

County Wicklow Social Inclusion Network Group (Sub-group of County Wicklow LCDC)

Terms of Reference (as Agreed 11th Oct. 2023)

Purpose

The purpose of the Social Inclusion Network Group (SING) is to

- a) Provide a forum for regular 2-way communication between marginalised communities/groups working with a social inclusion remit at local level and the local authority and other support agencies, giving:
 - a. an opportunity for networking and knowledge sharing amongst these, finding out what one another are doing, sharing challenges experienced, plans and activities, and so forth
 - b. a platform for greater cohesion, co-ordination and mutual benefit,
 - c. support for evidence-based practice about what is working for communities on the ground;
- b) Allow marginalised communities/groups working with a social inclusion remit at local level to examine and discuss the relevant plans and programmes forming part of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) and their delivery, with the aim of “social inclusion proofing” these;
- c) Provide an opportunity for SING members to give feedback on the role out of relevant plans and programmes contained in the LECP and how they are being experienced by the marginalised communities they represent and/or work with; identifying where they work well and making suggestions for how they could be made more responsive and deliver greater benefits for target communities. This feedback is particularly pertinent to revisions of the plans and programmes, and to the development of the LECP and its Implementation Plans;
- d) Enable member groups to identify additional initiatives (not presently in place) and ways of delivering actions, or ways of adding value to existing initiatives, that would deliver benefit to marginalised communities and recommend that these be considered for inclusion as part of the LECP. Similarly, the SING should identify instances of duplication that can be avoided.
- e) Provide a means for dissemination of information on social inclusion plans, programmes and initiatives amongst marginalised communities and groups working with a social inclusion remit at local level.
- f) Review the operation of the Network itself at 2 yearly intervals, to assess it’s operation and impact, and report on this to the LCDC, and to make alterations to the Group and how it works in response to reviews.
- g) Take a county-wide approach to social inclusion.

Scope

The scope of the activities of the Social Inclusion Network includes:

- building and fostering collaboration in progressing social inclusion
- raising awareness about social inclusion in the County
- ensuring marginalised groups are genuinely engaged, outlining their needs, co-designing responses and giving feedback on their experience of plans and policies (This may include delivery of training on how to engage with marginalised communities.)
- problem-solving and identifying ways to manage obstacles impeding social inclusion in County Wicklow
- communicating constructive feedback to all relevant service-providers
- convening and participating in cross-sectoral learning exchanges on social inclusion
- promoting and progressing understanding of a ‘social inclusion in all policies’ approach to social inclusion across the County

- assisting and facilitating with the gathering, analysis, and communication of local data relevant to the social inclusion initiatives

Commitment

Social Inclusion Network Group members commit to

- attending all scheduled Group meetings & to alerting the supporting administrative staff member of access or other requirements for their participation
- engaging with all Group documentation
- sharing communications and information relevant to the Group within their own organisation/ marginalised group
- disseminate information from the Group widely, as appropriate
- bringing matters deemed to negatively impact marginalised communities to the attention of the Group
- contribute actively to the deliberations and work tasks of the Group
- supporting the open and reflective exchange of information and learning at the Group
- progressing systems alignment and improvement with a view to proactively and positively impacting social inclusion in County Wicklow

Expectations

All Social Inclusion Network Group members can expect to be

- treated equally in all matters relating to the Group
- provided with accurate and meaningful information in a timely manner
- have their voice and viewpoint listened to
- given reasonable time to make considered decisions
- alerted to potential issues, as they arise, that could impact the Group
- part of building a Social Inclusion learning community

Meetings

- Meetings are facilitated by the chosen facilitator* or deputy facilitator (in the absence of the facilitator) who are both members of the SING. This position will be held for a limited period, in the first instance this will be for 1 year, and then as agreed by the SING. (SING members will be asked to volunteer to take on the facilitator role, and the role will pass from one volunteer to the next in random order.) SING members may be elected as facilitator or deputy facilitator for no more than 2 consecutive terms.
* *The first 2-3 meetings of the SING will be independently facilitated to allow details to be resolved and an election held.*
- A meeting quorum is 50% plus 1 of the Social Inclusion Network membership. This applies to those organisations who have submitted their member organisation (as per agreed template) at full meetings of the SING.
- There is a standing agenda, to which items may be added if notified in advance to the facilitator (via the administrative support staff).
- Decisions are made by consensus (i.e. members are satisfied with the decision even though it may not be their first choice)
- If consensus is not possible, a majority decision that has the support of the facilitator prevails
- The Group meets 4 times every year and may hold additional meetings where these are agreed
- Meeting papers are prepared and provided by administrative support staff; this includes agendas and supporting papers, meeting notes, information, and minutes. Any materials for distribution must be

provided to the staff concerned in good time. Meeting agendas and all available materials should be circulated to members 1 month in advance.

- Meetings will be held quarterly, time(s) and venues to be agreed at first meeting. Meetings will be held in different venues around the County and at mixed times (day/ evening) to accommodate as many members as possible and include all areas of the County. Unless otherwise agreed in advance, meetings will be of 90-minute duration.
- As required, mandated subgroups/working groups will meet outside these times at a time convenient to subgroup members. Subgroups will be constituted by the Social Inclusion Network Group, will be facilitated by a Group member and may include members who are not members of the Social Inclusion Network Group. Subgroups will report to Social Inclusion Network Group via the subgroup facilitator.
- The Group may agree to work being conducted and completed by Sub-groups between SING meetings.
- If submission of reports, other initiatives or decisions require agreement before a further SING meeting, this approval can be sought by simple majority of SING members via email, where a non-response is taken as assent.

Organisational support

The Social Inclusion Network Group will be facilitated and supported by an assigned member of staff in Wicklow County Council (Community, Cultural and Social Development).

The SING is intended to be mutually supportive. It aims to ensure communications allow everyone to engage comfortably. Members will together build a “Jargon Buster” listing acronyms and frequently used terms, to support full participation by all.

The Group will take measures to ensure all can take part, including use of visual and audio resources (e.g. for records of meetings, documentation, etc.)

Membership

Membership of the SING will reflect the marginalised communities within County Wicklow and the organisations that work with them. Membership will include, but is not limited to, groups and services in the following areas: community policing and community safety; children and young people; healthcare; older people; Traveller, Roma and immigrant / minority communities; those experiencing addiction; homeless; rural and urban disadvantaged communities; the Library Service; Citizens Information Service; Money Advice and Budgeting Service; and the Volunteer Centre. Membership can be fluid to facilitate representation of marginalised voices and to enable the SING to seek involvement by those who are completely left out within our society.

Reporting Structure

The Social Inclusion Network Group engages with, communicates with, and reports to the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and into Wicklow County Council and other relevant bodies ensuring that all relevant Social Inclusion Network Group deliberations are made available to inform the development of local area plans, service strategies, delivery and budgets.

Terms of Reference - Amendment, Modification or Variation

The Social Inclusion Network Group’s Terms of Reference will be approved at the first meeting of the Group and adopted following agreement at the next meeting. Thereafter they will be reviewed annually (and subsequent to a review in years when these are carried out) and may be amended, varied, or modified after consultation and agreement with the Group membership.

Health and Safety

Social Inclusion Network members must comply with the Health and Safety Statement of their own organisation and any in-person meeting venue. Venues for in-person meetings will be chosen to accommodate any specific declared requirements for Social Inclusion Network members to participate. All members attending as professionals and must adhere to their own organisational health and safety practices of attending meetings.