

This report launches at an unusual time in our collective history. The increased challenges that those parenting alone have faced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic has been widely reported. Now more than ever there is need to give Voice and Visibility to Kilkenny's one parent families.

The Statistics

There are 6,790 one-parent families living in Kilkenny, which equates to 11% of all households. Children in one-parent families make up 18.6% of all children in the county.

Why Is This Significant?

The Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) had concerns that the one parent family voice had all but disappeared from the landscape of groups they engage with and initiated the report. Research has shown that poverty, not family structure, is the key determinant in predicting outcomes for children. However, those parenting alone are at a greater risk of poverty than other demographic.

The Research

The LCDC Task Group was to identify the key needs, to map the issues and service gaps. Most important of all was to engage with one parent families in identifying all of these. Crucially, the report also set out to develop a process to make visible the lived experiences that one parent families are facing in our county and to give voice to those experiences.

The consultation and report process was led by Grainne O' Toole and Lorraine Mc Mahon.

In the findings one parent families identified key issues that need to be addressed to improve the quality of their lives and their well-being in Kilkenny:

- Access to affordable and flexible childcare
- Maintenance
- Transport
- Income Poverty
- Lack of Information
- Barrier to Participation
- Health
- Stigma
- Access to training and employment
- Mental Health

The Plan

Subsequent to the report an action plan was devised, wherein 5 goals were outlined (See the Snapshot Sheet attached for a breakdown of these). Work to meet these goals has already commenced and will be achieved through on-going interagency collaboration and the empowerment and support of one-parent families across the county.

The Progress

An interagency Lone Parent Steering Group has been established.

A Community Engagement Facilitator, funded through Healthy Ireland, is in place for a pilot phase.

The Kilkenny One Parent Community network is in development; an associated website is also being launched in conjunction with this report.

The website will function as an information hub but also as an avenue to foster the coming together of One Parent Families in Kilkenny.

Each of the agencies involved with the funding and oversight of the research played a key role in its development, namely: County Kilkenny LEADER Partnership (lead); Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board; the Community section of Kilkenny County Council; TUSLA; the Department of Employment and Social Protection; Kilkenny County Childcare Committee, and the Children and Young Services Committee.