

## Offaly Traveller Movement Strategic Plan, 2023 - 2025

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## Executive Summary

Offaly Traveller Movement (OTM) is a Traveller organisation that has evolved from a grassroots project supporting the Traveller community in Offaly. Since it was established in 1991, OTM has continually worked towards achieving greater equality and social justice for Travellers. Over the past 31 years, our work and our impact has continued to grow. This strategic plan provides a roadmap for Offaly Traveller Movement to support the Traveller community and improve our services over the coming three years.

Through this process, our Board of Directors and staff have thought carefully about ways to raise greater awareness of our work, deliver more effective services and respond to needs for Travellers and for our community. The process gave us an opportunity to pause and reflect on where we could prioritise our resources, and where we could make improvements in how we deliver services. To make sure that our plan is meaningful, we undertook consultations with our clients, our staff, and our Board to understand what goals would be important and relevant for the Traveller community.

This process of consultation and reflection has resulted in what we believe is an ambitious but achievable plan for our work for the coming three years.

### Our strategic goals for 2023-2025

Our strategic plan consists of seven strategic goals that we will work to achieve. These goals are:

- Strategic Goal 1** Expand the capacity of core programmes to meet increasing demand for health and accommodation supports in the community
- Strategic Goal 2** Develop a new Information & Advocacy Service in Birr, Co. Offaly
- Strategic Goal 3** Develop a series of events to promote Traveller pride in Offaly
- Strategic Goal 4** Launch campaign to raise awareness of poor accommodation standards for Travellers
- Strategic Goal 5** Work with local residents to fundraise for a community fund used towards community-led projects, activities or training
- Strategic Goal 6** Improve staff engagement
- Strategic Goal 7** Develop an outcome framework for Offaly Traveller Movement

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## Foreword

This Strategic Plan is a joint effort from the Board of Directors, staff and management of Offaly Traveller Movement. It began with asking the Traveller community in Co. Offaly to share important and crucial feedback about what changes were needed, and how Offaly Traveller Movement could support the community with achieving these goals over the next three years.

As we developed our strategy, our focus was always on what improvements can we make to our services and how can we better serve the local community. We work to empower individuals by providing support, offering advice and information, and engaging in advocacy and awareness raising work, both in Offaly and ongoing national campaigns in-partnership with other Traveller organisations and as a member of the Irish Traveller Movement.

Our staff have a strong sense of what we would like to achieve in three years' time. Our Strategic Plan reflects this vision and ambition. We are very grateful to our staff team for their immense work with developing this strategic plan and for the dedication, imagination and contribution to this process. We would like to acknowledge the many people who also shared their thoughts, insights and feedback with Offaly Traveller Movement, without your ideas this plan would not have been possible. We also worked in close collaboration with Quality Matters as our consultants to help develop this strategic plan and who supported our staff throughout these discussions.

We do not know what new challenges or issues the future will bring. As a charity, Offaly Traveller Movement faces constant changes that can impact our work positively and negatively, and this can make it uncertain how quickly our organisation can respond to new and emerging needs for Travellers. For us to respond effectively to change, we want to be proactive and be able to adapt to future challenges, instead of being reactive. This means, we have used this strategic plan as an opportunity to understand what are some challenges facing our work and to take a well-planned, forward-thinking approach to how we might respond to many of these. As always, we will focus on our resources to make sure we can create a difference for as many possible and so we can confidently achieve our vision over the next three years.

We hope the goals outlined in our strategic plan will be welcomed by the community and that people will see how it will benefit both Offaly Traveller Movement and Travellers in Co. Offaly. We hope this Strategic Plan will encourage more people to engage with Offaly Traveller Movement to make this future happen.

**Sandra McDonagh**  
Managing Director  
Offaly Traveller Movement

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Chairperson  
Offaly Traveller Movement

# About Offaly Traveller Movement

## Overview

Offaly Traveller Movement (OTM) evolved from a grassroots mobilisation advocating for the needs of the Traveller community in the area of Tullamore, which started back in 1991. In 1995 the organisation was registered with the Companies Registration Office (when it was previously known as Tullamore Traveller Movement Ltd). Ever since, OTM has continuously worked to achieve equality and social justice for Travellers both nationally and locally in county Offaly in partnership with the wider community.

Today, Offaly Traveller Movement has a team of 26 staff and offers a wide range of programmes in the areas of health, education, accommodation, youth and employment, all tailored to the specific needs of the Traveller community. OTM works from a human rights and community development approach.

## Achievements since our last strategic plan

Since our organisation's past strategic plan, 2018 to 2021, Offaly Traveller Movement has celebrated a number of important milestones and achievements.

- 2021** OTM developed and launched the Mincears Tairien programme, a mental wellbeing training programme for young and adult Travellers. The programme was developed with support from Big Picture Consulting.
- 2020** Launched a dedicated video honouring Traveller Pride and celebrating Traveller culture.  
  
Launched a national leaflet aimed at encouraging Travellers to become foster parents developed in partnership with Tusla.  
  
Secured funding for the Men's Shed and the Local Training Initiative.  
  
Mary McInerney, staff with Offaly Traveller Movement, was appointed chairperson of the Irish Traveller Movement.
- 2019** Youth OTM was awarded the Overall Junior Winner award at the Irish Cancer Society X-HALE Youth Awards 2019.  
  
Made a written submission and presentation on the topic of mental health to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Key Issues affecting the Traveller Community.  
  
Exhibited Travelling to Wellbeing (T2WB) service at the Exhibition of Recovery Initiatives Learning Set.
- 2018** Launched "*A Guide to Developing a Local Co-ordinated Crisis Response Plan for the Traveller Community 2018*" in partnership with the local HSE Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention and the HSE Traveller Health Unit. The guide provides a framework to develop a coordinated response to support individuals and families experiencing attempted suicide, suicide or unexpected death.

## Our Vision

Offaly Traveller Movement believes in a vision where all Travellers are respected, involved and equal members of Irish society and empowered to be their best selves to build a strong, inclusive community.

## Our Mission

Offaly Traveller Movement is a human rights, Traveller-led organisation dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and wellbeing of all Travellers. We advocate for fairness, equality and social justice for Travellers in all areas of our work.

## Our Core Values

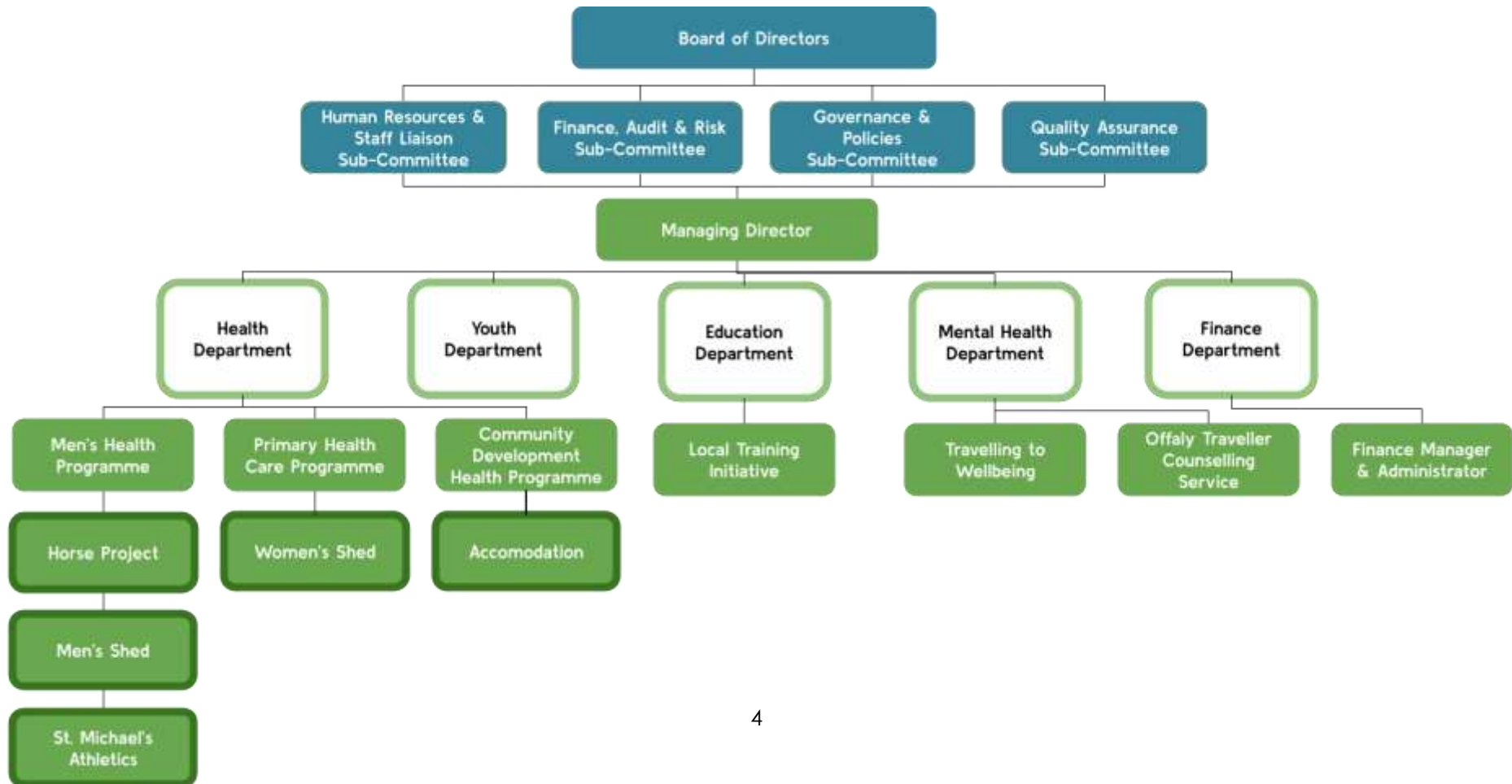
As an organisation, our values are:

- **Respect** – Our staff are open minded, supportive and prepared to welcome people into our service and to listen to their needs
- **Empowerment** – We empower our clients to help them achieve their goals and support them to be advocates for themselves, their families and their community
- **Community-led** – Our service is led and part of the community in Offaly, and we act in service of the Traveller community
- **Responsive to need** – As an organisation, we strive to work thoughtfully and quickly to issues and concerns in the community and to collaborate with our partners to find the right solutions
- **Anti-discrimination** – We recognize how historical and intergenerational racism towards Travellers has affected the lives and wellbeing of our community. We will actively challenge any discriminatory or racist attitudes or practices we find
- **Inclusive** – Our staff will work to be inclusive of all people, no matter their background or identity
- **Collaborative** – We work closely and acknowledge the valuable contributions of both local and national organisations who are our commitment to full equality of Travellers in Irish society

## Our Structure

Our team consists of 26 staff. Our organisation is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors, with relevant expertise and specialisms, as well as staff who are members of the Traveller community in Offaly. The illustration on the following page shows the structure of our organisation and how the staff teams are organised.

Figure 1 Organisational structure of Offaly Traveller Movement



## Our Approach

This section offers a description of our remit and explanation of our client services. We provide a range of services from our location in Tullamore, Co. Offaly, to support the needs of people in the local Traveller community.

Between 2018 and 2019, the European Union Agency on Fundamental Rights (FRA) conducted research on the socio-demographic situation and experiences of discrimination for Roma and Traveller communities across Europe(1). The following are some of the key findings for Ireland:

- Over 60% of Irish Travellers reported having experienced discrimination in relation to accessing services, employment, housing, education and health. One of the highest rates among survey groups from different countries.
- Irish Travellers have amongst the lowest rates of paid employment across Europe. 17% of Traveller women and 13% of Traveller men have paid jobs compared to 68% and 80% respectively in the general population.
- 70% of young Travellers aged 16 to 24 years old are not engaged in employment, education or training compared to 11% of young Irish people generally.
- Irish Travellers' life expectancy is 8 years shorter than that of the general population. More Irish Travellers (29%) have severe limitations due to health problems than people from the general population (17%)
- Ireland has the second highest rate of Travellers facing severe housing deprivation (24%) in Europe. This rate is 30 times higher than people generally in Ireland (0.8%).
- 31% of Travellers live in households that cannot pay for basic items

These figures show much work lies ahead. However, significant progress has also been made. The survey reports Ireland has amongst the highest rates, when compared to other countries, in relation to Traveller communities' awareness of laws against discrimination (58%) and awareness of at least one Irish equality body (49%). These figures are still low, but are nonetheless amongst the highest in Europe, serving as an encouragement to our work in raising awareness of discrimination, and supporting Travellers in understanding and realising their rights (1).

## Our Services

We seek to provide services in a culturally responsive manner, working closely with our clients, the wider Traveller community and in-partnership with our funders and other community/voluntary organisations working towards similar goals.

Our services are divided across four pillars, which are:

- Health
- Mental Health
- Youth
- Education

The services and initiatives delivered under each of four pillars is outlined in the section below.



## Health

### Primary Health Care Programme

The Traveller Primary Healthcare Programme is a peer led health promotion initiative delivered in partnership with the Health Service Executive (HSE). The programme employs peer Travellers to work as Community Health Workers (CHWs) and deliver a range of non-clinical health services within their communities. The service caters for over 300 families. CHWs provide information, advice and advocacy on different areas including the following:

- Breast and cervical cancer screening services
- HPV vaccination programme
- Oral health
- Ante natal care and post-natal care
- Child development and safety awareness, primary vaccination programmes, free preschool places and childcare options
- Mental health support
- Substance misuse support services
- Domestic violence awareness and supports

Additionally, the programme includes various health promotion initiatives touching on a variety of key physical and mental health themes (e.g., physical activity, asthma, nutrition, smoking cessation, bereavement support, suicide prevention). CHWs are also frequently involved in the organisation of other social and community development activities and work closely with the Traveller Public Health Nurse.

### Men's Health Project

Traveller men have poorer health outcomes than their settled counterparts. They also have higher rates of engagement with high-risk behaviours such as smoking or problematic use of illicit drugs. These outcomes, which are tied to historic discrimination and inequality, motivated OTM to develop a dedicated health project for men aiming to improve their physical and mental health. Our services include:

<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Supporting Traveller men to engage with health services</li><li>- Facilitating bi-annual health checks</li><li>- Increasing awareness around mental health and promoting discussion around suicide and suicide prevention</li></ul>
<b>Social Connection and Leisure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Developing and facilitating leisure opportunities including sports activities</li><li>- Supporting older Traveller men who experience isolation</li></ul>
<b>Advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Facilitating the Traveller Men's Health Network</li><li>- Ensuring Traveller Men participation in decision making structures at the local, regional and national level</li></ul>
<b>Horse Project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Facilitating increased Traveller men engagement with mainstream health services</li><li>- Bringing Traveller men together to participate in important cultural traditions and to learn about social determinants of health</li></ul>
<b>Community Men's Shed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provides a safe space for Traveller men to come together and share experiences</li><li>- Promotes skill development and reduces social exclusion among Traveller men</li></ul>

## Community Development Health Programme

The Community Development Health Programme promotes Travellers' participation in national policy, and supports health, well-being and skills development in the community. Services offered include:

<b>Advocacy services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Support Travellers voice in policy development and decision-making structures at the national and regional level including the coordination of the Midland Traveller Health Network</li><li>- Organise events that link with national and international health campaigns</li><li>- Work in-partnership with the Irish Traveller Movement and other Traveller organisations to advocate for Travellers' human rights at both a local and national level</li></ul>
<b>Support services in the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Improve awareness of mental health issues within the Traveller community</li><li>- Offers various health, wellbeing and educational and women's support groups throughout the year</li></ul>

## Information and Advice Service

Housing and accommodation has long been a key issue for Travellers and OTM, as poor accommodation can impact the lives and wellbeing of Travellers and families in many ways, such as their health, education, employment, mental health and inclusion in wider society. As part of our Community Development Health programme, OTM provides Travellers with access to information and advice in relation to any accommodation-related needs. When an individual is facing an issue with their accommodation or lack of, our Accommodation Worker is available to provide advice and information on how to engage with relevant voluntary and statutory agencies, such as Offaly County Council.

## Accommodation Advocacy Support

OTM offers support services for Travellers facing accommodation and tenancy issues through a dedicated accommodation worker. Aside from providing one-to-one support, our team also advocates at the national, regional and local level for the accommodation needs of Travellers in county Offaly by providing data and participating in relevant structures such as the Irish Traveller Movement's Accommodation Working Group.

## Mental Health

### Travelling to Wellbeing

Travelling to Wellbeing is a programme established in Offaly in 2013 that offers professional mental health services to Travellers experiencing mental health difficulties. The programme aims to promote mental wellbeing, address the high suicide rates in the Traveller community and reduce mental health stigmatisation.

Interventions are culturally responsive and tailored to the community specific needs; evidence-based; recovery focused; and supported by a two-fold approach that draws both from clinical mental health and community development good practice. Services include:

- One-to-one clinical therapeutic support with individualised recovery plans

- Crisis intervention
- Peer support groups
- Family support
- Mental health education
- Facilitation of access to other services including collaborating with other service providers to improve referral pathways
- Awareness raising initiatives on mental health and suicide prevention

Travelling to Wellbeing also engages in local, regional and national advocacy work by representing Offaly Travellers at the Irish Association of Social Workers, Women's Mental Health Network, National Traveller Mental Health Network, National Travellers Women's Forum, the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee and the Traveller Interagency Group

### **Mincears Tairien programme**

Mincears Tairien is a 10-week group mental wellbeing programme, setup in 2020, to support both young and adult Travellers with promoting self-care of their mental health and promote engagement with mental health services in the community. Over the 10-week programme, participants are introduced to a variety of topics, including team building, understanding resilience and coping, understanding self-advocacy, understanding self-care and self-compassion, exploring shame and stigma, as well as developing a personal action plan for accessing services in the community, when needed. While the programme is delivered in a group setting, our Mental Health Coordinator is available to support participants who are interested in being referred to other mental health programmes, delivered by OTM or in the community.

### **Offaly Traveller Counselling Service**

The Traveller community has higher suicide rates and poorer mental health outcomes than the average population. OTM offers counselling services to members of the Traveller community, including individuals, couples, children and families, who are in crisis and require mental health immediate support. The service was developed to address the high prevalence of mental health challenges in the Traveller community which is paired with their low level of uptake of mainstream services and the lack of access to timely counselling services due to long waiting lists. The Traveller Counselling Service not only supports them in the times of most need but also helps ensure they stay engaged with services.

## **Youth**

### **Offaly Traveller Movement Youth Project**

The OTM Youth Project offers a wide range of leisure and educational services to young Travellers in county Offaly who are 10 years old or over. The aims of the project are to empower Traveller youth, increase their self-confidence and develop their capacity for active participation in the community through the provision of safe and supportive social and leisure outlets. The youth teams work has been largely informed by research conducted in 2014 on Offaly Traveller youth needs and is aligned with the seven outcomes of the UBU Your Place Your Space National Framework of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The services offered include:

- Weekly drop-in clubs and peer support for school students

- Arts stand-alone projects (i.e., drama and film)
- Sport and physical exercise programmes (i.e., soccer, handball, swimming)
- Teambuilding activities (i.e., trips)
- Annual Traveller youth's summer project
- Support and advice in relation to formal education and links with educational institutions
- Support developing digital literacy
- Dedicated Youth Café in the Hazel Hub

Besides offering services to young people, the team also advocates for youth at a national level by liaising with other youth services and participating of national youth initiatives.

## Education

### Local Training Initiative

The Local Training Initiative (LTI) started back in 2020 with the aim of addressing disparities in the access to education opportunities for the Traveller community. It offers practical courses designed to develop learners' confidence, knowledge and skills to progress into further training and/or employment. This is delivered in an environment that is safe and welcoming and which facilitates re-engagement with education and professional development. Importantly, courses are focused on areas that, while being of interest to young people, can also contribute to the community. Courses offered include; Woodwork, Health and Fitness, Painting and Decorating, Career Preparation and a QQI Major Award Skills for Life.

### Adult Literacy

OTM offers a non-accredited adult literacy programme, which is intended to support individuals with developing their English reading and writing skills, as well as to help people with progressing into employment or further education.

## Our Funders and Partner Organisations

Offaly Traveller Movement's work is funded by and works closely with a number of voluntary and statutory organisations

**Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)** - The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth's mission is to enhance the lives of children, young people, adults, families and communities, recognising diversity and promoting equality of opportunity. (<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-children-equality-disability-integration-and-youth/>)

**Health Service Executive (HSE)** - The HSE is one of our funders. We receive referrals from health care professionals and community health workers who are working with Travellers, and we also refer people to HSE services who are seeking who are seeking general and mental health supports. (<https://www.hse.ie/eng/>)

**Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB)** – The LOETB plans, provides, supports and coordinates education, training and youth services in Laois and Offaly, and is a funder of our education and Youth service. Aside from being a funder, the LOETB has been a longstanding partner organisation, and OTM may refer clients who are interested in accessing other education programmes. (<https://www.loetb.ie/>)

**Offaly County Council** – The Offaly County Council is a longstanding funder and partner working closely with OTM. As the local authority, the Council provides and manages accommodation for the Traveller community, and will work closely with OTM on accommodation-related needs and issues affecting Travellers. In addition, the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) advises the Council on matters relating to Traveller and their particular needs. (<https://www.offaly.ie/eng/>)

**Offaly Local Development Company** - Offaly Local Development Company (OLDC) is a partnership of agencies and groups representing the community, statutory and private sectors. Over the past few years, OLDC provide small grants and funds to support OTM with its work. (<https://offalyldc.ie/>)

**The Community Foundation for Ireland** – The Community Foundation for Ireland is a philanthropic organisation that has provided grant funding to OTM. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Community Foundation gave small grants to help with our Covid-19 response. (<https://www.communityfoundation.ie>)

**Tusla – The Child and Family Agency** – In Ireland, Tusla is the statutory agency responsible for child protection and welfare services, family support, educational welfare and a range of other services, including those relating to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence. Aside from being a funder, Offaly Traveller Movement receives referrals from staff and social workers who are working with families and children who are Travellers. (<https://www.tusla.ie/>)

## Development of this strategy

This section explains the steps undertaken by Offaly Traveller Movement to develop our strategic plan, including how various stakeholder groups were involved in this process. Our strategic planning process was supported by Quality Matters, an independent research charity, who was responsible for undertaking a consultation and facilitating our staff and Board with developing the strategic plan.

### **Consultation with Clients, Families, Young People, Staff and Board Members**

At the start of this process, Offaly Traveller Movement undertook a lengthy consultation process to gather the views of our clients and partner organisations, as well as to engage our staff and Board of Directors to understand what is working well, and what about our work needs improvement into the future. In total, 26 individuals shared their views through surveys, phone interviews, or by sharing their feedback in a short video.

### **Analysing Key Themes**

The Board of Directors and staff examined emerging themes and findings from the consultation, in a report and brief video prepared by our researchers. The feedback provided welcomed reassurance about our areas of strength and expertise as an organisation, but also helped us to focus on the specific areas to focus our energy and further develop our services.

### **Reviewing Our Mission, Vision and Values**

An important step in reviewing where we are as an organisation was to review our organisation's vision statement, mission statement and values. Our vision statement describes what Offaly Traveller Movement understand as the goal of our work and the difference we would like see in society for our community. Our mission describes our work and what we do to help make this vision a reality. Lastly, our values statement explain how we undertake this work.

### **Development of Strategic Goals**

The Board of Directors and staff met to reflect on the direction of the organisation and to develop our strategic goals. This was a challenging yet thought provoking exercise that compelled both Board members and staff to think carefully and ambitiously about our work and consider if our strategy was achievable with our limited resources. This opportunity for the Board and staff to work closely on the development of this strategic plan made it a rewarding experience for whole team.

## Overview of Strategic Goals and Targets

This section explains the strategic goals for Offaly Traveller Movement for the next three years. Through this strategic planning process, the Board of Directors and staff identified and co-developed seven strategic goals, that will enhance our existing work, increase our ability to meet clients' needs, and innovate areas of our work, which have become increasingly complex and demanding for our service.

In brief, our strategic goals and intended outcomes over the next three years are:

### Strategic Goals

### Outcomes

**Strategic Goal 1:** Expand the capacity of core programmes to meet increasing demand for health and accommodation supports in the community

Increased funding by €54,000 to extend hours of 10 part-time workers across our Health Team, Community Development Health Team and Accommodation Service to meet increased demand for services

**Strategic Goal 2:** Develop a new Information & Advocacy Service for Birr, Co. Offaly

Offer a new Information & Advocacy service to be established in Birr, Co. Offaly and staffed by 3.0 FTE workers

**Strategic Goal 3:** Develop a series of events to promote Traveller pride in Offaly

Increase the number of community members actively involved in the planning and operation of Traveller pride events and the number of community events with representation from the Traveller community

**Strategic Goal 4:** Launch campaign to raise awareness and improve standards of poor accommodation for Travellers

A successful campaign to improve standards of accommodation for Travellers with positive engagement from Offaly County Council and agreement on necessary changes to practices related to accommodation upkeep for Travellers

**Strategic Goal 6:** Work with local residents to fundraise for a community fund used towards community-led projects, activities or training

Work with local residents to develop a fundraising strategy and work towards a goal of raising €5,000 over a three-year period to promote greater community cohesion and social inclusion among Travellers

**Strategic Goal 6:** Improve staff engagement

Our organisation has measured and demonstrated an increase in the level of staff engagement over a three-year period

**Strategic Goal 7:** Develop an outcome framework for Offaly Traveller Movement

Staff have piloted an outcome measurement process and used learnings to rollout a system for measuring our outcomes for the entire organisation.

## Strategic Goals

### Strategic Goal 1: Expand the capacity of core programmes to meet increasing demand for health and accommodation supports in the community

#### **Rationale**

OTM is the first port of call for the Traveller community in Offaly who are seeking health and wellbeing support, education, assistance with accommodation issues, or help with a crisis situation. Over the past three-years, the demand for our service has significantly increased, although there has been no substance change in our staff resources, our team has reached the upward limit of support it can provide to Travellers.

While we can reconfigure our services to address some needs, our funding limitations has meant we can only employ some part-time staff members to deliver crucial community services, such as a part-time Accommodation Worker who works with and advocates on behalf of Travellers with housing-related issues.

With the increase demand for support, and the accompanying cost-of-living crisis, our staff will experience a higher volume of cases and our clients can expect longer waiting times for services, if our staff are constrained by complex, urgent or priority issues. In order to deliver a reasonable, prompt and responsive service to the community, increased funding to provide our part-time workers with additional hours is required.

#### **Outcome**

Our interest is to raise €54,000 in increase funding to provide additional hours to ten part-time workers in order to meet the increased demand for our accommodation service, as well as health and community health teams.

#### **Key Actions**

1. Commission a researcher to undertake a full cost review and develop a business case for increasing the hours of part-time workers in OTM. This review should include an analysis of the salary levels of existing staff with pay sector comparators for the non-profit sector in Ireland.
2. Undertake a cost-per-unit analysis using our Salesforce data to establish and determine the cost-per-unit and value proposition of our service based on the funding we receive.
3. Through a dialogue with our core funders seek additional funding to increase the number of hours for some part-time workers to meet this demand and provide a fair and appropriate increase for existing staff who are below the sector average.



## Strategic Goal 2: Expand our Information & Advocacy Service to new town

### **Rationale**

An important part of our Information and Advocacy Service is offering a drop-in space where Travellers can receive brief interventions and crisis support. This means, the Traveller community have a dedicated space to meet with staff and where they can receive immediate support or an intervention to help with their distress. For people who are living outside of Tullamore, there is a higher demand for these interventions than our outreach workers can meet. With this increased demand and because of the complexity of cases, our staff believe that opening a dedicated Information & Advocacy space in Birr, Co. Offaly would make it easier and more accessible for people to access support locally.

### **Outcome**

Locate a premise and establish a new Information and Advocacy Service in nearby Birr, Co. Offaly to extend Offaly Traveller Movement's services to clients unable to travel to our offices located Tullamore.

### **Key Actions**

1. Undertake a gap analysis and cost-per-unit for our Information and Advocacy Service in order to develop a business case for extending our service into a new location in Birr, Co. Offaly, renting a new Information and Advocacy service and for hiring three project workers in-line with sector norms and standards.
2. Make improvements to our Salesforce system to ensure that all issues are recorded and client waiting times are being recorded, and to schedule regular meetings with all staff who are staffing the Information and Advocacy service, to review these issues and record solutions.
3. Through dialogue with our core funders to seek additional funding to meet this demand and to source a new Information & Advocacy space in Birr, Co. Offaly, so that we can deliver more accessible supports to Travellers living nearby.
4. If we are unable to raise full-cost recovery funding for a new Information and Advocacy service, rather than a space for this service, we will advocate for additional outreach workers who can deliver appointments to people unable to travel to OTM.

## Strategic Goal 3: Develop a series of events to promote Traveller pride in Offaly

### Rationale

In the next three years, Offaly Traveller Movement would like to better promote Traveller culture and pride in our local community. We see opportunities to celebrate Traveller pride as recognising the distinct heritage, culture and identity of Travellers. However, since the global pandemic, there has been fewer opportunities for our staff and clients to showcase and promote Traveller pride locally.

Building on our community development principles, Offaly Traveller Movement aims to work with members of the local community to organise and help run a series of Traveller pride events throughout the year. We feel this is important to making sure every event is for the community, led by the community.

During the next strategic period, we will be focussed on organising more community events, both among our Traveller community as well as within the wider community, to help enhance community cohesion and to challenge racist and discriminatory attitudes towards Travellers. Our ambition is for Traveller Pride to be more discussed and celebrated in Offaly as well as to attract greater interest from local media and local organisations who share our enthusiasm for this.

### Outcome

Our goal is to increase the number of community residents who, working in partnership with OTM, will be actively involved in the planning and running of Traveller pride events. We will also work with the community to increase Traveller representation in wider community events and celebrations in order to promote Traveller pride and build community spirit.

### Key Actions

1. Establish a Working Group and recruit members from the Traveller Community interested in working with OTM staff to celebrate Traveller culture and promote Traveller pride in our wider community. Our first step will be to agree on a number of Traveller Pride events throughout the year and develop a Terms of Reference for our group.
2. Once we have established our group, our staff will help organise our members by developing a plan and schedule of tasks needed before an event. This plan will need to consider how we will attract people to attend the event, how we can generate interest online or within the community, and how we can raise attention of concerns for Travellers.
3. Before each of the events, our staff will support each event by speaking with our network of schools, community groups and local services to help generate awareness and encourage interest from the wider community.
4. Also, our staff will produce a press release for our local newspaper and advertise the event on social media.
5. On an annual basis, we will hold a meeting with our Working Group to review their experiences and agree on what was successful. We will use this learning to help with planning future events or taking new approaches.

## Strategic Goal 4: Launch campaign to raise awareness and improve standards of poor accommodation for Travellers

### Rationale

Our organisation works in partnership with the Irish Traveller Movement and other Traveller organisations on various advocacy campaigns. We aim to launch a local campaign to address poor standards of accommodation for Travellers. Although OTM works in-partnership with Offaly County Council to address accommodation issues in the community, there are a high-number of accommodation-related issues raised by clients and we feel our role is to collaborate with our local authority to improve standards and advocate for a change.

To develop a better understanding of specific issues facing Travellers in relation to their accommodation, we will be undertaking further research and consultation with our clients to understand the source of their concerns and the specific practices which can be changed. We will work with the Irish Traveller Movement to understand what good practice exists, and to learn from other organisations who are undertaking similar approaches in their local area.

Building on the previous work of the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee and the efforts made by the Irish Traveller Movement to ensure Travellers and Traveller organisations are included in local decisions made about accommodation provision, OTM will develop and setup a local campaign to raise awareness of poor standards of housing and accommodations for Travellers in Co. Offaly and work with the local authority to improve standards, where housing has been found to poor or needing repair.

### Outcome

A successful campaign to improve standards of accommodation for Travellers with positive engagement from Offaly County Council and agreement on necessary changes to practices related to accommodation upkeep for Travellers

### Key Actions

1. Establish a Working Group to drive the development of our housing campaign and to scope what accommodation issues are a priority for the Traveller community in Co. Offaly, and where these are issues are aligned with the current work of our Accommodation Worker. Our Working Group will be comprised of both Travellers and professionals with experience in either legal and advocacy work.
2. Develop a campaign plan with key actions and events that will guide how OTM will raise greater awareness on accommodation issues. This plan should take into consideration our target audiences, communication messages, potential partners in the local community. Our goal will be to focus on one or two key priority issues that will be the focus of this campaign.
3. Work with a researcher to undertake an audit on all housing-related issues reported by Travellers living in poor accommodation provided by Offaly County Council.
4. Once the research is complete, we will meet with Offaly County Council to review findings and to discuss ways that these concerns and issues of poor standards of accommodation can be improved in a cost effective, sustainable way.

## Strategic Goal 5: Work with local residents to fundraise for a community fund used towards community-led projects, activities or training

### Rationale

Over the past three years, our clients and staff have encouraged us to find more resources for community purposes or events, which will improve our community spirit and reduce exclusion or isolation among Travellers. As a charitable organisation, much of our current funding is restricted and can only be spent on specific activities or employing our staff, which means we often do not have any discretionary budget that can be spent.

This strategic goal has two main objectives, the first is to work with community members to develop a more strategic approach to our fundraising activity, and to setup a community fund, which will pay towards some expenses for projects or activities that have a community benefit.

### Outcome

Work with local residents to develop a fundraising strategy and towards a goal of raising €5,000 over a three-year period towards creating greater community cohesion and improving social inclusion among Travellers

### Key Actions

1. Recruit a person with fundraising experience or a board member with fundraising expertise to work with a sub-committee of the Board and staff to develop a fundraising campaign.
2. Recruit a board or staff member to attend training on fundraising for charities delivered by either The Wheel or Fundraising Ireland, so that we are confident in our knowledge about any statutory obligations for charities
3. Develop a fundraising campaign that will include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Identifies what are OTM's budget limitations and what types of activities or events do we not have sufficient funding available to provide throughout the year;
  - b. Provides guidance and suggest options on how we can best raise funding either through an online campaign or through events;
  - c. Clarifies how OTM works in line with all statutory obligations and fundraising standards
4. Develop promotional materials and circulate through our network of local organisations, businesses and community groups. Update our website and social media to ensure there is clear directions on how people can make donations to OTM and clarify what our fundraising will be used to fund
5. Each year, our sub-committee will review learnings from our fundraising effort and set targets for the coming year

## Strategic Goal 6: Improve staff engagement

### **Rationale**

OTM wants to ensure that staff are having positive experiences and are well-supported in their roles. Research has found there is a strong link between positive staff engagement and quality service provision and high client satisfaction.

We will undertake a staff engagement survey and identify areas of strength as well as areas for improvement. This data will inform an engagement improvement plan to inform our supports for staff over the following two years. This process will be repeated every two years.

### **Outcome**

Increased levels of staff engagement in our organisation, evidenced by an improvement in our engagement score over a two-year period.

### **Key Actions**

1. Undertake a staff engagement survey as a whole organisation.
2. Collaboratively review of the findings as a whole team and identify engagement improvement actions for the following two – year period. Our staff will be responsible for agreeing on a small series of actions to enhance staff's experience of engagement, and each will be implemented for a two- or three-month period.
3. Repeat this process every two years

## Strategic Goal 7: Develop an outcome framework for Offaly Traveller Movement

### Rationale

To better understand the effectiveness of our work for our clients and their families, as well as to help us with assessing whether clients are closer to achieving their goals, OTM needs a clear outcome framework and system for how we measure change. Doing this will enable staff to not only measure our success, but also determine whether clients may need further supports or referrals to other organisations, in order to achieve their desired goals.

Although our interest in understanding how our work is helping clients, we see another benefit of this work is being able to demonstrate to our funders that OTM is achieving its objectives and creating a difference.

### Outcome

Staff will pilot an outcome measurement process, which involves gathering data from our clients and preparing a brief report with an analysis of their results. We will use these findings to better understand the type of benefit experienced by our clients and how much change they reported. After this pilot, we will work towards developing similar processes for other areas of our work and understanding how we can better evaluate the effectiveness of our work.

### Key Actions

1. Work with a facilitator experienced in outcome measurement to develop a theory of change for each programme delivered by OTM.
2. Hold a consultation with some of our clients to verify and validate outcomes identified in our theory of change. If we learn new information from our clients, this detail will be incorporated into our outcome framework.
3. Develop an outcome measurement tool for one to two programmes, which will be piloted by OTM. Our interest is designing a process and surveys that are user-friendly and accessible for our clients, and so they are easily administered by our staff.
4. Pilot an outcome measurement process and collect data from our clients. Once we have gathered data from a sample of clients, we will analyse our findings and communicate this information back to our clients to illustrate what has changed for them and ensure they are involved in this important process.
5. As a team, we will review the findings from our outcome measurement process and use this learning to develop a new outcome framework and systems for OTM.

## Acknowledgements

### Our Staff

<b>Managing Director</b>	Sandra McDonagh
<b>Health Manager</b>	Leona McDonagh
<b>Community Health Team</b>	Geraldine Ward Mary McInerney Brigid McInerney Sarah McDonagh Caroline McDonagh John McDonagh Celine McInerney
<b>Travelling to Wellbeing Mental Health Team</b>	Karen Boylan Pinkie McInerney
<b>Social Worker</b>	Sandra McDonagh Aisling Daly
<b>Counsellor</b>	Sharon Spain
<b>Youth Work Team</b>	Saranne Lovett Ellen McDermott Mary Ward Elizabeth Rattigan
<b>Community Development/Accommodation</b>	Sorcha Lewis
<b>Mens Health Project</b>	Frank Kavanagh
<b>Local Training Initiative Team</b>	Lorna Middleton Celine McInerney Ian McDonagh Lesley Jones
<b>Horse Project</b>	
<b>Public Health Nurse</b>	Nuala Hogan
<b>Finance</b>	Patrick Daly
<b>Administration Team</b>	Pascal Delaney Bridget McInerney
<b>Reception</b>	Siobhan Hennigan

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