on discussions or extracurricular activities. It affects their self-esteem and confidence, which can hurt their long-term educational progress and social integration. Young people have expressed the need for more support to feel included and engaged in their communities, so they do not get left behind because of language barriers.

The 24.3% rise in racially motivated incidents in 2023 highlights growing concerns about racial tensions and discrimination in the Omagh DEA. Young people, especially those from minority ethnic backgrounds, have voiced their need for greater inclusivity and safety. They shared that experiencing discrimination and racism creates a hostile and unwelcoming environment for them, affecting their sense of belonging and personal security. Feeling unsafe in their own communities can lead to social isolation, lower self-esteem and reduced participation in community life. These incidents put up barriers to their ability to thrive, impacting their emotional well-being, confidence and self-esteem.

Despite these needs, only 46% feel safe in their local area and 40% are worried about crime. Furthermore, 35% are concerned about the safety of women and girls, with Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) one of the top priorities across the Omagh DEA. Emotional health responses show varied levels of well-being, with 58% feeling barriers that hold them back from succeeding and 48% feeling supported through substantial changes like moving schools.

Safety and well-being are also concerns for young people in Omagh DEA. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents in 2023/24 within the DEA were 729, above the NI average of 708. This highlights the vulnerability of many young people to crime and anti-social behaviour, which can have severe and lasting effects on their mental health, stability and sense of security.

Domestic violence incidents (2023/24) recorded in Omagh DEA contributed to 311 in total, above the NI average of 260. This again can have devastating long-term effects on young people subjected to domestic violence. For those living in homes where violence or abuse is present, the impact can extend beyond just the immediate dangers, affecting their ability to trust others, form healthy relationships and cope with stress. The trauma of witnessing or experiencing domestic abuse can interfere with their emotional well-being and academic performance, leaving them at greater risk of developing long-term issues.

Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs) are neighbourhoods identified as experiencing the most severe multiple deprivation and received support under the Department for Communities People and Place Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. In total, 36 neighbourhoods have been identified to receive support. There is one NRA in the DEA area of Omagh.

Omagh Summary

- Low educational attainment and barriers to academic success among school-aged young people.
- Lack of accessible and relevant pathways into employment, training and further education including Careers, advice and guidance.
- Unwelcomed online bullying and abuse and impact on their emotional health and well-being.
- Poor Emotional health and wellbeing, influenced by stress, rural isolation and limited support from adults and peers.
- Poor physical health due to lack of exercise, unbalanced diet and lack of education on healthy eating.
- High rates of school suspensions and behavioural challenges linked to unmet social and emotional needs.
- Experiences of racism, discrimination and exclusion among newcomer and minority ethnic young people.
- Exposure to domestic abuse and unsafe home environments impacting wellbeing and stability.
- Limited access to inclusive, safe and welcoming spaces for connection, support and recreation.
- Safety concerns in public spaces due substance misuse and antisocial behaviour.
- Lack of awareness of rights and entitlements, particularly among young people with additional needs.
- Inequality in access to opportunities, driven by poverty, one parent families, rurality, social exclusion and community division.

Mid Tyrone

Key facts

There is 6,366 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old in Mid Tyrone DEA.

2,655 falls within the key youth service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.

2.1% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 0% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 83.1% (NI average 76.1%).

61 newcomer pupils in Mid Tyrone DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.

There was 1 incident with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is a 75% decrease from the previous year of 4 racial motivated incidents.

Below are the top ranked priorities for young people highlighted within the DEA:

1. **Your Future**: This encompasses career aspirations, opportunities for personal growth and the support needed to achieve long-term goals.
2. **Health and Wellbeing**: This involves their emotional health and wellbeing, physical health and overall wellbeing.
3. **Play, Hobbies and Interests**: This includes recreational activities, sports and hobbies that young people enjoy.
4. **Education**: This covers access to quality education, educational resources and support for learning.
5. **Your Rights**: This includes understanding and advocating for their rights as a young person.
6. **Equality:** Ensuring equality in Youth Services is crucial for fostering an inclusive environment where all young people can thrive. Here are some key aspects and recommendations for promoting equality:
    - ***Inclusiveness***: Ensuring all young people, regardless of background, have access to Youth Services.
    - ***Diversity***: Celebrating and respecting the diverse backgrounds and cultures of young people.
    - ***Rights***: Upholding the rights of young people and ensuring their voices are heard and valued.
7. **Safety**: This covers physical safety, emotional security and feeling safe in your community**.**

Mid Tyrone Stakeholder input/feedback

The data from Mid Tyrone DEA, home to 6,366 children and young people aged 0-25, highlights both unique challenges and opportunities in supporting its youth population. Of these, 2,655 fall within the key Youth Service priority age bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years. Statistically, Mid Tyrone DEA presents a more positive outlook compared to the wider Northern Ireland (NI) region, particularly in terms of employment and qualifications. Only 2.1% of young people aged 20-24 are neither employed nor qualified, significantly lower than the NI average of 4.9%. Moreover, the percentage of school leavers in Mid Tyrone who are unemployed or whose status is unknown stands at 0%, in stark contrast to the NI average of 4.7%. These figures indicate that Mid Tyrone's educational and employment landscape is stable compared to other DEAs across Fermanagh and Omagh, a point stakeholders have identified as an encouraging sign for the area.

Young people in Mid Tyrone DEA face emotional health and well-being challenges. Rates of anxiety and depression among young people in Northern Ireland, including Mid Tyrone, are around 25% higher compared to other UK nations. This highlights the need for targeted mental health support and early intervention programmes, especially those in rural areas. Bullying and Peer Pressure remains a significant issue, leading to feelings of isolation, low self-esteem and depression in the area. Peer pressure also plays a critical role, as many young people noted that they feel compelled to conform to social expectations or engage in risky behaviours to fit in. The use of substances such as vaping, drugs and alcohol has become a coping mechanism for some young people, further impacting their emotional well-being. This underscores the need for comprehensive substance misuse education and support programmes. And finally, the influence of social media can create unrealistic expectations and intensify mental health issues due to constant comparisons with others. Young people stated that this pressure can increase feelings of anxiety and depression.

Educational achievements in Mid Tyrone also align closely with the NI averages. In 2022/23, 83.1% of school leavers in Mid Tyrone DEA achieved at least five GCSEs, including English and Math, which is above the NI average of 76.1% 2. This suggests that educational attainment in the area is strong, and young people are achieving the qualifications needed to move forward in life. Stakeholders agreed, however, that there is still room for improvement, particularly for those who may not have access to support outside the home or school environment.

The area is also home to a relatively small number of newcomer pupils, with 61 enrolled in primary and post-primary schools during the 2023/24 school year. This contributes to the area's cultural diversity but also presents challenges for integration and language support. Despite this, 1.7% of young people aged 4-24 speak a language other than English, which is below the NI average of 4.1%. Furthermore, Mid Tyrone reported only one incident with a racist motivation in the 2023/24 year. This is a 75% decrease from the previous year, reflecting a more inclusive atmosphere among children and young people in the area.

Youth Justice referrals in Mid Tyrone are notably lower than the NI average. There were 14 referrals in 2022/23, below the NI average of 17, reflecting a low incidence of youth crime in the area. Stakeholders also reported that this could be attributed to the community's relatively dedicated support networks and preventive measures, which have contributed to a decrease in antisocial behaviour. Similarly, the number of suspensions in local schools in 2022/23 stood at just 30, far fewer than the NI average of 65.

This is an encouraging statistic, with stakeholders agreeing that the positive environments in Mid Tyrone may be linked to strong community support.

When it comes to domestic abuse, Mid Tyrone DEA is below the NI average in recorded incidents with a domestic abuse motivation. In 2023/24, there were 152 such incidents, compared to the NI average of 260 This lower number of domestic abuses may suggest a safer environment for children and young people in Mid Tyrone. However, stakeholders pointed out that this figure should be understood in the context of potential underreporting or cultural factors that may influence the recognition and reporting of such issues. Some stakeholders also noted the importance of ensuring that young people have the necessary support and education to identify and deal with domestic abuse issues when they arise.

The consensus among young people was that engaging in play and leisure activities not only brought them happiness and excitement but also served as an important stress reliever. Stakeholders expressed that these activities are essential for both physical and mental health, offering a much-needed break from the pressures of daily life. Children and young people expressed the need for recreational activities and spaces where they feel safe and valued, a point strongly supported by the young people themselves during focus group sessions. On the theme of safety, young people reported that while they had safe spaces to socialise, including at youth clubs, schools and churches, public spaces such as parks were not always perceived as safe, particularly for socialising at night.

Looking ahead, children and young people in Mid Tyrone DEA shared a mixed outlook on their future. While many expressed hopefulness and an understanding that their futures could change in positive ways, participants also mentioned feeling apprehensive about what lies ahead. Despite some uncertainties, young people feel confident in their ability to live independently in the future, though they acknowledged that achieving their full potential might be complicated by challenges like bullying, social media pressures and issues at home.

The issue of poverty also emerged as a concern. Young people in Mid Tyrone noted how poverty could impact the lives of their peers, leaving some excluded from social activities due to a lack of access to branded clothes or the ability to go on educational visits. This social exclusion can contribute to bullying, further underlining the need for support to address the broader socio-economic factors that influence young people's experiences The emotional health and well-being responses indicate that most young people feel active and vigorous, with 36% feeling this way more than half the time and 21% most of the time. Calmness and relaxation are common, with 43% feeling this way more than half the time and 25% most of the time. However, fewer wake up feeling fresh and rested regularly, with only 25% feeling this way less than half the time. Daily life is filled with interesting activities for most respondents, with 32% feeling this way more than half the time. Regarding access to provision and support, 50% agree there are plenty of opportunities for physical activities and 54% agree they can get help for their emotional health needs if required.

Mid Tyrone Summary

- Mental health challenges and emotional distress, fuelled by anxiety, depression and rural isolation.
- Online bullying, body shaming and low self-esteem affecting confidence and healthy relationships.
- Limited access career opportunities / guidance and support.
- Lack of safe, inclusive spaces for support and connection with others.
- Limited public transport restricting participation in activities and services.
- Rising substance misuse, including vaping, smoking and drug use.
- Lack of accessible, youth-friendly sexual and physical health education and support.
- Impact of domestic abuse on young people's stability and wellbeing.
- Road safety concerns and exposure to unsafe driving practices in rural communities.
- Social isolation and reduced opportunities for recreation and peer connection in rural communities and young people from newcomer communities.

Erne East

Key facts

There is 5,251 children and young people aged 0 -25 years old in Erne East DEA.

2,212 falls within the key Youth Service priority aged bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years.

4.1% of young people 20-24 years old are not in employment and do not have a qualification (NI average 4.9%).

The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or are unknown in 2022/23 is 0% compared to the NI average of 4.7%.

The percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including GCSE English and maths in 2022/23 is 86.7% (NI average 76.1%).

For the year 2023/24, there were 211 incidents with a domestic abuse motivation.

35 newcomer pupils in Erne East DEA primary and post primary schools in 2023/24.

There were 4 incidents with a racist motivation in 2023/24. This is the same as the previous.

Below are the top ranked priorities for young people highlighted within the DEA.

1. **Your Future**: This encompasses career aspirations, opportunities for personal growth and the support needed to achieve long-term goals.
2. **Play, Hobbies and Interests**: This includes recreational activities, sports and hobbies that young people enjoy.
3. **Safety**: This covers physical safety, emotional security and feeling safe in your community**.**
4. **Health and Wellbeing**: This involves their emotional health and wellbeing, physical health and overall wellbeing.
5. **Your Rights**: This includes understanding and advocating for their rights as a young person.
6. **Education**: This covers access to quality education, educational resources and support for learning.
7. **Equality:** Ensuring equality in Youth Services is crucial for fostering an inclusive environment where all young people can thrive. Here are some key aspects and recommendations for promoting equality:
    - ***Inclusiveness***: Ensuring all young people, regardless of background, have access to Youth Services.
    - ***Diversity***: Celebrating and respecting the diverse backgrounds and cultures of young people.
    - ***Rights***: Upholding the rights of young people and ensuring their voices are heard and valued.

Erne East Stakeholder input/feedback

Erne East DEA is home to 5,251 children and young people aged 0-25 years, with 2,212 falling within the key Youth Service priority age bands of 9-13 years and 14-18 years. Among young people aged 20-24, 4.1% are not in employment and do not have a qualification, which is lower than the Northern Ireland average of 4.9%. The percentage of school leavers who are unemployed or whose status is unknown in 2022/23 is 0%, compared to the NI average of 4.7% 2. Additionally, 86.7% of school leavers achieved at least 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and maths, significantly above the NI average of 76.1%.

In the 2023/24 academic year, there are 35 newcomer pupils in Erne East DEA primary and post-primary schools. The area recorded 4 incidents with a racist motivation, the same as the previous year. This indicates a need for continued efforts to promote inclusivity and address racial tensions.

Erne East DEA covers rural areas around Lisnaskea and Newtownbutler. The rural nature of the area presents unique challenges, including limited access to services and transportation. Many young people face longer travel times to access schools, leisure facilities etc. which can impact the overall well-being and opportunities available to young people in the area.

Erne East DEA faces challenges related to child poverty, with 793 children estimated to be living in relative poverty. This highlights the importance of targeted interventions to support these children and their families. Additionally, the area has a substantial number of children living in lone-parent families, which can impact their access to resources and support.

Substance misuse, particularly vaping, smoking and drug use, is rising among young people. They reported peer pressure to engage in these behaviours and concerns about the availability of drugs on the streets and the associated risks. Sexual health is another area of concern raised with a particular interest in teenage pregnancy that stakeholders feel remains an issue with a need for more information on consent and protection. This is important because sexual health is linked to both physical and emotional well-being.

Family issues, including domestic abuse, affect many young people. In 2023/24, there were 211 incidents with a domestic abuse motivation across the area, below the Northern Ireland average of 260. These experiences often contribute to mental health challenges. Children and young people in Erne East DEA also expressed concern about dangerous and careless driving, particularly on rural back roads. They have highlighted the need for more education on safe driving, especially when it comes to responsible driving. Concerns about crime are prevalent, with 74% worried about it. Half of the respondents (50%) are worried about the safety of women and girls, with 21% unsure. Additionally, 68% of respondents feel pressured to engage in potentially dangerous activities. These insights underscore the importance of addressing safety concerns and providing education on social issues to help young people feel secure and informed.

In terms of feeling valued, rights, careers and education and leisure and play responses, the young people feel confident about their career prospects and financial support, but there is still a substantial number that feels uncertain or disagrees. Additionally, many young people feel listened to, valued and respected, but there is room for improvement in ensuring everyone feels included and aware of their rights. The findings emphasise the need for enhanced educational and career support, as well as fostering a more inclusive and respectful community where all young people feel valued and heard. Overall, the data suggests that while Erne East DEA has strong educational outcomes and relatively low

unemployment among young people, there are ongoing challenges related to poverty, Emotional health and well-being, inclusivity and rurality that need to be addressed to ensure all young people have the opportunity to thrive.

Erne East Summary

- Limited access to safe, welcoming public spaces for socialising and recreation due to rurality.
- Substance misuse, particularly vaping, smoking and drug use linked to Emotional, Physical and Sexual health.
- Lack of inclusive, accessible and affordable opportunities that support wellbeing and reduce stress.
- Social exclusion linked to poverty, affecting participation in school and community life.
- Poor physical, emotional health and well-being due to lack of recreational and leisure facilities and accessibility.
- Lack of careers, advice and guidance.
- Bullying and peer pressure influenced by appearance, status and social media comparison.
- Uncertainty about the future, with some young people lacking confidence in reaching their potential.
- Limited opportunities to explore identity, independence and personal development in supportive settings due to rural isolation.
- Concerns about feeling safe and road safety in public spaces despite strong rural community and school-based support.