

## **IRD Duhallow Clg.**

### **Case Study 2018**

#### **Kerry**

**Duhallow Warmer Homes Scheme; The role of a Community Based Organisation in Tackling Isolation & Fuel Poverty for vulnerable households in Ireland.**



IRD Duhallow has strong links in all communities in Duhallow which it has developed through its bottom up approach to community and rural development over the last 29 years. Through community consultations and engagement with local community groups, IRD Duhallow has been able to reach out to the most marginalised and disadvantaged community groups and individuals in the region. Delivering the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), in an integrated manner with other rural and Community Development programmes has enabled IRD Duhallow to reach out to many more than if we delivered SICAP in isolation. SICAP and its predecessor programmes have allowed us to identify, establish and support Community Services such as a rural meals service, a community laundry, a warmer homes insulation programme and a care and repair programme all of which make independent living possible for the more vulnerable and isolated people in our region. The provision of Duhallow Warmer Homes Scheme, allows us to promote our SICAP interventions, as our Warmer Homes team are working on a daily basis in the homes of disadvantaged families and Older People, and a range of services and supports including our actively retired network for Older People, courses, one to one supports for disadvantaged families and individuals and opportunities offered through participation on CE, RSS and Tús.

## **Aim of the service;**

Duhallow Warmer Homes Scheme provides energy efficiency improvements to homes, reduces fuel poverty by 50% in houses and provides employment to those distanced from mainstream employment with Community Services Programme (CSP) funding support.

It operates 3 separate national programmes;

- The Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme (BEWHS) which is a free insulation service to eligible householders.
- The Homes Incentive Scheme (HIS) where grants of up to €923 are available to homeowners with houses constructed prior to 2006 but who aren't eligible for the BEWHS. Works include attic insulation, cavity wall insulation and ventilation works, low energy light bulbs and energy advice.
- The Better Energy Communities is delivered to communities across the county which supporting the insulation and ventilation of community facilities.

## **Background Context;**

Duhallow Warmer Homes Scheme was established as a community enterprise in 2006 by IRD Duhallow. At the time the area was characterised by an ageing population many of whom were living on their own in extremely rural areas in one off housing. This still remains the case today. In addition to this, 18% of our housing stock was also pre-1919 and in need of insulation works and upgrading. To support independent living of older and more vulnerable people in Duhallow, it was recognised that a need existed to ensure that these individuals had a warm home to live in. This in turn complemented other existing community enterprises such as our rural meals service and also the rural transport service which was in operation at the time.

In its first year, the programme was delivered through the Rural Social Scheme, where attic insulation was installed in fuel poor households in Duhallow and where the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) also provided funding towards materials and over heads. In 2007 funding was secured from Pobal through the Community Services Programme to fund 1 coordinator and 4 FTE's. In 2009, cavity wall insulation was added to our service. Following a request from SEAI, we also extended our area of coverage beyond Duhallow to include all of North Cork and parts of South Limerick. Due to the increased volume of work, an additional FTE was applied for and subsequently allocated to IRD Duhallow in 2012 bringing our total CSP workforce to 1 coordinator and 5 FTE's for the BEWHS which has remained unchanged today. However, the work that we undertake for SEAI has changed significantly. In late 2013 Duhallow Warmer Homes Scheme experienced a change in the exact work it was delivering under the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme (BEWHS) with new ventilation requirements introduced.

In 2014, IRD Duhallow delivered insulation works to 195 houses under the BEWHS. All houses received these newly introduced ventilation works. As SEAI had restricted budgets, the extra costs involved in delivering the ventilation works meant that fewer houses than previous years could be completed as the costs of ventilation works were very high.

In 2015, SEAI introduced a tender process to replace the grant operated scheme. Community based organisations (CBO's) such as IRD Duhallow Warmer Homes were placed in a separate lot (Lot D) to the commercial providers to avoid displacement. IRD Duhallow was successful with our tender. After this tender process, only 13 CBO's remained out of 30, of which only 3 were in Munster. Therefore, we once again had to increase our area of coverage to include all of County Kerry, North and Mid-Cork, South Limerick and parts of Tipperary.

### **Situation in Co. Kerry;**

In order to avoid loss of jobs and expertise we subcontracted work to Cunamh Energy Action based in Tralee, as they were one of the unsuccessful Community Business Organisation's (CBO's) following the tender process. In 2015, extra ventilation requirements were added by SEAI increasing once again the work required for a home receiving insulation works.

In 2017 Cunamh Energy Action Tralee ceased trading, resulting in Duhallow Warmer Homes being the only CBO delivering the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme for all of County Kerry in addition to all of North Cork and South Limerick.

A request was submitted to Pobal that Duhallow Warmer Homes would absorb the CSP positions from Cunamh Energy Action to help to retain these jobs in the county but also to ensure that we had the number of staff needed to deliver the service across the region. Unfortunately, this was not approved and the CSP positions were not reinstated and hence we now cover the whole of Kerry with the same number of staff since 2012. Despite this we have continue to achieve great work in the county and Duhallow Warmer Homes Scheme are supporting some of the most vulnerable, rurally isolated and disadvantaged individuals in our community. 338 houses in Kerry have been completed to date.

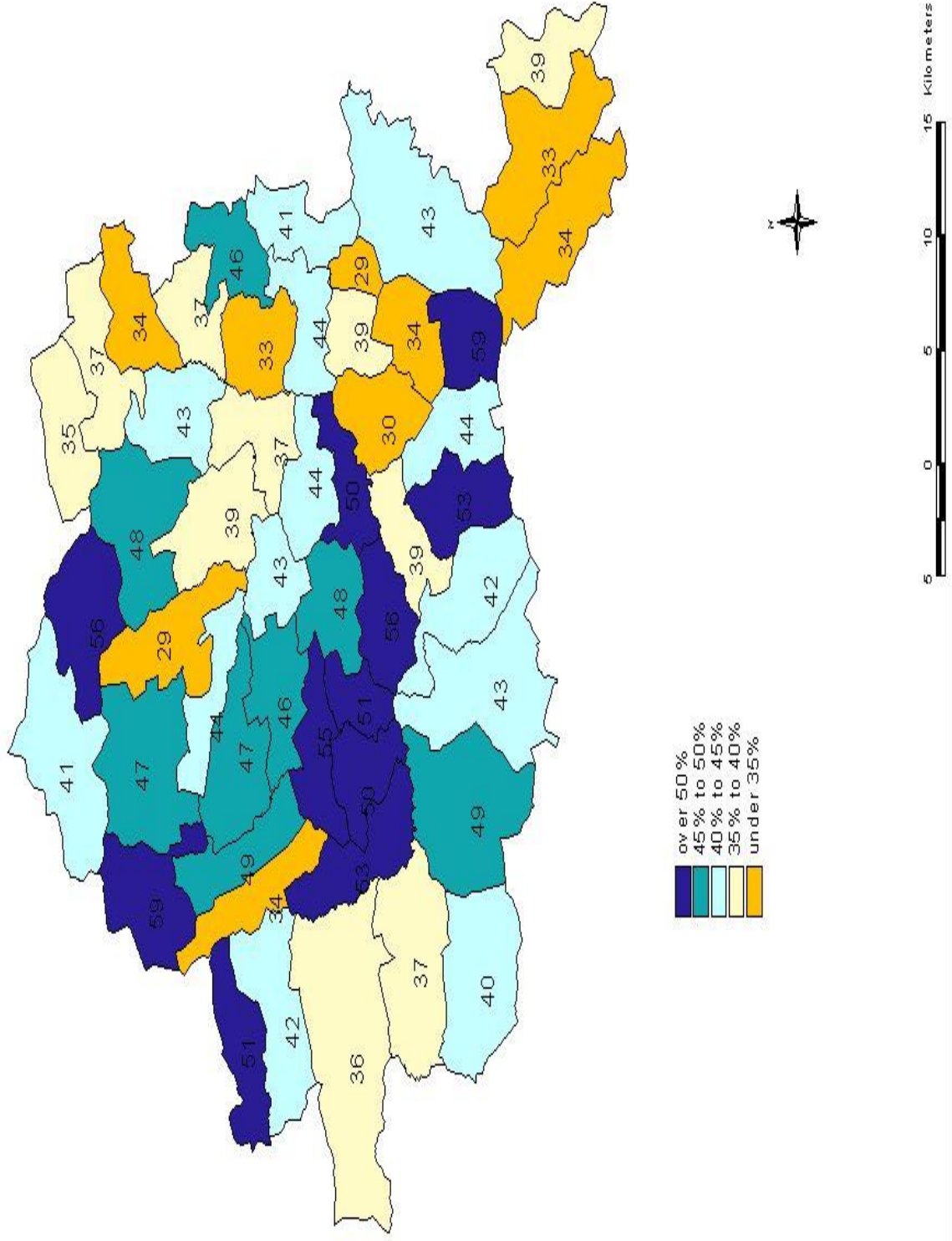


*Maura Walsh, IRD Duhallow pictured with Marie Linehan, CEO, Kerry Parents & Friends Association in the IRD Duhallow Go Kerry stand at the National Ploughing Championships 2017. IRD Duhallow has carried out energy efficiency upgrade works to a number of Kerry Parents & Friends properties since 2014 under the Better Energy Communities Programme.*

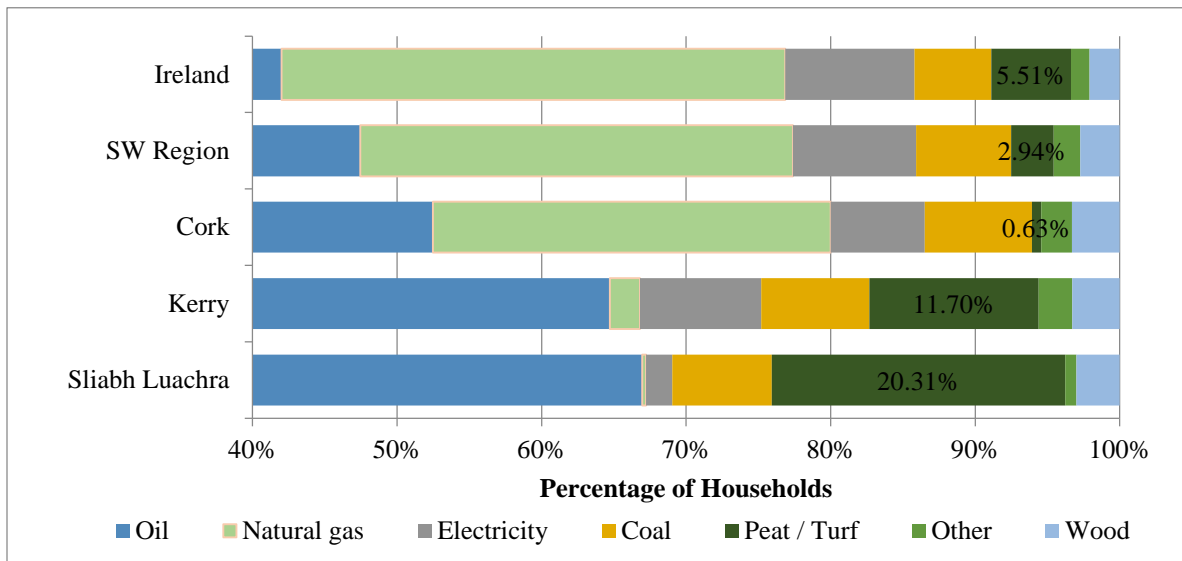
### **Demographics;**

For the purposes of the SICAP Programme IRD Duhallow covers the Sliabh Luachra area of East Kerry which encompasses the Rathmore, Gneeveguilla, Shrone, Tureencahill, Doctors Hill and Ballinahulla areas. However, the Duhallow Warmer Homes is covering the whole of Co. Kerry with limited staff resources. While, Duhallow Warmer Homes caters for the needs of some of the most vulnerable in Sliabh Luachra and all of Co. Kerry it is important to note that the housing stock in Sliabh Luachra is older than that of Co. Kerry and the State but also that as a county 20.69% of houses in Kerry were built before 1960, while the corresponding figure for Sliabh Luachra is 24.43%. As the following graph shows, the proportion of households burning peat for home heating in Sliabh Luachra is almost twice the Co. Kerry average and four times the national average. Overall as a county the reliance on peat and coal is an indicator of low-income / poverty. Moreover, as peat is one of the least efficient sources of home heating, it is also associated with poorer quality of life and with some health problems. This data provides further evidence of the compelling need to promote anti-poverty interventions in Sliabh Luachra and rural Co. Kerry, particularly among older people, disadvantaged families, those in isolated rural areas and those in local authority housing estates.

Percentage of Total Housing Stock, constructed pre-1960, in Duhallo, 2006



## Primary Source of Home Heating among Households in Sliabh Luachra and Selected Geographies, 2016.



### Target Group;

Under the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme the target groups engaged through this service are those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the region. Persons who own their own home which must be built prior to 2006 are eligible for this free service once they are in receipt of one of the following social welfare means tested payments;

- Fuel Allowance as part of the National Fuel Scheme,
- Job Seekers Allowance for over six months and have a child under of seven years of age,
- One Parent Family Payment
- Family Income Supplement
- Domiciliary Care Allowance
- Carers Allowance & Carers Benefit.

Duhallow Warmer Homes has actively been promoting this service across the county of Kerry in an effort to reach out to those who may be eligible. Those in receipt of carers allowance and carers benefit are the most recent addition to the eligibility list and this is a welcomed addition.

Under the Better Energy Communities Scheme we are able to provide support to local community and voluntary groups who own and operate facilities in need of insulation and ventilation. Many facilities such as community halls, special needs facilities and units have been supported in Kerry under this programme such as Kerry Parents and Friends facilities.

### SICAP Contribution;

As Duhallow Warmer Homes Scheme is now covering all of County Kerry it was identified that a marketing grant and the purchase of new equipment and vehicles was greatly needed to reach out to those most in need of this service in the area. We are currently in the process of submitting an application for a small marketing grant targeted specifically at Kerry which will allow Duhallow

Warmer Homes Scheme to promote the service to households in the Sliabh Luachra area. It is envisaged that this marketing campaign will expand the reach and customer base of Duhallow Warmer Homes Scheme and ensure its future viability, including the retention of jobs for those who are most distanced from the labour market. This will increase the sustainability of the Warmer Homes Scheme and its ability to contribute to the social and economic development of disadvantaged communities and households in Duhallow.

The beneficiaries of the services Duhallow Warmer Homes offer are the same as those targeted by SICAP and by delivering the warmer homes through a CBO IRD Duhallow is in a fortunate position that we can refer and link such beneficiaries onto SICAP and other programmes if and when they need it. Development offers link with beneficiaries of the service and help to identify relevant supports for these individuals. For example, many of the recipients of the warmer homes are older people that we would encourage to link up with actively retired groups, which we have established across the region with SICAP support, access the Pobal Senior Alert Scheme, attend information sessions and training etc. This is also the case with, for example, family carers who have their home insulated. Frequently we would encourage these households to avail of support from our Duhallow Carers Group which again is assisted through SICAP funding. The Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme is free to those in receipt of Fuel Allowance or Family Income Supplement or Job Seekers Allowance (For more than 6 months and have a child under 7 years of age) or the One Parent Family Payment. Thus, a large number of individuals eligible for SICAP supports including target groups such as low-income households, those vulnerable to addiction, lone parents, people with disabilities, the unemployed and disadvantaged children and families have engaged with this scheme, proving the interconnectedness of SICAP with this Social Enterprise.

Under the Better Energy Communities Programme community facilities have availed of insulation works, which are vital to support the good work that community groups are undertaking voluntarily. Such supports greatly assist communities financially as many are paying significant heating bills. Furthermore, a cold hall maybe a deterrent to target groups who might wish to utilise community facilities for training, workshops, seminars etc. This service has ensured that SICAP target groups in turn were supported indirectly as it ensures that they have a warm comfortable community facility to access for various meetings, training, workshops etc such as women's groups, actively retired groups, youth clubs etc. These community centres also act as outreach facilities for the provision of SICAP training supports offered through IRD Duhallow's Community Education & Lifelong Learning and Labour Market actions.

Our staff who are employed through the Community Services Programme avail of training such as Safe Pass and First Aid and one to one supports such as career guidance delivered through the SICAP programme actions. Many who began as Tús or CE Scheme participants have been supported to get permanent CSP part-funded, positions on our Warmer Homes. The SICAP training offered to staff members has helped to upskill the employees while in turn assisting Duhallow Warmer Homes Scheme to improve its service to the local community.

Adverts placed in Outlook Publications (Tralee, Killarney & Sliabh Luachra) funded through SICAP:

**IRD DUHALLOW WARMER HOMES SCHEME**

**FREE INSULATION SERVICE**



If you are in receipt of one of the following payments you may be eligible to receive insulation services free of charge:

- Fuel Allowance
- Family Income Supplement
- Jobseekers Allowance  
(for more than 6 months and have children under 7 years of age)  
Houses must be owner occupied and constructed before 2006

**seai** SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AUTHORITY OF IRELAND


**NSAI** Agreement  
Cavity Wall Insulation Approved Installer of Bonded Bead

IRD Duhallow Warmer Homes  
REC No. IAB/262

**Contact IRD Duhallow Warmer Homes Scheme on 029 60633**

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**E: duhallow@eircom.net**

## Employment

As Duhallow Warmer Homes is a social enterprise its remit is twofold. Firstly, it provides an insulation service to those eligible and in need of such supports but secondly it provides job opportunities, work placements and employment to those who are distanced from mainstream employment. It has an allocation of 1 full-time co-ordinator and 5 FTE's under the Community Services Programme (CSP). However, Duhallow Warmer Homes employs 9 people in the enterprise with more than half of their wages costs coming from income generated through the business. 90% of the current staff were distanced from mainstream employment having been long term unemployed prior to commencing employment with Duhallow Warmer Homes Scheme. In the past with a high rate of unemployment in rural areas especially among the under 25's, it was particularly difficult for many to gain meaningful and sustainable employment. This social enterprise helps to upskill, train and employ local people who fall into this category and have for a number of reasons been unable to obtain work up to now as we provide job placements from CE, RSS and Tús who work side by side with our permanent staff learning new skills which will assist them to get employment in the private sector. Now with unemployment on the downturn the reality is that many of those who are still unemployed often have other underlying issues and difficulties in their lives which prevents them from accessing mainstream employment such as addition, mental ill health, lack of transport and reluctance on the part of employers to employ the long term unemployed etc. Duhallow Warmer Homes

Scheme coordinator links with SICAP Development Officers to ensure that relevant supports are identified to support any staff in their development.

### **Collaborative Community Engagement;**

Recognising the need to have a collaborative approach in responding to the needs of the most vulnerable in the community IRD Duhallow established the Duhallow Community Care Committee on which Duhallow Warmer Homes is represented on along with other stakeholders from organisation such as An Garda Siochana, PHN's, community welfare and St. Vincent de Paul. Such collaboration is helping to reach out to those most in need and is facilitating a more efficient approach to supporting independent living of older people in their own homes. Older people are amongst those in the community who can be most affected by issues such as isolation, fuel and food poverty along with a range of other welfare concerns. Poor housing has a profound effect on physical, psychological and social health, and hence on quality of life, and this is amplified when the individual is coping with disability or an addiction. Work through the Duhallow Community Care Committee usually involves general clean up, painting and repairs. This often facilitates a person who has been hospitalised for a period of time to return home and avail of home help. Many referrals are made through this service to the Warmer Homes Scheme co-ordinator which resulted in works being carried out.

The warmer homes co-ordinator liaises with SICAP development officers to support both CSP employees and beneficiaries of the service along with linking up with the IRD Duhallow SICAP funded Job Centre to identify potential future employees. As Duhallow Warmer Homes scheme also has a number of TUS & CE Scheme participants the co-ordinator liaises with TUS & CE Scheme supervisors to support participants on these schemes through identifying relevant training opportunities, mentoring and one to one supports such as identifying relevant future employment opportunities by working with the Employment Officer, under the SICAP programme.

Collaborations with social inclusion supports such as SICAP are important for Duhallow Warmer Homes Schemes as it helps to provide and promote coordinated, expanded, enhanced and more innovative community services, ensuring supports for employees and individuals who engage with the service.

### **Challenges/barriers;**

There is a huge gap in the market to meet the insulation needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable households in Co. Kerry and there is further significant demand from homeowners from across the county of Kerry for insulation works. Significant marketing and promotion of the service provided by Duhallow Warmer Homes is required. Further investment in its equipment and replacement vehicles to ensure safe travelling given the mileage being covered by our current vehicles.

With almost 4,500 people in Kerry in receipt of the Free Fuel Allowance a high proportion are estimated to also own their own homes and would be eligible for the free insulation service under the BEWHS. In addition, Cunamh would have provided the basic packages in the past servicing over 900 houses-all of these houses should be revisited and be allowed avail of the updated enhanced packages of replacement windows, doors, slabbing and plastering as well as standard

ventilation. There are also 6,769 family carers in Co. Kerry. These houses still occupied by Target Groups need to be included in the scheme, currently they are not.

## **Opportunities**

IRD Duhallow successfully tendered to Kerry County Council in 2017 and are now listed on a panel of contractors to provide Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Works for Local Authorities. Works will be allocated on a project by project basis following a mini tender among the panel of contractors.

In 2018, SEAI expanded the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme (BEWHS) to include deep retrofit works such as external and internal wall insulation, window replacement and installation of heating systems. IRD Duhallow will need to train our staff to receive NSAI certification to deliver external wall insulation in order to deliver these additional measures in-house.

## **Rural Poverty**

Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice have written extensively on Rural Poverty highlighting how poverty manifests in rural areas with a concentration of services in larger urban centres

For families living in rural areas they are subjected to the additional “Rural cost” of €69.91-€108.61 per week. Ownership and use of a Car(s) is essential which can lead to an additional burden of €56-€126 per week

Those who are experiencing or at risk of Fuel poverty are heavily reliant on heating oil with no gas lines etc. Single adult households remain very vulnerable to Fuel Poverty.

Households with teenagers face additional food clothing & transport costs making them the most vulnerable to poverty in rural areas. Rural households face double burden of relying on more expensive heating oil & paying a greater amount of carbon tax while not having financial ability to improve their situation. Many of the poor rural families living in private, low quality, rented accommodation in fuel poverty

Warmer Homes Initiatives delivered by Local Development Companies bring the rural poor into contact with a broader range of services such as SICAP supports and other community supports such as meals on wheels, furniture revamp, community laundry, community education and training. Therefore, it really is a win win situation for all. In rural areas there are increasing distances between centres of services which places additional financial burdens of €150 per week on households (Vincentian Study)

Single people experience greater fuel poverty especially after losing partner and rural families with children over 10 have severest poverty levels (Vincentian Study).

## **Achievements;**

As can be seen in the table below, IRD Duhallow has provided energy efficiency upgrade works (mainly attic and cavity wall insulation works) to more than 3,800 properties in the region since

2006. These works were delivered through numerous schemes such as the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme (BEWHS), Home Incentive Scheme (HIS), Better Energy Communities (BEC). Lot D+ was introduced in 2018 whereby deeper retrofit works were introduced such as internal and external wall insulation, window replacement & heating upgrades. So far in 2018, 20 houses are in the process of receiving these enhanced insulation works.

<b>Completed Houses 2006 to date</b>						
<b>Year</b>	<b>BEWHS</b>	<b>Home Incentive Scheme</b>	<b>BEC-Community Buildings</b>	<b>BEWHS-Enhanced package with Dry-Lining &amp; Heating</b>	<b>Houses Total</b>	<b>Carbon Monoxide Alarms</b>
2006	130				<b>130</b>	
2007	140				<b>140</b>	
2008	150				<b>150</b>	
2009 *	480				<b>480</b>	
2010	713				<b>713</b>	
2011	502				<b>502</b>	
2012	390		31		<b>421</b>	
2013 **	274		70		<b>344</b>	
2014	195		47		<b>242</b>	
2015	191		5		<b>196</b>	
2016	153	33	5		<b>191</b>	
2017	143	29	5		<b>177</b>	200
2018 (to date)	78	42	1	20	<b>141</b>	300
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3539</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3827</b>	<b>500</b>

\* Cavity Wall Insulation added in 2009

\*\*Ventilation measures added from September 2013 onwards

A Social Cost Benefit Analysis of the Rural Social Scheme carried out for Pobal by Dr. Chris McInerney, University of Limerick in 2009, used the experience of IRD Duhallow's Warmer Homes Scheme to illustrate the cost and benefits produced by the RSS Scheme. This study stated that:

‘The value of the insulation work undertaken is the most obvious of these. Based on locally available rates, it is suggested that the full market cost of insulating an average size house of 125 meters<sup>2</sup> is approximately €919. For the 172 houses insulated by the Warmer Homes Scheme in 2007, this generates a total benefit to the community of €158,068. On top of this 154 lagging jackets and 264 CFL bulbs were installed to the value of €3,080 and €2,640 respectively. However, beyond the direct value of the work undertaken and materials installed, it is necessary to include the value of energy savings produced. In terms of

heating alone, a local survey in the Duhallow region suggests that there has been a 25% reduction in heating costs. Assuming an annual heating bill of €1,200 (1.5 tanks of home heating oil or equivalent), a saving per house of €300 / year can be estimated, leading to a total saving on heating of €516,000 over a 10-year period. It can be argued that such savings occur each year for a number of years and thus, conservatively, the undiscounted savings produced for a ten-year period are included. In addition, using ESB figures for energy savings, it can be estimated that the savings produced by the installation of lagging jackets, over a ten-year period is €30,800, and CFL bulbs, over the estimated lifetime of a bulb, is €44,800. The pro rata value of supervisors wages is estimated in this case to be €18,18254.” (Please see table in appendix 1).

### **Conclusion;**

Older people in Duhallow have been significantly affected by gaps in service provision, fuel poverty and social exclusion and isolation. As a result, there has been a greater shift towards community and social enterprises such as Duhallow Warmer Homes Scheme as a principal means of meeting the unmet needs of older people. Through engagement with local community groups and individuals through SICAP, animation work will continue to ensure that those most in need are targeted and informed of the services, both public and Community that are available to them locally. IRD Duhallow’s Warmer Homes Scheme will continue to provide an essential interface and link a range of services to marginalised individuals, contributing to the social and economic development of disadvantaged areas.

**Appendix 1: Extract from ‘A Social Cost Benefit Analysis of the Rural Social Scheme’ (2009)  
Section 2.3-Costs and Benefits of the Warmer Homes scheme in Duhallow**

	<b>Non financial benefits</b>	<b>Financial Benefits</b>		<b>Non financial Costs</b>	<b>Financial costs</b>	
<b>Individuals and their families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company and an opportunity to socialize</li> <li>• Flexibility and adequate time to carry out farming Activities</li> <li>• Has an impact beyond generations, especially on the outlook of children and their aspirations.</li> <li>• Causes children to view the parent working on the RSS in a different, more positive light.</li> <li>• Increased efficiency on the farm</li> <li>• Enhances personal development</li> <li>• For women participants, contributes to a sense of personal fulfillment.</li> </ul>	Additional annual income of €7,194/ person x 12 =	€86,328	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential dependence on the RSS And on IRD Duhallow.</li> <li>• Encourages changes in farm Practice e.g. leaving milk production, to suit off-farm work. May have implications if RSS participation were to cease.</li> </ul>	No additional costs reported.	
<b>Community &amp; State</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides additional source of contact for local communities, especially those who are more isolated.</li> <li>• Allows informal monitoring of community wellbeing.</li> <li>• Enables potential linkage with different social services</li> </ul>	- Full economic value of insulation work done on 172 houses at current market prices at approx. €919/ house. ) -Pro rata value of supervisors wages - 25% saving on heating costs (1.5 fills of diesel / year or equivalent = €1200) - 154 Hot water tank jackets (€20 each) - Energy saving €20/ year x 154 x 10 years - 264 CFLs @ €10/ bulb CFL Energy saving <sup>1</sup> (264 x €170 savings) -Donated Vehicles	€158,068  €18,254  €516,000 (300 x 172 houses x 10 years) €3,080  €30,800  €2,640 €44,880  €7,000	No additional non- financial costs	Average real cost / participant (€11077 x 12)  Nominal insulation fee (€75/ house)  Insulation Materials  Non reimbursed Staff time / participant (12 x €690)	€132,924  €12,900  €67,080  €8,280
<b>Total Financial Costs and Benefits</b>	Total Financial Benefits		€867,050		Total Fin. Costs	€221,184
	Economic Benefit / participant		€72,254		Economic Cost / participant	€18,432
<b>Cost: Benefit ratio = 1: 3.92</b> <b>i.e. for every €1 of cost each RSS participant produces €3.92 of quantifiable benefits</b>						

<sup>1</sup> Source for lagging jacket and CFL savings: ESB [http://www.esb.ie/main/downloads/energy\\_home/esb\\_energy\\_efficiency\\_tips.pdf](http://www.esb.ie/main/downloads/energy_home/esb_energy_efficiency_tips.pdf)

