



# Ballaghaderreen Early Years Services Report



## Survey and Demographics

May 2020

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# Introduction

## Background

This report provides an overview of the possible need and demand for an early year's service in Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. It has been carried out on behalf of Roscommon County Childcare Committee, Roscommon LEADER Partnership Company CLG and TUSLA, who have been working closely with the local community and local interest groups regarding the provision of an early years service, specifically focusing on the needs of refugees within the community and those accommodated by the Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre (EROC).

The report was prepared by Meehan Tully and Associates Ltd. in 2019, with the assistance of the Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from Roscommon County Childcare Committee, Roscommon LEADER Partnership Company CLG and TUSLA.

## Aim

The aim of the report is to provide the Steering Committee with information regarding the potential need and demand for an early year's service in Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. The report should indicate the current level of early years' service provision within Ballaghaderreen, and whether such a level of provision is adequate for the needs of a town, and catchment area, of the size of Ballaghaderreen, having consideration for the specific needs of the local community, and based upon the demographics of the population and the potential client base.

The findings and recommendations should reflect the size and type of childcare facility being proposed by the Steering Committee for Ballaghaderreen, i.e. a modular childcare building, located at The Shambles, Ballaghaderreen; funding for which has been secured from the Department of Justice.

## Methodology

The methodology employed in the report was comprised of the following:



# The Growing Tree

In 2019, the Department of Justice approved funding for an early years facility, called The Growing Tree, to be developed at The Shambles, Ballaghaderreen; for which planning permission has been approved as per the designs below.



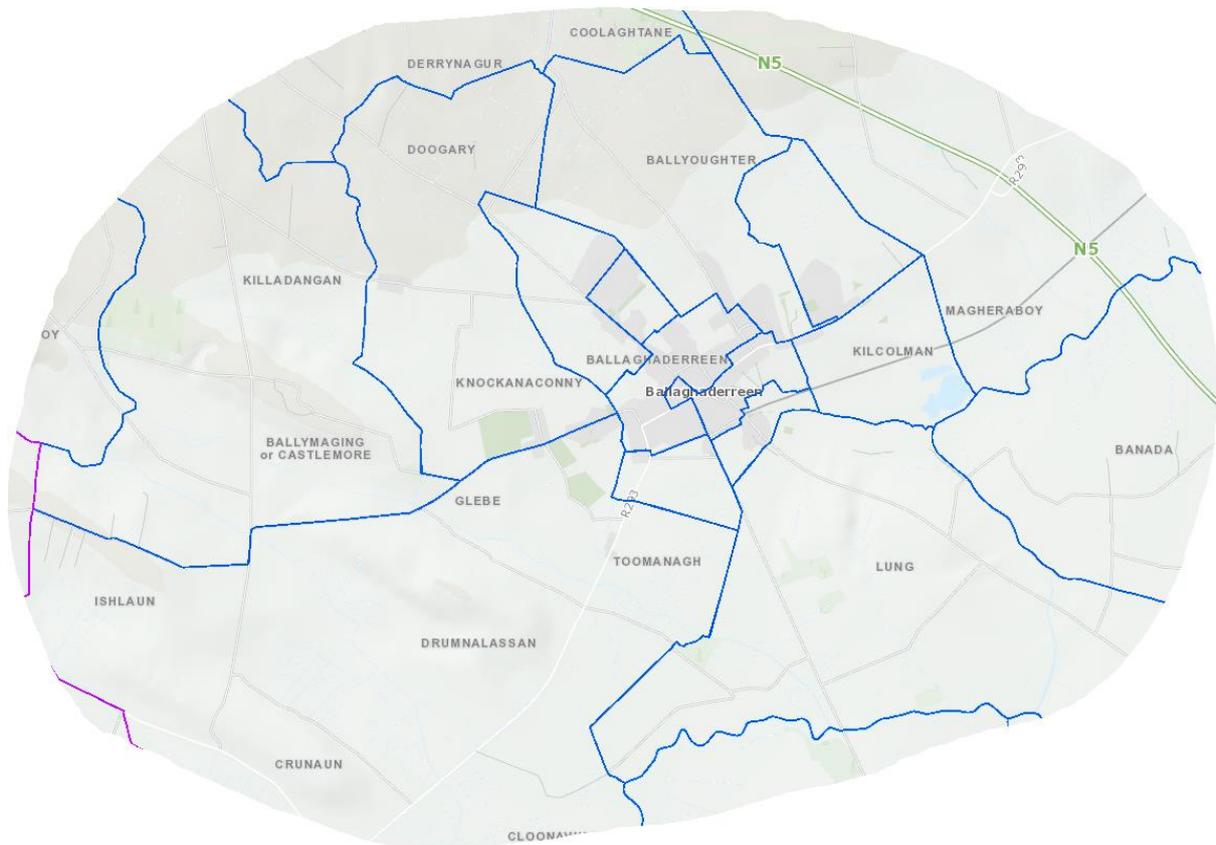
The location of the facility at The Shambles is ideal, within the town, with access to parking if required, and alongside the Ballaghaderreen Family Resource Centre with its training and support services.

The aim of this report is not to assess, in detail, the financial viability of The Growing Tree but, rather, to review the need and demand for such a facility in Ballaghaderreen town and the surrounding area. The first step in this review is to analyse the sociodemographic statistics of the area.

# Sociodemographic aspects

## Catchment Area<sup>1</sup>

For the purposes of this study, the catchment area for Ballaghaderreen has been recorded as including the fourteen Small Area Population (SAP) areas<sup>2</sup> surrounding Ballaghaderreen. These SAPs have been used for the purposes of the demographic/ population profile in this chapter and are illustrated on the map below.



<sup>1</sup> All demographic statistics are sourced from the CSO’s Census 2016 Small Area Population Statistics (SAPs)

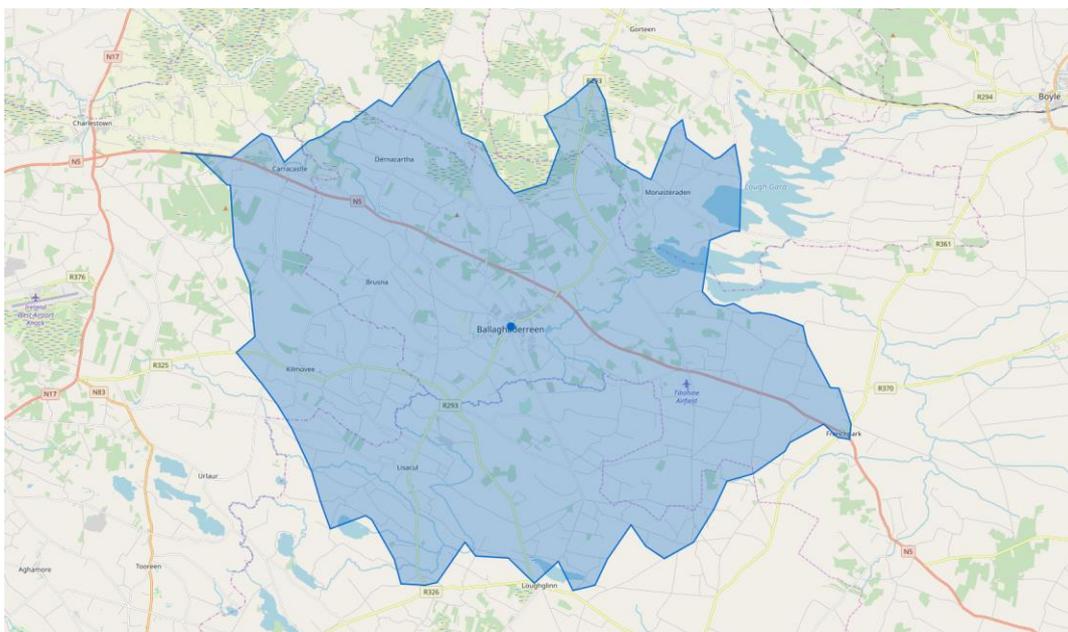
<sup>2</sup> The fourteen SAP areas identified by the IDs 197011003-18, excluding numbers 15-16.

## Drive time and catchment area

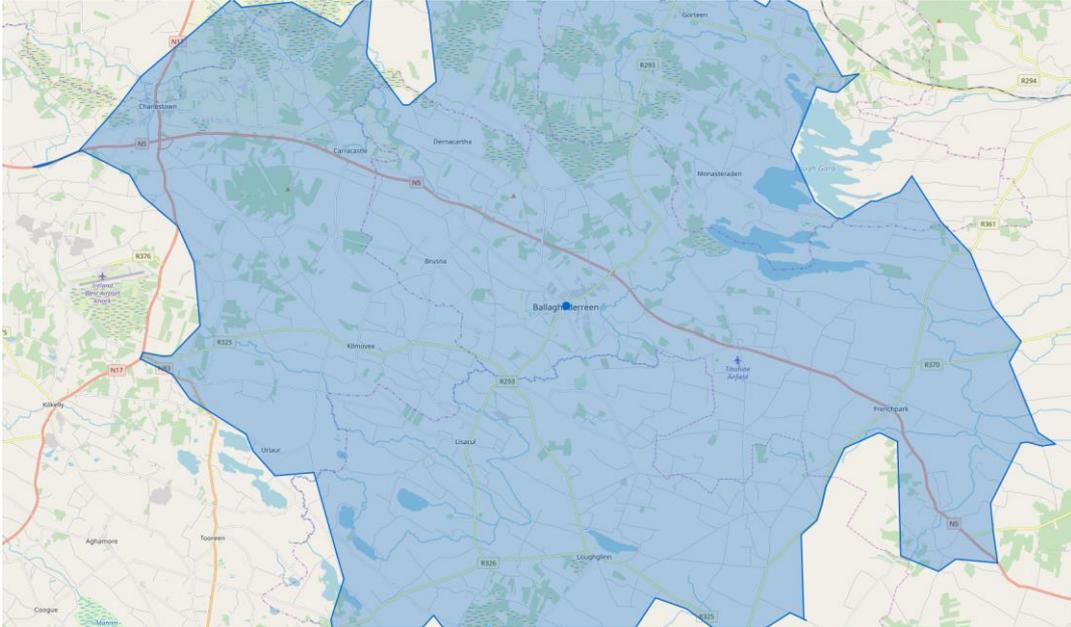
### *10-minute drive time*

The map immediately below illustrates the potential catchment area for Ballaghaderreen, using a 10-minute catchment area, while the second map illustrates the 15-minute catchment. A point of note for both maps is that Frenchpark is included in both maps, which reflects the following:

- As shown in the survey later, Frenchpark is the main location for childcare services being used by the catchment population, outside of Ballaghaderreen.
- The fact that Frenchpark is on the very edge of the 10-minute drive, reflects the call by many parents for early years' services to be located closer to Ballaghaderreen, particularly when considered alongside the demonstrated lack of access to transport for the local population.

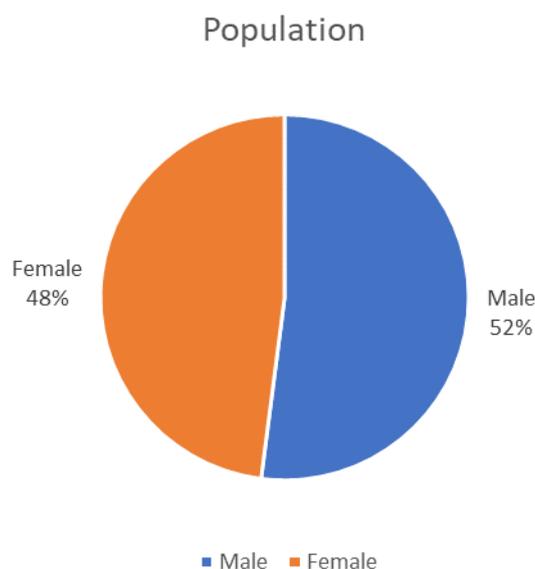


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## Total Population, Census 2016

The overall population of the area including and surrounding Ballaghaderreen, as defined by fourteen specific SAP boundaries, is 2,106 persons. Of these, 1,010 are female, with 1,096 males, as depicted in the chart below.



## Age profile of population, Census 2016

The population of the area is predominantly, over half, between 19 and 59 years of age, though with sizeable numbers of dependents, 24%, aged 18 years of age and under, and 24% aged 60 years and over.<sup>3</sup>

## Percentage of population between 0-18 years of age, Census 2016

Age profile	0 to 4 years	5 to 9 years	10 to 14 years	15 to 18 years	Total
Boys	62	70	87	53	272
Girls	62	64	71	41	238
Total	124	134	158	94	510
% of Total Population	6%	6%	8%	4%	24%

Years	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Total
Boys	13	9	9	16	15	13	9	15	16	17	17	15	19	19	17	16	15	13	9	272
Girls	14	10	12	15	11	17	12	14	13	8	16	17	16	11	11	14	7	5	15	238
Total	27	19	21	31	26	30	21	29	29	25	33	32	35	30	28	30	22	18	24	510
% Pop.	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	24%

<sup>3</sup> Very slight differences in percentages are due to rounding of figures.

## Families with youngest child's age

Families with youngest child's age	0-4 yrs.	5-9 yrs.	10-14 yrs.	15-19 yrs.	20+	Total
Number of families	101	49	65	39	74	328
% of Total	31%	15%	20%	12%	23%	100%

## Youth dependency ratio

Dependency ratios indicate the potential effects of changes in population age structures for social and economic development, pointing out broad trends in social support needs. By relating the group of the population most likely to be economically dependent (aged 0-14 years) to the group most likely to be economically active (15-64 years), changes in the dependency ratio provide an indication of the potential social support requirements resulting from changes in population age structures. A high youth dependency ratio, for instance, implies that higher investments need to be made in schooling and child-care.<sup>4</sup> The dependency ratio in the Ballaghaderreen catchment area is 32, which equates to the National figure.

## Percentage of population over between 19-59 years of age, Census 2016

Age profile	19-24 years	25-29 years	30-34 years	35-39 years	40-44 years	45-49 years	50-54 years	55-59 years	Total
Male	69	74	87	72	73	62	67	66	570
Female	67	64	77	62	56	62	78	56	522
Total	136	138	164	134	129	124	145	122	1,092
% of Total Population	6%	7%	8%	6%	6%	6%	7%	6%	52%

## Percentage of population over 60 years of age, Census 2016

Age profile	60-64 years	65-69 years	70-74 years	75-80 years	80-84 years	85+ years	Total
Male	62	61	54	36	24	17	254
Female	61	64	41	30	20	34	250
Total	123	125	95	66	44	51	504
% of Total Population	6%	6%	5%	3%	2%	2%	24%

## Size of households, Census 2016

Size of households	1 person	2 person	3 person	4 person	5 person	6 person	7 person	8+ person	Total
Number of households	311	251	118	86	55	21	8	11	861

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, Methodology Sheet, Relevance of Dependency Ratios

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<b>Number of people</b>	311	502	354	344	275	126	56	97	2,065
<b>% of total people</b>	15%	24%	17%	17%	13%	6%	3%	5%	100%

The total number of people recorded above is very slightly different to the total number living in the area – this is likely due to the number of people who may not have stated the size of the household above.

Families with all children <15 years	1 child	2 children	3 children	4 children	5+ children	Total
<b>Number of families</b>	72	51	33	7	3	166
<b>% of Total</b>	43%	31%	20%	4%	2%	100%

### Family types, couples and one-parent

Family type with all children <15 years	Couples	One parent mother	One parent father
<b>Number of families</b>	121	40	5

Family type with all children <15 years	Couples	One parent mother	One parent father
<b>Number of children</b>	240	68	9

### Family Cycle, Census 2016

The Family Cycle measures the number of families, categorised according to separate criteria based upon the different stages of families, e.g. pre-family, pre-school, empty nest, etc. Areas with a high number of families in the pre-school families would generally require the greatest level of supports regarding childcare services.

Family cycle	Pre-family	Empty nest	Retired	Pre-school	Early school	Pre-adolescent	Adolescent	Adult	Total
<b>Number of families</b>	52	72	66	44	49	73	53	109	518
<b>Number of people</b>	104	144	132	138	195	271	226	385	1,595
<b>% of families</b>	10%	14%	13%	8%	9%	14%	10%	21%	100%

### Disability, Census 2016

18% of persons in the area described themselves as “persons with a disability.” This is significantly higher than the national rate of 13.5%.

	Male	Female	Total
<b>Persons with a Disability</b>	86	95	181
<b>% of Total Population</b>	9%	9%	18%

## General Health, Census 2016

49% of persons in the area described their health as being “very good”, which is very low in contrast to 58% nationally.

	Very good	Good	Fair	Bad	Very bad	Not stated	Total
Population by general health	1,037	675	259	47	16	72	2,106
Percentage of households	49%	32%	12%	2%	0.8%	3%	100%

## Number of carers, Census 2016

Carers	Male	Female	Total
No. of carers	30	57	87
% of Total Population	1%	3%	4%

## Means of travel to work, school or college, Census 2016

Means of travel	On foot	Bike	Bus or coach	Train, DART or LUAS	Motorbike / scooter	Car driver	Car pass.	Van	Other	Work at home	N/A	Total
Work	87	9	3	1	0	395	31	69	4	25	51	675
School or college	105	0	22	2	0	19	255	4	0	0	26	433
Total	192	9	25	3	0	414	286	73	4	25	77	1,108

## Travel time to work, school or college, Census 2016

Time	Under 15 mins	1/4 hour - under 1/2 hour	1/2 hour - under 3/4 hour	3/4 hour - under 1 hour	1 hour - under 1 1/2 hours	1 1/2 hours and over	Not stated	Total
Journey time	562	174	108	50	43	23	123	1,083
% of Total	52%	16%	10%	5%	4%	2%	11%	100%

## Time of leaving for work, school or college aged 5+

Population aged 5+ by leaving time	Before 06.30	06.30-07.00	07.01-07.30	07.31-08.00	08.01-08.30	08.31-09.00	09.01-09.30	After 09.30	N/A	Total
Number of persons	54	66	59	105	97	275	251	87	89	1,083
% of Total	5%	6%	5%	10%	9%	25%	23%	8%	8%	100%

## Employment by sector

Sector	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	Building & construction	Manufacturing industries	Commerce and trade	Transport and communic.	Public admin.	Profess. services	Other	Total
Male	22	60	78	82	27	16	36	71	392
Female	3	4	27	68	5	13	96	73	289
Total	25	64	105	150	32	29	132	144	681

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<b>% Total</b>	4%	9%	15%	22%	5%	4%	19%	21%	100%
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## Access to internet

Access	Broadband	Other	No	Not stated	Total
<b>Households with internet</b>	489	82	262	27	860
<b>Percentage of Households</b>	57%	10%	30%	3%	100%

## Households with cars

20% of the population do not have access to a car. This is in contrast with the rest of the County, with Roscommon recording a total figure of 10% of the population not having access to a car.

Households with cars	No car	1 car	2 cars	3 cars	4+ cars	N/A	Total
<b>Number of households</b>	176	427	203	22	6	26	860
<b>% of Total</b>	20%	50%	24%	3%	1%	3%	100%

## Households with a PC

56% of people in the area have access to a PC, which is less than the 64% recorded for the County.

Households with a PC	Yes	No	N/A	Total
<b>Number of households</b>	481	344	35	860
<b>% of Total</b>	56%	40%	4%	100%

## Ethnic/ cultural background

Ethnic/ Cultural Background	White Irish	White Irish Traveller	Other White	Black or Black Irish	Asian or Asian Irish	Other	N/A	Total
<b>Persons</b>	1,421	57	251	10	218	71	65	2,093
<b>% of Total</b>	68%	3%	12%	0%	10%	3%	3%	100%

## Emergency Reception and Orientation Programme – new community (EROC)

203 refugees have been located at the Full Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre in Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon, RCCC has been appointed to work as a member of the EROC Reception Programme's Interagency Working Group for the County, which includes bodies such as Tusla, the Department of Social Protection, An Garda Síochána, the HSE Department of Justice and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Roscommon County Council.

# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE



## POPULATION



The Ballaghderreen catchment area has total population of 2,106, 48% are women.

6% of the population are in the 0-4 years age bracket, with 6% in the 5-9 years age bracket. 8% are aged between 10-14 years.



## 0-14 YEARS

20% of the population are aged between 0-14 years.

## BROADBAND

67% of the population have access to the internet.

## DISABILITY

18% of the population are classed as having a disability.

## ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE

1,309 people are economically active, 62% of the population.

## GENERAL HEALTH

49% of the population described their health as being very good

## NEW COMMUNITIES

The Emergency Reception and Orientation Programme is based in Ballaghaderreen.

## EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

Commerce and trade are the largest employer, 22%, followed by professional services 19%.

17% of family households in the Ballaghaderreen area are in the pre-school or early school family stage.

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The impact of the sociodemographic data upon the ‘need’ for an early year’s service is discussed later in the document. The next section reviews the ‘demand’ for such a facility.

# Survey of early years in Ballaghaderreen

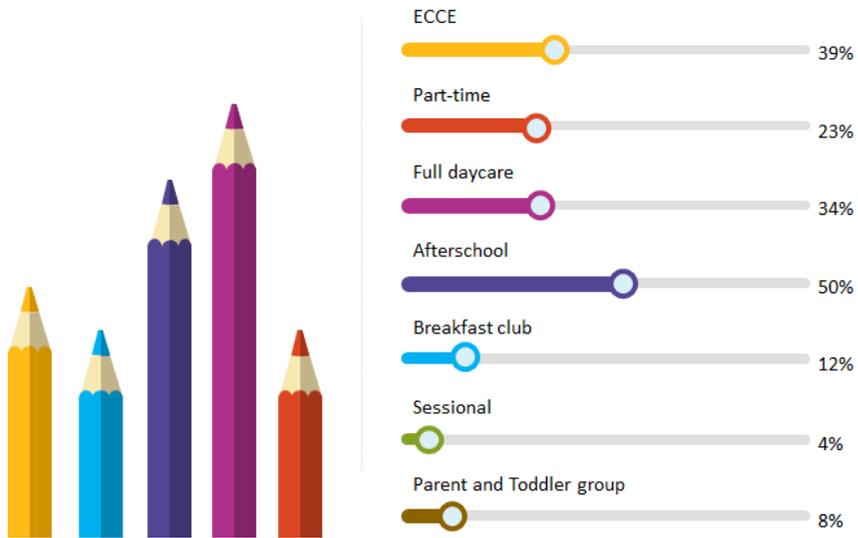
A survey was carried out of the use of early year's services, as well as other recommendations from 127 parents, in the Ballaghaderreen catchment area. The survey provides a very informative picture of the extent to which the responding parents currently use early year's services, and the location of these services. Specifically, the questions asked of the respondents included the following:

1. What services are important to you right now?
2. If you use early year's services, where are they located?
3. What services will be important to you in 3-5 years?
4. What is most important to you in choosing a service?
5. What additional services do you think are needed in Ballaghaderreen?
6. What are the main obstacles in your daily life?
7. What support groups would you like to attend?
8. What training courses would you like to attend?

While some of the questions above are not directly related to early year's services, e.g. obstacles in your daily life, they provide important information regarding issues that may impact upon the potential for a parent to be able to access and/ or use the services. For example, the survey reviews the need for transport, e.g. is it essential, or just a benefit, for the service to be in town? and interest in support/ training groups, e.g. can these be linked to the services within the adjacent Resource Centre?

The next section of this document summarises the findings of the survey, while the subsequent section, Need and Demand, analyses the impact of the survey and sociodemographic findings upon the proposal for an early years' service.

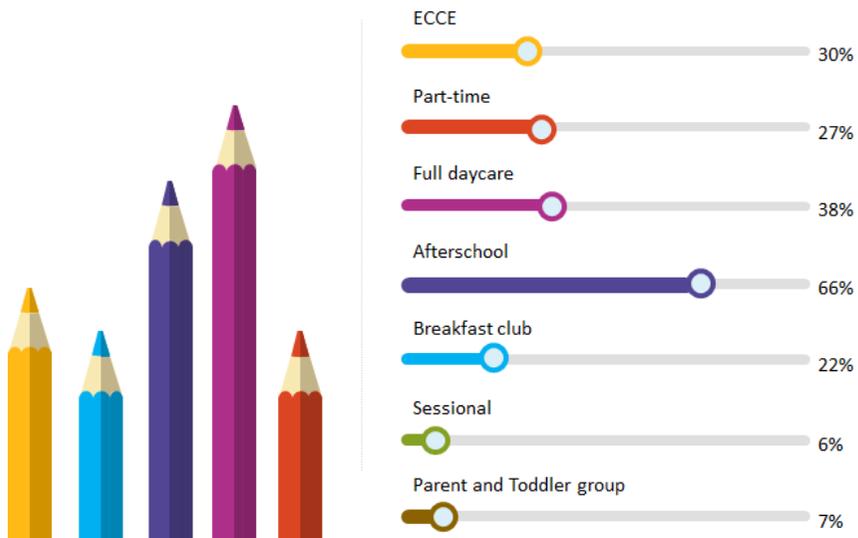
What services are important to you right now?



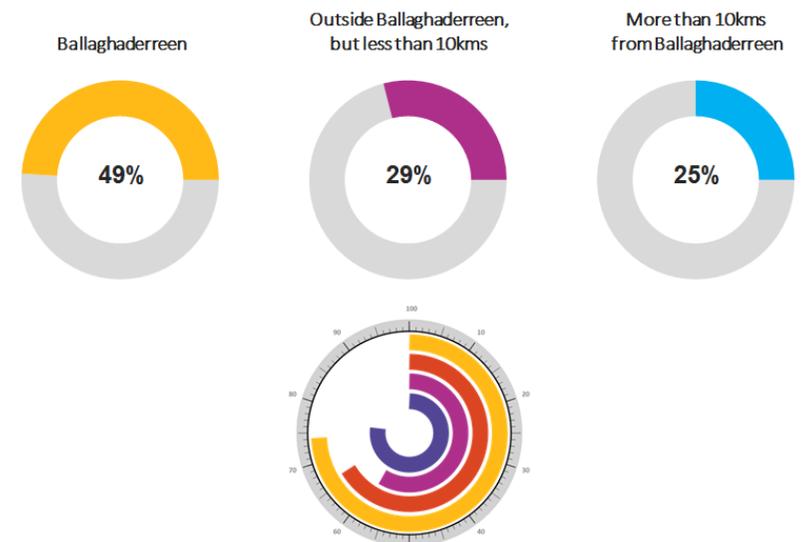
# Ballaghaderreen

## Early Years Survey of Parents 2019

What services will be important to you over the next 3-5 years?

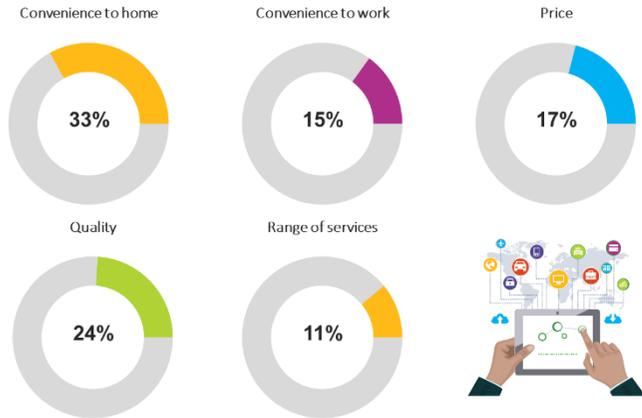


If you use services, where are they located?

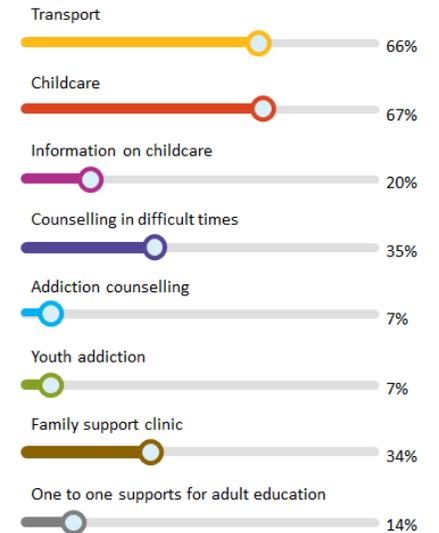


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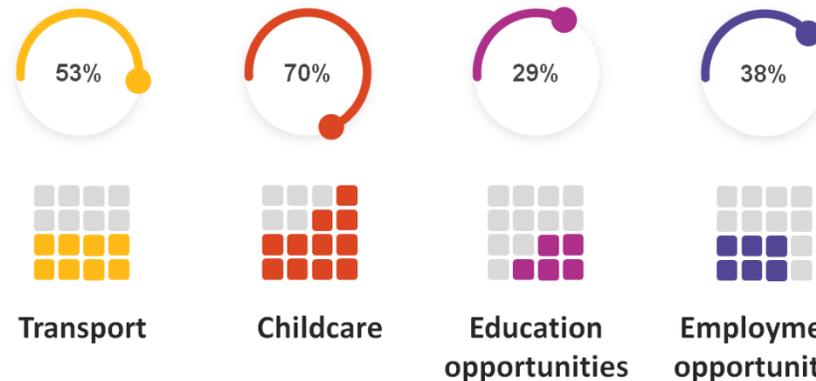
What is most important when choosing a service?



What additional services do you think are needed in Ballaghaderreen?



What are the main obstacles affecting your daily life?





# Need and Demand

## Need

The need for a service is determined by a variety of factors, such as:

- Number of services in local area
- Nearest alternative, outside local area
- Size of catchment area and population

Determining the need for a service is essential, because it indicates the lack, or not, of services, facilities and supports in an area, regardless of whether these have been highlighted by the local community. This is particularly important in the case of services, facilities and supports aimed at special interest groups that, otherwise, would not have the opportunity to raise their concerns. It is also important in situations where the local community, or special interest groups, would not necessarily be aware of the 'need' for such services, facilities or supports, due to their own lack of experience in accessing such initiatives in the past. This may be important in terms of the intended client group for The Growing Tree, i.e. refugees in Ballaghaderreen and within EROC.

Put simply, regardless of the stated 'demand' for services, facilities or supports, if there are not enough such initiatives within a catchment area of a certain size, then there is a demonstrated 'need' for such services, which should be led by local and regional agencies.

### ***Services in Ballaghaderreen***

When the preparation of this report commenced, there were only two early year's provider, in Ballaghaderreen.

Early Learners, which was a community-based service, providing childcare for the past 19 years, providing the ECCE scheme to approximately 22 children daily during the programme year. In 2019, the service was planning an additional afternoon ECCE session to cater for the children in the area who could not avail of a space in the morning session. This additional provision of an ECCE session would have increased the service numbers to 38 children availing of the free pre-school year. **However, due to issues unrelated to the childcare service itself, the provider has ceased operating since mid-2019.**

Tír na nÓg is a sessional pre-school service and operates for 38 weeks of the year. It provides childcare for 22 children, with an intention to take an additional 22 children in late 2019.

**There is currently one early year’s childcare service within Ballaghaderreen itself, and no full day care service.**

### ***Nearest alternative***

The nearest childcare services outside of Ballaghaderreen are

- Brightsparks Childcare, Lisacul, 6.6 kilometres, and
- Toddle Inn, Loughlynn, 10.7 kilometres, and
- Castlekids Carracastle, 9.7 kilometres, and
- Frenchpark and Districts Childcare CLG, located in Frenchpark, 13 kilometres from Ballaghaderreen and approximately 15 minutes’ drive.

The Frenchpark service was the service most often mentioned when referring to childcare services being used outside of Ballaghaderreen.

### ***Catchment Area***

As mentioned earlier, the overall population of the area including and surrounding Ballaghaderreen, as defined by fourteen specific SAP boundaries, is 2,106 persons. Of these, 416 are children under the age of 14. Ballaghaderreen town itself has a population of 1,808.

Based on the population of the catchment area, the question arises – is this enough of a population to justify an early years and school age childcare facility? To answer this question, it is best to make a comparison of this town with another town facing a somewhat similar question, i.e. Manorhamilton.

Town	Population	Services in Town	Services within 10kms	Childcare places	Services available
<b>Ballaghaderreen</b>	1,808	1	0	22-44	Sessional pre-school
<b>Manorhamilton</b>	1,466	1 (community)	1 (private)	122+	Full day care, breakfast club, ECCE, SAC, 0-3 years

To further highlight the ‘need’ for childcare in the Ballaghaderreen catchment area, the childcare service in Manorhamilton, a community-based service, recently closed, likely temporarily, due to issues, unrelated to the demand or need for the service. This has left approximately 100 children having to rearrange childcare, with many of these unable to secure formal childcare within the area. The reaction to the closure has been significant, with interventions by politicians and agencies attempting to support the reopening of the service as soon as possible. However, despite having a larger population and potential target market, Ballaghaderreen has only a portion of the facilities that are regarded as essential to town of a smaller size, need and demand.

**The catchment area of Ballaghaderreen is sufficient to sustain a viable early years and school age childcare facility, but there is only one such facility within a 6km radius of the town, and no full day care.**

## **Demand**

Demand refers not only the support for a service, but the public awareness of the lack of such a service in the area, based upon stated requests for services, as evidenced by use of alternative facilities, surveys, and public statements.

### ***Agency-led demand***

The demand for an early years and school age service has been demonstrated at an agency-level by the collaboration and support generated for the project by groups such as the Roscommon County Childcare Committee, Roscommon Integrated Development CLG, Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG and TUSLA. Each of these organisations have stated their support for the provision of such services in the Town, due primarily to the lack of current services, requests for such services from clients in the catchment area, and their awareness of the difficulties being faced by parents and guardians in securing transport to potential services outside of the town.

### ***Local demand***

As discussed earlier, a local early year's survey of 127 parents in Ballaghaderreen clearly demonstrated a large demand for early years and school age childcare. A summary of the findings from the survey are provided below, available in detail earlier in the document:

- ECCE and afterschool are the services in most demand, followed closely by full daycare.
- Over the next few years, afterschool will become the most popular among parents, with over two thirds of parents stating they will have a need for such a service.
- Childcare was the additional need regarded as most important for Ballaghaderreen, very closely followed by access to transport.
- The main obstacle to the parents' daily life was childcare, at 70%, followed, once more, by transport, 53%.

The survey has clearly highlighted a demand among parents for childcare in Ballaghaderreen, which is also strongly motivated by a general lack of access to transport and, as a result, limiting most options for parents to services available within the town itself.

## **Summary of need and demand**

To summarise, there is a demonstrated need and demand for early years and school age childcare in Ballaghaderreen. Regarding need, the catchment area of Ballaghaderreen is sufficient to sustain a

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viable early years and school age childcare facility, but there is only one such facility in the town or within a 6km radius of the town, with no full day care. In terms of demand, there has been demonstrated support for the project among local agencies such as Roscommon County Childcare Committee, Roscommon Integrated Development CLG, Roscommon LEADER Partnership CLG and TUSLA; based upon a clearly stated demand for childcare in Ballaghaderreen from local parents, which is also strongly motivated by a general lack of access to transport.

# Projections

This section refers to the projected income and expenditure for the proposed Growing Tree childcare facility in Ballaghaderreen. The projections are being provided merely for discussion purposes at this stage, to identify the potential breakeven point of a childcare facility of the size being proposed for The Growing Tree and, therefore, to examine whether this breakeven point can be reached.

To facilitate these initial projections, the following assumptions have been made:

1. The baby room mentioned in the initial design plans has been converted to a full daycare room. Based on the initial projections, it was determined that the provision of the baby room was not financially viable.
2. The ECCE Pre-school rooms have been projected to provide 2 morning ECCE sessions and one afternoon ECCE session.
3. Afterschool is being provided in the family room, although the area required will have to be reviewed. Additional afterschool hours have been included whereby some children will require full daycare outside of the academic year.
4. The maximum number of weeks for any of the projected services is 48 weeks for the full daycare, reducing to 38 weeks for the ECCE scheme.
5. The number of weeks to be worked by staff has been increased by 8% above the regular service weeks, to account for additional costs in employing staff to cover annual leave.
6. The projected income for the services has been based upon the following:

Childcare	Children	Weeks	Weekly fee	Rooms	Total
<b>Full day care</b>	16	48	€120	1	€92,160
<b>Morning ECCE</b>	9	38	€120	2	€82,080
<b>Afternoon ECCE</b>	7	38	€120	1	€31,920
<b>Afterschool</b>	8	38	€120	1	€36,480
<b>Full day afterschool</b>	6	10	€120	1	€7,200
<b>Total</b>					<b>€249,840</b>

7. The projected wages for the facility have been based upon the following:

Staff position	Hours per week	Weeks	Hourly Wage	Total	No. Staff	Total
<b>Manager</b>	40	52		€34,000	1	€34,000
<b>Full day care</b>	40	51.84	€12	€23,846	2	€47,693
<b>ECCE</b>	20	41.04	€12	€9,439	3	€28,318
<b>Afterschool</b>	20	41.04	€12	€9,439	2	€18,878
<b>Full day care afterschool</b>	40	10.8	€12	€4,968	2	€9,936

<b>Total</b>	<b>€138,825</b>
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8. Projected costs have been based on other childcare facilities of a similar size.

## Potential viability

	<b>Profit And Loss</b>				
	Year - 20/21 Budget €	Year - 21/22 Budget €	Year - 22/23 Budget €	Year - 23/24 Budget €	Year - 24/25 Budget €
<b>Sales</b>					
Full day care	92,160	94,160	98,000	102,000	105,000
ECCE Sessions	65,550	68,000	75,000	77,000	85,000
Afterschool	15,200	17,000	19,272	22,000	23,500
Afterschool - additional hours	7,200	7,300	7,560	7,850	8,000
<b>Total Sales</b>	<b>180,110</b>	<b>186,460</b>	<b>199,832</b>	<b>208,850</b>	<b>221,500</b>
<b>Direct Costs</b>					
Full daycare wages	47,693	48,000	53,000	53,000	58,000
ECCE Wages	28,318	28,500	29,000	31,000	32,000
Afterschool wages	18,878	19,000	20,000	21,000	22,000
Afterschool - additional hours	9,936	10,000	10,800	11,000	12,000
Supplies and food	11,456	11,846	12,483	13,185	13,650
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>116,281</b>	<b>117,346</b>	<b>125,283</b>	<b>129,185</b>	<b>137,650</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>63,829</b>	<b>69,114</b>	<b>74,549</b>	<b>79,665</b>	<b>83,850</b>
<b>Overheads</b>					
Manager	34,000	34,500	35,000	35,500	36,000
PRSI Full-time	8,945	9,034	9,636	9,691	10,293
PRSI Part-time	4,970	5,003	5,203	5,481	5,742
Heating	2,400	2,500	2,600	2,600	2,600
Maintenance	650	750	800	800	800
Insurance	550	600	600	650	650
Phone	900	920	940	940	940
ESB	750	760	780	780	780
TV Licence	160	160	180	180	180
Bank Charges	350	380	400	400	400
Fire, security and pest control	500	550	600	650	700
Waste and charges	600	700	800	900	1,000
Training	400	500	600	700	800
Miscellaneous	800	850	900	900	900
<b>Depreciation</b>					
Equipment	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,200	7,200
<b>Total Depreciation</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>6,200</b>	<b>7,200</b>
<b>Total Overheads</b>	<b>61,975</b>	<b>63,207</b>	<b>65,039</b>	<b>66,372</b>	<b>68,985</b>
<b>Operating Profit</b>	<b>1,854</b>	<b>5,907</b>	<b>9,510</b>	<b>13,293</b>	<b>14,865</b>
<b>Cumulative Retained Earnings</b>	<b>1,854</b>	<b>7,761</b>	<b>17,271</b>	<b>30,564</b>	<b>45,429</b>

Based upon the above, there is a good potential for the viability of a service of this size; if the service focuses on ECCE, full-daycare and afterschool. As mentioned earlier, there is a need for an early years' service, based upon the lack of such services and the size of the catchment area, as well as a demand for such services from parents. However, projections indicate that the provision of birth-3 age services would not be financially viable unless subsidised by alternative methods of funding, due to the potential wage costs and limited numbers likely to attend.

# Findings

The findings arising from this report are provided below, in form of answers to questions regarding the potential need and demand for an early year's childcare service in Ballaghaderreen.

## **Is there a need for an early year's childcare facility?**

Yes. Despite having a population of 1,808 in Ballaghaderreen town, with 2,106 people living in the wider catchment area, there is only one other early childcare facility of a similar nature to The Growing Tree within a 6km radius of the town, with no full daycare service.

## **Is there a demand for an early year's childcare facility?**

Yes. A survey of over 127 parents has indicated strong support and demand for an early year's childcare facility, focusing particularly on ECCE, SAC and full day care. The survey indicates that, over the coming years, SAC will become even more popular among parents.

## **Is it a good idea for the service to be located in the town?**

Yes. Apart from childcare, the main obstacle facing parents' daily life was transport, which reflects the anecdotal evidence from the agencies that many of those who will potentially use The Growing Tree do not have access to a private car, and are adversely impacted by the lack of public transport in, and around, Ballaghaderreen.

## **Is the proposed early years' service a viable social enterprise?**

Based upon the projections, there is a good potential for The Growing Tree to be a viable social enterprise, focusing particularly on ECCE, SAC and full day care. However, birth-3 year's services are not likely to be financially viable unless subsidised by alternative funds, due to the wage costs and limited likely numbers attending.

## **What else needs to be considered?**

While The Growing Tree is designed to meet the needs of a specific target group, the findings of this report indicate that there is a potential that the demand for early years services may become greater than the capacity of the proposed facility. The size of the catchment area, and lack of early years services, as well as the numbers using services outside of the catchment area, indicates that the demand for early years will exceed the capacity of The Growing Tree in the short to medium term, i.e. potentially over 2-3 years, particularly if it proves a successful project, housed in an attractive modular setting. This may be addressed by an expansion of the Growing Tree and/ or a re-opening of the recently closed community service, i.e. Early Learners Ballaghaderreen.

