

IRD Duhallo

YOUTH NEEDS ANALYSIS

in Duhallo and the Lee Valley

2021

*This report was funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the EARRD - Europe Investing in Rural Areas - LEADER 2014-2020. This project is supported by IRD Duhallow and the North Cork, South Cork and Kerry LAGs.



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IRD Duhallow

Research and compiled by Dr. Brendan O'Keeffe and Dr. Noreen O'Mahony
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James O'Keeffe Memorial Institute, Newmarket, Co. Cork, Ireland.

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List of Acronyms

CLLD	Community-Led Local Development
CSO	Central Statistics office
CYPSC	Children and Young People's Services Committee
ED	Electoral Division
EP	European Parliament
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
Gul	Growing Up in Ireland
HEI	Higher-Education Institute
IAT	Internet Addiction Test
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IRD	Integrated Resource Development
LEADER	<i>Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale</i> (Links between actions for the development of the rural economy)
NE	North East / North-Eastern
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PLC	Post Leaving Cert
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
SE	South East / South-Eastern
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
TY	Transition Year
W	West / Western



Minister's Foreword



Norma Foley TD
*Department of Education
and Skills*

May I begin by thanking the IRD Duhallow Board and The Youth and Education Working Group for inviting me to write this forward.

I would like to applaud all those involved in undertaking this impressive report which highlights the important and unique role the IRD Duhallow plays in the development of this region.

Rural development in its essence is about supporting communities on the ground and this collaborative piece of work has brought together a number of key stakeholders in the community, producing valuable, enlightening and important insights and research.

The recommendations outlined as part of the report will most certainly underpin the development of regional strategy going forward.

I believe that this is a report that could have the potential to be replicated across the country as it presents an exciting opportunity to further engage with young people and ensure their voices are heard.

Many of the findings and recommendations mirror the goals of the recently announced government strategy contained in Our Rural Future Rural Development Policy 2021-2025, which highlights government's commitment to providing additional support for young people in rural Ireland.

COVID 19 has brought with it a myriad of challenges and Ireland's youth have faced disruptions and situations never previously experienced. I would like to acknowledge the resilience, ingenuity and strength of character shown by our young people. In particular for

all the sacrifices they have made and continue to make for the good of the nation. I welcome the dedicated chapter in this report relating to the impact of the pandemic on the young people of the region. It highlights a number of issues including the importance of broadband in rural areas not just for academic purposes, but also work opportunities and social connectivity. The importance of lifelong learning opportunities is emphasised throughout the report and centres of excellence such as the James O'Keeffe Institute act as central hubs for adult and second chance education in rural areas.

This report has been produced with funding from the LEADER programme. It is fitting that the current 14-20 programme has a dedicated funding strand for Rural Youth. Ensuring the needs of young people are fully catered for in rural areas will enable the continued vibrancy of rural communities and regions. We need to mitigate outward migration from rural Ireland and I foresee that the increased uptake in remote working resulting from the pandemic experience will generate a greater number of white collar jobs to the region, thereby supporting greater economic vibrancy and improved quality of life for young people living in the area.

I am reminded of the wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi who once said: "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

To those of you working tirelessly with IRD Duhallow you have demonstrated great generosity of spirit and social conscience. I thank you for your breath of vision, your focus on young people and your growing and nurturing of rural communities.

Wishing you continued success.

Minister Norma Foley TD
Department of Education and Skills

Preface



Rory O'Donnell

This report on youth needs is both an important resource for IRD Duhallow and a significant example of an approach to analysis and development that has wider relevance. The report reflects an understanding of the need for a combination of both bottom-up and top-down needs, perspectives and

visions. Indeed, as I note below, finding the organisational forms and practices that yield a really effective combination of bottom-up and top-down—rather than just an awkward or tokenistic combination of the two—is a central challenge in Irish rural development policy now and, I would argue, for Irish public sector reform more widely.

The report contains exceptionally rich data on the life, experience and needs of young people in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. Not surprisingly, the issues which it highlights operate at different levels. Some challenges have a significant national element, reflecting unresolved national policy issues, such as housing, urban real estate management, childcare affordability and car insurance. Some are common to many rural areas, such as public transport, childcare provision and agricultural succession. And some are distinctive to this particular part of Cork county or, indeed, as the report shows, to particular areas within Duhallow and the Lee Valley.

But the thrust of the analysis—and the perspective of IRD Duhallow, LEADER and modern rural development thinking—is that even where national policy frameworks are critical, such as in housing and childcare, they will always require place-based contextual knowledge, engagement and implementation. Indeed, with the right combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches, local projects and innovation, of the kind promoted by IRD Duhallow over the past three decades, can solve problems locally but also significantly inform national policy. But, by and large, national policy and public reform has not yet created the organisational arrangements and policy approaches which effectively combine local problem solving with national learning and direction. It is, of

course, a difficult challenge, faced right across the democratic world. But in figuring out how to do it, much can be learned from the approach in this study and, particularly, from the work of IRD Duhallow and similar organisations.

One of the striking findings of the report is low or moderate satisfaction with the level and quality of public services. This underline the fact that Ireland has not yet combined our critical income transfers and benefits, which improved strongly in recent decades, with the kind of capacitating services advocated in the 2005 report *The Developmental Welfare State* (National Economic and Social Council).

Reflecting this, the report unveils important substantive issues—such as mental health pressures and inadequate opportunities for social interaction beyond sport and the pub—as well as critical process and institutional needs. An example of the latter is the strong argument for ‘increased support for animation, capacity-building and community development, so that civil society organisations can provide an enhanced range of opportunities, amenities and facilities for young people and enable them to participate more fully in local development and decision-making’.

This youth needs analysis is timely given the recent publication of the important Government White Paper *Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025*. The White Paper claims to represent ‘a new milestone in the approach to rural development policy for Ireland’. It does, indeed, combine two perspectives that are prominent in international thinking. The first is increased understanding that rural development is integrally linked to policies across a wide range of areas and is strongly shaped by urban development and urbanising tendencies. The second is ‘a more holistic and place-based approach to rural development than heretofore’, which encourages and supports rural communities to develop cohesive, integrated and tailored plans to meet the long-term needs of their own particular area (*Our Rural Future*, 2021, p. 28 and 12).

Together these explain why, in contrast to earlier rural development strategies, the focus on rural *sectors*—such as agriculture, the marine and tourism—is now combined with greater attention to the strength and

fabric of rural *towns and villages*, given the role they play in the economic, social and cultural dynamics. Indeed, the White Paper builds on the CSO's distinction between three types of rural areas: those with high urban influence, moderate urban influence and those that are highly rural and remote. Indeed, the youth needs analysis illustrates ways in which different parts of Duhallow and the Lee Valley exhibit different degrees of urban influence and rural remoteness.

This sophisticated approach—recognising the influence of a wide range of national policies and the specific features of each rural area—maps out the possibilities and challenges facing *Our Rural Future*.

On the one hand, it means that the success of *Our Rural Future* is heavily dependent on the effectiveness of the many other strategies and policies referenced in the White Paper. Among the most prominent are *Project Ireland 2040* (encompassing the *National Development Plan* and the *National Planning Framework*) and the five-year strategy for the community and voluntary sector *Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities* (2019). There are many others, and beneath these lie the actual policies—such as housing, childcare and transport policy—that really determine what happens or cannot happen. For example, history shows us that a failure to have an effective national policy for affordable housing undermines a grand spatial ambition, such as the National Spatial Strategy, and reduces the impact of county development plans.

On the other hand, the explicit adoption of a place-based approach puts centre stage the question: what institutions and processes are needed to formulate integrated tailored plans for particular places, such as Duhallow and the Lee Valley, and how do these combine local participation with appropriate links to national agencies and actors? Only with both will it be possible to mobilise local actors and national (and indeed, international) resources to create, deliver and monitor projects with address economic and social problems.

It is not possible, in this preface, to assess the effectiveness of the key national strategies, such as *National Planning Framework* (NPF), and the policies cited in *Our Rural Future*, and on which the success of the white paper will rely. But, it is fairly widely agreed

that the NPF, while setting out ambitious new spatial goals, leaves somewhat undefined what institutional arrangements and actors will be empowered to design and deliver plans—from Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans and Regional Strategies down to the rural area 'Master Plans' referred to in *Our Rural Future*. A good example of the combination of these substantive and institutional issues, cited in *Our Rural Future*, is the complexity of the challenges involved in delivering the Town Centre First Principle. Are the institutional, legal and political frameworks in place to deliver on this principle? As well as allocation of funding to relevant schemes, this will require both empowering local actors and removing obstacles that lie within national policy and legal frameworks – i.e. new combination of both bottom-up and top-down.

Likewise, on the subject of participation *Our Rural Future* cites the 2019 White Paper *Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities*. Also produced by the Department of Rural and Community Development, that strategy constituted a significant step forward after the severe centralisation of policy, and curtailment of engagement, that occurred in crisis from 2008 to 2014. It has advanced and formalised a significant return to engagement with the community and voluntary sector. But, again, a lot depends on whether the progressive perspective articulated by the Department of Rural and Community Development has a real impact on the approach taken by line departments and agencies in the programmes they fund. It is with these that community and voluntary groups have their most significant relationship. Where these remain siloed, or continue with a top-down approach to policy design, commissioning, funding and evaluation, the ambitions for participation of the 2019 White Paper are unlikely to be realised. Indeed, it may be significant that some of the strongest and most consistent experiments in local engagement and empowerment would seem to be in EU-funded programmes such as LEADER and the European Innovation Partnerships.

The youth needs report brings forward evidence that should be reflected on locally, but also nationally. In analysing IRD Duhallow's youth projects over the period 1991 to 2020, it notes that in addition to the direct and project-specific investments, documented in formal project documents, there have been significant

intangible contributions. While the scale of these inputs, and the contribution of these tailored inputs to youth development, wellbeing and progression, are hard to measure, they should not be excluded, as they tend to be, by the falsely precise programme planning and evaluation procedures imposed at national level in the past decade. National policy, commissioning and evaluation must find a way of supporting, rather than excluding or discounting, the promotion of innovation

and demonstration projects that characterises the work of IRD Duhallow and similar organisations. Again, this seems to be based on combining innovation on *substantive* challenges, such as mental health and education, with inventive *processes* of inquiry, like the Youth Needs Analysis, engagement and action.

Rory O'Donnell

University College Dublin

Executive Summary

This report presents one of the most extensive and in-depth sets of studies undertaken among young people in rural Ireland. It represents a significant body of evidence that can serve to inform decision-making and modes of development, not just in Duhallow and the Lee Valley, but in most of rural Europe.

Young People in Duhallow and the Lee Valley – issues, needs and potential

The demographic and socio-economic profile, presented in Chapter 2, provides evidence of the scale and manifestation of the urbanising patterns mentioned above. Successive returns from the Census of Population show that while Duhallow and the Lee Valley have a relatively strong child and teenage population, outmigration, especially to Cork and Dublin, is leading to a depletion in the proportion of the population aged between eighteen and thirty-five. This is particularly the case in Western Duhallow. The data on intercensal population change reveal that the parts of the Lee Valley and South-Eastern Duhallow that are closest to Cork City are the most vibrant in the IRD Duhallow area; they have higher proportions of young families and lower age dependency ratios. As the analysis presented in later sections illustrates, these communities' vitality is not just associated with proximity to the city; it is also driven by strong bottom-up action, which has resulted in communities attracting investment and developing amenities and facilities that offer local citizens a good quality of life. Indeed, the various surveys, among young people, presented here, underscore the importance of wellbeing, access to recreational spaces and opportunities for self-actualisation in enabling individuals and families to make choices about where they live and work. The territorial profile points to the following recommendations:

- Provide increased support for animation, capacity-building and community development, so that civil society organisations can provide an enhanced range of opportunities, amenities and facilities for young people and enable them to participate more fully in local development and decision-making;
- Further facilitate inter-community networking and information-sharing, so that best practices are transferred across communities;
- Invest in significant flagship projects in Western Duhallow that will enhance the area's attractiveness and quality-of-life, in ways that

build on its traditional cultural capital and cross-county linkages;

- Invest in support services for families with young children, including rural primary schools and family support services;
- Further promote inter-generational projects in all communities, particularly in those that have a high proportion of newcomers;
- Establish a forum for 18- to 35-year-olds in each of the community forum areas, to operate on the same principles as IRD Duhallow's Community Forum, and to elect two representatives to IRD Duhallow's Youth & Education Working Group; and
- Strengthen linkages to the Duhallow diaspora, particularly in Dublin.

The territorial profile reveals some infrastructural deficits locally, particularly in respect of broadband connectivity, which, as survey results (in Chapter 5) demonstrate, is integral to enabling Duhallow and the Lee Valley to achieve economic competitiveness and give young people enhanced progression pathways in education and employment. Indeed, ICT connectivity is increasingly expected and required in order to access many commercial and public services, and as the survey results (in Chapters 3 and 4) reveal, early intervention and access to support services are vital for all young people, particularly those who live in challenging circumstances and in households that are affected by material and spiritual deprivation. Data provided by statutory bodies and service providers reveal some gaps and shortcomings in respect of social supports and vocational pathways. The consultations with service providers highlighted severe limitations, in terms of assessing needs and appraising outcomes, due to the collation and reporting of data on the basis of administrative counties, rather than contemporary geographies. This practice, which applies in most statutory bodies, is particularly disadvantageous to large counties such as Cork, and it inhibits transparency, understanding and analysis at sub-county level. It also mitigates against inter-county data comparisons, given the disparities in respect of population and geography. As noted here, many agencies do not collate or publish data for Duhallow and the Lee Valley, while they do so for individual counties that have smaller populations. These findings point to the following recommendations:

- Ensure that statutory sector data / returns, in larger counties, including Cork and Kerry are

collected, collated and published at sub-county level – preferably at the level of local electoral areas or rural districts;

- Undertake comparative analysis, using sub-county data, to accurately assess the per-capita levels of public sector investment and service provision in Duhallow and the Lee Valley;
- Provide for the disbursal of public funds (directly from government and through statutory bodies) on the basis of quality assurance criteria, rather than on county-based allocations; and
- Establish a family resource centre in Duhallow, under the aegis of IRD Duhallow.

Experiences and Perceptions of Second-Level Students

The survey among second-level students reveals generally high levels of engagement in the education system and positive perceptions of schools and teachers. Almost three-quarters of females anticipate progressing to higher education, as do over sixty percent of males. Their career aspirations tend to focus on public service employment in health and education, more than on careers in the knowledge economy or other emerging sectors. Just six percent of males, and no females, indicated that they would like a career in farming.

In terms of wellbeing, the vast majority of young people report healthy behaviours in respect of eating, taking exercise and refraining from smoking. However, underage alcohol consumption and unhealthy attitudes towards alcohol are problematic. The survey results also reveal notable mental health challenges, including feelings of fatigue, loneliness and isolation. Females were more likely, than were males, to report mental health difficulties, including feeling suicidal. Less than half of females reported that they could talk to their father or to another adult if they have problems or difficulties. Over three quarters, of both genders, can talk to their mother.

Social media play an important role in enabling young people to keep in contact with one another and to access information. While ICT can have an enabling effect, the survey results provide cause for concern in that they indicate that young people can be overly reliant on online information, the accuracy of which can be dubious. Moreover, their tendency to access information from online platforms can lead to the displacement of supportive adults, and the survey

findings reveal that only a minority of teenagers consult parents or teachers when they need to access information about relationships and sexuality. Indeed, fewer than half of young males report ever having discussed sex and / or relationships with their parents. Young people also reported that they feel under pressure to use social media and to alter images and profiles on their accounts.

The survey findings point to the following recommendations:

- Promote linkages between local farms, schools and youth organisations, so that young people have a more accurate and positive perception of agriculture, and a greater understanding of the multiple roles played by farming households, including food production, landscape conservation and acting as repositories of cultural and social capital;
- Expand the range of progression opportunities available to young people, particularly in agriculture, trades and services;
- Better enable schools and communities to further empower young people to live healthy lifestyles – including making further investments in a wider range (beyond field games) of sporting and recreational facilities;
- Encourage greater female participation in recreational activities – through establishing new groups, and encouraging existing groups to be more proactive in reaching out to, and including, those aged 16 to 35;
- Ensure that every community in Duhallow and the Lee Valley has a looped walk (slí na sláinte) and spaces that are conducive to whole-of-family recreation;
- Promote greenways and ensure greater connectivity to existing walking and cycling routes, such as the Duhallow Way;
- Mainstream the provision of after-school activities in all schools, as places in which young people are given the space and confidence to access any supports they need;
- Further invest in parenting / grandparenting support programmes, and deliver programmes that are bespoke for fathers and grandfathers;
- Equip youth, parents and guardians with more tools to enable them to ensure greater online safety and lobby (in collaboration with other stakeholders) for greater regulation of online activities and the de-anonymisation of online

- platforms; and
- Provide further support to service providers (statutory and non-statutory) in order to ensure that their services are fully accessible to those who live in rural communities – in-person, and not just through online interfaces.

Experiences and Perceptions of Young Adults

In addition to surveying teenagers, this research involved consultations with persons aged 18 to 35. As noted in the opening remarks, the relative size of this population cohort is an important indicator of the vitality of rural areas. Indeed, the European Commission has long contended that rural youth are those aged up to 35 years. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of social science literature and / or research about those aged 18 to 35 in rural areas, and IRD Duhallow envisages that the results presented here (elaborated in Chapter 4) represent a contribution to filling this void.

Those aged 18 to 35 exhibit a strong sense of place and a commitment to their home communities in Duhallow and the Lee Valley – regardless of where they currently live. They visit home frequently, and most would like to be able to live permanently in their home communities. Yet, like many in their generation, they face challenges in respect of financial insecurity, paying mortgages and affording childcare. Some also report difficulties in obtaining planning permission. Just over one third report that they can get employment in their preferred job / sector locally. The survey findings demonstrate that poor quality broadband is an economic and social barrier in many parts of Duhallow and the Lee Valley. Almost sixty percent of respondents reported that it has not improved over the past five years.

Despite Ireland’s progress in respect of gender equality, over recent decades, the survey results indicate the persistence of some gender inequities. In over one third of households, childcare fees are paid from the mother’s income, and women are much older than men when they acquire their driving licence or buy a car. Young women socialise less frequently than young men do, and they are less likely to participate in sporting and recreational activities.

The findings in respect of social interactions and community engagement point to the need for more investment in community amenities and a redoubling

of agencies’ efforts to support the well-being of young people. Almost ten percent of young adults report not having socialised at all in the past month (in pre-pandemic times). While young people appreciate their home communities’ cultural and natural capital, they report feelings of isolation and boredom, and their perceptions underscore the need for ongoing investment in improving quality of life, in tandem with increasing economic opportunities in rural areas.

The survey among those aged 18 to 35 points to the following recommendations:

- Invest (not just through LEADER, but through all public bodies) in ensuring that communities in Duhallow have adequate and future-proofed supplies of housing, infrastructure and services to enable them to grow their populations and to enable young adults to exercise choice about where they live;
- Improve and integrate public / community transport facilities, so that commuters have realistic options in terms of green and active travel;
- Re-double the acceleration of the rollout of rural broadband – to commercial and domestic premises;
- Provide general and bespoke training and upskilling in entrepreneurship and innovation – targeted at young adults, and accessible to those who are open to living / working in Duhallow / the Lee Valley;
- Work with national organisations to advocate for young people, in relation to issues such as car insurance, home affordability and access to public services;
- Deepen linkages between third-level education providers and rural communities and offer third-level and further education / training options in Duhallow;
- Continue to highlight issues affecting young people, including loneliness, isolation and mental health – and encourage young people to support their peers; and
- Continue to challenge gender stereotyping and inequality;

Empowering Young People

Both survey cohorts (i.e. teenagers and those aged 18 to 35) reported similar perceptions of the levels of vibrancy in their communities. They reported positively

on the work of community and voluntary groups, local schools and the quality of the local environment. However, they identified clear shortcomings in respect of several public services, particularly transport. They recommended investing more in community infrastructure, including non-sporting amenities, extending the range of family supports (especially for those with special needs), making roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists and improving the quality of housing.

IRD Duhallow had completed both surveys prior to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been a major disrupter of all facets of life. Given its significance, and mindful of the need to learn lessons from society's experience of the pandemic, IRD Duhallow undertook a dedicated study in January 2021. The findings are presented here in Chapter 5. They show that over the course of 2020, institutions such as schools and colleges invested in their capacity to ensure better youth engagement. While their efforts are laudable, young people favour face-to-face and blended learning over exclusively online platforms. As other studies also reveal, the pandemic has caused young people to become disconnected from their places of study / employment and from their peers, and most are concerned that it will have adverse effects on their learning, education and career prospects. The survey findings also point to significant adverse mental health consequences and shortcomings in the supports available to young people.

Among those in employment, a quarter have suffered a drop in income, and almost a third have had to give-up work or reduce their hours, due to the pandemic. Females have been more adversely affected than males. Females are less keen, than are males, on working from home in a post pandemic environment.

The pandemic has significantly altered people's social lives, and the survey findings reveal that most are spending more time, online, using social media and walking in their neighbourhoods. As a result of the restrictions, they are devoting less time to physical activities and sport, and many of the positive behaviours, in respect of healthy living, which are documented in Chapter 3, have clearly been undermined and reduced over the course of 2020-21. People also report a worsening of their mental health, sleep patterns and their ability to cope with life. Thus,

while national headlines and attention have focused on the need for the elimination of disease (COVID-19), the survey findings reveal pressing and growing needs to deal with the socio-psychological impacts of the pandemic on our young people. As Chapter 5 outlines, the findings in Duhallow and the Lee Valley are underpinned by pioneering, peer-reviewed research. The local findings resonate with a growing body of evidence from across Europe, and these point to:

- Equipping rural areas with the infrastructure and capacity to grow their populations and sustain an increased range of economic functions and activities;
- Ensuring that the EU and government make further strides in promoting family-friendly societies and workplaces; and
- Working with regulators, NGOs, educators and the private sector to ensure that information and communications technologies are less invasive and are more conducive to human well-being.

Development Approaches

Since its inception, IRD Duhallow has had a proactive focus on young people, and as the data presented in Chapter 6 reveal, the organisation has directly invested over €5.3million in youth-related projects. This investment is in addition to the time its staff and voluntary board and sub-committees devote to youth mentoring, guidance and support, the scale of which is innumerable. In addition, young people have been among the primary beneficiaries of several of IRD Duhallow's initiatives including its Jobs' Club and work with farming families. Thus, IRD Duhallow's contribution to youth development is significant and impactful.

Through the application of community-led local development (CLLD) approaches, over four decades, IRD Duhallow has expanded life opportunities and progression pathways for young people in education, employment and community development. IRD Duhallow has also built the capacity of local civil society to engage with and support young people, and to develop projects and amenities for their benefit. The survey findings point to the need to consolidate and build on such approaches, and to make increased investments, so that local social capital is further strengthened, and young people have expanded choices in respect of their life trajectories.

Chairpersons Report



Cllr. Gobnait Moynihan

This Youth Needs Analysis in the IRD Duhallow region is a very valuable piece of work. We have nothing previously like this very informative research for the IRD Duhallow region. It is a vital piece of work as it informs us of what youth services/facilities are needed within in the community.

I would like to start by thanking my colleagues on the Youth Working Group for initiating and overseeing this large piece of work. I wish to thank IRD Duhallow Chairperson, Breeda Moynihan Cronin for appointing me as Chair of the strategically focused Youth and Education Working Group. I wish to thank the WG members for their dedication and ongoing support, they undertake Trojan work amongst the youth of the region delivering youth leadership programmes, literacy support programmes, public speaking courses, careers exhibitions and even transnational projects.

I would like to thank all the students and young people for participating in the research. Thanks to all those who completed the questionnaire, the online survey and the students and staff from following schools: Boherbue Comprehensive school, Coachford College, Coláiste Treasa, Millstreet Community School, Pobal Scoil Sliabh Luachra, Scoil Mhuire in Kanturk and St Mary's Catholic Secondary School in Macroom. Many local workplaces circulated this email to the staff members within the age bracket of the study, and we thank them for their support. I also want to thank local Macra and Foroige clubs who encouraged their members to partake in the survey.

Upon reading this report I'm sure you will agree that the authors have done an excellent job presenting their comprehensive research. I also wish to thank the IRD Duhallow staff – CEO Maura Walsh, along with Helen O'Sullivan, Conor Judge and Louise Bourke for all their work on this report. I also wish to acknowledge LEADER and the LCDCs in North Cork, South Cork and Kerry for their support in funding this report. This report is of huge importance in that it is one of the few studies that covers our young adults. The definition of a young person is someone up to the age of 35, this means it covers three distinct groups: school children, college students and those who are in employment or seeking employment.

We are honoured and deeply grateful that Minister for Education, Norma Foley T.D. has taken time out of her schedule to officially launch this report. I would also like to thank Dr Rory O'Donnell for honouring us by writing the foreword to this report. Rory is highly acclaimed for his extensive work and research with NESC, and his eminence in the fields of rural and economic development mean that he offers valuable insights into this report.

We see that Duhallow and Lee Valley have a relatively strong child and youth population, but are not retaining this population. But on a positive note, most young people (64%) would like to live in this rural area, to be close to family, or feel it's a nice place to raise children. The report highlights the importance of housing, infrastructure and services for rural areas, and of course the increasing importance of high speed broadband connectivity. It behoves all communities and agencies to ensure they have such a choice, and it is evident that the issue of housing needs to be looked at.

While the research reveals that most teenagers are committed to healthy lifestyles, I was shocked to read that 1 in 8 of the respondents report having an eating disorder. Over half of the respondents report that their weight affects the way they feel about themselves. A fifth stated they have self-harmed, and a higher proportion (31%) have felt suicidal. This alone is extremely worrying and shows a need for specific supports to help our young people. Having some of this research carried out during the pandemic, we get a taste as to how the pandemic may exasperate these issues. Ensuring schools, youth workers and communities are equipped to provide our young people, with the appropriate tools and support is vital. I am concerned about the long-term impact the pandemic will have on our young people and their ability to cope with what life has in store.

Another point worth noting is employment in the Lee Valley and Duhallow area. We see that there is a higher rate of labour participation in the area than in the case regionally or across the State. This is evidence of a strong local entrepreneurial culture, and we need to continue to foster enterprise, innovation and creativity. This piece of research is insightful and a great deal can be learnt from it about our young people. Pointers have been given as to what need to be done in the Lee Valley and Duhallow - to make it more inclusive for our young people. I am also inspired by how our young people have sought to be responsible and stoic in the face of the pandemic.

1. Introduction and Context

IRD Duhallow's Youth and Education Working Group commissioned this independent report in order to supplement and enhance the evidence base available to it, and to others, with regard to youth development in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. The report responds to both bottom-up and top-down needs, perspectives and visions, and it seeks to give voice to young people on a wide range of contemporary issues.

- From the **bottom-up**, local communities, including those who work with young people – as educators and community leaders and young people themselves note the need for concerted efforts to support and sustain community-based youth initiatives locally. They note that youth engagement happens in a wide range of formal and non-formal settings, including schools, sports clubs and across civil society. Therefore, it is important that stakeholders, in traditional youth work and those in other settings, be informed about the needs, experiences, hopes and desires of young people. Furthermore, it is essential that young people be enabled to play full and active parts in decision-making – especially in situations where such decisions affect them directly.
- From the **top-down**, there has been a greater coordination of statutory functions over the past decade. The publication of the national policy framework for children and young people – *Better Outcomes – Brighter Futures* (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014a) promotes a holistic approach to meeting the needs of children and young people – based on early and preventative interventions. The policy framework also emphasises evidence-based and data-driven decision-making. Moreover, national policies advocate an increased commitment to partnership approaches, including greater collaboration between actors in the formal and non-formal sectors.

1.1 LEADER and Rural Youth

The LEADER approach to rural development embodies working from the bottom-up and promoting horizontal partnerships. In practice, this implies involving all actors – community, social partners and statutory - in working together to implement agreed strategies and actions. In respect of youth, the current LEADER Operating Rules specify that IRD Duhallow and other LEADER

organisations ought to support the promotion of youth entrepreneurship and associated training, so as to provide improved pathways for young people to access economic opportunities. The operating rules further specify the need to invest in actions that develop the social infrastructure of rural areas and provide important opportunities for young people to realise their potential.

LEADER projects involving young people may be eligible under any of the three current programme themes: economic development (including enterprise and job creation); social inclusion and the rural environment. Mindful of the need, therefore, to garner data and information in respect of all three thematic areas, the research presented here deals with young people's economic experiences and prospects, their engagement in their local communities and their perspectives of the environment – cultural and ecological. Over successive iterations of LEADER, young people have been defined as those aged up to thirty-five.

The data collection that underpins this report deals with a wide range of youth-related issues, and it covers the age spectrum specified by the European Commission. Given the need to drill down into the specific experiences and perspectives of this significant age cohort, IRD Duhallow advocated undertaking two parallel surveys – one with senior-cycle second-level students and one with those aged 18 to 35. This approach – with two mutually reinforcing sets of surveys – has generated a comprehensive dataset, as evidenced by the findings presented in chapters three and four.

The most recent OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) reviews of rural policy note the merits of the LEADER approach. *Rural 3.0* (OECD, 2018) provides a refresh of the OECD's 2006 publication *A New Rural Paradigm*, which advocates collaborative approaches to development – involving all sectors, namely the public sector, the private sector and social enterprise and non-governmental organisations and civil society. In order to ensure this report delivers benefits for all actors (as specified in *Rural 3.0*), the questions that were addressed by young people, through the two survey instruments, deal with public service provision, institutional trust, attitudes to society and government, enterprise development, job creation, education and progression and the roles of community

and voluntary groups, among other actors, in rural communities.

1.2 National Policy Outcomes



The aforementioned national policy framework *Better Outcomes – Brighter Futures* – advocates an evidence-based approach to policy-formulation, decision-making and service delivery. It notes the need for bespoke approaches and interventions in line with local contexts and issues. The policy framework acknowledges that children and young people in rural and island communities may face particular difficulties in accessing services (2014a: 33). It further notes the importance of taking rurality into account when devising approaches and delivering initiatives, and the framework specifies the need for the provision of support to young people building businesses and livelihoods in the rural economy, such as in farming, fishing, forestry, food, hospitality and tourism (2014a: 94). The national policy framework also acknowledges the specific life experiences of rural children and young people, and it refers to the potential significance of access / distances. The framework notes that children and young people may experience difficulties maintaining friendships due to social exclusion, rural isolation and/or the need for them to take on caring responsibilities within their families (2014a: 101). In order to give effect, at local level, to these acknowledgements and recommendations, in national policy, it is necessary to collect, collate and disseminate data – as data provide pointers for the development of strategic and operational plans and robust databases ensure the development of indicators that allow for objective performance monitoring.

Commentaries by the National Youth Council of Ireland, Comhairle na nÓg and other NGOs with an advocacy and policy remit note the importance of public service provision and access to supports and services in enabling young people to realise their potential. Distance from services has been a persistent challenge for young people in rural areas, and austerity policies, over the past decade, have compounded these challenges. The provision of services through on-line platforms has, in theory, improved citizens' access to services, but this is contingent on the provision of reliable broadband, which as the findings in this report show, remains a notable deficit in much of Duhallow and the Lee Valley. Moreover, the migration to on-line platforms can lead to a de-personalisation of service provision, and a weakening of the mentoring role traditionally associated with youth work, education and champions in public bodies. These issues are among those explored in this report.

1.3 Strengthening the Evidence Base

This report represents a contribution to strengthening the evidence base to which IRD Duhallow's Youth and Education Working Group, among others, can refer when making decisions. Young people and those who work with them have personal and professional insights that are integral to decision-making. In addition, many have subject knowledge (e.g., health, education), and they can often draw on experiences and evaluations of interventions, pilots and ongoing projects. However, these stakeholder experiences can be strengthened and enhanced through the independent collection of statistical data about the lives and perspectives of young people. This report seeks to do that. It reflects the assertions contained in the *Value for Money and Policy Review of Youth Programmes* (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014), Recommendation Six of which stated that "local service planning, in identifying the groups of young people that will be engaged in a given year, should include a quantified estimate of the differential need levels of the young people or groups of young people involved. This estimate should be based on clear demographic data and other local intelligence" (2014b: 12). Chapter 2 of this report provides extensive demographic data, which seeks to complement local knowledge and insights.

The demographic and socio-economic data presented here relate to over twenty variables, and the statistics for Duhallow and the Lee Valley are compared and

contrasted with those of other geographies, namely Counties Cork and Kerry, the South-West Region and Ireland (the State). These comparisons are essential in enabling benchmarking. Furthermore, the data are mapped at local (electoral division – ED) level, so that particular features and patterns in each community can be observed and analysed. It should be noted, however, that there are data limitations when working beyond the statistics published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). These limitations affect large counties, most especially County Cork. As the data presented in Chapter 2 illustrate, there are notable points of divergence between Duhallow / Lee Valley and Cork County, and there are some considerable divergences within the IRD Duhallow catchment area. Capturing these sub-county patterns is important, but it is not possible where agencies only collect and report data at county level.

Since the publication of *Better Outcomes – Brighter Futures* (in 2014), the Department of Children and Youth Affairs has published periodic sets of statistics under the heading *State of the Nation's Children*. These

publications include some of the variables contained in Chapter Two (of this report) as well as several indicators relating to child and youth wellbeing and development. These indicators include, among others, drug and alcohol use, children in care, uptake of services (including mental health), self-harm, substance abuse and referrals to programmes operated by statutory bodies. The data in the *State of the Nation's Children* reports are presented at national, regional and county levels. Counties Longford and Leitrim have smaller populations than does the IRD Duhallow catchment area (Duhallow and the Lee Valley), and several counties, including Carlow, Louth, Sligo and Dublin have smaller surface areas. The statistics for these six counties are fully enumerated and presented. Meanwhile, the statistics for Duhallow are absorbed within those of Cork City and County (and Kerry). This mitigates against planning, delivery and evaluation at the sub-county level, and against the pursuit of the bespoke approaches and objectives elaborated in the national policy framework. This practice persists despite the long-standing presence of three administrative divisions in Cork County and the existence of three Local



IRD Duhallow supports young people with disabilities to upskill through the Ability programme.

Community Development Committees (LCDCs) that align with those divisions. In contrast, bottom-up initiatives such as LEADER and the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) are effectively implemented, reviewed and monitored at sub-county level.

1.4 Structure of the report

This report comprises five chapters and two appendices. Chapter 1 sets the research in context. Chapter 2 provides a detailed demographic and socio-economic profile of young people in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. This extensive catchment area includes all of Duhallow – as covered by IRD Duhallow, since the early 1990s, along with the Lee Valley communities – extending from Inchigeela to Aughabullogue - and including the town of Macroom. The profile is largely quantitative, and it provides micro-level data on variables that relate to the lives of young people. This analysis is supported by over fifty local-level maps – presenting a refined spatial analysis of a range of demographic and socio-economic variables.

Chapters 3 and 4 present the findings from two surveys that give voice to young people. The first of these, in Chapter 3, deals with the 16- to 18-year-old age cohort. It includes several age-appropriate issues, including school life, educational progression, career guidance and pathways, relationships with peers, parents, teachers and other adults, health and wellbeing. The content of the questionnaire reflects some of the issues that are explored in the Economic and Social Research Institute's (ESRI) and Trinity College Dublin's *Growing-Up in Ireland* (Gul) longitudinal study. The questionnaire also looks at young people's perspectives of their local communities, and it affords them opportunities to rate local service provision and amenities. The questionnaire concludes by asking respondents to suggest ways in which the lives of young people in Duhallow and the Lee Valley can be enhanced. These are summarised at the end of chapter three, and are presented, by school, in Annex 2. The second set of survey findings is presented in Chapter 4. This deals with the 18- to 35-year-old age cohort. Their bespoke survey questionnaire included the same set of questions about community that were presented to the 16- to 18-year-olds, thereby allowing for comparative analysis – as presented in Chapter 6. Chapter 4 details young adults' perspectives and experiences on several fronts including employment, housing, local service provision, transport, childcare,

wellbeing, citizenship and community development.

Recognising the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of young people, IRD Duhallow identified the need to undertake a specific piece of supplementary research. The results thereof, which are presented in Chapter 5, deal with young people's experiences in education, employment, families and communities over the course of 2020 and 2021. This set of findings ensures that the report takes stock of contemporary issues. The chapter underscores the importance of proactively ensuring that young people play leadership roles in shaping our society's post-COVID trajectories.

The scale of the surveys, presented here, is extensive; survey respondents numbered 362 second-level students and 280 young adults (aged 18-35) – representing 642 discrete voices. A further 220 responses, from young people (aged 16 to 35), were received in respect of the COVID-19 survey. Thus, this report assembles 862 contributions from young people in Duhallow and the Lee Valley.

Chapter 6 draws the various research strands together, and it refers in particular to the responses to the common questions – on community and place. It provides commentary and analysis of the perspectives offered by the entire survey cohort (16- to 35-year-olds), and it identifies pertinent messages for IRD Duhallow and other actors / stakeholders, in identifying development priorities, strategies and actions for the coming years. These findings are parsed in the context of an appraisal of IRD Duhallow's investment in, and support for, youth development.

2. Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile



Young people are supported by IRD Duhallow to learn about their future options through the SICAP funded Annual Careers Exhibition

This chapter presents a demographic and socio-economic profile of young people in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. It provides statistical information and maps in respect of the following variables:

- Numbers of young people;
- Young people as a proportion of the population;
- Age dependency;
- Population change;
- Nationality and ethnicity;
- Children and families;
- Households;
- Employment;
- Educational attainment;
- Health and well-being – including caring and disability;
- Broadband connectivity; and
- Affluence and deprivation.

The information presented here and in the accompanying maps (see Annex 1) provides pointers that ought to enable agencies and decision-makers to ensure that actions and interventions can be targeted towards specific cohorts and places. The data also underscore the importance of prioritising particular investments and ensuring that preventive approaches are pursued – based on local-level action and early intervention. This chapter reveals that, as many of the variables affecting the lives of young people are interconnected, integrated and collaborative approaches are required.

The data presented here are derived from the Census of Population, which provides an objective and reliable

dataset. Moreover, census data are published at local level – including for the sixty-one electoral divisions that comprise the IRD Duhallow catchment area (also referred to as Duhallow and the Lee Valley). Thus, data can be analysed spatially and over time, and when the next set of census data will be published (following Census 2022), longitudinal comparative analysis will be possible. Map 1 (in Annex 1) shows the electoral divisions (EDs). The publication of data at ED level allows for the computation of values for each of the IRD Duhallow community forum areas namely, North-Eastern

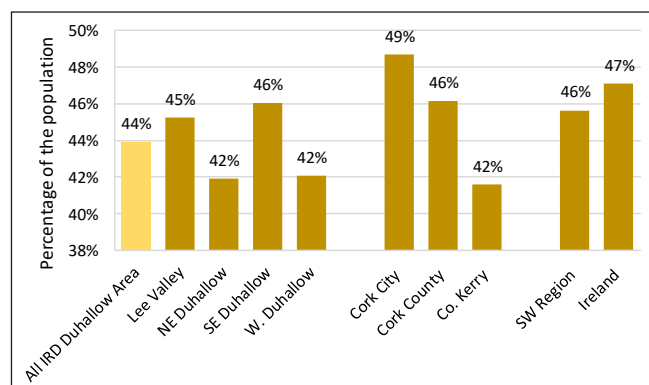
(NE) Duhallow, South-Eastern (SE) Duhallow, Western (W) Duhallow and the Lee Valley respectively.

For confidentiality reasons, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) does not publish data for any individual cohort (e.g., young people) at sub-county level. Therefore, it is not possible to extrapolate findings in relation to young people exclusively from the data presented here. Instead, the material outlined in this chapter serves to describe the context in which young people live, and it assesses how this context affects their lives – their wellbeing and their potential.

2.1 Numbers of young people

Duhallow and the Lee Valley have significant youth populations. The current IRD Duhallow catchment area (Duhallow and the Lee Valley) has a total population of 42,252, of whom 18,878 (44%) are aged 0 to 34. This figure is above the corresponding value for County Kerry, but below that of County Cork and the State, as the following graph shows:

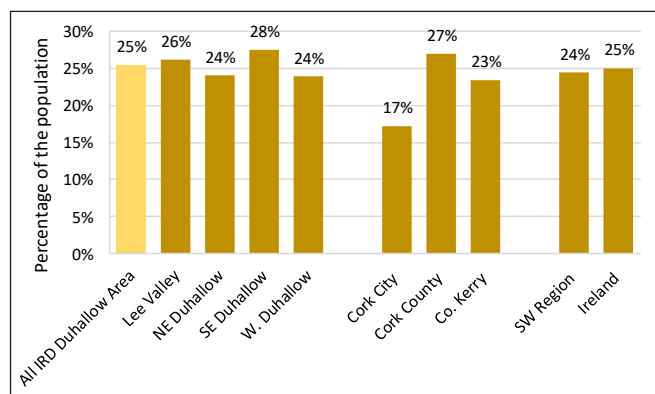
Fig. 2.1: Percentage of the population aged 0 to 34



As the graph illustrates, SE Duhallow and the Lee Valley have a higher proportion of the population aged 0 to 34 than is the case in other parts of Duhallow. The figures for South-Eastern (SE) Duhallow and the Lee Valley are comparable with that of Cork County, while the figures in North-Eastern (NE) and Western (W) Duhallow are comparable with that of County Kerry. Due to the presence of third-level institutes (UCC and CIT), Cork City records the highest figure for the geographies presented here.

When the figures are computed for the population aged 0 to 18, the figures for the IRD Duhallow catchment area, and its constituent community forum areas are more directly comparable with those of Cork County.

Fig. 2.2: Percentage of the population aged 0 to 18



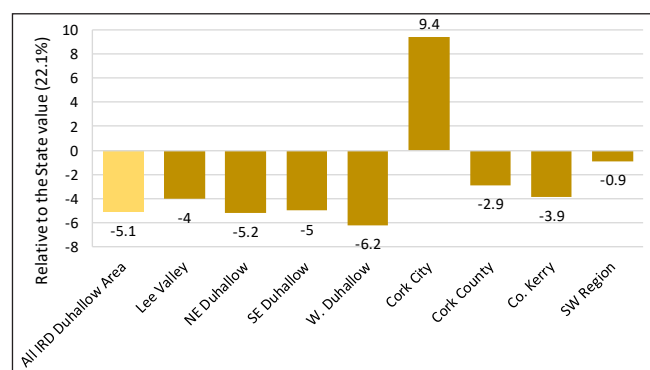
The contrast between Duhallow’s relative standing, as presented in both graphs (Fig. 2.1 and 2.2), suggests that the area has a relatively strong child and youth population, but is not retaining this population – as those in their late teens move elsewhere to study and work. As the following table shows, the proportion of persons aged 18 to 24 is lower in Duhallow, especially in Western Duhallow, than is the case in Cork County.

Table 2.1: Percentage of the population aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 34

Geography	Age Cohort		
	18 to 24	25 to 34	18 to 34
All IRD Duhallow Area	6.7%	10.2%	17.0%
Lee Valley	7.3%	10.8%	18.1%
NE Duhallow	6.6%	10.3%	16.9%
SE Duhallow	6.9%	10.2%	17.1%
W. Duhallow	6.1%	9.8%	15.9%
Cork City	13.5%	18.0%	31.5%
Cork County	7.2%	12.0%	19.2%
Co. Kerry	6.8%	11.4%	18.2%
SW Region	8.2%	13.0%	21.2%
Ireland	8.2%	13.8%	22.1%

The following graph illustrates the relative size of the population aged 18 to 34 – with the State value (22.1%) as the benchmark. As the graph shows, the proportion of the population aged 18 to 34 in Cork City is almost ten percentage points higher than is the case across Ireland. The corresponding figures for Cork County and Kerry are three and four percentage points below the State value, while the IRD Duhallow catchment area value is over five percentage points lower. Western Duhallow records the most negative value (-6.2 percentage points). This analysis points to the importance of working with young adults across Duhallow, and in Western Duhallow in particular, to ensure that there are sufficient employment, transport and social opportunities in place to enable them to live locally – if they so wish. The survey findings presented in chapter four provide specific pointers in these respects.

Fig. 2.3: Proportion of the population aged 18 to 34, relative to the State



Maps 2 to 9 (in Annex 1) present the spatial distribution of persons aged 0 to 34 (at ED level) – in absolute numbers - across the IRD Duhallow catchment area. These maps illustrate the significance of the area’s main towns, particularly Macroom and Kanturk, as having notable concentrations of children, teenagers and young adults. Both towns have significant populations of persons aged 25 to 34, which is associated, in part, with an increase in the local housing supply over the past fifteen years. As the maps also show, there are significant child and teenage populations in Banteer, Donoughmore and Millstreet.

Maps 10 to 17 present the spatial distribution of persons aged 0 to 34 (at ED level) – as a proportion of the total resident population – across the IRD Duhallow catchment area. The main towns¹, with the exception

¹ The population centres with the highest values on these indicators are Millstreet, Rathmore, Macroom and Kanturk.

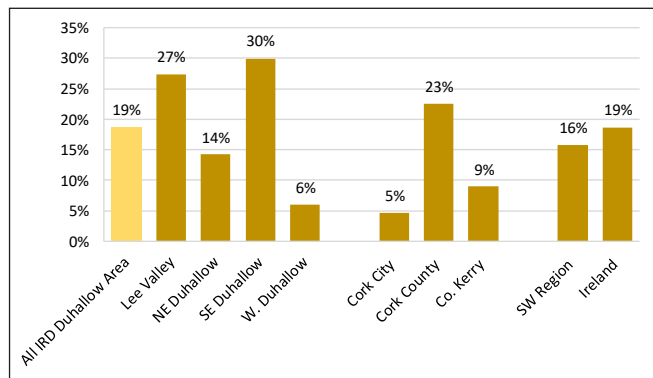
of Newmarket, exhibit values that exceed the median (for the entire catchment area), and values are generally higher in the Lee Valley and SE Duhallow than is the case elsewhere. The maps also illustrate that a number of more rural communities have notable proportions of their populations aged 0 to 9 and 10 to 18. These include, Ballydesmond, Freemount and Taur / Glash.

2.2 Population Change

Population change is both an indicator and a driver of the level of opportunity available to young people. Population increase is generally associated with a widening of horizons and opportunities, while population decline is generally associated with structural disadvantages and limited access to services.

The IRD Duhallow catchment area has a total population of 42,977, of whom 33,723 live in Duhallow and 9,254 live in the Lee Valley. The area’s population has increased by nineteen percent (from a population of 36,190) since 2002. While the total population has grown, growth has been geographically variable, as the following graph illustrates.

Fig. 2.4: Percentage population change, in comparative context, 2002-2016



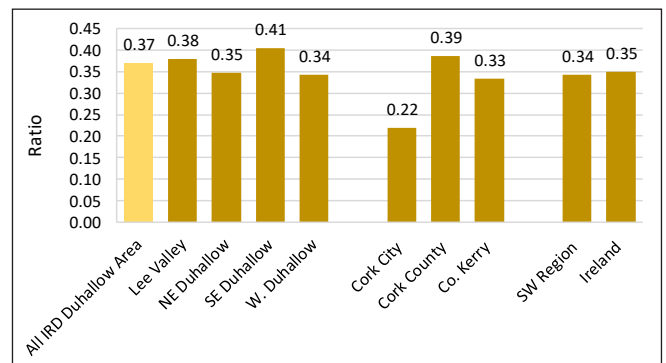
Over the course of the fourteen years to the most recent Census of Population (2016), the population of Ireland (the State) grew by nineteen percent. The overall level of growth in Cork County exceeded that – by four percentage points. As the graph illustrates, SE Duhallow (+30%) and the Lee Valley (+27%) experienced faster growth rates. Duhallow’s overall population grew at the same rate as that of the State, but, as the graph shows, rates were considerably lower in Western and North-Eastern Duhallow. Maps 18 and 19, which present ED-level population change, since 2002 and 2011 respectively, illustrate that the highest growth rates have been in the following communities: Bweeng,

Carrigadrohid, Laharn /Lombardstown, Donoughmore, Macroom and Millstreet. Thus, these locations are those that have the most immediate needs in terms of sustaining levels of service delivery. The maps also show the persistence of population decline – thus underscoring the need for investment in improving services and enhancing opportunities for young people, among others, in the following communities: Balldaly/ Caherbarnagh, Boherbue, Knockaclarig, Glash/ Taur, Meelin and Rockchapel.

2.3 Dependency Ratios

The youth dependency ratio is defined as the number of persons aged 0 to 15, relative to the number of persons aged 16 to 65. Persons aged 0 to 15 are considered to be dependent, as they are not legally permitted to be members of the workforce. As the following graph shows, the IRD Duhallow catchment area has a youth dependency ratio that is slightly higher than is the case across Ireland, as a whole. The highest values – indicating strong child and young teenage populations – are in South Eastern Duhallow and the Lee Valley.

Fig. 2.5: Youth dependency ratio

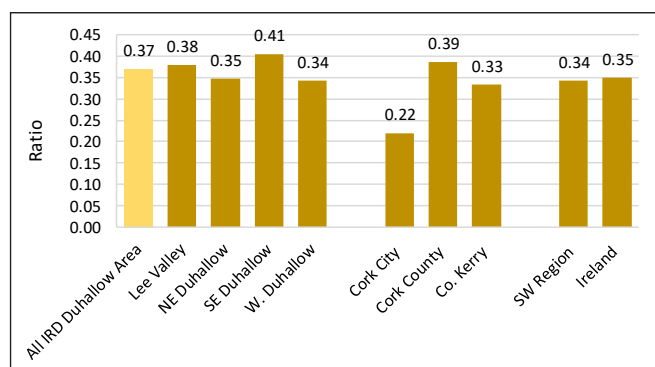


As map 20 shows, the communities with the highest youth dependency ratios are Ballinagree, Bweeng, Donoughmore, Dromtarriffe, Freemount, Laharn / Lombardstown and Shrone.

The elderly dependency ratio is the corollary of the youth dependency ratio; it refers to the proportion of the population aged over 65 (those eligible to receive the state pension) relative to those aged 16 to 64. As can be expected, this exhibits the opposite spatial pattern to the youth dependency ratio. The following graph illustrates that Western and NE Duhallow have the highest values, while values are lower in the Lee Valley and SE Duhallow. This pattern is shown in greater

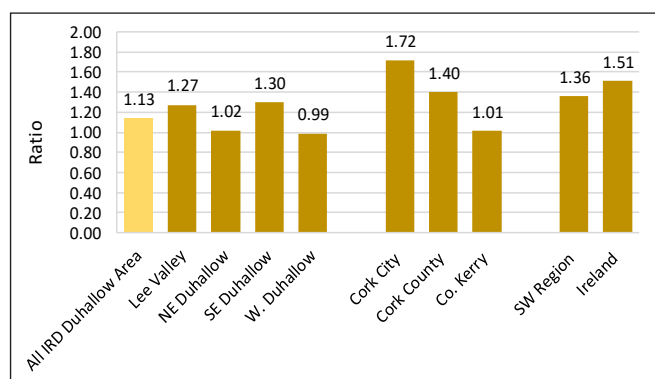
detail in map 21. It confirms that the communities with the highest elderly dependency ratios are Ballydaly, Cullen, Kiskeam, Knockclarig, Knocknagree, Newmarket and Rockchapel. In terms of youth development, these communities have the greatest scope for the promotion of inter-generational projects.

Fig. 2.6: Elderly dependency ratio



The demographic vitality ratio provides a useful indicator of the overall demographic health of an area – particularly its ability to grow. As the following graph shows, the IRD Duhallow catchment area and each of its component parts record demographic vitality ratios that are below the corresponding values for Cork County, the SW Region and the State. Map 22 presents these figures at ED level, and it reveals that the highest demographic ratios – in line with regional and State values – are in the following communities: Ballinagree; Donoughmore; Millstreet; and Rusheen. Kanturk (including the surrounding townlands) also records a value that is comparable with the regional level. Conversely, the communities with the lowest values are Boherbue, Kiskeam, Lismire, Meelin and Newmarket.

Fig. 2.7: Demographic vitality ratio



2.4 Nationality and Ethnicity

The IRD Duhallow catchment area is home to 2,382 people who have a nationality other than Irish or UK.

These represent almost six percent of the resident population. As map 23 illustrates, the value exceeds fifteen percent in Millstreet, while values are in excess of eight percent in Kanturk, Macroom and Rathmore.

The CSO uses the following classifications of ethnicity: White Irish; White Irish Traveller; Other White; Black or Black Irish; Asian or Asian Irish; and other. The following table presents the numbers of persons who belong to the various ethnic minorities locally.

Table 2.2: Number of persons in ethnic minority categories

Geography	Ethnicity				
	White Irish Traveller	Other White	Black or Black Irish	Asian or Asian Irish	Other
Lee Valley	24	862	24	58	98
NE Duhallow	10	568	23	41	79
SE Duhallow	9	823	190	94	114
W. Duhallow	5	642	18	26	78
All IRD Duhallow Area	48	2,895	255	219	369

Maps 24 to 28 present the distribution of these ethnicities, at ED level, across Duhallow and the Lee Valley. While it is not possible to provide an age profile of any of them, they are indicative of a growing ethnic diversity – as is the case across Ireland, and the maps indicate where resources need to be targeted, in the first instance, in promoting integration and interculturalism.

The following table lists the communities that have the highest proportions of the various ethnic minorities listed above.

Table 2.3: Communities with the highest proportions of ethnic minorities

Ethnicity	Communities with highest proportions
Irish Travellers	Kilcorney, Macroom
Other White	Carrigadrohid, Kanturk, Macroom, Millstreet, Nad, Rathmore
Black or Black Irish	Millstreet
Asian or Asian Irish	Millstreet
Other	Donoughmore, Kanturk, Macroom, Millstreet, Rockchapel

2.5 Children and Families

In the IRD Duhallow catchment area, there are 11,253 families and 16,113 children (persons aged 0 to 15). Map 29 shows the distribution of children (absolute number) across Duhallow and the Lee Valley. The highest concentrations are in the main towns, and in rural areas that are relatively close to Cork City namely

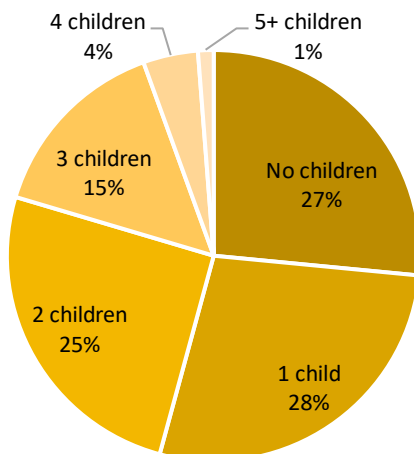
Aughabullogue, Bweeng and Donoughmore.

The following table presents the number of families by the number of children they have, while the pie-chart that follows shows the breakdown (in percentage terms) by family size.

Table 2.4: Number of families by size (number of children)

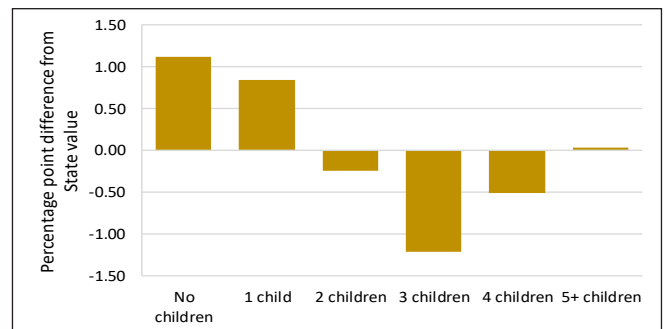
Geography	Families (number of)					
	No children	1 child	2 children	3 children	4 children	5+ children
Lee Valley	630	657	603	353	102	29
NE Duhallow	760	696	637	306	88	25
SE Duhallow	892	857	878	498	166	37
W. Duhallow	877	847	748	385	136	46
All IRD Duhallow Area	3,159	3,057	2,866	1,542	492	137

Fig. 2.8: Families by number of children



As the following graph shows, family sizes are smaller in Duhallow / the Lee Valley than is the case across Ireland, as a whole. Duhallow / Lee Valley has proportionately more families with no children and one child, and proportionately fewer families with three or four children.

Fig. 2.9: Relative family size – number of children per family in Duhallow and the Lee Valley relative to Ireland



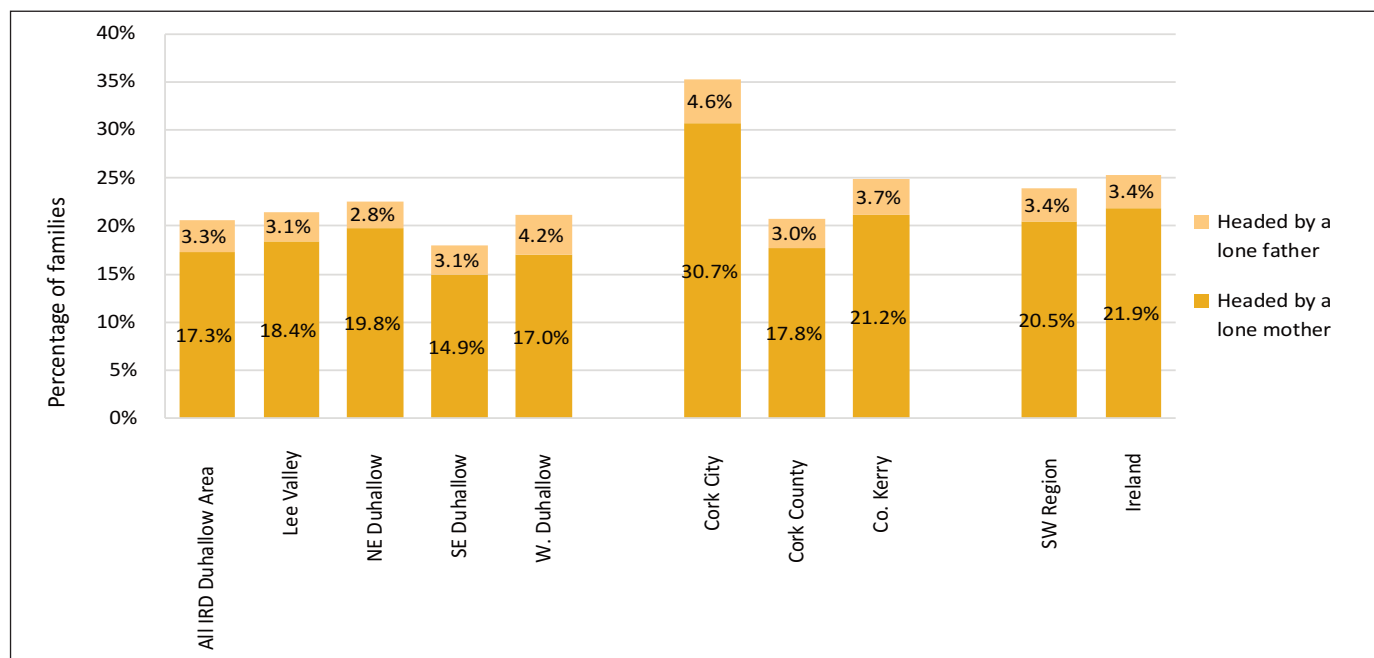
Of the 8,094 families with children in Duhallow and the Lee Valley, the vast majority (79%) are headed by a couple. This is higher than the corresponding value (75%) for the State. The following table shows the number of families, by family type (headed by a couple or lone parent), in Duhallow and the Lee Valley.

Table 2.5: Number of families by type

Geography	Families (number of)				
	Couples with children	Lone mothers with children	Lone fathers with children	Total one parent families	Total families with children
Lee Valley	1,369	321	54	375	1,744
NE Duhallow	1,356	347	49	396	1,752
SE Duhallow	1,997	363	76	439	2,436
W. Duhallow	1,705	367	90	457	2,162
All IRD Duhallow Area	6,427	1,398	269	1,667	8,094

As the following graph shows, the vast majority of lone parent families are headed by females. Locally, the proportion of lone parent families is highest in NE and Western Duhallow.

Fig. 2.10: Proportion of families headed by a lone parent



As map 30 shows, the communities with the highest proportions of lone parent families are Banteer, Freemount, Kanturk, Kiskeam, Knocknagree and Macroom. These communities also have the highest proportions of families headed by a lone mother, as illustrated in map 31. Map 32 shows the proportion of families headed by a lone father. The highest values, in this regard, are in Kiskeam, Knocknagree and Rockchapel.

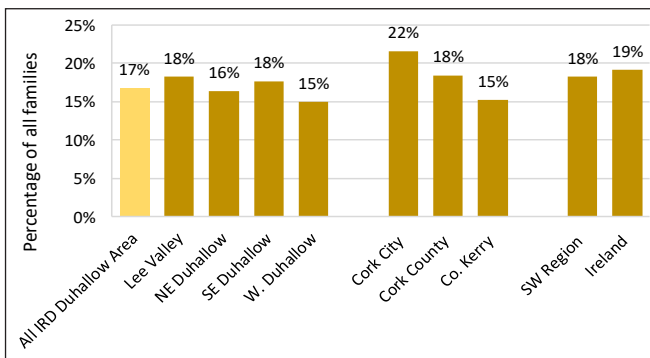
The CSO datasets identify families with children aged under 15 as a sub-set of family types. Using this metric, it is possible to identify, at ED level, the number of children in households headed by lone parents. The aggregate data are presented in the following table, while the corresponding ED-level data are presented in maps 33 to 36.

Table 2.6: Number of children, in families with children aged up to 15, by family type

Geography	Absolute Numbers				Percentages		
	Headed by a lone mother	Headed by a lone father	All one parent families	All families	Headed by a lone mother	Headed by a lone father	All one parent families
IRD Duhallow Area	678	67	745	3,333	20.34%	2.01%	22.35%
Lee Valley	166	8	174	667	24.89%	1.20%	26.09%
NE Duhallow	176	15	191	746	23.59%	2.01%	25.60%
SE Duhallow	190	27	217	914	20.79%	2.95%	23.74%
W. Duhallow	146	17	163	1,006	14.51%	1.69%	16.20%
Cork City	3,428	217	3,645	8,999	38.09%	2.41%	40.50%
Cork County	8,415	740	9,155	29,262	28.76%	2.53%	31.29%
Co. Kerry	3,076	276	3,352	10,704	28.74%	2.58%	31.32%
SW Region	14,919	1,233	16,152	48,965	30.47%	2.52%	32.99%
Ireland	116,858	9,014	125,872	328,684	35.55%	2.74%	38.30%

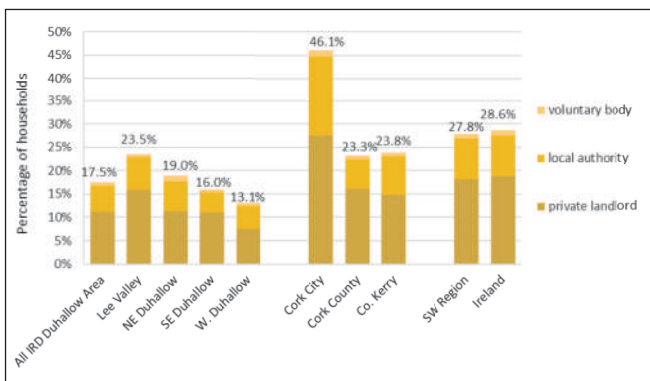
The proportion of families that can be classified as pre-family and pre-school is similar (within one percentage point) in the IRD Duhallow catchment area and Cork County, as the following graph illustrates. Thus, the overall demand for childcare and school places is projected to be in line with national levels. As map 37 shows, the communities with the highest values, on this indicator, are Banteer, Bweeng, Carrigadrohid, Donoughmore, Kanturk, Knockaclarig, Macroom, Millstreet and Rathmore.

Fig. 2.11: Pre-family and pre-school families as a percentage of all families²



Housing tenure is a determinant of youth progression; children who grow up in rented homes generally experience greater material deprivation and have lower levels of self-actualisation than do children whose families own their own homes. As the following graph shows, the proportion of families living in rental accommodation is lower in Duhallow and the Lee Valley than is the case in Cork County, the SW Region and the State.

Fig. 2.12: Proportion of households living in rental accommodation³



Maps 38 to 41 show the distribution, at ED level, of households in rental accommodation. As map 38 shows, the communities with the highest proportions of households renting from Cork / Kerry County Council are Banteer, Ballydesmond, Freemount, Kanturk and Macroom. Map 39 presents the proportion of households in the private rental sector. The communities with the highest values, in this regard, are Kanturk, Macroom, Millstreet and Rathmore. The communities with the highest proportion of households renting from a voluntary body are Ballydesmond, Millstreet and Newmarket, as shown in Map 40. Map

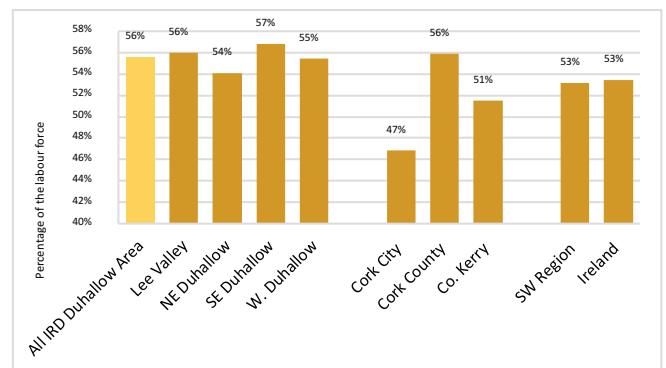
² Pre-families are those comprising couples who are yet to have their first child. Pre-school families are those whose children are aged 0-4.

41 synthesises the data presented in the three preceding maps; it shows that the communities with the highest overall proportions of households, who rent, rather than own, their own homes are the five main towns along with Banteer, Bweeng, Freemount, Inchigeelagh and Laharn / Lombardstown.

2.6 Employment

In Duhallow and the Lee Valley, there are 18,755 persons at work. The area has a higher rate of labour force participation than is the case regionally and across the State, as the following graph shows.

Fig. 2.13: Percentage of the labour force classified as 'at work'



As the following graph shows, the rate of labour force participation, among males, in Duhallow and the Lee Valley is on a par with that of County Cork. However, the rate of female participation in the labour force is slightly lower locally. Map 42 presents the labour force participation rates, at ED level, in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. It illustrates that the communities with the highest rates are Aghabullogue, Banteer, Carrigadrohid, Derrinagree, Donoughamore, Kilbrin, Millstreet and Taur / Glash. Conversely, the communities with the lowest levels of labour force participation are generally in Western Duhallow (in County Cork, rather than County Kerry).

In Duhallow and the Lee Valley, there are 1,577 persons classified as being 'unemployed, having lost or given up their previous job'. In addition, there are 164 persons (83 males and 81 females) – mainly young people, who are looking for their first job. As map 43 shows, the communities with the highest rates of unemployment are Ballydaly, Ballydesmond, Boherbue, Freemount, Inchigeelagh, Kanturk, Kilcorney, Macroom and Nad.

³ The data labels (figures on top of each column) refer to the total percentage households living in rental accommodation. The legend refers to the providers (owners) of rental accommodation.

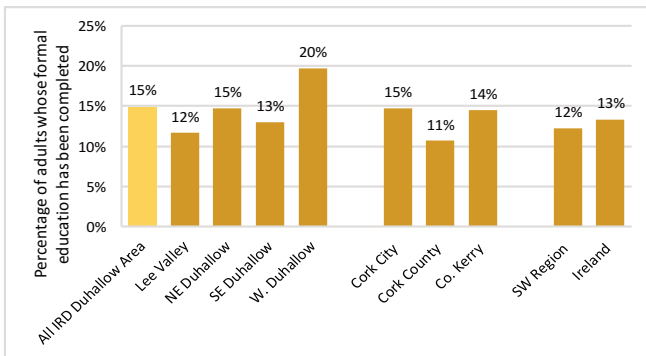


Development Officers in IRD Duhallow support young people in the region with CV and interview skills including conducting mock interviews.

2.7 Educational Attainment

The IRD Duhallow catchment area, and Western Duhallow in particular, has a lower level of educational attainment than is the case regionally and nationally. As the following graph shows, the proportion of the population who do not have a second-level qualification is three percentage points above the regional value. The figure for Western Duhallow is eight percentage points greater than the regional value.

Fig. 2.14: Percentage of the adult population whose highest level of educational attainment is 'primary education'⁴



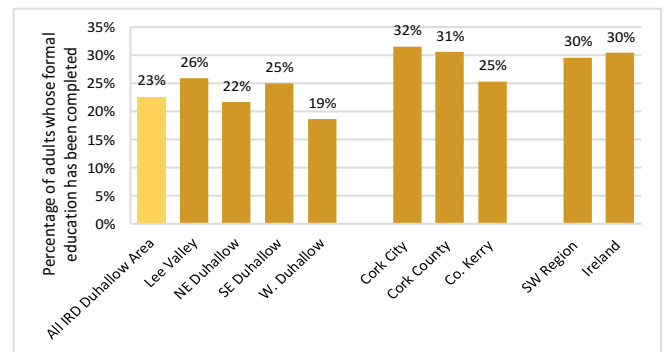
Map 44 shows the values, at ED level, in respect of the proportion of the population without a second-level qualification (i.e., they completed their formal education by aged 13 – 14). The communities with the highest values are Ballydesmond, Kiskeam, Lyre and Rockchapel. While the values, in these communities, are associated with an older age profile, they are also driven by early-school leaving. Thus, these communities merit additional attention in the promotion of youth

⁴ Figures are based on the population aged 15 years and over who have completed full-time education.

progression in the formal education system.

The following graph shows that the IRD Duhallow catchment area and its constituent community forum areas have a lower proportion of the population with a third-level qualification than is the case regionally and across the State. There is a gap of approximately seven percentage points between the local value (23%) and the regional (29.6%) and State (30.4%) values. This gap increases to eleven percentage points in respect of Western Duhallow. Within the IRD Duhallow catchment area, the highest values are in the Lee Valley and SE Duhallow. Map 45 presents these data at ED level, and it shows that the communities with the highest proportions of persons with a third-level qualification are Aghabullogue, Banteer, Carrigadrohid and Macroom.

Fig. 2.15: Percentage of the adult population with a third-level qualification



2.8 Health and Wellbeing

Since 2006, the Census of Population has recorded data on self-declared health status; respondents classify their own health status on a scale that ranges from very good to very bad. This is a useful proxy indicator of wellbeing, as values tend to correlate with material affluence and deprivation; affluent areas generally have higher proportions of people whose self-declared health status is very good, while deprived areas have higher proportions of people with poor health. The data also tend to correlate with rurality, and, despite having older age profiles, most rural areas record higher proportions of persons with very good / good health than is the case across the State as a whole. Indeed, the following graph is a manifestation of the inter-relationships between health status and other socio-economic variables. Of the comparator geographies presented here, Cork City has the highest proportion of persons whose self-declared health status is fair, bad or very bad. This is associated with many of the variables already

elucidated in this report including having an above-average proportion of persons residing in local authority rental accommodation. Kerry's rate (10.45%) is above the regional rate (9.59%), as Kerry has the oldest population of any county in Ireland. Locally, the highest values, in respect of people with poor health (as indicated by those declaring their status to be fair, bad or very bad), are in NE Duhallow. Map 46 shows that the communities with the highest proportions of persons with poor health are Banteer, Kanturk, Newmarket and Rockchapel⁵.

As the following table shows, there are almost 1,900 carers in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. Of these, almost forty percent are male. The number of male carers has been growing, in absolute and relative terms, over recent decades, but their visibility in support and advocacy groups is much lower than that of females. Map 47 shows the spatial distribution (in absolute numbers) of carers in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. It illustrates the concentrations in the main towns, while also revealing substantial numbers in several rural communities, including Ballydesmond, Boherbue and Rathmore.

Table 2.6: Number of carers, by gender and community forum area

Geography	Males Carers	Females Carers	Total Carers
Lee Valley	148	238	386
NE Duhallow	169	263	432
SE Duhallow	214	342	556
W. Duhallow	201	298	499
All IRD Duhallow Area	732	1141	1,873

There are 5,537 persons with a disability in Duhallow and the Lee Valley (49% male and 51% female), as the following table shows.

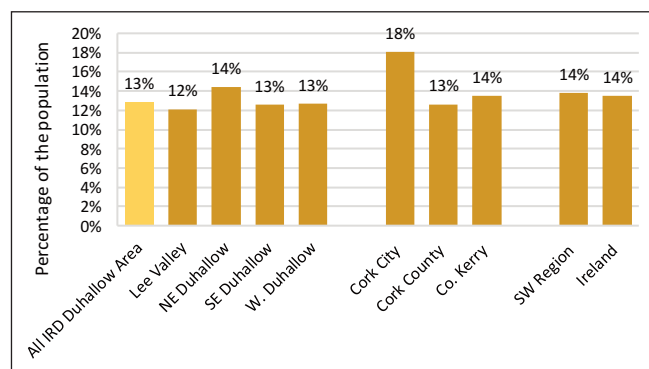
Table 2.7: Number of persons with a disability, by gender and community forum area

Geography	Persons with a disability		
	Male	Female	Total
Lee Valley	534	585	1,119
NE Duhallow	655	685	1,340
SE Duhallow	784	847	1,631
W. Duhallow	727	720	1,447
All IRD Duhallow Area	2,700	2,837	5,537

⁵ The figures for Kanturk are affected by the community hospital, while those for Newmarket are affected by a local nursing home. That said however, Macroom, which has both a community hospital and nursing home, records lower figures than either Kanturk or Newmarket.

As the following graph shows, NE Duhallow has the highest proportion of persons with a disability, while the Lee Valley has the lowest proportion – among the component parts of the IRD Duhallow catchment area.

Fig. 2.16: Percentage of the population with a disability

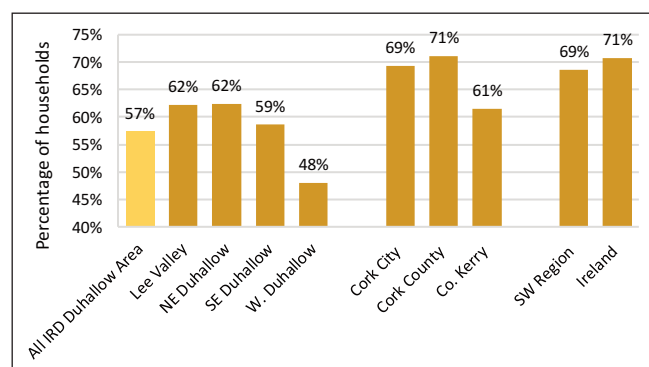


Map 47 shows the distribution – in absolute numbers – of persons with a disability, while map 49 presents these as a proportion of the resident population. These show that the communities with the highest values are Kanturk, Kiskeam, Newmarket and Rockchapel.

2.9 Broadband Connectivity

Broadband connectivity is integral to economic development and to citizens' abilities to access public services. As the following graph shows, the IRD Duhallow catchment area has lower levels of connectivity than is the case regionally and across the State. Connectivity levels are lowest in Western Duhallow.

Fig. 2.17: Percentage of households with a broadband connection



Map 50 shows the distribution of households with a broadband connection (as a proportion of all households). This confirms the pattern indicated in the graph above; it shows that the communities with the

greatest connectivity deficits are Ballydesmond, Cullen, Kilcorney, Kiskeam, Knockaclarig and Rockchapel. The data presented here are from 2016 (most recent census), and as such they are indicative of the baseline on which the National Broadband Plan needs to build. Map 51 shows the current (Q4 2020) provision of broadband infrastructure in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. It demonstrates the persistence of the relative deficits that were present in 2016.

2.10 Material Affluence and Deprivation

Maps 52 to 54 present the levels of affluence and deprivation, at ED level, in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. The data refer to the Pobal Haase-Pratschke Index of Affluence and Deprivation, which provides a composite score, based on a range of demographic and socio-economic variables. Scores range from -30 (very disadvantaged) to +30 (very affluent). While the index offers an objective measure that is comparable spatially and longitudinally, it is based on discrete snapshots in time – every five years, and it does not refer to the causes or processes associated with affluence or deprivation. Thus, the index has practical, albeit limited application.

In Duhallow and the Lee Valley, there is only one ED, namely Ballyhoulihan, that registers a HP score of >10; it's score is 10.1. As the following table shows, most EDs in catchment area have either negative scores or are marginally above average (i.e., in the range 0 to 5). Over forty percent of the population lives in an area with a negative HP score.

Table 2.8: HP Index Scores (of affluence and deprivation) by ED and population in Duhallow and the Lee Valley, 2016

HP Scores	No. EDs	% of EDs	Population	% of Area's Population
-10 to 0	27	44.3%	17,250	40.1%
0 to 5	25	41.0%	20,506.00	47.7%
5 to 10	8	13.1%	4,946.00	11.5%
10+	1	1.6%	275.00	0.6%

Maps 52 to 54 illustrate the persistence of deprivation and structural weaknesses in Western and Northern Duhallow. As noted throughout this chapter, these are the areas that exhibit the greatest need in terms of supports for youth development. The longitudinal data (2006 to 2016) indicate that the economic recession has

been most acutely manifest in the following communities Ballydesmond, Boherbue, Gneeveguilla, Kiskeam, Kilcorney, Knockaclarig and Rockchapel. The maps show that while Kanturk town performed relatively well between 2006 and 2011, it subsequently experienced an increase in relative deprivation.

2.11 Data held by agencies and service providers

There are a number of agencies and service providers that hold data on young people and families in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. In most cases, agencies / organisations hold data on the individuals and families who use their services, and they periodically supplement in-house records with needs analyses. Agencies have varying levels of transparency and openness in respect of data sharing, which is, in some cases, due to the nature of the data they hold. In order to complement the demographic and socio-economic profile and the surveys with young people that are presented in this report, IRD Duhallow approached the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and several agencies to enable them to add agency-level data to our understanding of the needs of young people in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. The data garnered from agencies and from official sources have been presented in a separate report, and are summarised here under the following headings:

1. Agriculture;
2. Education;
3. Care and Welfare;
4. Economy; and
5. Safety and Security.

Agriculture

Among the resident population of Duhallow and the Lee Valley, there are 2,262 persons working in the primary sector. These constitute approximately twelve percent



Young people in the Duhallow region partake in tractor driving skills workshops.

of the labour force, compared to twenty-eight percent, in Duhallow, in 1996. The number of young farmers (aged under 35), in Duhallow and the Lee Valley declined from 644 in 1991 to 274 in 2010. Thus, those aged under 35 accounted for eight percent of the total number of farmers. Over the same twenty-year period, farm sizes have increased and stocking rates have declined. The forthcoming Census of Agriculture (due to take place in 2021) will be very telling for young farmers locally.

Other data on agriculture show decreasing margins on farms. Declines in profitability and market shortcomings associated with commodity production are squeezing farm incomes – thus making the sector unattractive to young people, even those who have a strong interest in working on the land.

Education

There are nine second-level schools in the IRD Duhallow catchment area, all of which are listed in the following table (see next page). They have a total student population of 3,523⁶. The mean and median student populations are 391 and 329 respectively.

Data, for 2019, on student progression post the Leaving Certificate, across all nine schools (in the catchment area), reveal that:

- 46% progress to universities;
- 33% progress to institutes of technology (IoTs)
- 5% progress to colleges of education
- 15% progress via other pathways.

The rate of progression from second-level to third-level education is above the national average.

Second-level schools in the IRD Duhallow Catchment Area

Official School Name	Address	DEIS (Y/N)	Fee Paying School (Y/N)	Pupil Attendance Type	Subjects offered through Irish	School Type	Ethos/Religion	Student gender	Female	Male	Enrolment (2019 - 2020)
Boherbue Comprehensive School	Boherbue	N	N	Day	None	Comprehensive	Inter denominational	Mixed	172	152	324
Coachford College	Coachford	N	N	Day	None	Vocational	Inter denominational	Mixed	363	407	770
St Mary's Secondary School	Macroom	N	N	Day	None	Secondary	Catholic	Girls	323		323
Coláiste Treasa	Kanturk	N	N	Day	None	Vocational	Multi denominational	Mixed	287	262	549
McEgan College	Macroom	Y	N	Day	None	Vocational	Multi denominational	Mixed	83	98	181
De La Salle College	Macroom	N	N	Day	None	Secondary	Catholic	Mixed	2	365	367
Millstreet Community School	Millstreet	N	N	Day	None	Community	Inter denominational	Mixed	174	155	329
Scoil Mhuire	Kanturk	N	N	Day	None	Secondary	Catholic	Mixed	158	132	290
Scoil Phobail Sliabh Luachra	Rathmore	N	N	Day	None	Community	Inter denominational	Mixed	201	189	390

Care and Welfare

TUSLA is the primary agency with statutory responsibility for the care and welfare of children and young people. TUSLA publishes comprehensive data, on a quarterly basis, in respect of throughput in each of its seventeen regions, including Cork and Kerry. Over the past five years, the number of children (aged 0 to 17) in TUSLA's care, in Cork and Kerry (combined) ranged between 228 and 261.

During the third quarter of 2019, there were 2,108 referrals to TUSLA in the South-West Region; of these 1,871 were in Cork and 237 were in Kerry. Welfare

issues accounted for over half of all referrals.

Data for 2020 show that the proportion of cases awaiting referral to a social worker is twice as great in Kerry as in Cork; it stands at 18% in Kerry and 9% in Cork.

Data on suicide and self-harm, among young people, are recorded at national level. These records, for the period 2011 to 2018, show that among those aged up to 24, males are four times as likely (than females) to commit suicide.

The figures in relation to self-harm show a general increase in the number of 10- to 14-year-olds, and a

⁶ Figures are based on the 'Final Data for the 2019/2020 academic year as of 30th June 2020', published by the Department of Education and Skills.

general decline among those aged 20 to 24, who have engaged in self-harm.

Family resource centres (FRCs) represent one element of the interventions required to enable young people and families to deal with welfare / wellbeing issues. Yet, Duhallow and the Lee Valley represents the most extensive area in the SW Region that does not have a family resource centre.



The James O'Keeffe Institute acts as a one stop shop for services and supports within the region and acts as a Family Resource Centre for those in the Duhallow area although it does not receive funding for it.

Economy

Data on labour force participation are disaggregated, by age cohort, at national, rather than local level. Data on unemployment and other variables relating to social welfare are published for two age cohorts - those aged under 25 and those aged 25 and over.

Nationally (across Ireland) and locally (in Duhallow and the Lee Valley), the number of young people (those aged up to 25), on the live register, increased rapidly between 2008 and 2009 and remained high until it started to decline, in 2011. In 2020, the absolute number of young people on the live register was similar to the number in 2010, but it has come to represent a smaller proportion of the total number of persons (of all ages) on the live register.

Safety and Security

Data provided by the Department of Justice and An Garda Síochána⁷ reveal that young people are disproportionately affected by crimes against the

⁷ The Central Statistics Office considers data provided by An Garda Síochána to be 'under reservation'. This implies that they do not meet standards required of official statistics published by the CSO.

person. Persons aged 18 to 29 account for over one third of personal crime victims. Females are 4.2 times more likely, than are males, to be victims of sexual crimes.

While young people are more likely, than are others, to be victims of particular crimes, they are also more likely to be perpetrators. Indeed, persons aged up to 30 years are responsible for approximately half of particular offences⁸.

Age-related data, in respect of safety and security, are all at national level. Data relating to Duhallow and the Lee Valley, which are derived from PULSE⁹ and other returns from local garda stations, are not broken down by age of the victim or perpetrator. Returns from Kanturk, Macroom, Millstreet and Newmarket Garda Stations reveal that over the period 2003 to 2019 (inclusive), there has been a gradual downward trend, in the number of recorded offences, from a peak of almost 1,200 in 2005 to 510 in 2019.

2.11 Conclusion – implications of the secondary data

The IRD Duhallow catchment area has a population equivalent to that of a small Irish county. It is more populous than Counties Leitrim and Longford. Despite this, and despite the dynamics of Ireland's demographic patterns over the past century, many statutory bodies continue to publish data at county and regional level only. Indeed, many do not collect or collate sub-county level data. This practice, which is associated with historical, rather than contemporary, geographies and administrative systems, mitigates against larger counties, including Cork and Kerry. Thus, it behoves the relevant bodies to supplement the data presented in this chapter by providing and sharing data for the IRD Duhallow area specifically. This applies specifically to the performance indicators presented in national policy documents, including *Better Outcomes - Brighter Futures*.

The data presented here and in the accompanying maps (Annex 2) provide several useful baseline indicators and action signposts to support youth development and progression. They highlight particular areas of need,

⁸ The selected offences for which age-related data are provided are as follows: homicide offences; sexual offences; and attempts/threats to murder, assault, harrasments and related offences.

⁹ PULSE (Police Using Leading Systems Effectively) is a computer system used by the Garda Síochána.

most notably Western and North Eastern Duhallow. These parts of the IRD Duhallow catchment area exhibit the greatest structural weaknesses, and increased investment in the development of their local economies, infrastructure and social services is essential to enabling young people, among others, to fully realise their potential.

The data and analysis presented here suggest that the Lee Valley and South Eastern Duhallow have greater levels of socio-economic vibrancy, and that such vibrancy has an enabling effect on young people. Accessibility to Cork City and to services in Macroom are important for families, children and young people, and by virtue of their geography, these communities offer more economic and social opportunities. Actions in these areas, therefore, need to focus on retaining and sustaining opportunities and to encouraging innovations, and the mainstreaming of good practices, so that hard-to-reach and minority cohorts receive greater attention and supports.

While this chapter provides a comprehensive profile of young people in Duhallow and the Lee Valley, the databases on which it draws have notable limitations, particularly in respect of geography. Almost all agencies and public bodies, in Ireland, record data at county level. This report has already noted the challenges this poses for locations such as Duhallow and the Lee Valley. While counties are associated with cultural and sporting identity, they bear little, if any, relevance to the economic and social geography of contemporary Ireland. Moreover, the continued shortcoming among most agencies to collect and publish sub-county or district-level data can be undermining of evidence-based decision-making and area-based development. This is particularly disadvantageous for large counties such as Cork and Kerry, and it behoves stakeholders across both counties to work together and with government and the CSO to put systems and resources in place that provide for more micro-level data collection and an empowering of all agencies to make more evidence-based decisions.

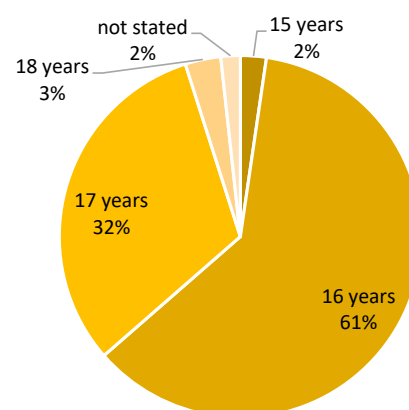
3. Youth Experiences and Perceptions

This chapter presents the findings of a bespoke survey questionnaire administered to senior-cycle second-level students in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. It deals with education, career prospects, quality-of-life, community development, local service provision, relationships, health and wellbeing, recreation, social media and other issues that affect young people. The findings provide insights into the lives of young people; the research has provided a conduit through which they can document what is happening in their lives and how they see themselves, their families, schools, community and the wider society. Thus, this report provides a useful snapshot in time of young people’s experiences and perspectives, and it is relevant to parents / guardians, youth leaders, teachers / schools, community organisations, service providers, public bodies and policymakers – as well as to young people themselves. The results, as presented here, are largely quantitative, and are derived from a survey questionnaire that was administered with the cooperation of seven second-level schools¹⁰, namely

- Boherbue Comprehensive School;
- Coláiste Treasa, Kanturk;
- Pobalscoil Sliabh Luachra, Rathmore;
- St Mary’s Catholic Secondary School, Macroom.
- Coachford College;
- Millstreet Community School;
- Scoil Mhuire, Kanturk; and

A total of 362 students completed the survey questionnaire. The respondents were predominantly (65%) in transition year (TY), while just over one-third (35%) were in fifth year. The gender breakdown of respondents is sixty-one percent female and thirty-nine percent male. The majority (86%) of respondents were born in Ireland. The following pie-chart shows respondents’ age range:

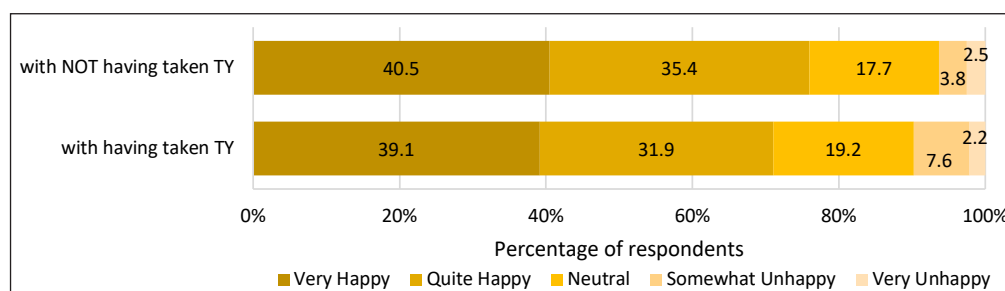
Fig. 3.1: Age profile of survey respondents.



3.1 Education and Employment

A majority (79%) of respondents are either in TY or have taken it. As the following graph shows, most students (the entire cohort) are happy with their decision – either to have taken TY or not to have done so.

Fig. 3.2: Students’ level of happiness with their decision to have taken, or not taken, TY.



When the figures in respect of having taken TY are analysed by gender, they show that that eighty-two percent of males, but only sixty-five percent of females are happy to have done so. Almost a quarter (24%) of females report that they are ‘neutral’ about their decision, while a further one-in-eight (12.4%) is either ‘somewhat unhappy’ or ‘very unhappy’. There are no notable gender differences in respect of the decision not to have taken TY; levels of satisfaction are broadly similar among males and females.

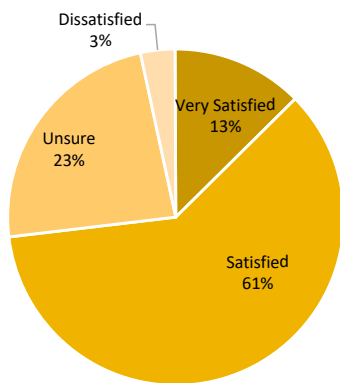
Almost three-quarters of students are happy with their current programme of study (e.g., Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied). Values are broadly similar (within seven percentage points) across males and females.

¹⁰ Paper based survey questionnaires were distributed in-school (in classrooms / assembly spaces), and were completed under supervision – thereby ensuring that each student had an appropriate space to ensure that he / she could complete his / her questionnaire privately and could ask for clarification in respect of any question, if required. All students were advised that participation was voluntary; they could withdraw from the survey at any time; and that no question was compulsory. All questionnaires were completely anonymous. Neither the schools nor IRD Duhallow were involved in the transfer of data from the paper questionnaires to the electronic database. The independent researcher undertook that task.



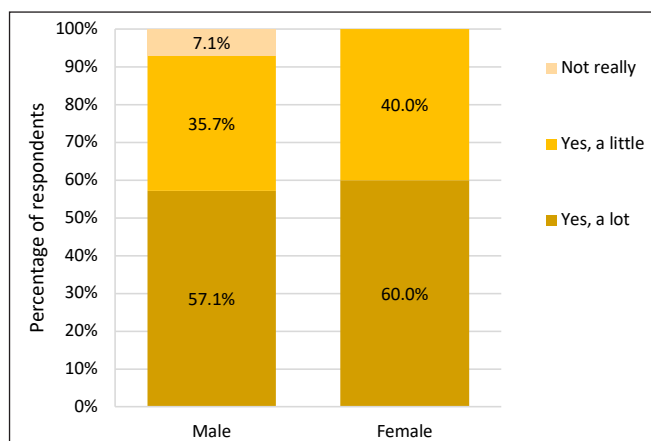
Young people in the area are encouraged to become advocates for change, partaking in events such as International Women's Day.

Fig. 3.3: Students' levels of satisfaction with their current programme of study.



Just under one-in-five students (19%) is doing a subject outside of school, with females being more likely to do so. The following table lists the number of students taking the various subjects outside of school. It shows that the most popular subjects are business, music and agricultural science.

Fig. 3.4: Students' levels of satisfaction with grinds / extra tuition, by gender.



¹¹ The cumulative value on this table (n=71) exceeds 19% of respondents. This is because three students are taking two subjects outside of school. Two of these three are studying music.

Table. 3.1: `number of students taking subjects outside of school'¹¹

Subjects	No. of students
Business	13
Music	12
Agricultural Science	9
Accounting	7
French	6
Applied Maths	4
Polish	4
German	3
Chemistry	2
Economics	2
Geography	2
Japanese	2
Spanish	2
Biology	1
Portuguese	1

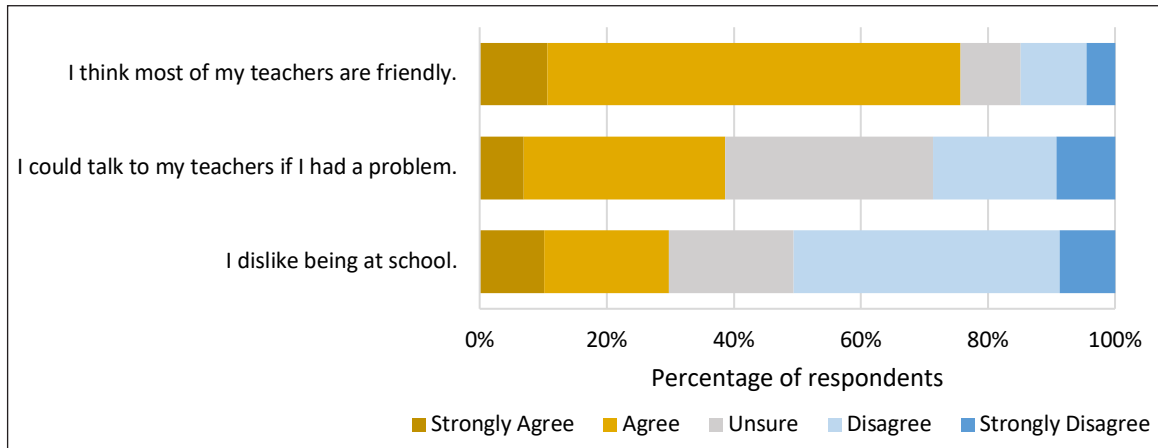
Just over one-in-six (14.8%) students is currently receiving a grind / extra tuition. Females are more than twice as likely as males to be doing so. Students are more than twice as likely to take grinds on a 'block basis', rather than on an on-going basis. Of those who are receiving grinds, the majority find them to be useful, as the following graph shows. The figures reveal that females are slightly more satisfied, than are males, with their grinds / extra tuition.

A large majority (79.4%) of students indicate that they expect to take grinds before their Leaving Certificate. Over a quarter (27.2%) state that they will definitely take grinds, and a further sizeable cohort (52.3% of all respondents) indicates that they will 'probably' do so.

The following figure captures students' perspectives of school and of their teachers. A minority (29.8%) agree with the statement 'I dislike being in school'. This is higher than the figure recorded in the Growing-Up in Ireland (GUI) (2016a) survey. It reported that eighteen percent of seventeen-year-olds dislike school, and its authors observed that "this dislike develops during secondary school" (2016: 11). Locally, the vast majority (75.7%) of students perceive their teachers to be friendly. Over a third (38.6%) agree or strongly agree with the statement 'I could talk to my teachers if I had a problem'. This is ten percentage points higher than the

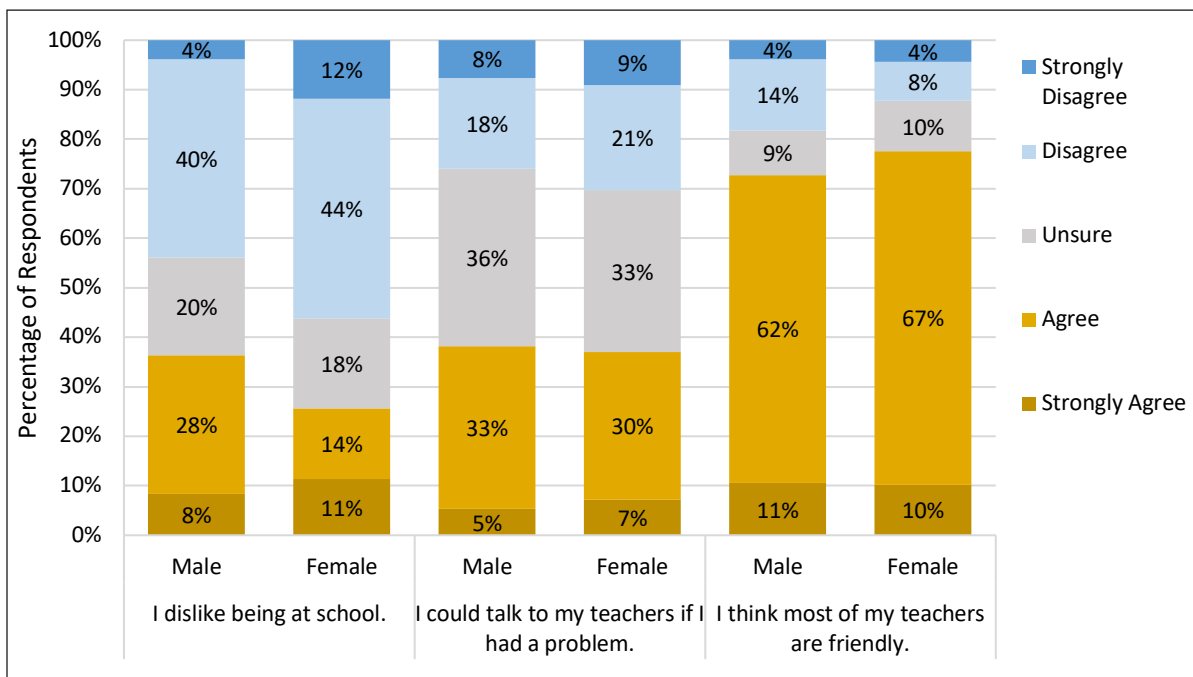
proportion of students who either disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. Almost a third (32.8%) of students indicate that they are 'unsure' in response to this statement.

Fig. 3.5: Students' perspectives of school and their teachers



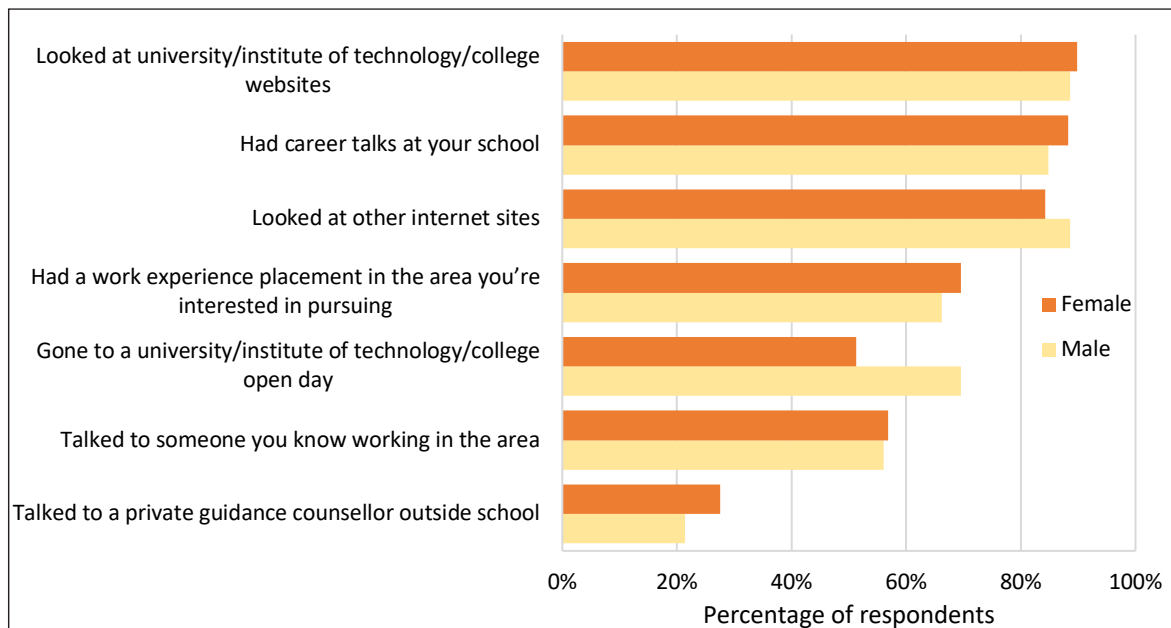
As the following graph shows, a greater proportion of females, than of males, like being at school, but perceptions of teachers – in terms of friendliness and a person to whom students can talk about a problem – are broadly similar (within five percentage points) across both genders.

Fig. 3.6: Students' perspectives of school and their teachers, by gender



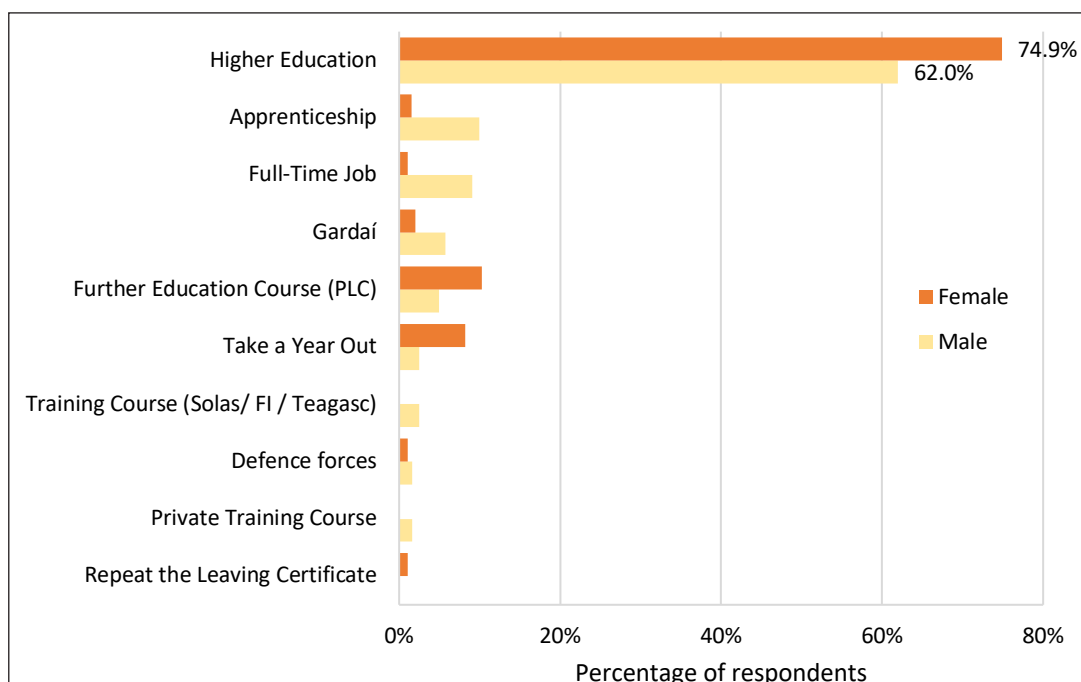
The internet is the conduit through which students most frequently access information about options for employment and further study post their Leaving Certificate. The vast majority (>80%) have looked at the websites of higher-education institutes (HEIs) or other internet sites, such as those of employers, training bodies and statutory agencies. Over two-thirds (69%) have completed a work experience placement in the area in which they are interested in pursuing a career. Over half (57%) of students have talked to a person who works in their area of interest. The same proportion (57%) have attended an open day at a HEI, although as the following graph shows, a higher proportion of males (70%) than females (51%) have done so. Just under a quarter (24.4%) have talked to a private guidance counsellor outside of school.

Fig. 3.7: Ways in which students access information about post-Leaving Certificate options, by gender



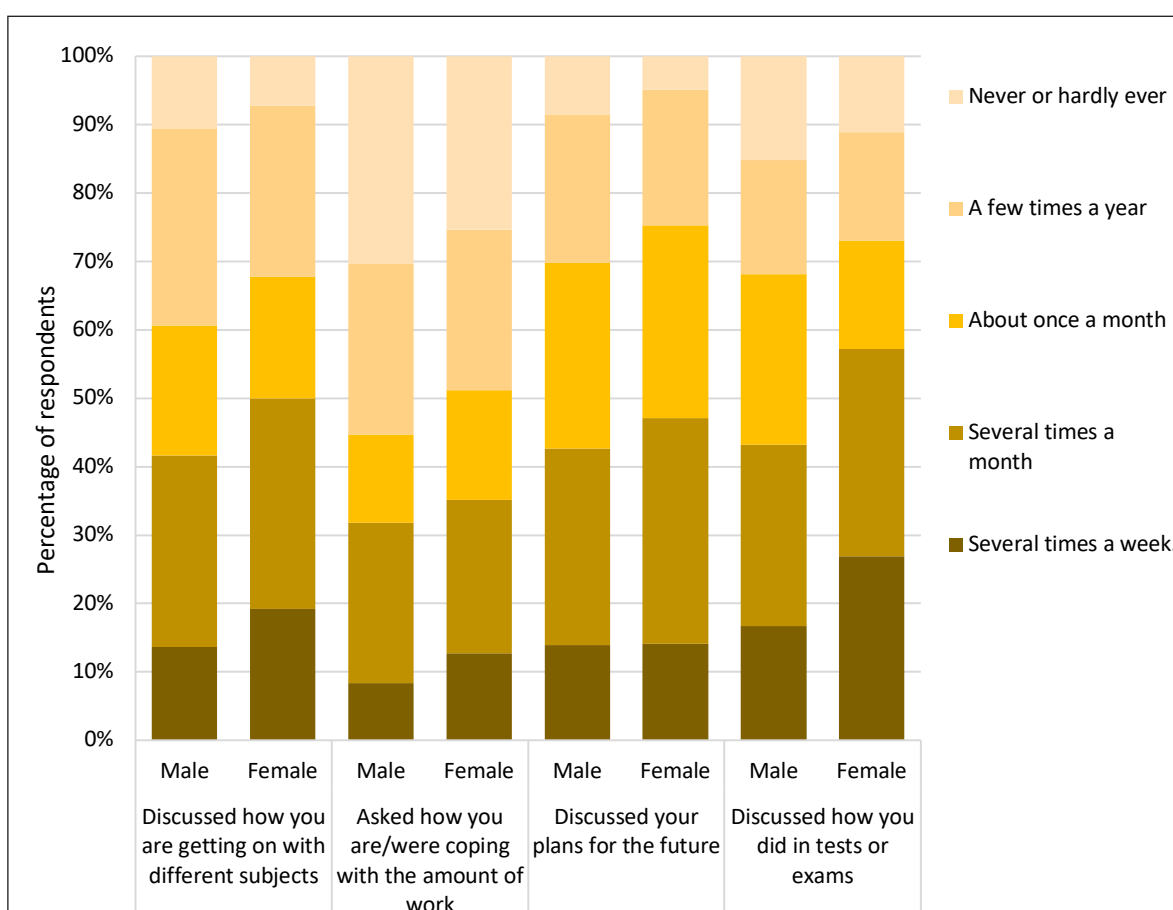
Survey respondents were asked to identify their most likely education or career trajectory upon completion of their Leaving Certificate. As the following graph shows, the vast majority (75% of females and 62% of males) envisage progressing to third-level education (in a university or institute of technology). Among males, just under one-in-ten (9.9%) envisages undertaking an apprenticeship, while a similar additional proportion (9.1%) expects to get a full-time job. Less than three percent of females expect to undertake an apprenticeship or secure a full-time job. However, females are twice as likely, than are males, to opt for a further-education course / PLC; ten percent of males and five percent of females selected this option. Females are more than three times likely, than are males, to opt to take the year out (8.2% among females and 2.5% among males). Just under six percent of males and two percent of females see themselves joining an An Garda Síochána. Fewer than three percent of respondents opted for the other options presented in the questionnaire.

Fig. 3.8: Most likely post-Leaving Certificate trajectories, by gender



As the following graph illustrates, females report that their parents / guardians talk to them more frequently about their studies and work prospects than is the case among males. Half of females report that their parents / guardians talk to them, at least several times per month, about how they are getting on with different subjects. The corresponding proportion among males (41.7%) is over eight percentage points lower. Over one-third of females (35.1%) report that their parents ask them, at least several times a month, how they are coping with the amount of work they have. Among males, the corresponding value is three percentage points lower. Almost one-third (30.3%) of males and a quarter (25%) of females report that their parents / guardians ‘never or hardly ever’ ask them about how they are coping with their work. Among females, almost half (47.1%) report that they are asked about their future plans, at least several times a month. Among males, the corresponding value is lower (42.6%). In respect of the four indicators (of parental involvement) presented here, the largest gap – on the basis of gender – is in respect of discussing how a student did in tests or exams. Well over half (57.2%) of females report that their parents / guardians do so at least several times a month. Among males, the corresponding figure (43.2%) is fourteen percentage points lower.

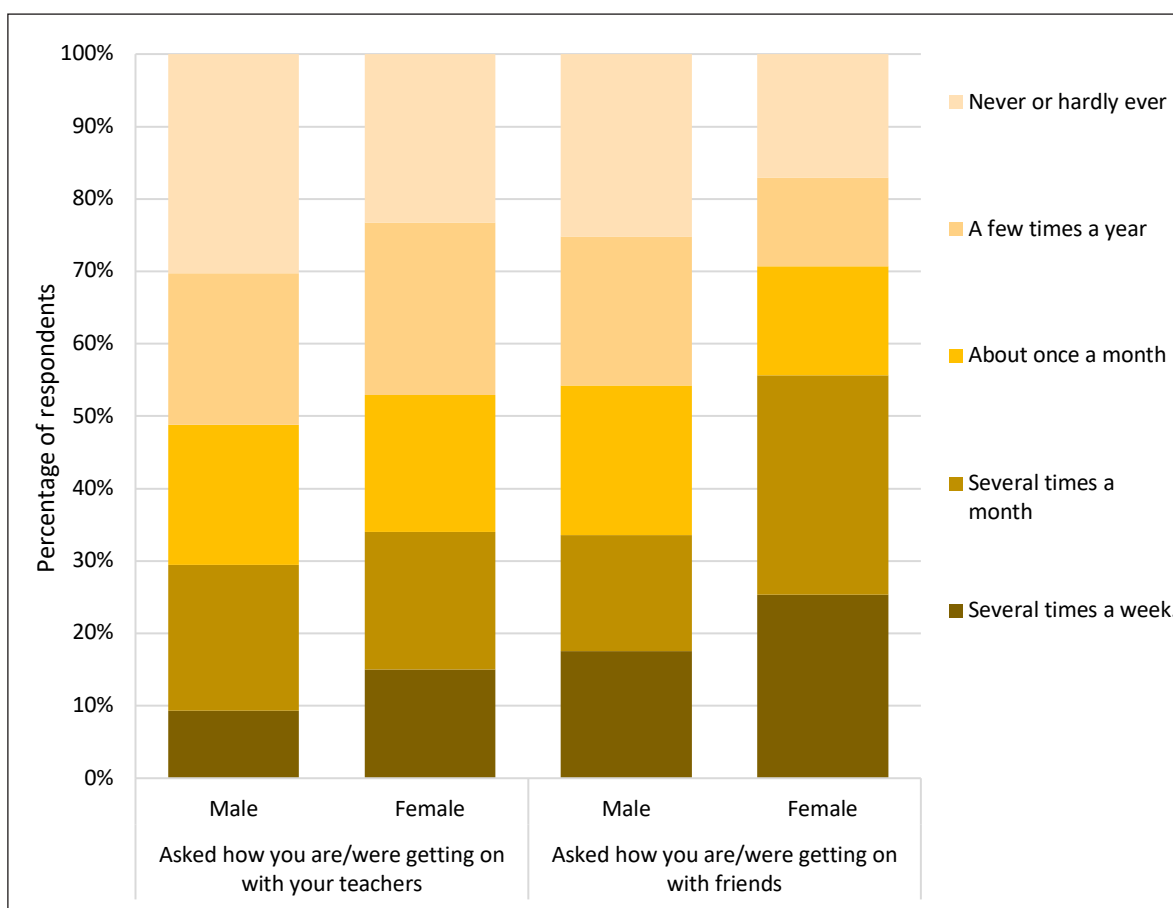
Fig. 3.9: Frequency with which parents / guardians discuss aspects of their children’s education / work with them, by gender



The survey findings reveal that parents / guardians are more likely to talk to their children about how they are getting on with their friends than with their teachers. Parents are also more likely to talk to their daughters, than to their sons, about such relationships. Among males, just under thirty-percent report that their parents / guardians, talk to them, at least several times per month about how they are getting on with their teachers. Among females, the corresponding value is over four percentage points higher. The modal value among males (30.2%) is in respect of ‘never or hardly ever’. Among females, the modal value (23.8%) is ‘a few times a year’. In respect of relationships with friends, over half (55.6%) of females report that their parents / guardians ask them, at least several times a month, how they are getting on with their friends. Among males, just over one-third (33.6%) state that they have those

discussions with their parents / guardians, with such frequency. Among females, the modal value (25.4%) is 'several times a week', while among males, the modal value (25.2%) is hardly ever. Almost one-in-six (17.1%) females report that their parents / guardians never or hardly ever ask them how they are getting on with their friends.

Fig. 3.10: Frequency with which parents / guardians discuss aspects of their children's school-based relationships with them, by gender



The vast majority of students report receiving help with homework. Almost two-thirds (65.6%) receive help at home, while almost nine-in-ten (86.5%) receive help from friends. The following table shows the frequency, by gender, with which students receive help with homework.

Table 3.2: Frequency with which students receive help with homework, by gender and type of help

Type of help	Frequency	Male	Female
Help at home	Yes, often	8.8%	17.4%
	Yes, sometimes	54.4%	49.8%
	No	36.8%	32.8%
Help from friends	Yes, often	17.4%	19.7%
	Yes, sometimes	68.9%	66.8%
	No	13.6%	13.5%

Almost half (47.3%) of respondents report having a part-time in-term job. Values are similar among males and females (48.1% and 46.9% respectively). A higher proportion (61.7%) has had a holiday job, and males are more likely, than females, to have done so (66.1% and 58.9% respectively). The modal number of hours worked per week, for holiday jobs, is twenty. This is the case among both genders.

The survey questionnaire invited students to identify the job / occupation they would most like to have once they complete full-time education. In response, a total of 161 different job titles emerged. These have been classified by sector, and they are presented in the following table. As the data show, jobs in the medical sector (e.g. nurse, doctor, physiotherapist and midwife) command the single greatest popularity among students (preferred occupations). Females were almost twice as likely as males to express a preference for jobs in this field. Among males, jobs in education command the single greatest popularity, while they are the second-highest preference among females. Occupations in commerce (e.g., accountant, bookkeeper and auditor) command the third highest overall popularity, followed by jobs in professional services. The arts command similar levels of preference among males and females, with respondents identifying jobs such as musician, painter, filmmaker, photographer and performance artist. Males are over four times more likely than females to want to be engineers, and they are also more likely to work in information technology (IT). All the respondents who said they would like to be veterinarian or veterinary nurses were female, while all those who said they wanted to be farmers or farm contractors were males. A similar proportion (6.1%) of males stated that they would like to work as professional athletes (mainly as soccer players and / or boxers). Caring professions (e.g. home carers and those working with people who have special needs) and jobs in the legal sphere (e.g. solicitors and judges) were exclusively identified among females. Meanwhile, only males mentioned jobs in transport (as drivers, transport managers, pilots). While the data (by sector) indicate no gender-based difference in respect of the construction sector, the actual jobs students identified reflected a gender divergence, with females wanting to be architects and quantity surveyors, and males wanting to be carpenters, block-layers and plasterers.

Table 3.3: Students' preferred employment sectors (based on occupations they identified)

Sector (preferred)	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Medical	12.3%	24.7%	20.1%
Education	14.9%	17.4%	16.4%
Commerce	7.9%	8.9%	8.6%
Professional Services	10.5%	6.8%	8.2%
Arts	6.1%	5.8%	5.9%
Engineering	10.5%	2.6%	5.6%
IT	5.3%	3.2%	3.9%
Veterinary		6.3%	3.9%
Science	3.5%	3.2%	3.3%
Public Service	3.5%	2.6%	3.0%
Sports	6.1%	1.1%	3.0%
Construction	2.6%	2.6%	2.6%
Agriculture	6.1%		2.3%
Care		3.2%	2.0%
Transport	4.4%		1.6%
Law		2.1%	1.3%
Media	0.9%	1.6%	1.3%
Defence	1.8%	0.5%	1.0%
Environmental	0.9%	1.1%	1.0%
Education / Medical		1.1%	0.7%
Agriculture / Public Service		0.5%	0.3%
Commerce / Medical		0.5%	0.3%
Construction / Education	0.9%		0.3%
Education / Commerce		0.5%	0.3%
Education / Law		0.5%	0.3%
Hospitality / Catering		0.5%	0.3%
Professional Services / Agriculture		0.5%	0.3%
Other	1.8%	2.1%	2.0%



Discussing career paths and employment prospects at the IRD Duhallow Annual Careers' fair.

The responses exhibit a preference for employment in traditional sectors and in the public service, and they indicate considerable gender-based differences.

The survey questionnaire also asked respondents to

state the job they actually expect (rather than prefer) to get once they complete full-time education. In response, a total of 152 different job titles emerged. These have been classified by sector, and they are presented in the following table. The responses indicate that, relative to their preferred occupations, jobs in the education and medical spheres continue to occupy first and second positions. However, their sequencing has flipped, indicating that students perceive that it is more realistic to expect a job in education than in the medical professions. This may be associated with the number of leaving certificate points required to access some medical courses relative to arts and education courses. The findings also reveal that more students expect to become educators than actually have education as their preferred career pathway. The data presented here provide further evidence of gender-based roles and expectations, as indicated by the figures in respect of engineering, construction and sports.

Table 3.4: Students' expected employment sectors (based on occupations they identified)

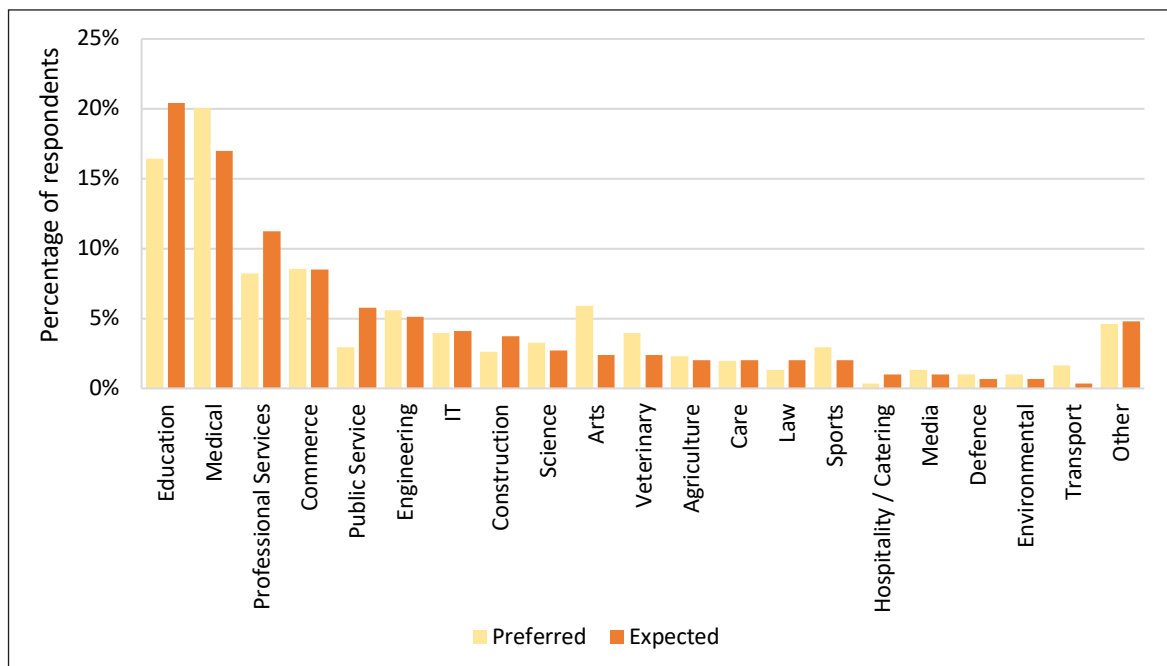
Sector (preferred)	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Education	17.9%	22.0%	20.4%
Medical	7.1%	23.1%	17.0%
Professional Services	10.7%	11.5%	11.2%
Commerce	8.9%	8.2%	8.5%
Public Service	8.9%	3.8%	5.8%
Engineering	10.7%	1.6%	5.1%
IT	5.4%	3.3%	4.1%
Construction	5.4%	2.7%	3.7%
Science	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%
Arts	2.7%	2.2%	2.4%
Veterinary		3.8%	2.4%
Agriculture	5.4%	2.0%	
Care	0.9%	2.7%	2.0%
Law	1.8%	2.2%	2.0%
Sports	4.5%	0.5%	2.0%
Hospitality / Catering		1.6%	1.0%
Media		1.6%	1.0%
Defence	0.9%	0.5%	0.7%
Environmental		1.1%	0.7%
Transport	0.9%		0.3%
Other (or more than one)	5.4%	4.4%	4.8%

The data in respect of students' preferred and expected occupations are significant for Duhallow / The Lee Valley. This is predominantly a rural area, and opportunities for employment in the medical and education sectors are more limited than is the case in large urban centres. The range of occupations in professional services is also narrower here than in the cities and large towns. The low standing of agriculture (2.3% of total preferences and 2.0% of expected jobs)

has to give grounds for concern. Like many rural areas Duhallow / The Lee Valley has made strides, over recent decades, to expand its tourism offering. Yet, a very small percentage of students expressed a preference for, or envisage themselves, working in hospitality or catering roles. The locality also has a number of strong indigenous local engineering and transport firms, and their influence and potential may be reflected in the

data presented here. Duhallow / The Lee Valley has a strong cultural heritage, and this may be a driver of the notable proportion (6%) of students who state that they would like to work in the arts. However, as the following graph illustrates, the relative gap between preference and expectation is greater in respect of the arts than any other employment sector.

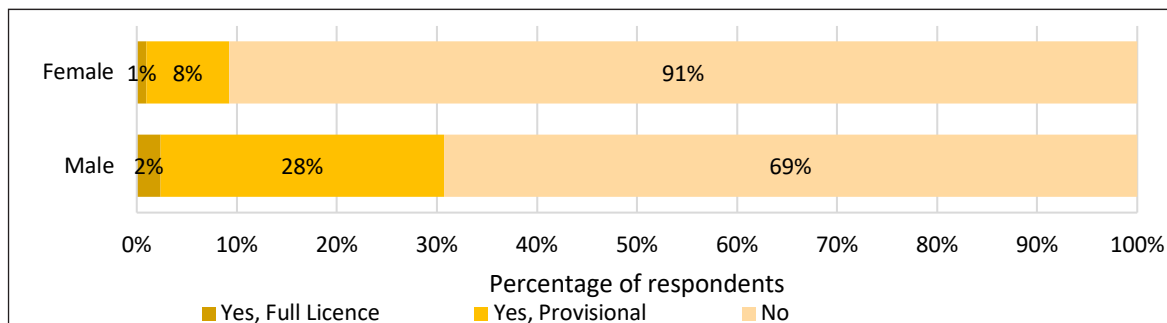
Fig. 3.11: Students' preferred and expected employment sectors



3.2 Mobility, Autonomy and Interests

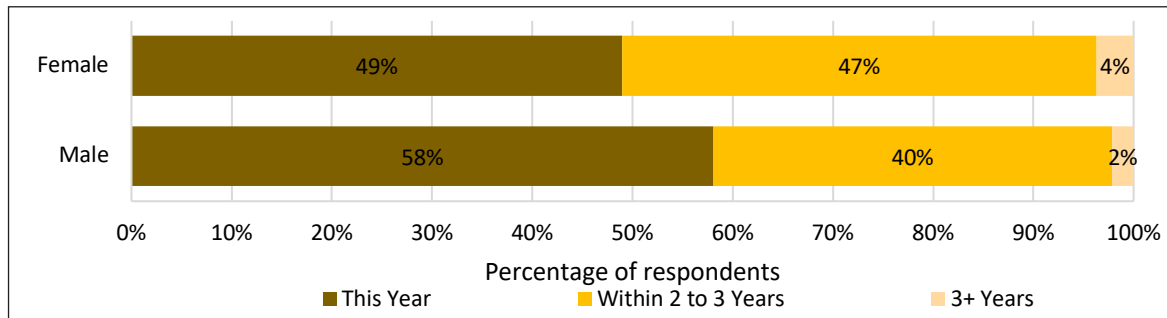
As the following graph shows, the majority of students do not have a driving licence. Males are over three times more likely, than are females, to have a licence.

Fig. 3.12: Percentage of students with a driving licence



Among those who do not have a driving licence, a majority of males and almost half of females expect to acquire one within the year.

Fig. 3.13: When students anticipate acquiring their driving licence



The survey questionnaire presented a list of recreational activities. The list mirrored that used in the Growing Up in Ireland Survey (conducted by the ESRI). Respondents were invited to indicate the frequency with which they engage in each activity: either ‘several times a week’; ‘weekly’ ‘fortnightly’; ‘monthly’; or ‘rarely / or never’. The following bar-graph presents the findings. It reveals that the activity in which students – both males and females – most frequently engage is ‘listening to music’. Over ninety percent of females and over eighty percent of males do so several times a week, and almost all (>95%) listen to music at least weekly. Over ninety percent (92%) surf the internet at least weekly; females do so with greater frequency than do males. Over three-quarters (75.4%) spend time with pets – at least weekly; females are more likely than are males to do so. Over two-thirds watch Netflix and / or regular TV at least weekly. A large majority (74.6%) of males, but only half (50.5%) of females play sport with others at least once a week. Males are also more likely than are females to:

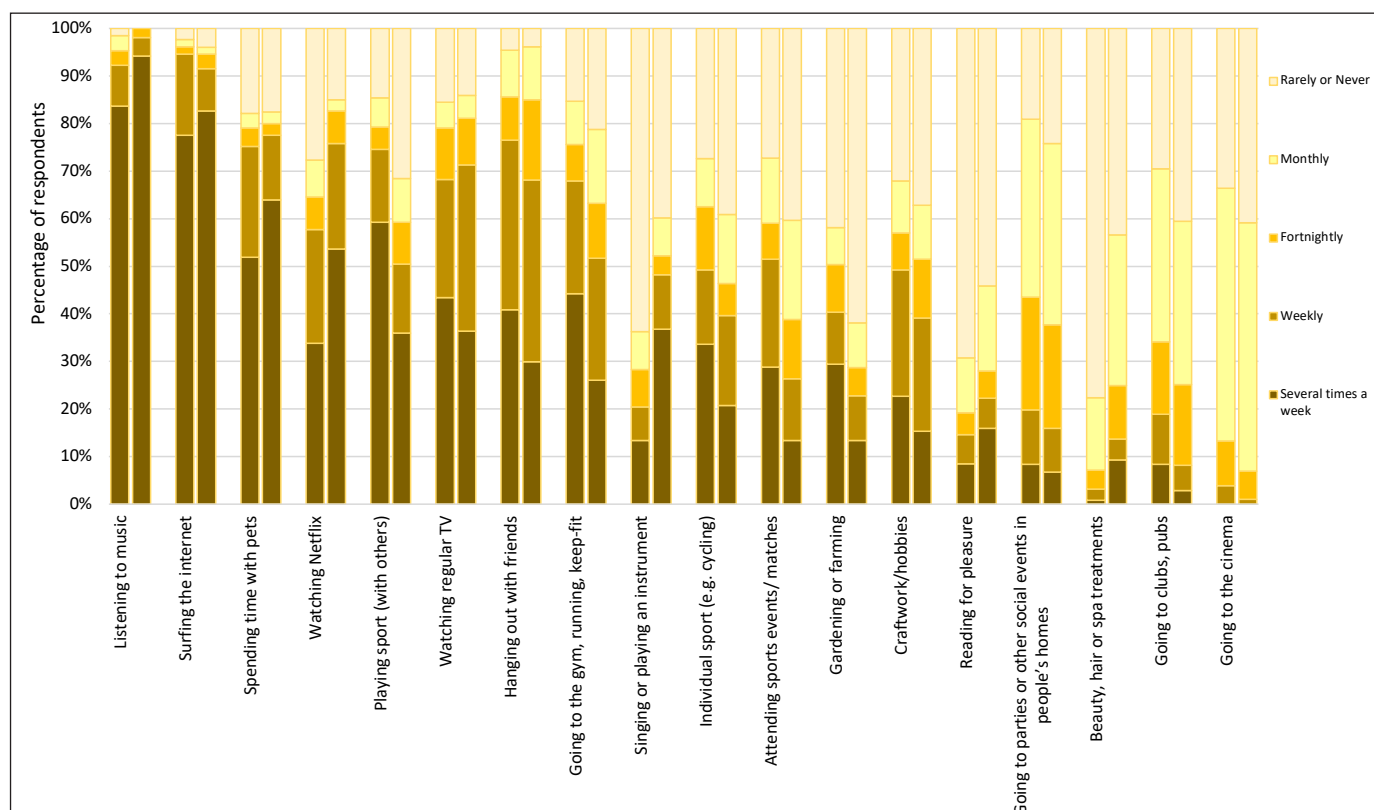
- go to the gym, run and keep fit (a difference of 16.2 percentage points in respect of weekly or more often);
- engage in individual sports (a difference of 9.6 percentage points);
- attend a sporting event (a difference of 25.1 percentage points); and
- undertake gardening or farming (a difference of 17.5 percentage points); and do craftwork / hobbies (a difference of 10.1 percentage points).

Females are more likely to spend time singing or playing a musical instrument; almost half (48.3%) do so at least weekly. The corresponding figure for males is over twenty-five percentage points lower (20.5%).



During the summer months’ young people in the region perform weekly seisuins in Bruach na Carraige. The culture and heritage of Sliabh Luachra is prominent throughout the Duhallow region.

Fig. 3.14: Frequency with which students engage in selected activities, by gender¹²



The tendency among males to be more physically active than females tallies with the GUI findings (2016c). The GUI study observed, “frequent exercise (6 days or more) was significantly more prevalent among males than females (74% compared to 58% respectively)” (2016c: 5).

The following table shows the percentage of young people (in Duhallow / Lee Valley) who have participated in a range of activities over the course of the preceding year.

Table 3.4: Percentage participation in selected activities

Activity / Forum	Percentage
Sports clubs/ teams	76%
School / student councils	34%
Games / hobbies clubs	30%
Arts, drama, dance, or music	29%
Youth Clubs	16%
Breakfast club / after-school club	7%
Religious groups or organisations	5%
Computer clubs/ groups	5%
Other Clubs/ Activities	8%

Over three-quarters of students are involved in a sports club and / or team. Just over one-third (34%) are members of school / student councils. Their participation in such fora are specifically referenced in the national strategy Better Outcomes Brighter Futures (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014a) as a mechanism through which young people can exert some influence over decisions that affect them. A smaller proportion (30%) is involved in, or has participated in, activities associated with a non-sporting club. Examples include coderdojo and chess. A similar number (29%) has participated in arts, drama, dance and music activities – in community settings, while just over one-in-six has been involved or is involved in a youth club.

Among the survey cohort, gender emerges as a determinant of students’ participation in sporting and recreational activities. This is relevant in the context of young people’s health and wellbeing. Research by Healthy Ireland records that, relative to their male counterparts, younger women have lower levels of participation in clubs and groups, and they are much more likely than younger men to have a substantially increased metabolic risk; 18% of women aged 15-24

¹² In respect of each activity, the first column relates to males and the second column relates to females.

have a substantially increased risk compared with 5% of men of the same age (2015: 42). The next section provides further insights into students' health and wellbeing, including mental health.



Kanturk has a strong cycling tradition and young people from the region train regularly in the LEADER funded Cycling Velodrome.

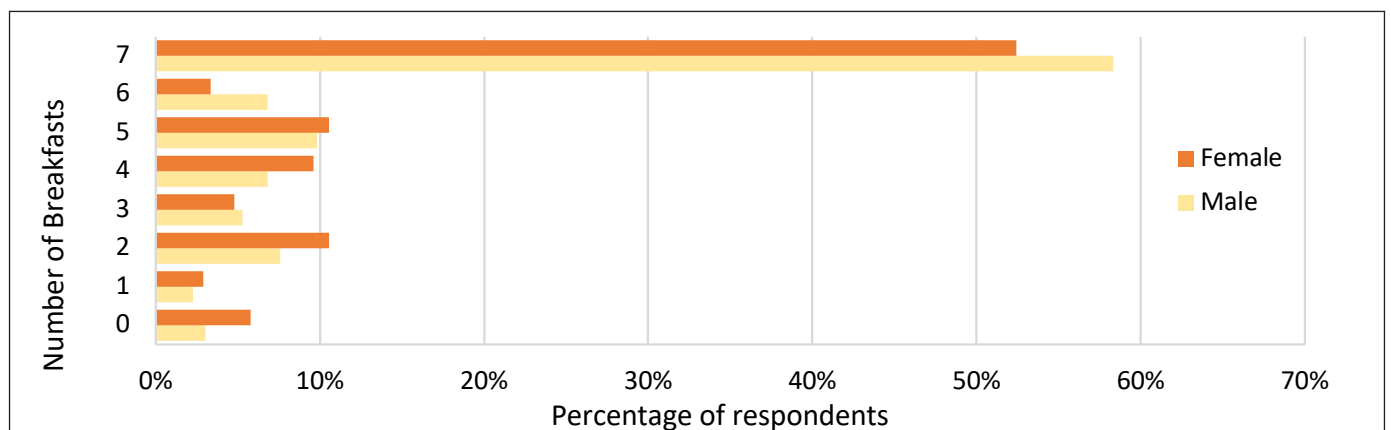
3.3 Nutrition, Health and Well-being

Students were asked a series of questions about their eating habits, diet and the consumption of alcohol and

illicit drugs. These are relevant issues, given, as noted by Healthy Ireland (2015: 34), “a healthy diet is crucial in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. It plays a key role in maintaining a healthy weight as well as encouraging positive lifestyles generally. Conversely an unhealthy diet not only leads to excess weight but also increases the chances of acquiring type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, coronary heart disease and certain cancers”. Healthy Ireland research has noted particular challenges in respect of young people having poor diets and low levels of physical activity. It finds, for example, that “younger people are less likely to eat breakfast – 40% of 15–24-year-olds do not eat breakfast every day... and daily consumption of fruit and vegetables is lower amongst younger people. 73% of those aged under 35 eat fruit or vegetables daily, compared with 80% of those older than this” (2015: 35).

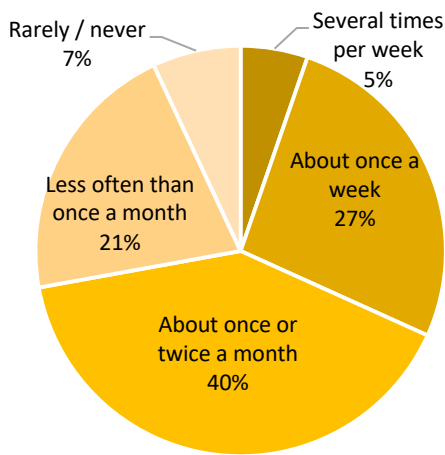
The Duhallow / Lee Valley survey finds that the vast majority (93%) of students generally eat breakfast at home. As the following graph shows, the majority of students (58% of males and 52% of females) eat breakfast every day. The survey findings also reveal that almost one-fifth (19.2%) of females and more than one-in eight (12.9%) males eat fewer than three breakfasts per week.

Fig. 3.15: Number of breakfasts eaten per week, by gender



As the following pie-chart reveals, almost a third of students report eating out on a weekly basis or thereabouts.

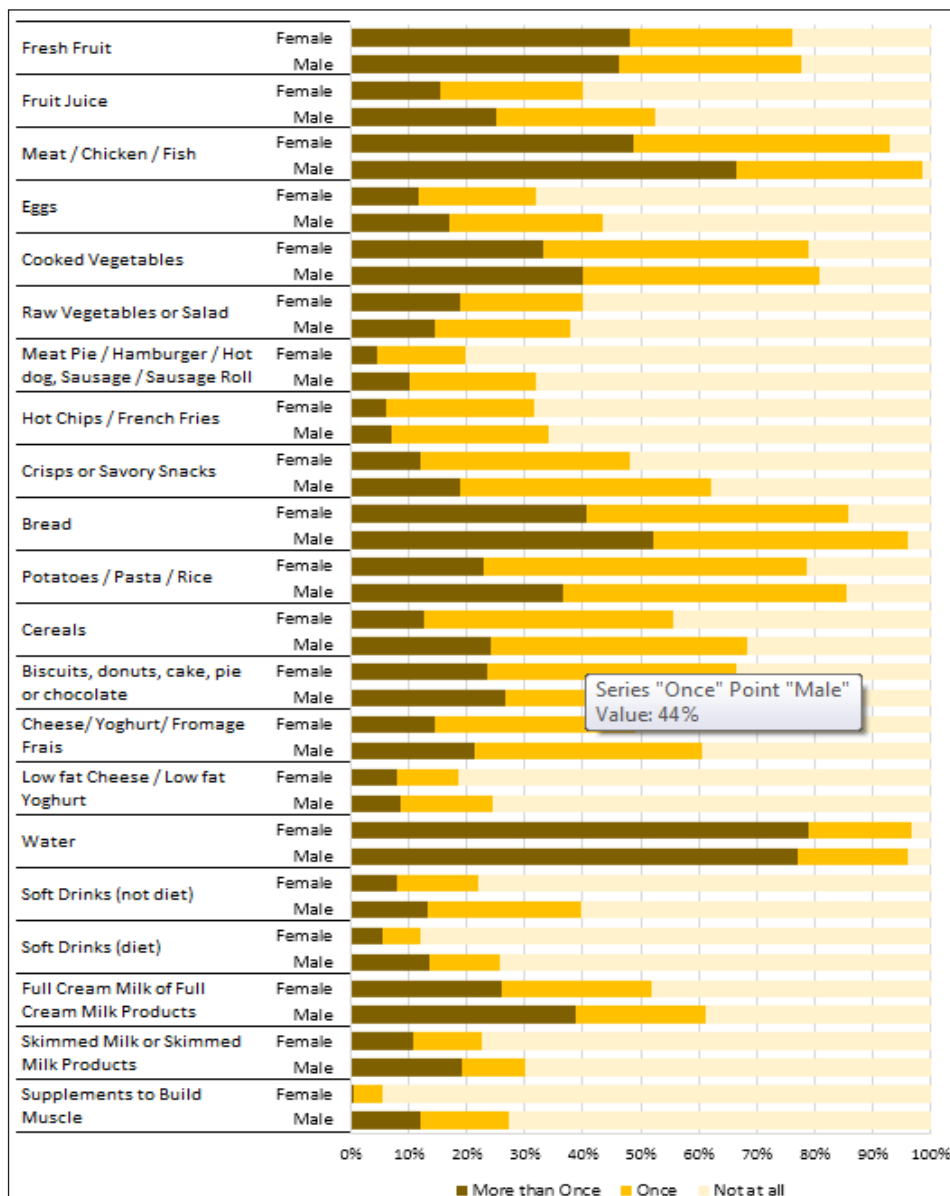
Fig. 3.16: Frequency with which students eat out (in a restaurant / café)



The vast majority (71%) of students report that they do not follow a specific diet. Among those who do, the most popular options are low carb (7%) and high protein (6%). Just over two percent are vegetarian and almost one percent are coeliac. A similar proportion (0.8%) is on a sugar-free diet.

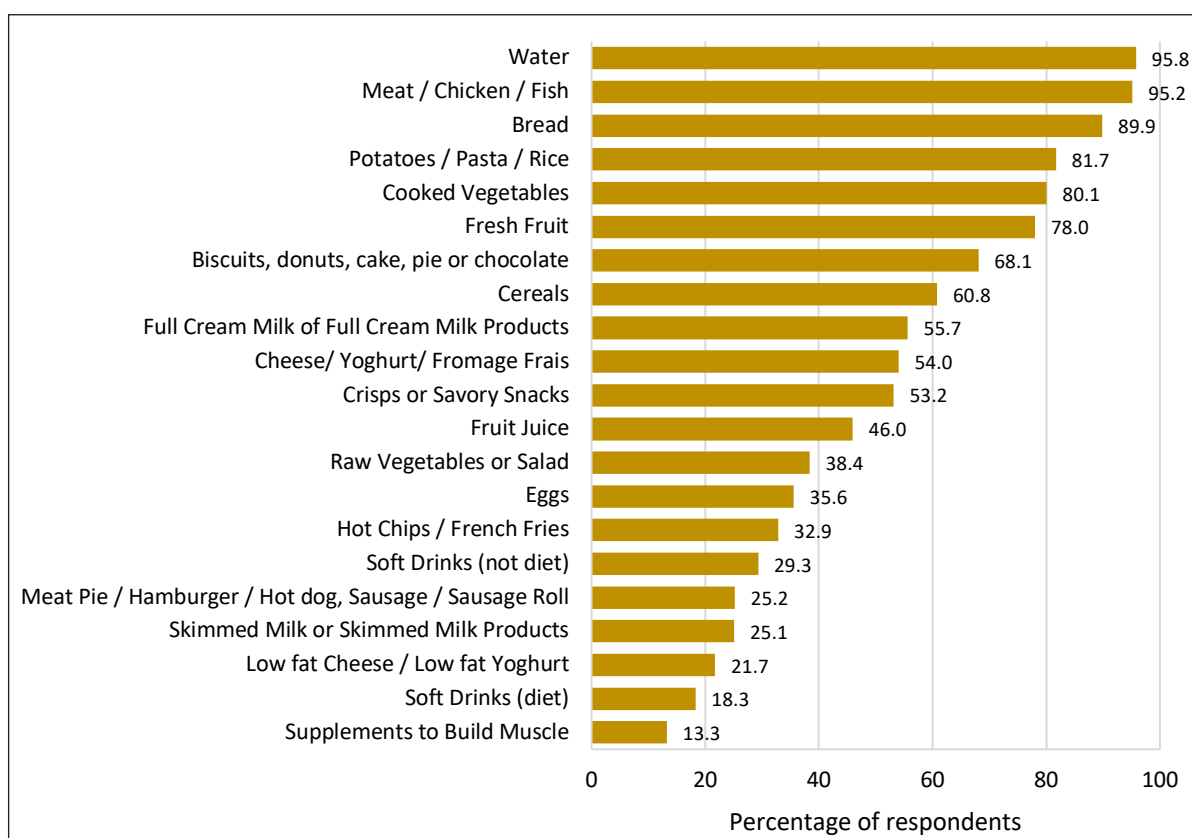
Reflecting a question from the GUI survey, our survey questionnaire presented respondents with a list of foods and drinks, and asked them how frequently (more than once, once, or not at all) they had consumed each of them in the previous twenty-four hours. The following bar-graph presents the results – with the foods and drinks listed in the order in which they were listed in the questionnaire.

Fig. 3.17: Frequency with which students consume selected foodstuffs, by gender



The survey findings reveal that for both males and females the most frequently consumed items are water, meat / fish / chicken, bread, fresh fruit and cooked vegetables. The least frequently consumed items are muscle-building supplements, soft drinks and low-fat dairy products and meat-pies / hamburgers / sausages / sausage rolls. The results are broadly in line with those recorded by the GUI survey (2016c) among 17- and 18-year-olds, and the data indicate that students in Duhallow and the Lee Valley are, for the most part, following WHO and HSE guidelines in respect of healthy eating. However, the data reveal some consumptions that do not reflect these guidelines. Over a quarter (27%) of males and six percent of females report having consumed a supplement to build muscle. Approximately one-fifth (21% of females and 19%) of males had not eaten cooked vegetables, while almost a quarter (24% of females and 22% of males) had not consumed fresh fruit. Thus, a considerable proportion of young people had not consumed the recommended 'five-a-day' fruit and / or vegetables. The following graph illustrates the percentage of students, in descending order, who have consumed each individual food / drink, within the preceding twenty-four hours.

Fig. 3.18: Percentage of students who have consumed specific items within the previous 24 hours

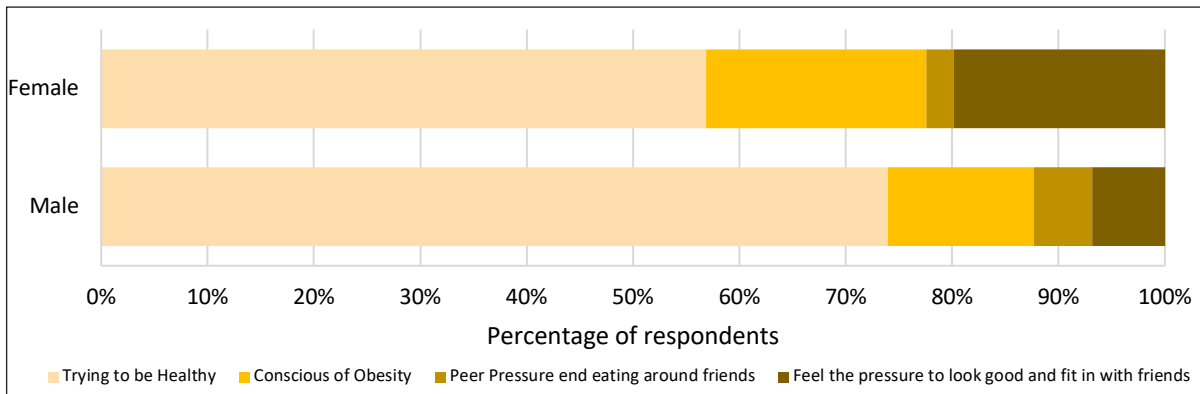


Schools and health professionals have been to the fore in encouraging healthy eating and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. As noted in the GUI reports, they are motivated by the need to address Ireland's growing obesity challenge. GUI recorded (2016c: 4) that among 17- and 18-year-olds almost twenty percent (19.6%) were overweight and almost eight percent (7.8%) are obese. The Duhallow / Lee Valley survey results indicate that the majority of students have taken these messages on board, as almost two-thirds (62%) report that they control their diet. However, a sizeable majority (38%) does not do so. The figures are broadly similar among males and females. Among those who control their diet, the primary motivation is 'trying to be healthy', as the following graph illustrates. However, approximately one-in-six does so for unhealthy reasons, namely peer pressure and fitting in with friends.



As part of the Ability Programme participants learn how to cook and prepare nutritious meals.

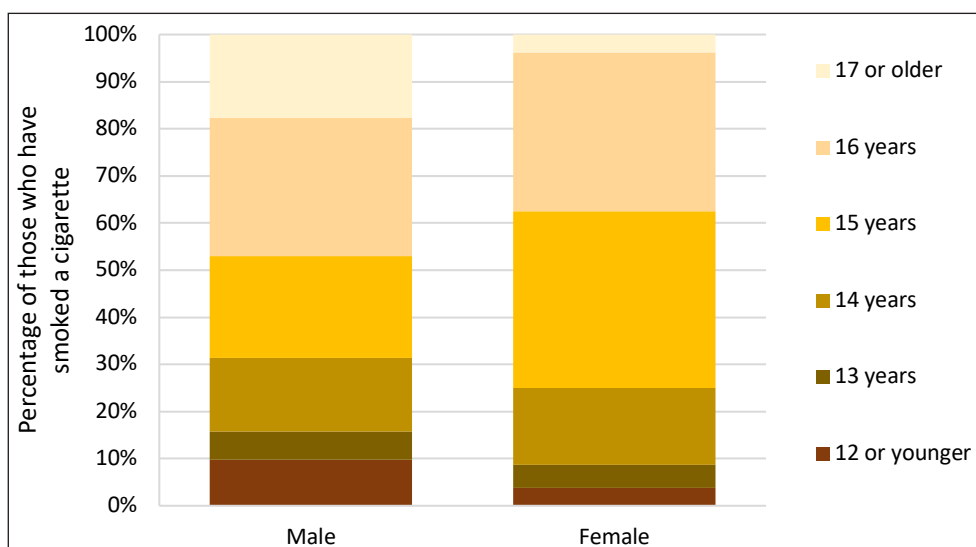
Fig. 3.19: Reasons for diet control, by gender



Almost a quarter (23% of all respondents: 30% of females and 11% of males) report eating in secret. The corresponding figures in the GUI survey (2016c) are twenty percent for females and fifteen percent for males. In Duhallow / Lee Valley, one-in-eight students states that they have an eating disorder. Females are almost twice as likely as males to be affected in this regard (15% of females and 8% of males). Over half of students (56% of all respondents; 70% of females and 32% of males) report that their weight affects the way they feel about themselves.

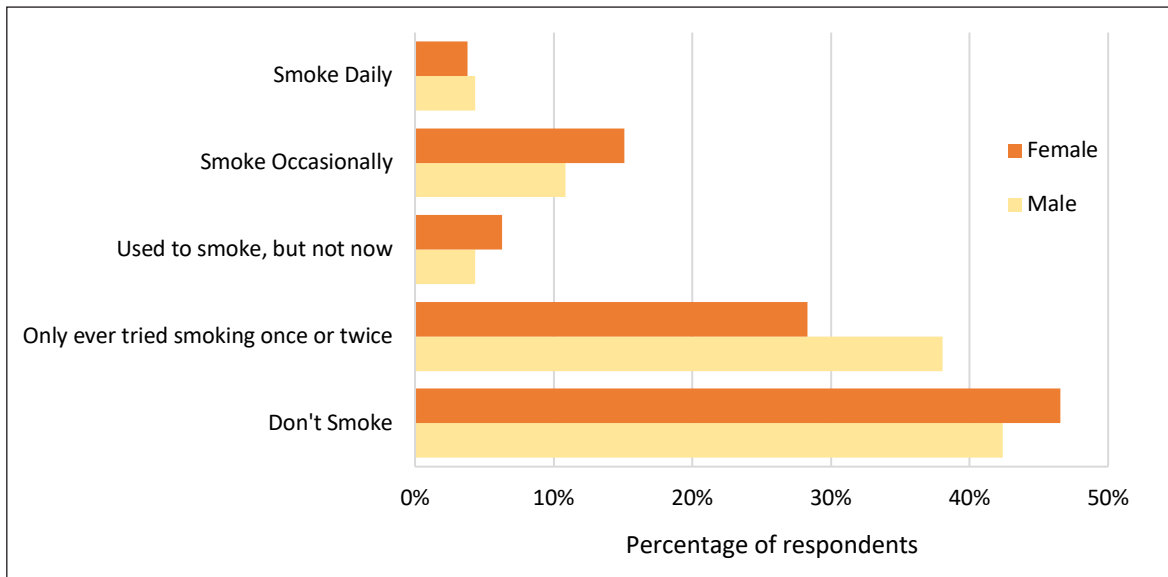
As noted in the GUI research, “levels of alcohol consumption, smoking and drug-taking are clearly a concern in terms of the current and future wellbeing of young people” (2016d: 11). Thus, this study included specific questions in relation to the consumption of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs. The findings reveal the majority of students (59%), of both genders, report that they have never smoked a cigarette. The corresponding figure among 17–18-year-olds, as recorded in the GUI research (2016d) was fifty-one percent. In Duhallow / Lee Valley, among those who have done so, the modal age at which they smoked their first cigarette was fifteen years for the entire cohort; fifteen for females and sixteen for males. The data reveal that, by their sixteenth birthday, more females than males had smoked. The findings also show that females smoke with greater frequency (based on the combined numbers who smoke daily and occasionally). The data are presented in the following graphs.

Fig. 3.20: Age at which students first smoked a cigarette, by gender



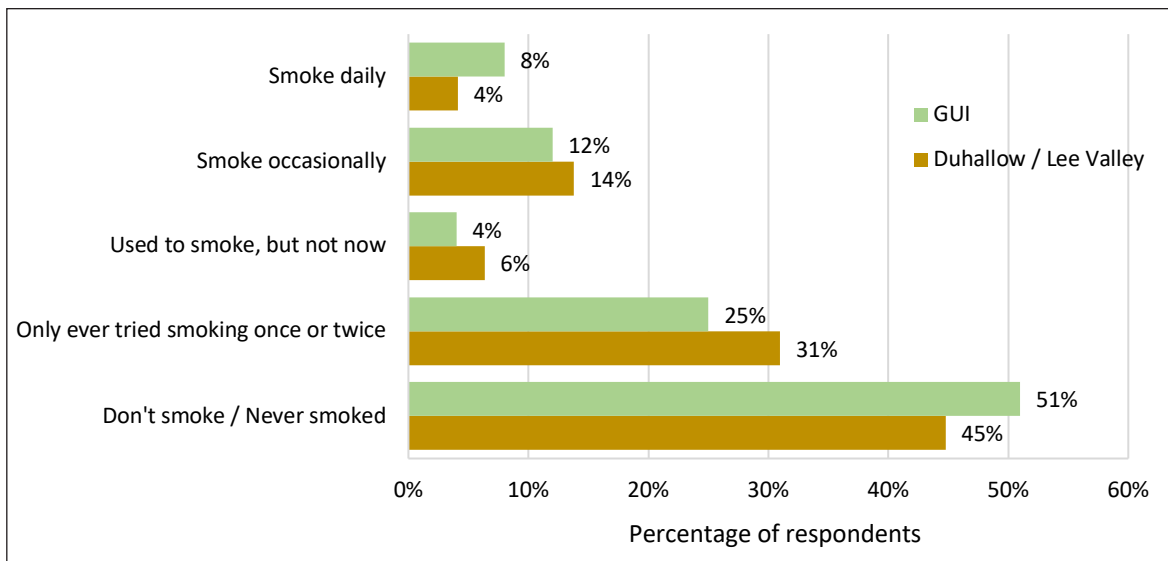
Over three-quarters (77%: 80.4% of males and 74.8% of females) of students report that they do not smoke, or they only ever tried smoking once or twice. A further six percent state that they used to smoke, but do not do so anymore. Almost one-in-seven students (11% of males and 15% of females) smokes occasionally, while four percent smoke on a daily basis.

Fig. 3.21: Smoking habits and frequency, by gender



As the following graph illustrates, over three-quarters (76%) of respondents in the local and GUI surveys do not smoke, never smoked or only tried smoking once or twice. However, between eighteen and twenty percent are habitual smokers – with varying frequency.

Fig. 3.22: Comparative smoking habits and frequency, GUI and local datasets



Among those who currently smoke (regardless of frequency) nine percent report that they have tried to give up cigarettes, but were unable to do so.

The survey findings reveal that alcohol consumption is more prevalent among young people, in Duhallow / Lee Valley, than is tobacco consumption. Three-quarters (75.5%) of students report that they have consumed alcohol, although the majority are under the legal age. The following pie-chart shows the frequency of alcohol consumption among the entire set of respondents.

Among those who consume alcohol, almost two-thirds (65%) report to drinking on a monthly basis or less frequently. Just over seven percent report that they consume alcohol at least every week. Thus, the frequency of alcohol consumption among students in Duhallow / Lee Valley is lower than among 17–18 years olds in the GUI (2016d: 2) survey, as the following graph shows¹³:

Fig. 3.23: Frequency of alcohol consumption among all respondents

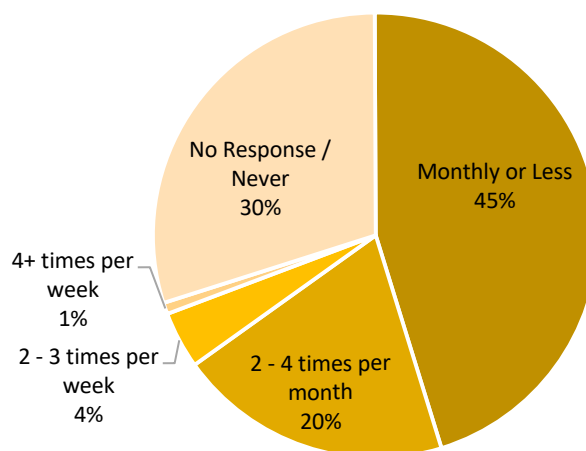
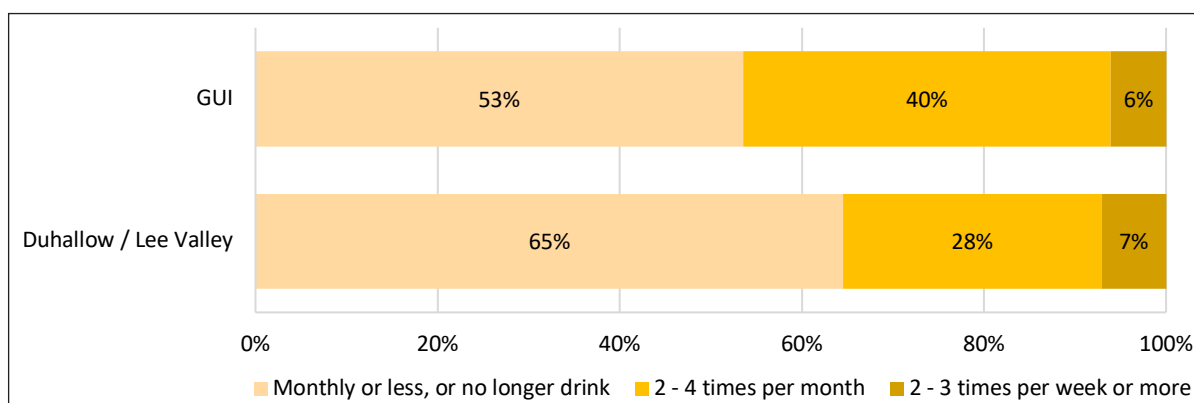


Fig. 3.24: Frequency of alcohol consumption, among those who have drunk, GUI and local data



The majority (55%) of those (in the Duhallow / Lee Valley survey) who consume alcohol report that they have been drunk. Nearly a third (31%) of the entire cohort, or over a third (37%) of those who drink, report that they binge drink. Almost two percent of those who drink report that they have driven a vehicle after consuming alcohol, while over a quarter (26%) of the entire survey cohort report having travelled in a vehicle the driver of which had consumed alcohol or an illicit drug.

Almost one-fifth of respondents report that they have taken an illicit drug. Almost all received the drugs through a 'friend'. Some declined to say who the supplier was / is. The most widely consumed drug is 'weed'. This is also the case among 17–18-year-olds covered by the GUI survey (2016d: 8). Locally, a small number (<2%) have taken pharmaceuticals. No respondent mentioned a so-called 'hard drug' e.g., heroine, while among the GUI cohort, four percent reported having taken ecstasy. Of those who take drugs – either currently or in the past – almost four percent claim to have driven a vehicle after consuming. The proportion of students who have taken, or still take, illicit drugs is largely the same among males and females. The

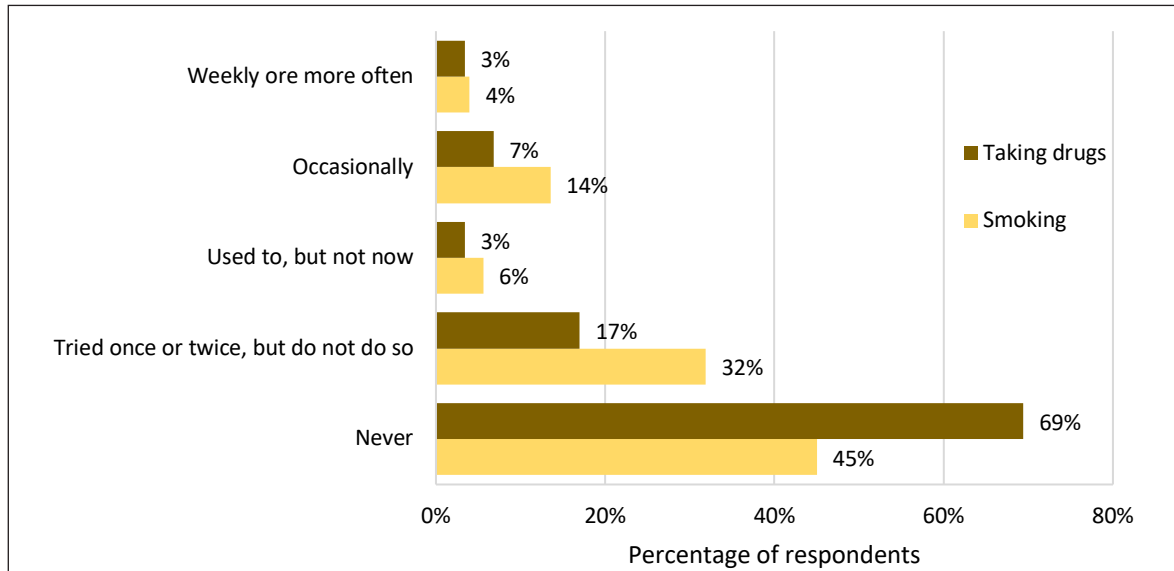


Almost one fifth of respondents said that they had taken an illicit drug.

¹³ Direct comparisons are not advisable, as the Duhallow / Lee Valley cohort include persons aged under 17, while the GUI cohort is aged 17 – 18.

following bar graph compares consumption habits / patterns in respect of smoking and drug-taking across the entire survey cohort.

Fig. 3.25: Frequency of smoking and taking illicit drugs



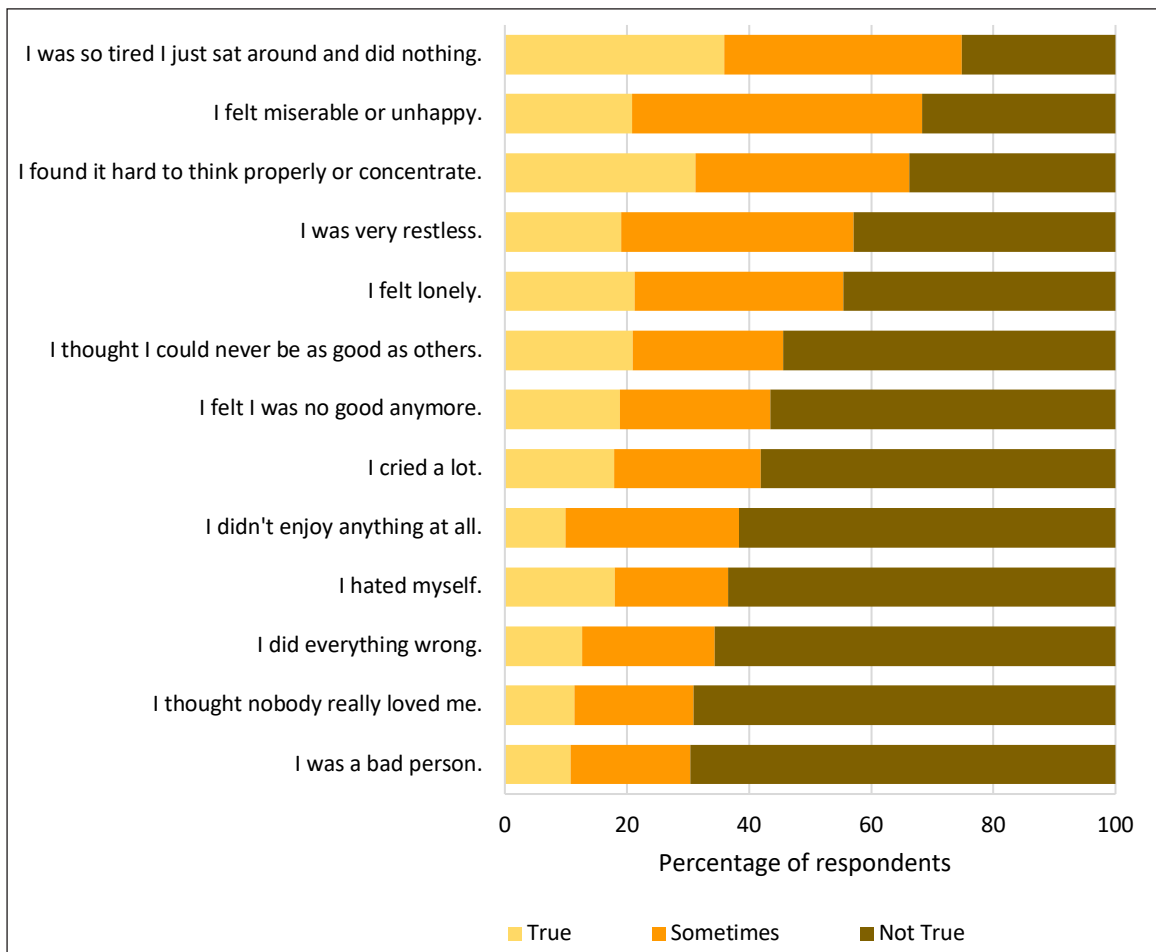
Survey respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they are with life in general – on a scale from zero to ten (zero implies ‘extremely dissatisfied’ and ten implies ‘extremely satisfied’). As the following graph shows, the modal score is seven, followed by eight. The mean value is 6.6. This is lower than the mean value of 7.2, which the GUI survey recorded among 17–18-year-olds across Ireland (2016b: 2).

Fig. 3.26: Overall level (on a scale of 0 to 10) of life satisfaction



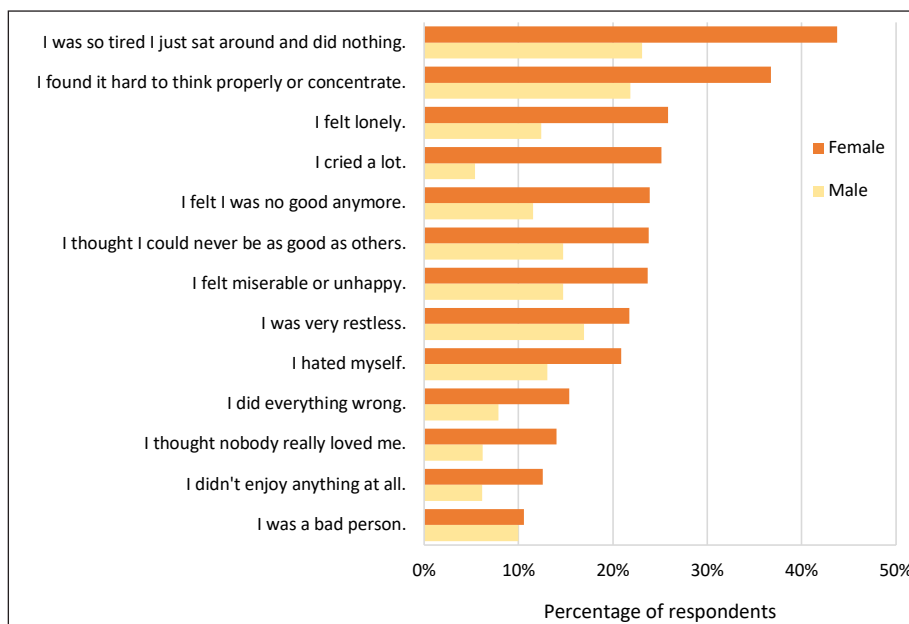
In order to further explore students’ life satisfaction and mental wellbeing, the survey questionnaire presented them with a series of statements and asked them to indicate how much they had felt or acted in those ways over the previous two weeks. The following graph presents the findings. It reveals that, at least on some occasions, over two-thirds of students were ‘so tired [they] just sat around and did nothing’ (75%) and ‘felt miserable and unhappy’ (68%). Over half (57%) were restless and / or lonely (56%).

Fig. 3.27: Frequency of selected feelings and actions over a two-week period



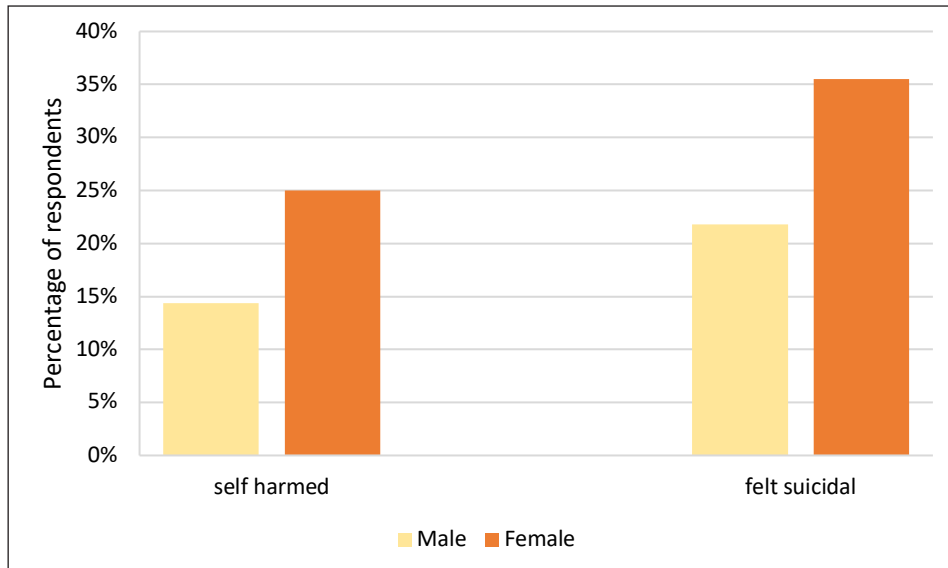
As the following bar-graph illustrates, a higher proportion of females, than males, was likely to report negative sentiments or behaviour in respect of each indicator.

Fig. 3.28: Percentage of respondents, by gender, responding 'true' in respect of selected feelings and behaviours over a two-week period



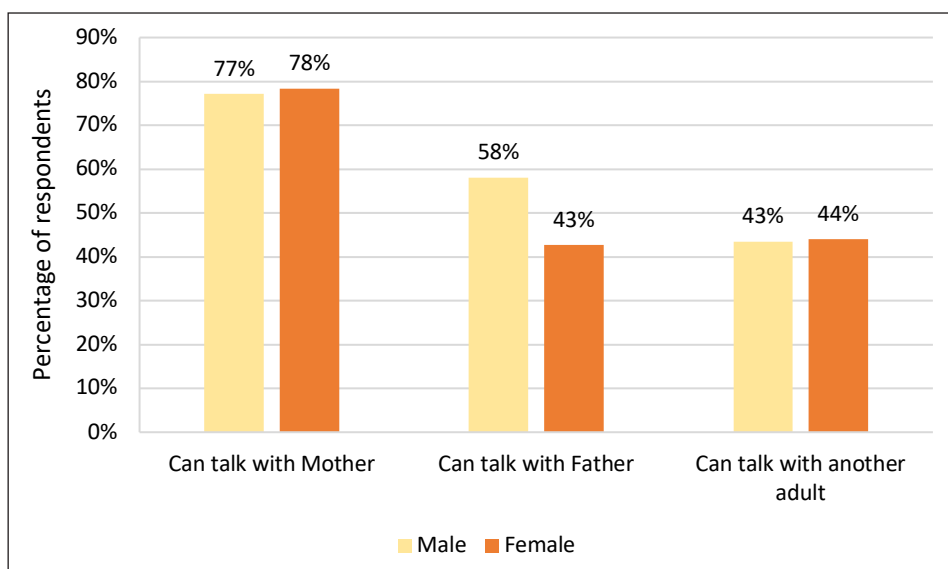
Just over one-fifth (21%) of respondents state that they have self-harmed, while a higher proportion (31%) state that they have felt suicidal at some time. Females reported a greater propensity in both respects, as the following graph illustrates.

Fig. 3.29: Percentage of respondents who have self-harmed or felt suicidal, by gender



As the following graph shows, over three quarters of students can talk to their mothers when they have a problem / difficulty. However, the figure is considerably lower, for both genders, in respect of talking to fathers.

Fig. 3.30: Percentage of respondents who can talk to their mother, father or another adult when they have problems or difficulties, by gender

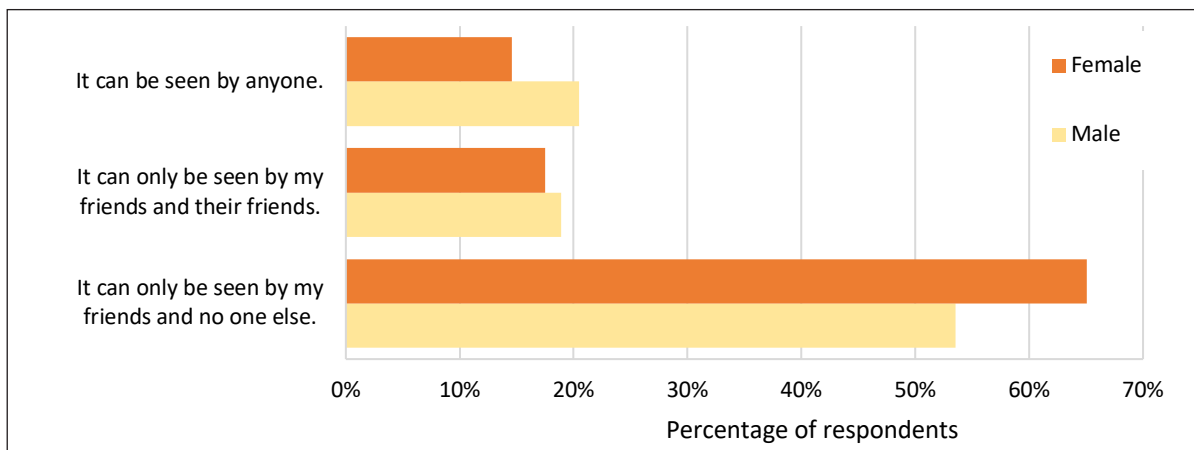


The corresponding figures from the GUI research (2016c: 4) are “most (80%) felt they could talk to their mothers about ‘difficulties or problems’, but only 59% could talk to their fathers”.

3.4 The Internet and Social Media

Almost all (98%) students report that they have a social media account / profile. The modal number of accounts is four, and the vast majority (85%) have at least three accounts. Facebook is by far the most popular social media platform. As the following graph illustrates, in respect of students' primary social media accounts, over one-third are visible to persons beyond their immediate circle of friends.

Fig. 3.31: Visibility levels of holders' main social media account, by gender



In preparing this survey questionnaire, members of the IRD Duhallow Youth and Education Working Group had raised concerns, stemming from other research, regarding an increase in internet addiction among young people. Research by Kennedy and Lynch (2016) noted that internet use among young people is impacting on social and emotional wellbeing. Tomaszek and Muchacka-Cymerman state, “the results of research conducted in Europe showed that the IAD (pathological Internet use or problematic Internet use) prevalence among youths is 1–11%, and in the USA varies between 7.9% to 25.2%... [associated with] negative outcomes such as emotional problems, depression, isolation of social relations and educational low performance” (2019: 4107-8).



Rural hubs have been extremely important during times of lock down as young students need to access high speed broadband to continue their studies. IRD Duhallow has supported the development of a number of these hubs throughout the region including Tureencahill, Laharn, Aubane and Glash.

In order to explore the extent of internet addiction, the Duhallow / Lee Valley study has taken nine of the twenty indicators used in the Internet Addiction Test (IAT) (Young, 1998). Dr Kimberly Young, a professor at St Bonaventure University and director of the Centre for Internet Addiction Recovery, developed the IAT to assess symptoms of Internet addiction and compulsivity in a variety of test settings. As noted in the literature, diagnosis of internet addiction is often complex. Unlike chemical dependency and substance abuse, the internet is predominantly a positive and constructive tool that facilitates people to undertake an increasing range of tasks. Consequently, Internet addiction can be masked and under-reported. The IAT is a worldwide accepted and validated testing instrument that is easy to administer in several settings. The IAT total score is the sum of the ratings given by the examinee for the 20 item responses. Each item is rated on a 6-point scale ranging from 0 to 5. The maximum score is 100 points. Total scores that range from 0 to 30 points are considered to reflect a normal level of Internet usage; scores of 31 to 49 indicate the presence of a mild level of Internet addiction; 50 to 79

reflect the presence of a moderate level; and scores of 80 to 100 indicate a severe dependence upon the Internet. Given the scope of the Duhallow / Lee Valley survey and the time available to those completing it (a 40-minute class period), not all indicators could be included. Therefore, the scores presented here are in percentages – relative to the absolute numbers listed above. The findings locally are as follows:

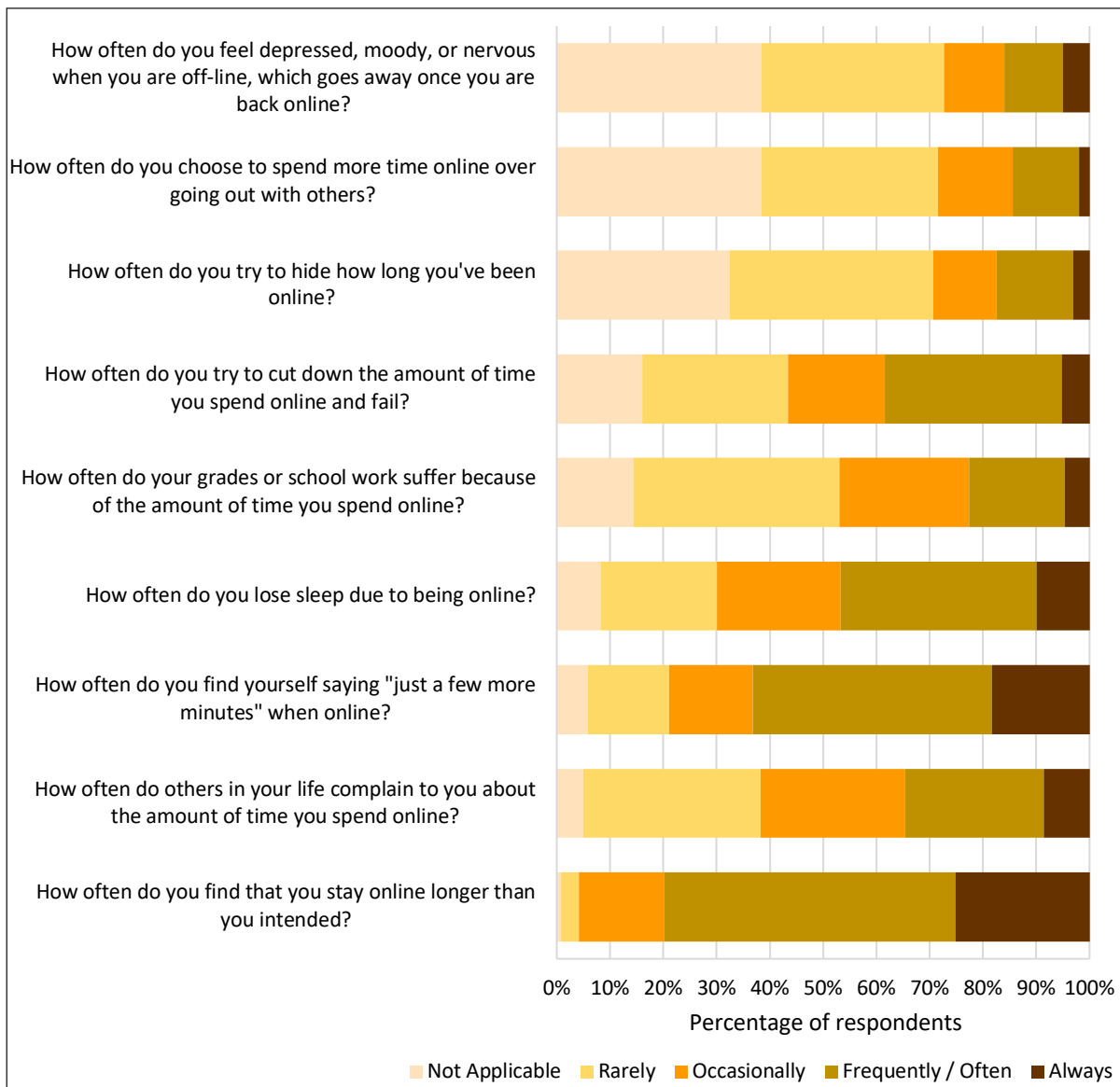
- The overall IAT score (for the entire cohort) is 41; this indicates a mild level of internet addiction;
- Among males, the mean IAT score is 40; among females, it stands at 42;
- Over three-quarters (79%) find themselves staying on-line longer than expected – either

always, often or frequently;

- Nearly half (47%) find that they lose sleep due to being on-line – either always, often or frequently;
- Over one-in-eight (12.6%) would choose to spend time on-line over going out with others - either always, often or frequently; and
- Almost forty percent (38%) try to cut down the amount of time they spend on-line – either always, often or frequently.

The following stacked bar graph presents the responses in respect of each of the selected indicators on the IAT scale.

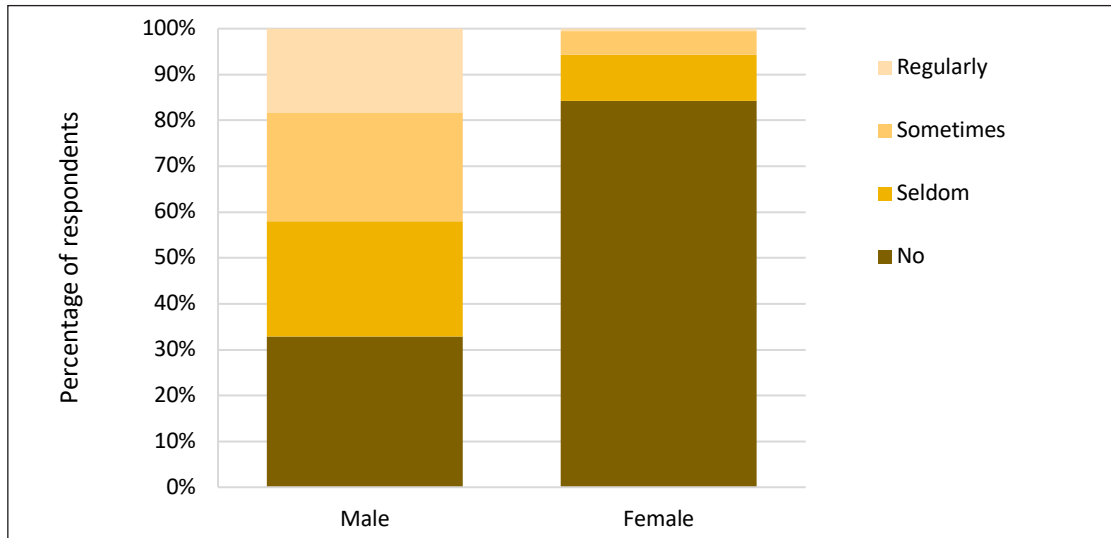
Fig. 3.32: Self-description of the impacts / effects of internet use



The survey findings reveal that over one-third of students watch on-line pornography. As the following graph shows, males are more likely to do so, with almost one-fifth stating that they do so ‘regularly’. Among those who watch

pornography, the vast majority (83%) do so alone. Approximately five percent do so with their friends and one percent with other adults. The remainder (11%) watch pornography together with their boy/girlfriend.

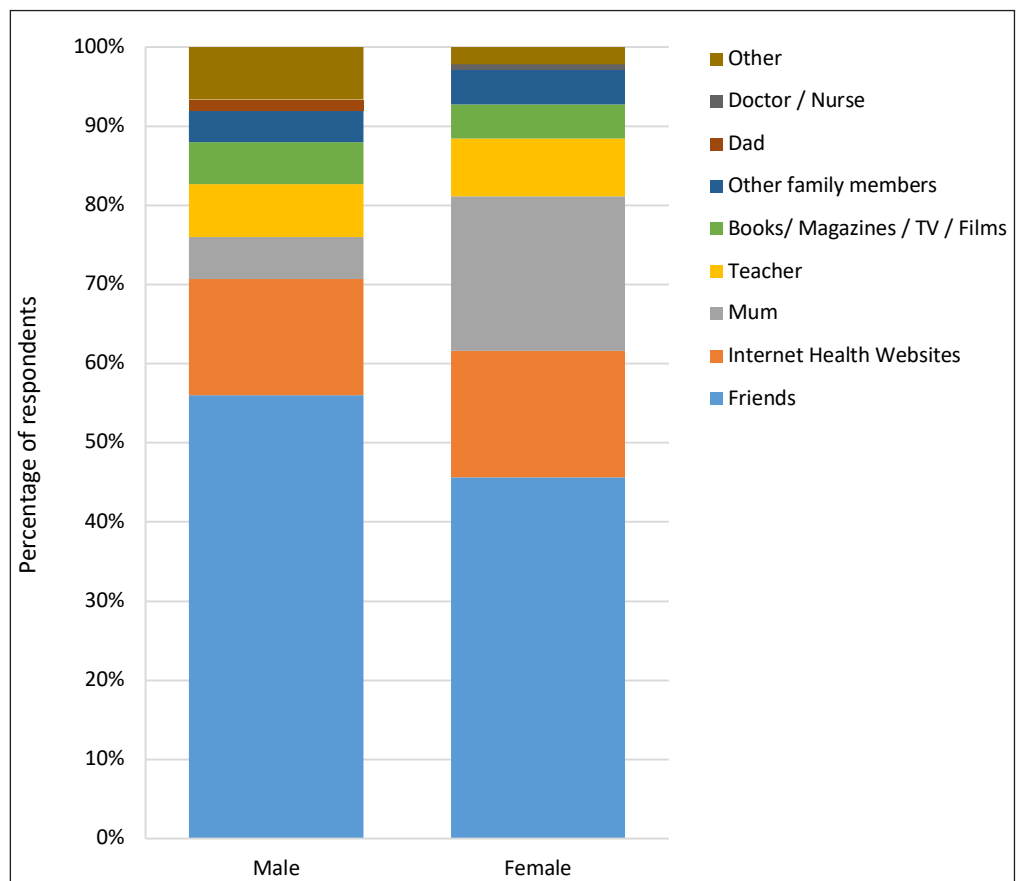
Fig. 3.33: Frequency of watching pornography, by gender



3.5 Relationships and Sexuality

The questionnaire explored several aspects of relationships and sexuality, including information sources, ability to talk to others, sexual activity and family relationships. The vast majority (85%) of students report having received relationships and sexuality education (RSE) in school. RSE has been on the school curriculum for a number of years. As the students who report not having received this education are not concentrated in a particular school, the findings suggest that they are not recognising the material as RSE, and may be associating it with another subject, such as religious education or biology.

Fig. 3.34: Sources for most information / advice about sex and relationship issues



As the following graph reveals, the modal sources for the most information and advice about sex and relationship issues are friends (36%), the internet (11%) and mothers (10%). Very few (0.3%) young people report that they approach their fathers for information / advice. Teachers were

identified by just over five percent of respondents. It should also be noted that one-in-five students did not specify a source for information / advice. When asked, they replied either 'nowhere', 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say'. Males were more likely to be in this latter category.

As the following graph shows, a small majority of students say that they have never discussed sex and / or relationships with their parents / guardians. Girls are more likely, than boys, to have done so.

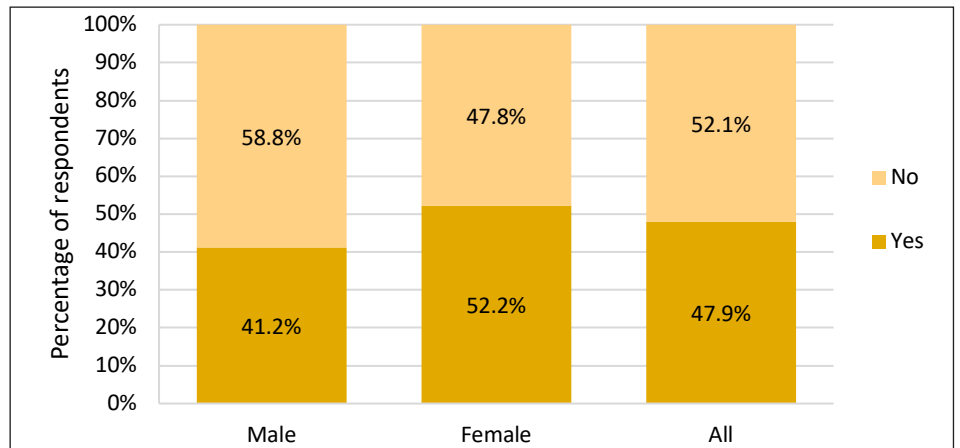


Fig. 3.35: Proportion of students who have discussed sex and / or relationships with parents, by gender

As the following sets of bar graphs show, students find it more difficult to have a discussion with their fathers than with their mothers. Over eighty percent (82%) stated that they found it never came up or that it was very / quiet difficult to discuss sex and / or relationships with fathers. The corresponding figure for mothers was under two-thirds (63%). The main driver of this difference is among girls.

Fig. 3.36: Ease or difficulty of talking to mothers about sex and / or relationships, by gender

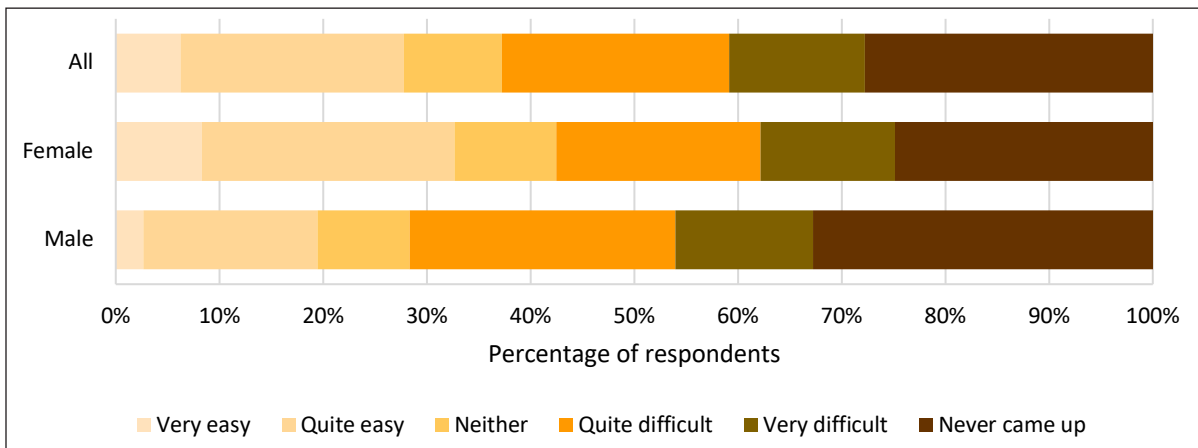
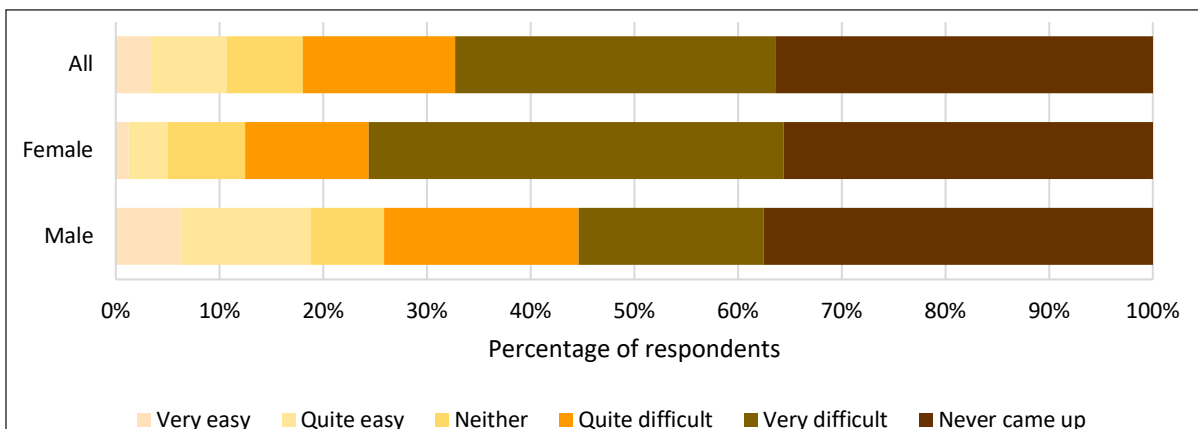
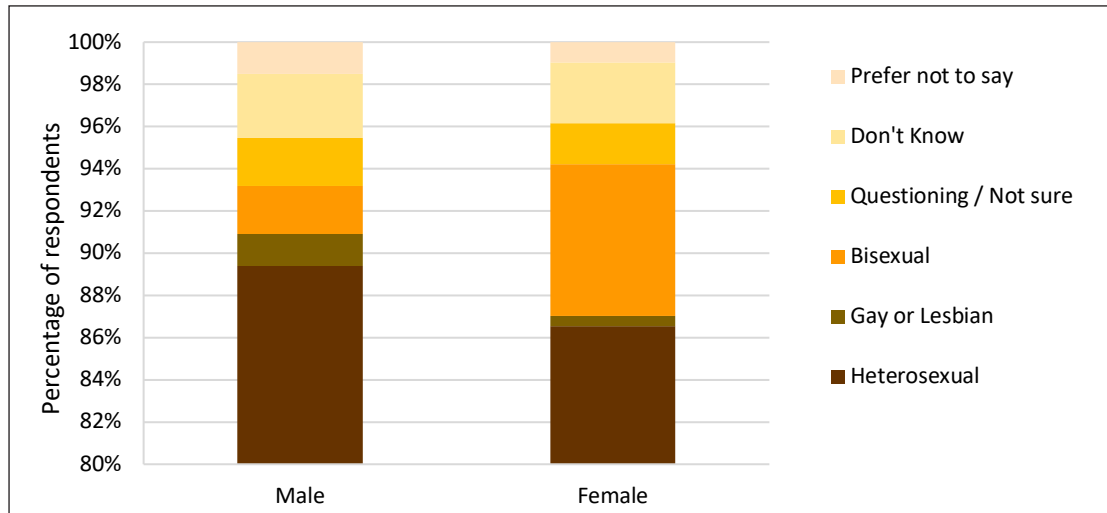


Fig. 3.37: Ease or difficulty of talking to father about sex and / or relationships, by gender



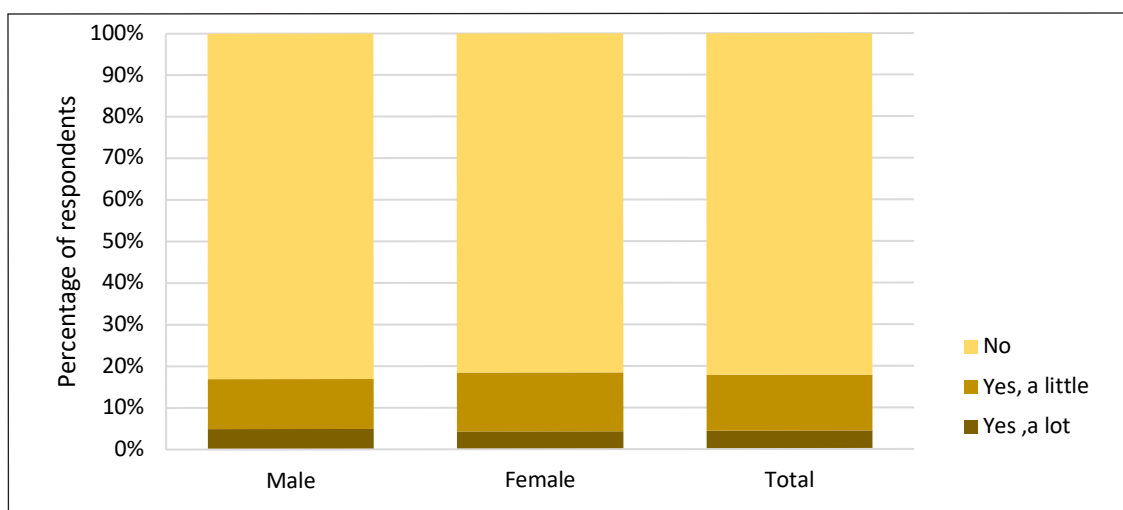
The vast majority (89% of males and 86% of females) of students describe themselves as heterosexual. The second largest (7%) cohort among females is bisexual. Almost three percent (2.9%) (with similar values in both genders) state that they do not know their sexual orientation, while just over two percent (2.1%) state that they are questioning / unsure.

Fig. 3.38: Self-description of their sexual orientation, by gender



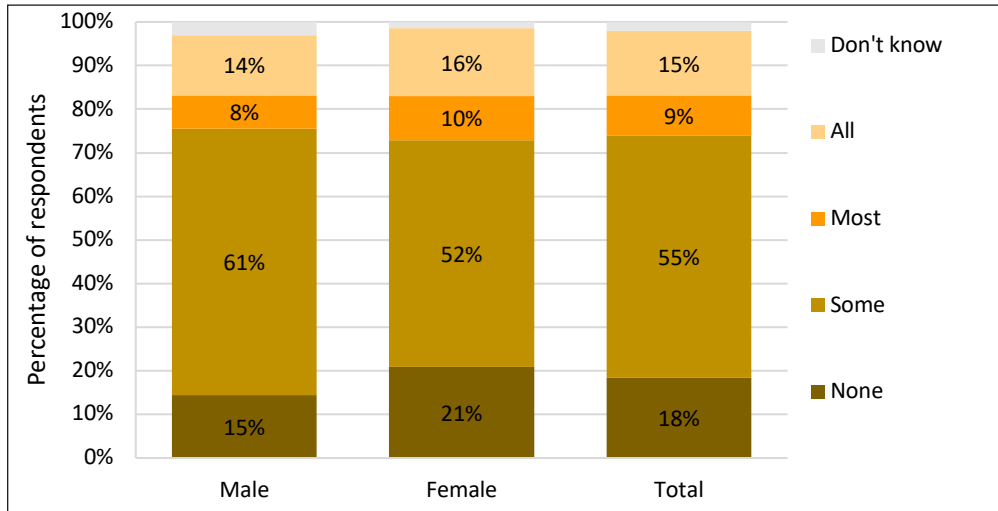
Almost a quarter (24%) report that they currently have a boyfriend or girlfriend. When asked if they had been in a relationship, and if so, who had ended it, most (66%) stated that they did (not the friend); there was no notable differences in the responses to these two questions among males and females. One-in-six of those who had been in a relationship stated that they came under pressure, from friends and / or the ex, to get back into that relationship. Again, the responses were not affected by gender. A small proportion (4.6%) stated that they received text or e-mails, from their ex, seeking to get back together. Responses were broadly similar from males and females when asked if they feel pressure from schoolmates/ peers to have sex or to say they have had sex, as the following graph shows. Over four in five (82%) state that they do not feel such pressure. However, nearly one-in-twenty (4.5%) students states that they feel 'a lot' of pressure.

Fig. 3.39: Extent to which students are under peer pressure to have sex or say, they had sex



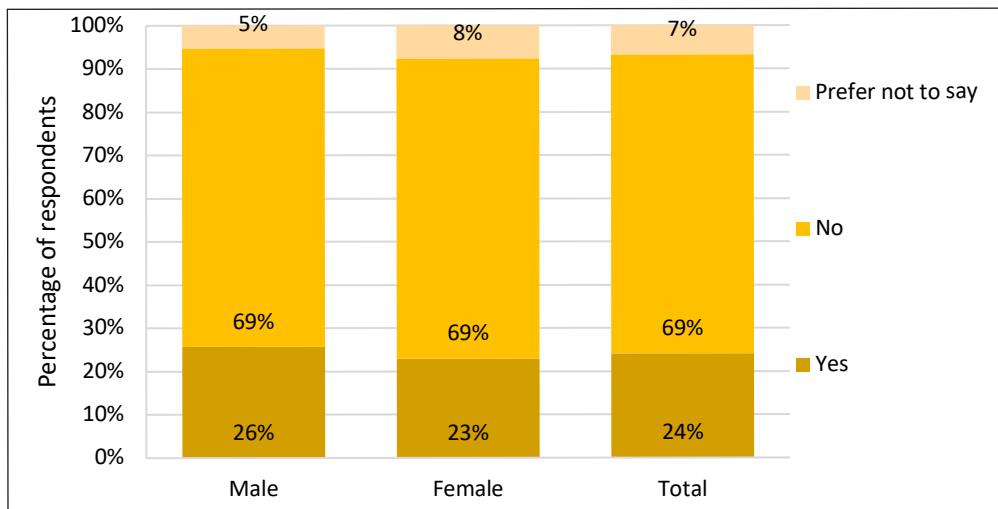
Most students believe that at least some of their friends have had sex. As the following graph shows, more males than females hold this opinion.

Fig. 3.40: Percentage of students who believe that their friends have had sex, by gender



When asked if they had sexual intercourse, almost a quarter (24%) stated that they had, and as the following graph shows, this proportion was three percentage points higher among males than among females.

Fig. 3.41: Percentage of students who have had sexual intercourse, by gender

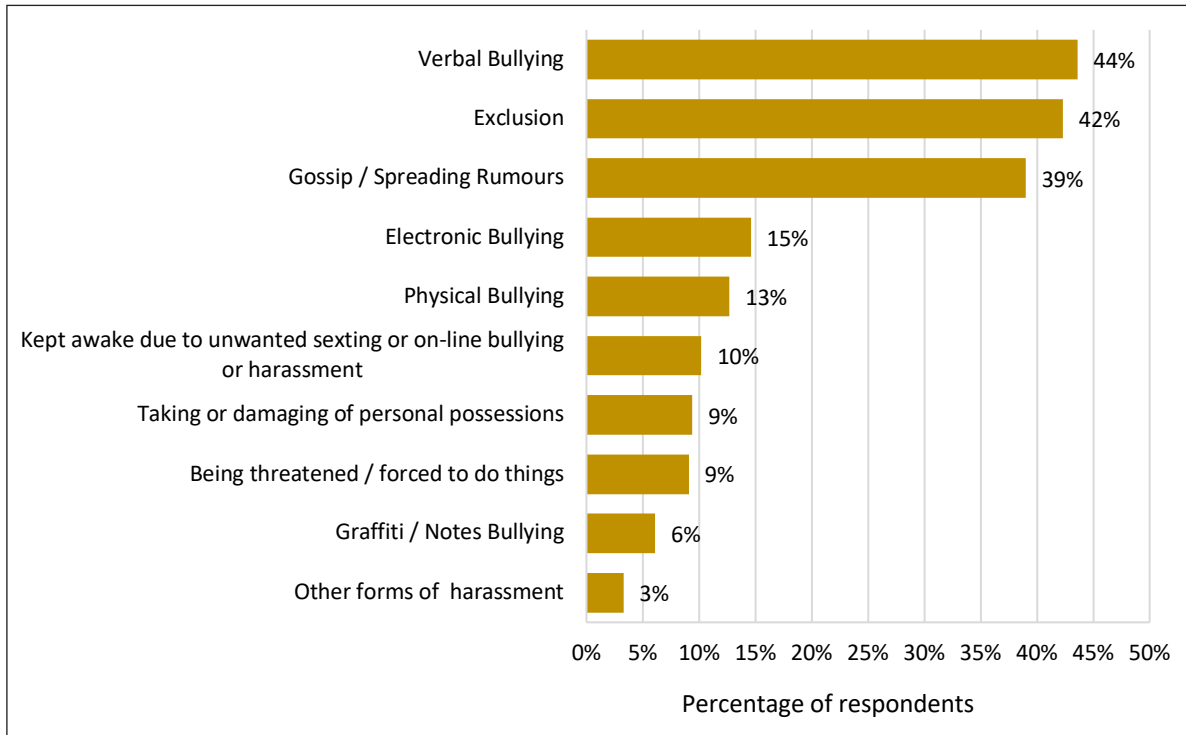


Most (56%) of those who have had sexual intercourse stated that they were in a steady relationship with their sexual partner on the first occasion. Nearly one-in-twenty (4.7% of the total cohort) report that they had sexual intercourse on their first meeting with their sexual partner. Over a quarter (28%) report that they did not use contraception the first time they had sexual intercourse. Almost two-thirds (65%) used a condom, while four percent of females report that they take a contraceptive pill. The modal number of sexual partners among this cohort is one. However, ten percent have had two or more partners. Almost four percent (5.3% of females and 1.5% of males) of students stated that they had been the victim of a sexual assault. In two-thirds of these cases, the assault involved sexual intercourse.

When asked if they had experienced various forms of bullying and / or harassment, between one-third and half of students stated that they had experienced verbal bullying, exclusion and / or gossip or rumours. Over one-in-eight experienced either electronic or physical bullying, while one-in-ten has been kept awake at night due to sexting or on-line bullying and / or harassment. Almost as many have had their possessions damaged or have been threatened

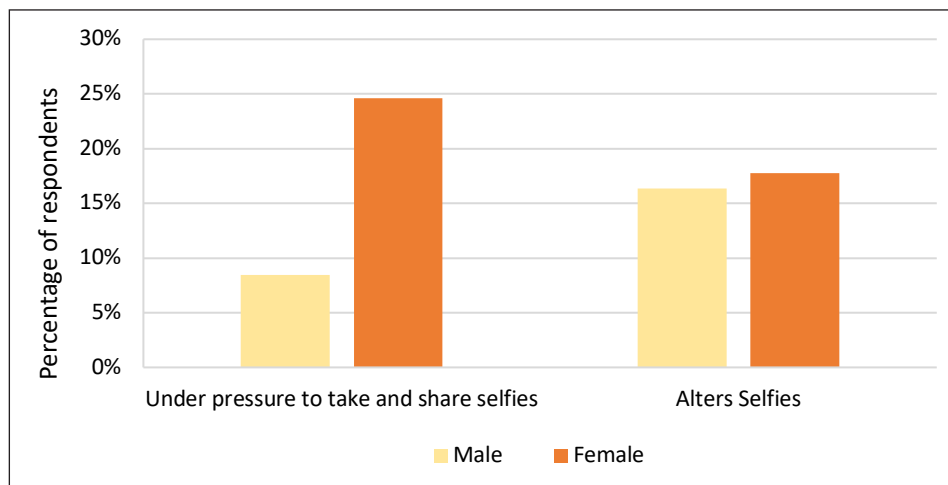
or forced to do things. Smaller but not insignificant numbers have experienced graffiti, received notes or been subjected to other forms of harassment. With the exception of physical bullying and being threatened, these forms of bullying and harassment were more likely to be visited on females than on males.

Fig. 3.42: Percentage of students who have experienced various forms of bullying / harassment



As the following graph shows, almost a quarter of females and nearly one-in-twelve males report coming under pressure to take and share selfies. Approximately one-in-six, of both genders, reports altering selfies.

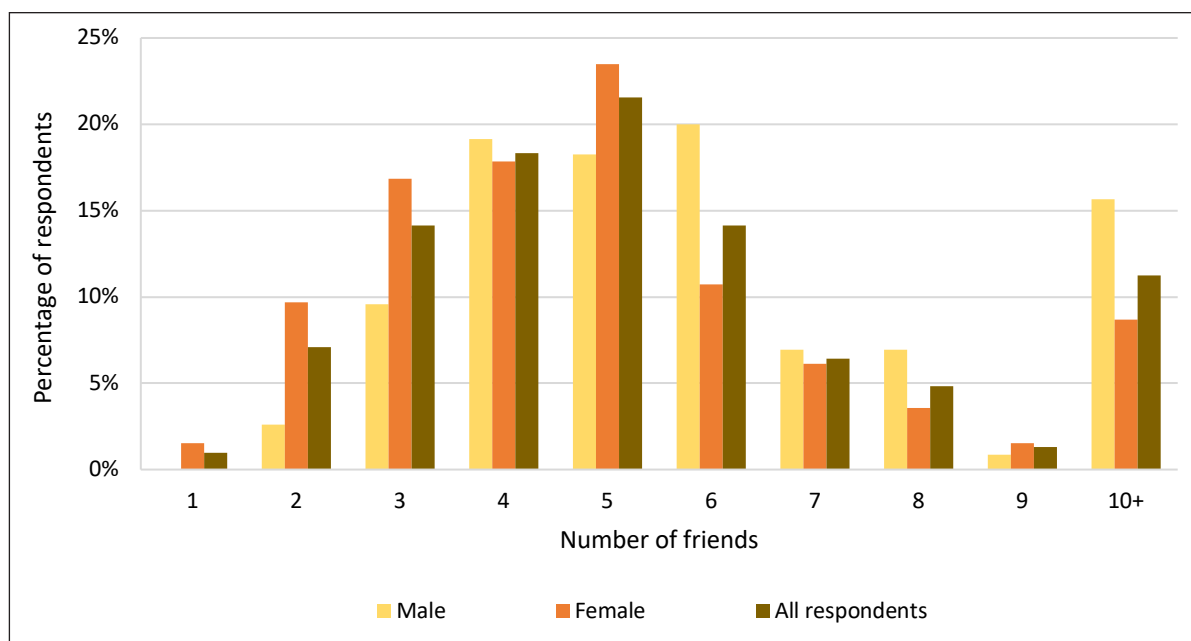
Fig. 3.43: Behaviour in respect of selfies, by gender



Students were asked to state the number of friends with whom they usually ‘hang around’. As the following graph shows, the modal numbers are five for females and six for males. The mean values are 6.3 for males, 5.3 for females and 5.7 overall. Over half (54%) have between three and five friends with whom they ‘hang around’. Among the GUI sample of 17–18-year-olds, the corresponding figure is 46%. In Duhallow / Lee Valley, a quarter of females report

'hanging around' with one to three friends. One-in-six males reports 'hanging around' with at least ten friends. Thus, the data show that males have larger friendship groups than do females. This tallies with the GUI research. It records that "in general, males were more likely to report larger groups of friends" (2016b: 6); almost half of males (48%) but under forty percent (39%) of females had six or more friends with whom they hang around. The corresponding figures in respect of hanging around with six or more friends (in Duhallow / Lee Valley) are fifty percent for males and thirty-one percent for females.

Fig. 3.44: Number of friends with whom students usually 'hang around', by gender



As the following table shows, students are more likely to have friends who are about the same age as themselves. These figures are similar to those recorded by the GUI research that "just under three-quarters of 17/18-year-olds described most or all of their friends as being around the same age as them" (2016b: 6).

Table 3.5: Percentage of students by age cohorts of their friends

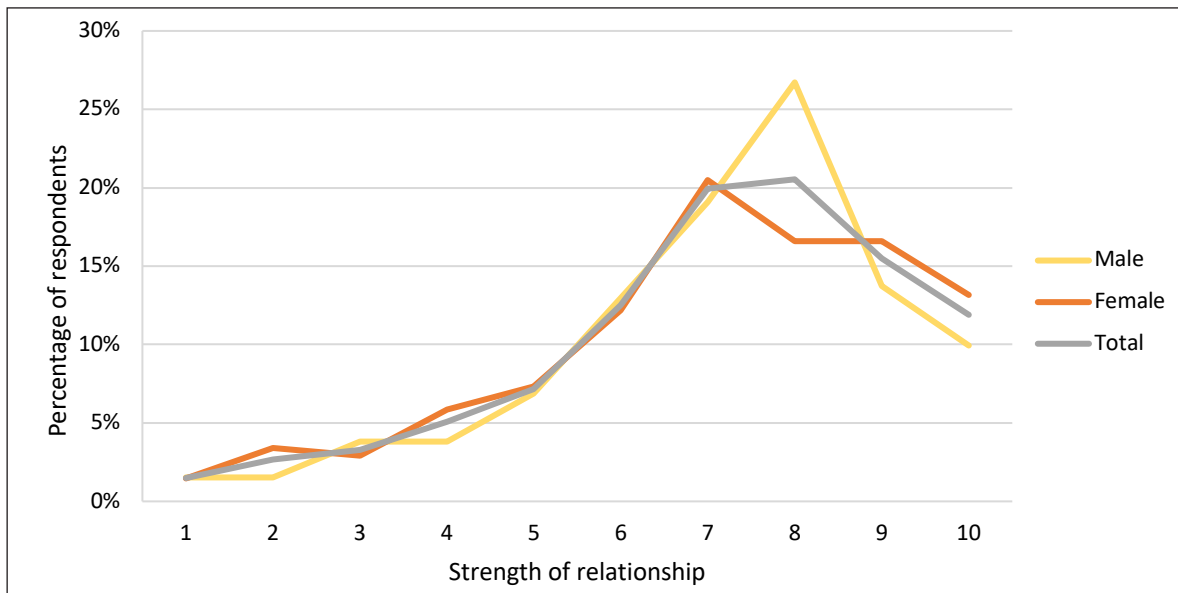
Ages	Proportion of friends		
	None	Some	Most or All
A year or more younger (than me)	27%	68%	5%
About the same age (as me)	3%	17%	81%
A year or two older (than me)	17%	71%	12%
More than two years older (than me)	17%	71%	12%

Survey participants were presented with a scale on which they could report how well members of their household get on with one another. Values on the scale ranged from one to ten (1 = 'We don't get on at all' to 10 = 'We get on very well'). As the following graph illustrates, the modal values are seven among females and eight among males.



One in six males report hanging around with at least ten friends.

Fig. 3.45: Perceived strength of household relationships – ability to get along together, by gender



3.6 Community and Society

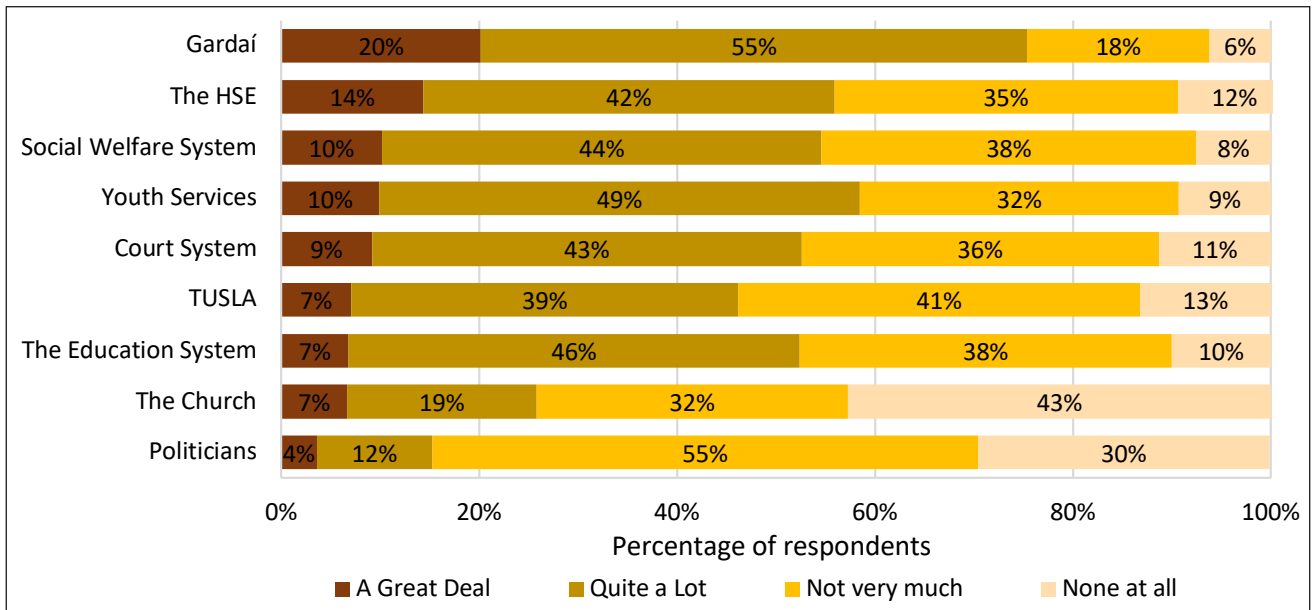
The questionnaire concluded by asking students about their perceptions of their local community and society. Successive studies have highlighted the enabling roles that community infrastructure and services can play in young people's lives (Woods et al., 2010; O'Keeffe and O'Beirne, 2014). The IRD Duhallow survey asked students if they believe that most people can be trusted; their answers ranged on a scale from one to ten (1='You can't be too careful' to 10='Most people can be trusted'). As the following graph shows, the modal value, among both genders, is five.

Fig. 3.46: Level of trust in people generally, by gender



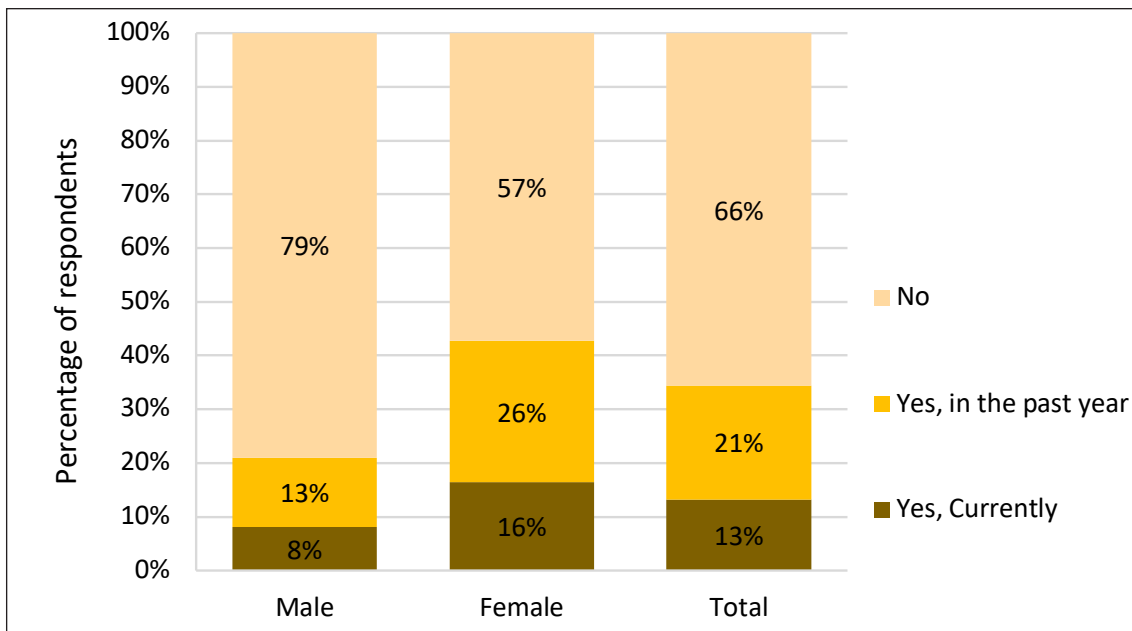
Several studies note the importance of social capital and institutional trust in enabling societal wellbeing. This survey used the same instrument that applies in studies such as the Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2017) and European Social Survey (Breen and Healy, 2016) to establish students' levels of trust in selected institutions. The responses are presented here – in descending order – based on the proportion of respondents who have a 'great deal of trust' in each institution / cohort. The findings reveal that most student place a great deal or lot of trust in An Garda Síochána, the HSE, the social welfare system, youth services and the courts system. The lowest levels of trust are associated with politicians and the Church. Males generally expressed greater levels of trust than did females.

Fig. 3.47: Levels of trust in selected institutions / cohorts



Students were asked if they currently, or within the past year, regularly volunteer(ed) with any organisation. As the following graph shows, females are more likely, than are males, to be volunteers.

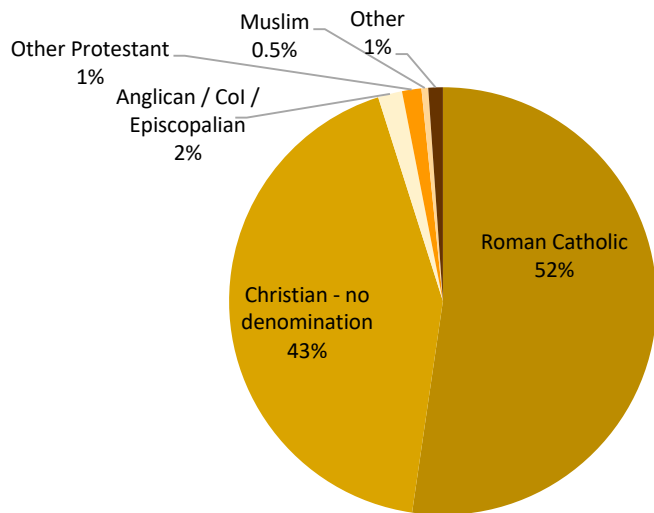
Fig. 3.48: Extent of volunteering, by gender



Among the schools that participated in this survey, Rathmore accounted for the bulk of the students who are currently involved in volunteering. This is due, in part at least, to the link between Pobalscoil Sliabh Luachra and the Rathmore Social Action Group. Other forms of volunteering, among students, include assisting with juvenile GAA and local tidy towns' committees. The modal number of hours per month devoted to voluntary activities is ten.

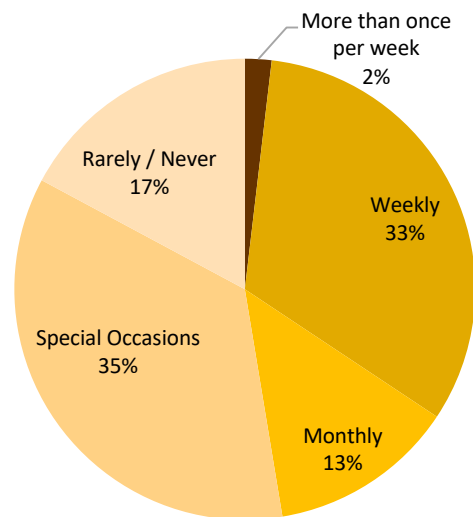
Four in every five (81%) students report that they belong to a religion. Of these, just over half describe themselves as 'Roman Catholic', as the following pie-chart shows:

Fig. 3.49: Religious affiliation of those who belong to a religion



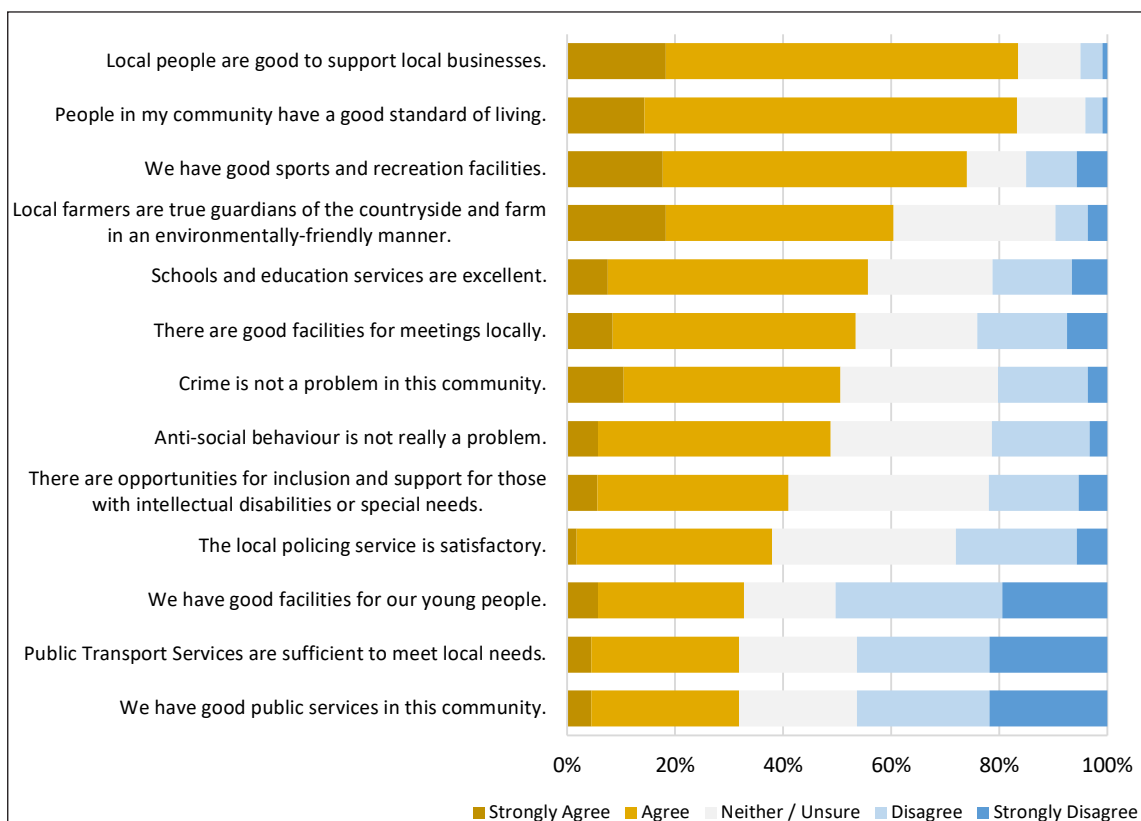
Of those who belong to a religion, just over one-third (35%, or 28% of the entire cohort) report that they attend a religious service at least weekly. The proportion who attend a service weekly is higher (by seven percentage points) in Duhallow than in the Lee Valley.

Fig. 3.50: Frequency of attendance at religious services



The following graph presents students' perspectives of the vibrancy of their home communities on a selected range of economic, socio-cultural and environmental indicators (Stolte and Metcalfe, 2009; O'Keeffe, 2015).

Fig. 3.51: Levels of agreement / disagreement with given statements about community vibrancy



The responses reveal that over eighty percent of students agree or strongly agree with the following statements: 'Local people are good to support local businesses' and 'People in my community have a good standard of living.' Almost three-quarters (74%) agree or strongly agree with the statement 'We have good sports and recreation facilities.' The majority also agree or strongly agree with the affirmative statements in respect of farmers, schools / education services, meeting facilities and the absence of crime. Opinions are almost evenly divided in respect of anti-social behaviour being a problem locally and the inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities and / or special needs. Only a minority agree with the view that the local policing service is satisfactory. Just under one-third (31.9% to 32.7%) agree with the given statements regarding facilities for young people, public transport provision and public services. Overall, the results indicate higher levels of satisfaction with community-based services and lower levels of satisfaction with services provided by public bodies. The exceptions in that regard are schools and education and youth

facilities. The former is a public service that is generally positively perceived, while the latter is generally provided by non-statutory bodies.

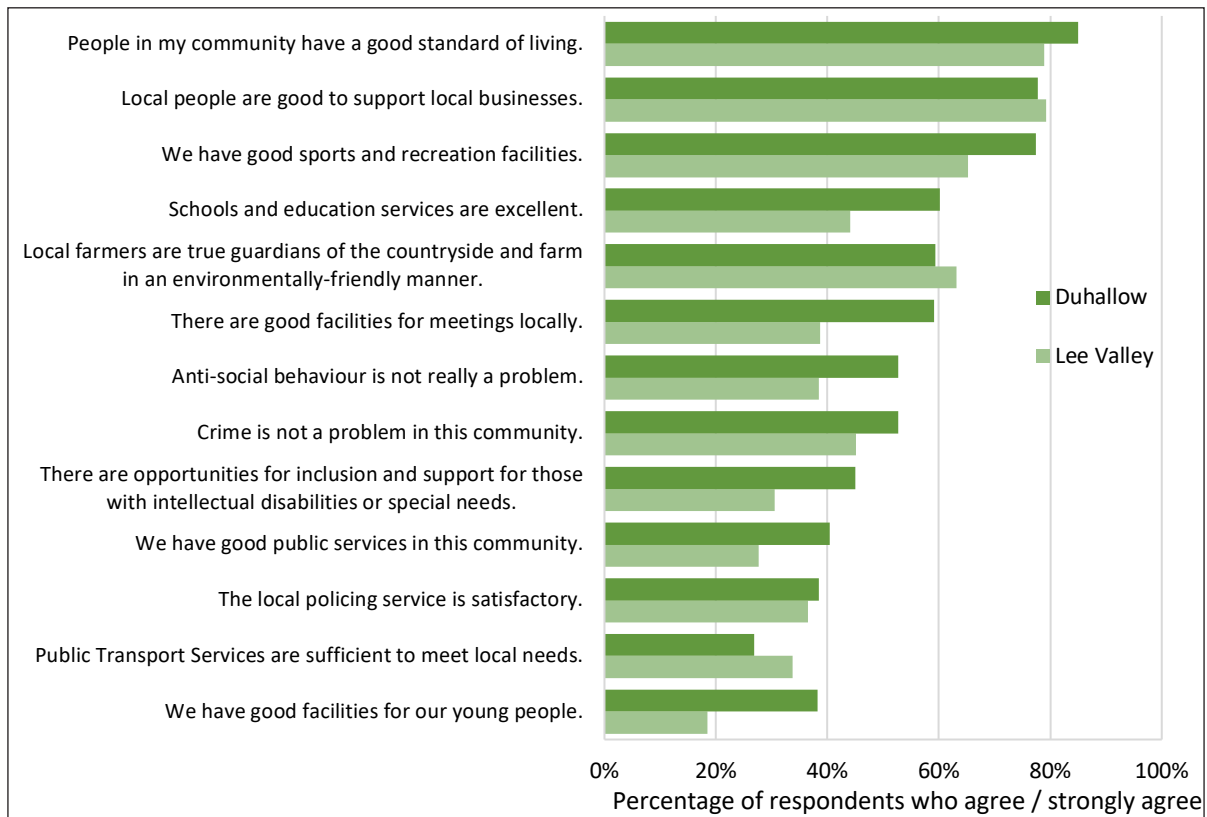
When the results are analysed geographically, Rathmore stands out as having the highest level of satisfaction with youth services. Geographical analysis also shows perceived higher levels of vibrancy in Duhallow than in the Lee Valley; levels of agreement are higher in Duhallow on eleven of the thirteen indicators. This implies that students who live in Duhallow perceive higher levels of vibrancy in their communities than do those who live in the Lee Valley.

When the results are analysed by gender, they show that a higher percentage of males, than females, either agree or strongly agree with all statements, with the one exception – 'Public Transport Services are sufficient to meet local needs'. Thirty percent (30.4%) of males and one-third (33%) of females either agree or strongly agree with this statement.



Cliona Healy, Kate O'Callaghan and Nicholas Tarrant of the FriendS group taking part in health & nutritional sessions, which were held in the James O'Keeffe Institute.

Fig. 3. 52: Comparative levels of agreement, among respondents from Duhallow and the Lee Valley, with given statements about community vibrancy.



The final two questions (before the set of independent variables) asked students to put forward recommendations in respect of facilities in their home community and their nearest town. They were also asked to identify the steps that could be taken in order to improve the quality of life for young people locally. These responses were collated, in 2019, and reported to IRD Duhallow, for incorporation into its various work programmes. They are also presented in Annex 2.

4. Experiences and Perceptions of Young People

This chapter deals with lived experiences and perceptions among young adults (aged 18 to 35) in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. It looks their experiences of education, employment and community and it delves into their perceptions of civil society and contemporary political matters. The findings presented here are based on an on-line survey that was promoted locally – in the media and through community-based structures during 2019. A total of 280 completed questionnaires were received.

As is frequently the case with voluntary surveys, females are over-represented among the respondents. They account for almost two thirds (65%) of those who completed this questionnaire. Half the respondents are aged 18 to 22, and half are aged 23 to 35. Approximately one fifth (21%) have children. A quarter are married / cohabiting, while a further thirty percent are in a relationship. The remainder (44%) are single. Over half (53%) of the respondents have a third-level qualification. Students account for almost thirty percent (29%) of respondents, while over sixty percent (62%) are in employment. The remainder (9%) are either out of work, looking for their first job or are engaged in caring / homemaking duties. The following table presents respondents' connections to Duhallow and / or the Lee Valley. Over three quarters (77%) grew-up in, and currently reside, in Duhallow and / or the Lee Valley. Thirteen percent of the respondents are people who have moved to the locality.

Table 4.1: Respondents by location (growing up / current residence)

Location	Persons	%
Grew up in Duhallow and live in Duhallow	177	63%
Grew up in Duhallow and live elsewhere	26	9%
Grew up in Lee Valley and live in Lee Valley	38	14%
Grew up in Lee Valley and live elsewhere	4	1%
Has moved to Duhallow	25	9%
Has moved to the Lee Valley	10	4%

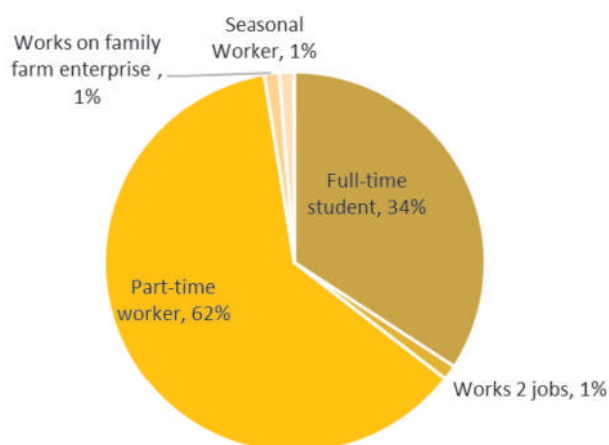
4.1 Study / Education



IRD Duhallow encourages young adults in the region to upskill and supports part time training opportunities through programmes such as skillnet which allow people to continue their studies.

Students represent a sizeable cohort of the respondents, accounting for twenty-eight percent (n=78) of the total sample. A minority (28%) report being in receipt of a Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) grant. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the majority (66%) report that they work, during term time, in addition to their studies, as the following pie-chart illustrates. This figure (66%) is lower than the corresponding figure (74%) among those who are currently in employment (either full-time or part-time), and who have attended a third-level institute. Among the latter three-quarters (75%) report that they worked 'during most or every term', while a quarter (25%) report that they worked 'during some terms'.

Fig. 4.1: Percentage current of students, by employment status



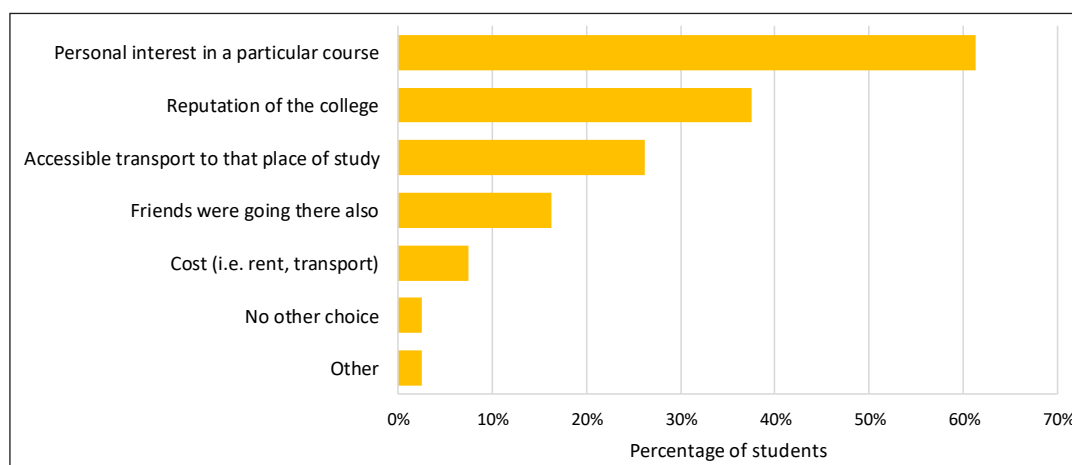
The vast majority (85%) of students worked during the previous summer. Of these, just over half did so on a full-time basis. Among those who are currently in employment (either full-time or part-time), and who have attended a third-level institute, over three-quarters (77%) report having worked every summer, one-in-eight (12%) worked some summers, while the remainder (11%) generally did not work during their summer breaks from college.

Most students (89%) have progressed through third-level education without stopping, postponing or changing their course of study. Of those whose studies were interrupted, almost all experienced such interruptions during their first year. Among the nine

students in this cohort, there was generally more than one contributory factor that disrupted their studies. The most commonly experienced factors were – in descending order – as follows: mental health reasons; lack of finances; and switching to another academic course.

Third-level students were asked to identify the factors that had influenced their choice of third-level institute. As the following graph illustrates, the main motives were ‘personal interest in a particular course’ and ‘reputation of the college’. Accessible transport was a determinant among over a quarter (26%) of respondents.

Fig. 4.2: Factors that influenced students’ choices of third-level institute¹⁴



Among the survey respondents five (n=5) are doing apprenticeships – one each in agriculture, electrics and finance and two others. Three are male and two were female. None have any family connections to the field in which they are undertaking the apprenticeship. Two report having stopped their apprenticeship at some point – one for financial reasons and one because he switched to another apprenticeship.

4.2 Employment

The majority (62%) of survey respondents describe themselves as being in employment. The following pie-chart presents their employment profile, by sector. Agriculture (the primary sector) employs five percent of the survey sample, and almost a quarter work in the secondary sector (manufacturing and construction). This combined proportion (28%) is considerably higher than the corresponding figure for the State, and this is indicative of a more rural and traditional economic profile. One third of workers is employed in the services sector. This is lower than the State equivalent. Duhallow

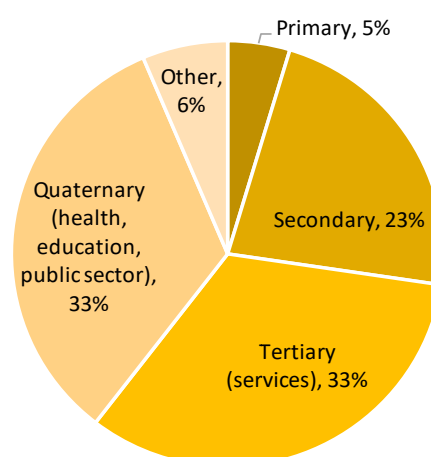
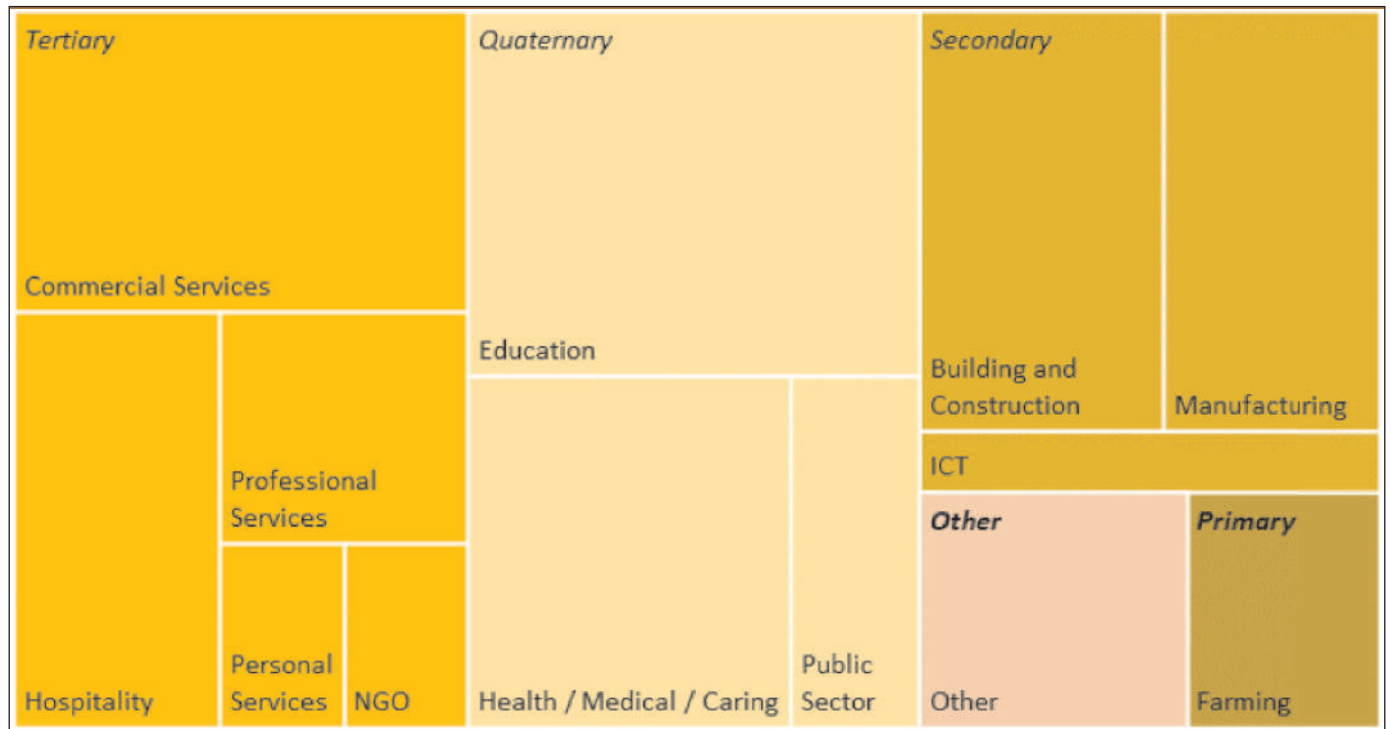


Fig. 4.3: Employment by sector

¹⁴ The percentage shown here total more than 100%. This is because students were able to select more than one option.

and the Lee Valley have, based on this survey sample, a higher proportion of the youth workforce engaged in the quaternary sector (teachers, healthcare professionals and public servants) than is the case nationally. As subsequent sections of the survey reveal, workers in this sector are more likely, than are others, to commute – mainly to Cork City and Mallow, than to work locally.

The following graph provides a more refined description of the respondents’ occupational profile.



North Cork is the primary place of employment among survey respondents. Forty percent of people work in Duhallow or another part of North Cork – predominantly Mallow and Charleville. Almost a quarter (24%) of respondents work in Cork City; the Lee Valley has a higher proportion of workers travelling to the city for employment than is the case among Duhallow-based residents. Killarney is the next singular most significant employment base.

Many of the programmes delivered by IRD Duhallow including the Broadening Your Horizons Programme offer work placement opportunities to young people.

Fig. 4.5: Places of work (locational)



As the following pie-chart shows, the vast majority (83%) of workers, are employed on a full-time basis, while the remainder (17%) work on a part-time basis or have seasonal / variable working arrangements. Among those who are full-time workers, almost one-in-ten, would prefer to work on a part-time basis, while almost half of part-time workers, would prefer to work full time. Gender is a determinant of respondents' working hours; while the majority of both genders work on a full-time basis, the figures among males and females are 87% and 70% respectively. Among full-time workers, the proportion of women who would prefer to be part-time workers is three times greater than among males.

Fig. 4.6: Percentage of workers by duration of working hours

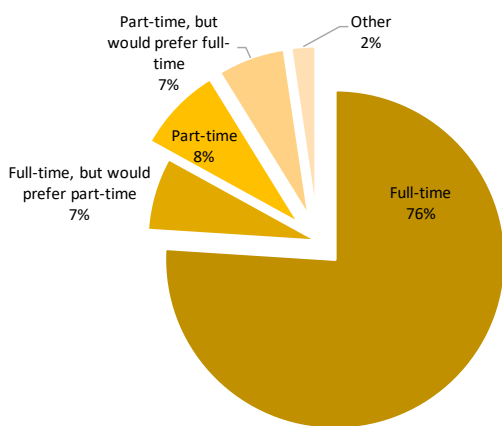
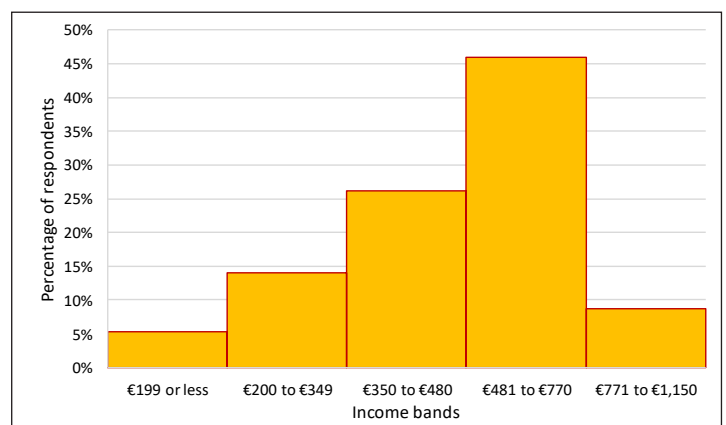


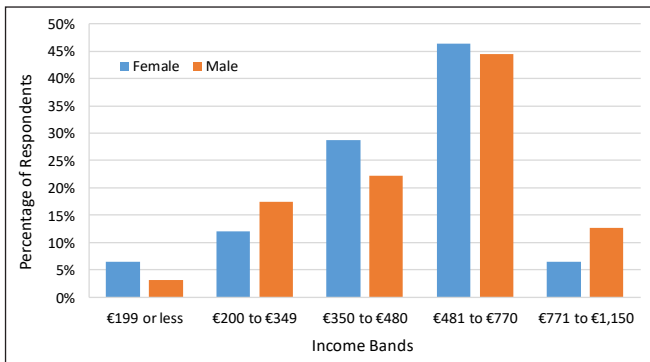
Fig. 4.7: Personal weekly take-home pay



As the above graph shows, the modal weekly net (after tax) income per person is in the range €481 to €470.

When these figures are analysed by gender, they reveal that females are over-represented among those whose take-home pay is less than €199/ week, while males are over-represented among those whose weekly take home pay is in excess of €771. At the same time, however, a higher percentage of males, than females, have a take-home income of less than €350 per week. This may be associated with higher levels of male employment in unskilled and semi-skilled professions. Among survey respondents, males are three times more likely to be working in farming and almost four times more likely to be employed in construction. Employment in health and education is predominantly held by females.

Fig. 4.8: Personal weekly take-home pay by gender



The questionnaire asked: ‘When you are aged 40, what annual wage, before tax, do you realistically expect to earn?’ The mean and modal responses were €60,000.

The questionnaire also asked respondents to indicate their preferred working hours. The following table synthesises their responses. It reveals that two-thirds (66%) have a preference for working either 8am to 4pm or 9pm to 5pm. The third-most popular option is 9.30am to 5.30am. Approximately one-in-eight respondents – more females than males - would prefer to complete the working day by 2.30pm. As the table shows, males are more likely, than are females, to opt for earlier starting times (both 8am and 6.30am).

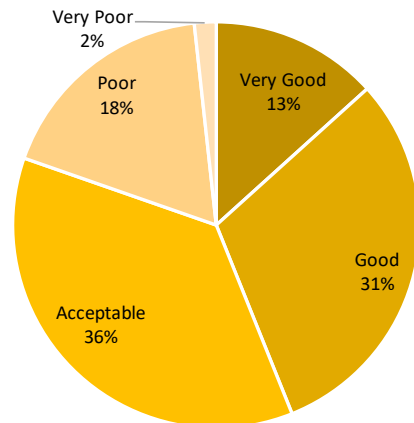
Table 4.2: Preferred working hours by gender

Hours	Female	Male	Grand Total
8am to 4pm	37%	43%	39%
9am to 5pm	27%	27%	27%
9.30am to 5.30pm	12%	8%	11%
6.30am to 2.30am	4%	11%	6%
9am to 2.30pm	8%	2%	6%
Other	12%	10%	11%

Those who are currently in the workforce were also asked to appraise their work-life balance. As the following graph illustrates, under half (44%) describe it as either good or very good. Over one third (36%) describe their work-life balance as acceptable, while a fifth (20%) state that it is either poor or very poor. Males express lower levels of satisfaction, than females, in respect of work-life balance; almost a quarter (24%) of males, compared with eighteen percent of females, describe it as poor or very poor.

¹⁵ This refers to the entire survey sample – not just those who are in employment.

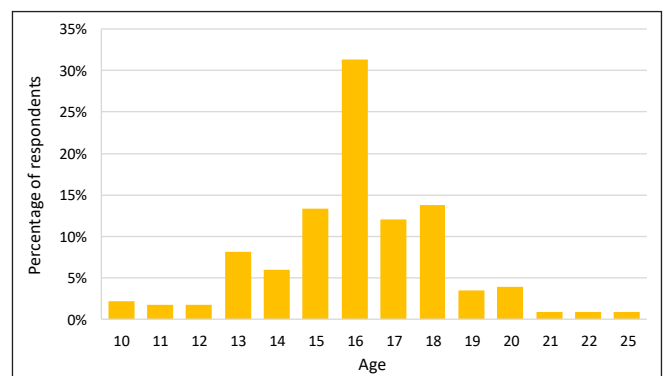
Fig. 4.9: Descriptions of work-life balance



A quarter of all¹⁵ respondents provide regular unpaid help for a family member with a long-term illness, health problem or disability, or to an elderly person. Among those who do so, over two thirds (67%) are female.

The vast majority (90%) of survey respondents report having done at least one day’s work outside the family home¹⁶. As the following graph shows, the modal age at which they did so was sixteen. This is also the mean age. Values are the same for males and females.

Fig. 4.10: Age at which first day’s work outside of home was completed

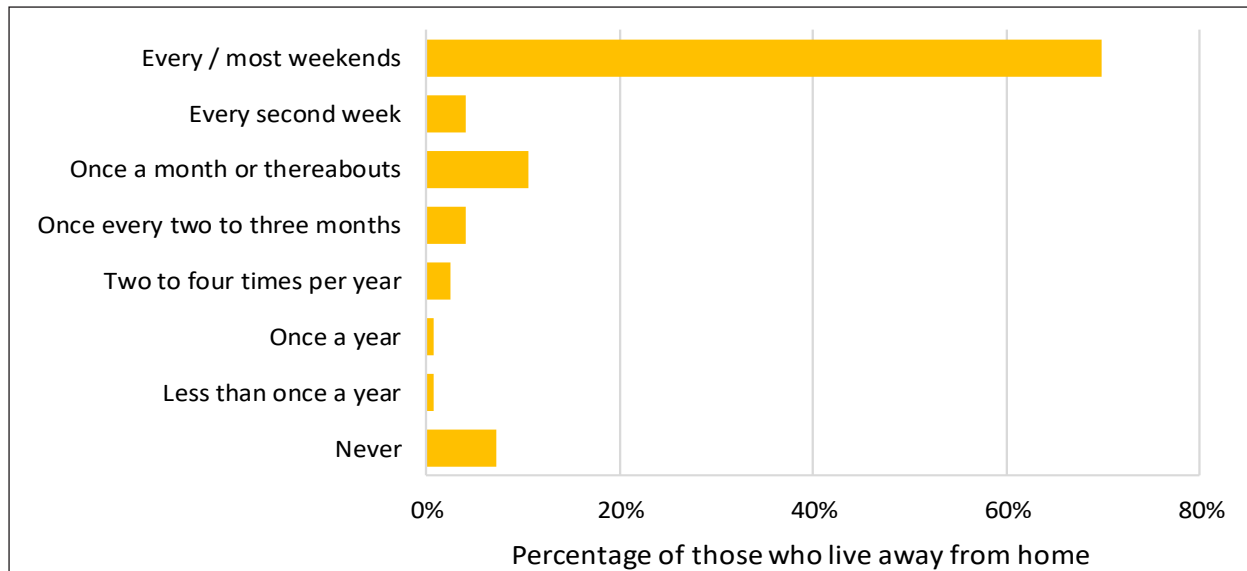


¹⁶ This may include summer work, volunteering, farmwork e.g., saving crops / turf.

4.3 Accommodation

Among survey respondents, slightly under half (44%) live away from home. Among these, most (70%) visit home every, or most, weekends, as the following graph illustrates.

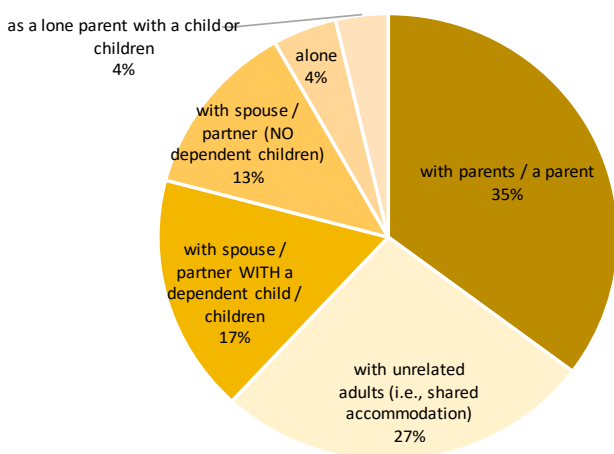
Fig. 4.11: Frequency with which people visit their family home



Their primary motives for visiting home, in descending order (by frequency of the citation among respondents) are: to visit family; to see friends; and to play sport.

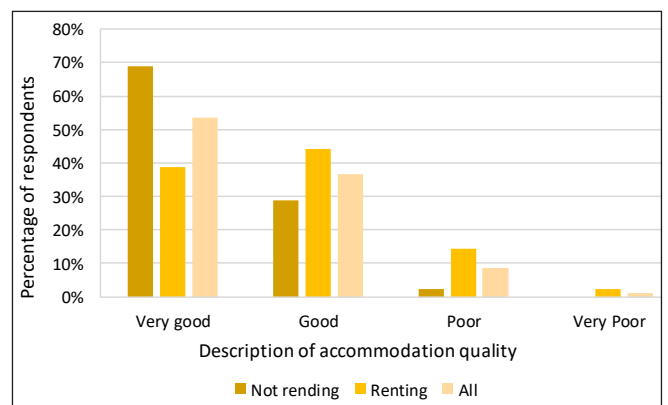
Among the entire survey cohort, over one third reside with a parent / parents, while over a quarter (predominantly students) live in shared accommodation. Thirty percent of the survey sample are living with a spouse / partner, and of these, slightly over half (57%) have at least one child. Four percent live alone, and a similar portion are lone parents. The following pie-chart shows how respondents describe their current living arrangements:

Fig. 4.12: Current living arrangements



The vast majority (90%) describe the quality of their accommodation as either good or very good, but, as the following chart shows, the proportion is lower among those who are in rental accommodation than is the case among all others.

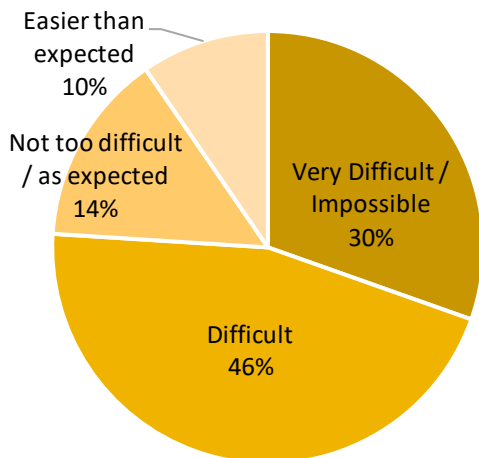
Fig. 4.13: Descriptions of accommodation quality, renters and non-renters



Among those who live in rental accommodation (45% of all respondents), most (60%) pay their own rent. A further twenty-four percent of renters receive support from their parents / family, while seven percent are in receipt of some form of housing assistance payment. Just over nine percent rent their homes from a local authority or voluntary / social housing body.

Most respondents report having had difficulties in securing rental accommodation, as the following graph shows; over three quarters (76%) said that it was difficult or very difficult/impossible to secure rental accommodation:

Fig. 4.14: Level of ease or difficulty in securing rental accommodation

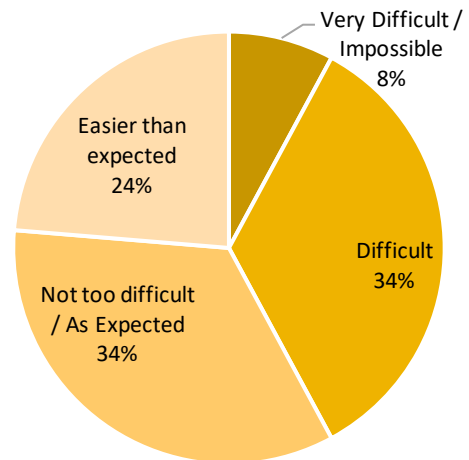


The modal channel through which people secured rental accommodation is 'friends / neighbours / word-of-mouth' (40%), and the second-most frequent channel is the DAFT website (24%). A further fourteen percent of people sourced their rental accommodation from or through a family member.

Most of those who live in rental accommodation are paying between €100 and €150 per week on rent alone, and the average weekly rent is €166.

Among those who have purchased or built a home, the majority (68%) had to borrow at least eighty percent of the finances required to do so. Just over one-in-five (21% of) homeowners took out mortgages / loans to cover half the construction / purchase costs. As the following graph illustrates, most homeowners did not have any notable difficulties in securing a mortgage, while eight percent reported that it was very difficult / impossible to do so.

Fig. 4.15: Ease or difficulty in securing a mortgage



The majority (64%) of respondents state that, if given the choice, they would prefer to build their own house on a greenfield site. Among the remainder (36%), respondents are almost evenly split as to where they would like to purchase an existing house – either in the open countryside or in a town / village.

Ten percent of the survey sample (n=28 persons) had applied for planning permission. Of these, the majority (57%) state that it was difficult or very difficult / impossible to secure planning permission. Forty percent of those who have submitted an application for planning described the system as either poor or very poor. Over half describe it as acceptable, while only one respondent state that the system is good. Most (54%) of those who applied for planning had received or purchased their site from relatives. Over two thirds (68%) of planning applications were processed within twelve months of submission, while over a quarter (28%) were in train for over two years. The modal planning fee ranged between €5,000 and €10,000.



Forty-two percent of young people said it was difficult / very difficult / impossible to get a mortgage.

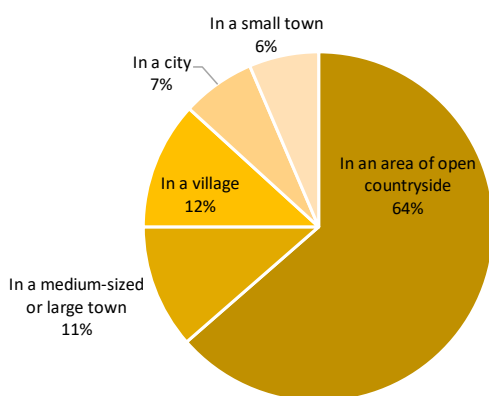


The majority of young adults state that they would like to settle down in the Duhallow / Lee Valley / Sliabh Luachra areas.

4.4 Perceptions of Place

When asked if they had a complete choice of where to live, the majority of respondents indicate that they would prefer to live in a rural, rather than an urban, environment. The following graph presents their preferences.

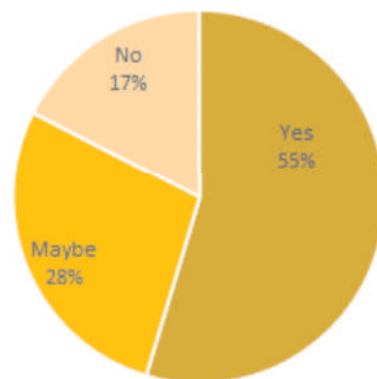
Fig. 4.16: Where people would ideally like to live



The majority of young adults state that they would like to settle down in Duhallow / the Lee Valley / Sliabh Luachra, as the following graph illustrates. Over eighty

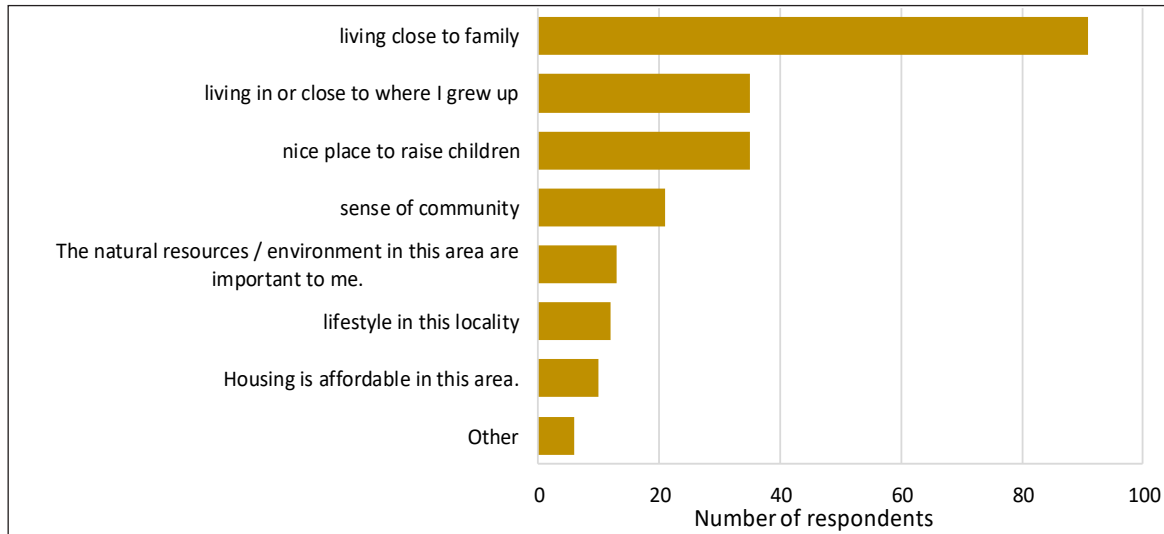
percent (83%) respond 'yes' or 'maybe' to this question.

Fig. 4.17: Responses to 'Would you like to settle down in Duhallow / the Lee Valley / Sliabh Luachra?'



When asked about the primary reasons that motivate them to live locally (in Duhallow/ the Lee Valley / Sliabh Luachra), more respondents refer to 'living close to family' than to any other factor. The joint-second most significant factors are 'living close to where I grew up' and a 'nice place to raise children. The following graph presents the results.

Fig. 4.18: Factors that motivate people to live in Duhallow, the Lee Valley and Sliabh Luachra

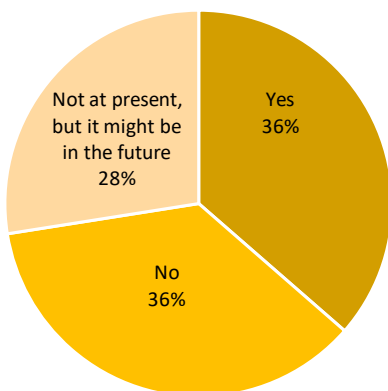


Among the seventeen percent of respondents who indicated that they would not like to settle down in Duhallow, the Lee Valley or Sliabh Luachra, the following are the main reasons cited (all were referred to with the same level of frequency):

- Don't like the culture/ lack of acceptance of certain issues;
- Housing is too expensive;
- Lack of energy; and
- A combination of factors.

Employment is a significant determinant of place of residence. As the following pie-chart shows, just over one-third (36%) of respondents believe the type of job they would like to be available in Duhallow, the Lee Valley or Sliabh Luachra.

Fig. 4.19: Local availability of preferred job



Among those (36%) who replied 'no', almost half (49%) would be willing to live locally and to commute to that job. A further third (33%) might be willing to commute, while almost a fifth (18%) report that they are not willing to commute.

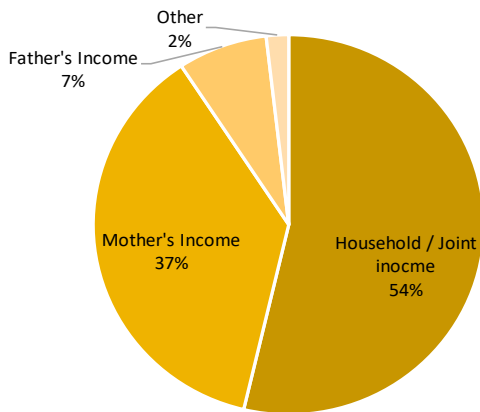


Young entrepreneurs such as Katelynn Murphy are celebrated at the annual IRD Duhallow Business Awards.

4.5 Childcare

Just over a fifth (21%, n=59) respondents have children. Among these, over half (53%) receive assistance from a family member with childcare. The vast majority (92%) of all those with children pay for formal childcare. As the following graph illustrates, over one third of households pay for childcare out of the mother's income.

Fig. 4.20: Income that is used to pay for childcare



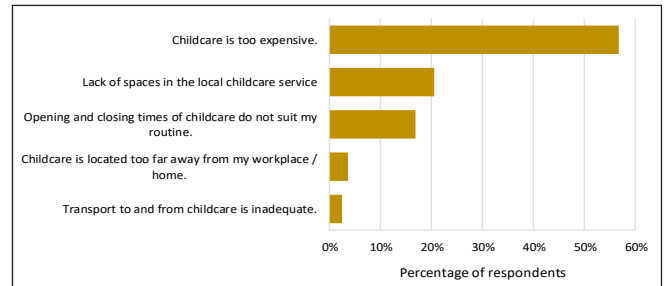
The following table presents the maximum amount of money people can afford to pay for childcare.

Table 4.3: Maximum amount people can afford to pay for childcare for one child per week

Amount	Percentage
Between €200 and €249 per child per week	3%
Between €150 and €199 per child per week	2%
Between €100 and €149 per child per week	19%
Between €51 and €99 per child per week	36%
Less than €5041%	

The survey questionnaire also asked respondents to identify ways in which childcare, or the lack thereof, can be a barrier to participation in the workforce. The following chart presents their responses. It indicates that cost is the dominant factor – cited by over half (57%) of respondents.

Fig. 4.21: Aspects of childcare that are a barrier to participation in the workforce

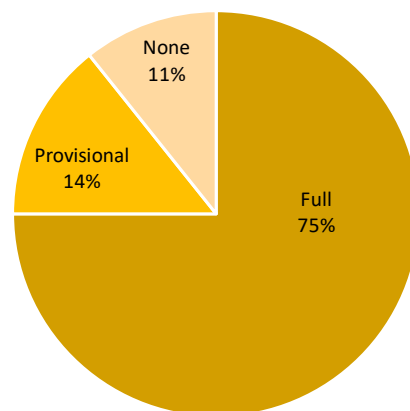


The availability of childcare within the region can be a huge barrier to preventing women from working.

4.6 Mobility

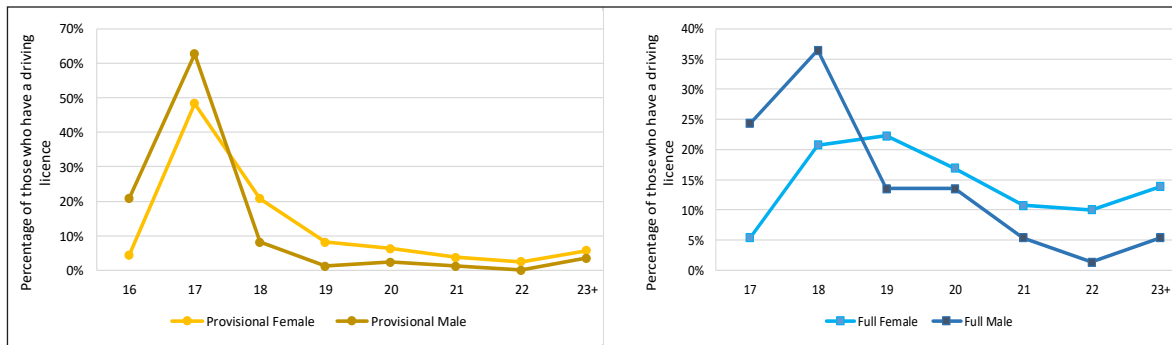
Three quarters (75%) of young adults have a full driving licence, while just over one in ten does not have any licence, as the following graph illustrates.

Fig. 4.22: Types of driving licence held
Seventeen is the modal age at which people received



their provisional driving licence, while eighteen is the modal age at which people secured their full driving licence. The following graph shows the distribution of the ages at which people received their driving licences by gender.

Fig 4.23: Age at which driving licences were secured by gender



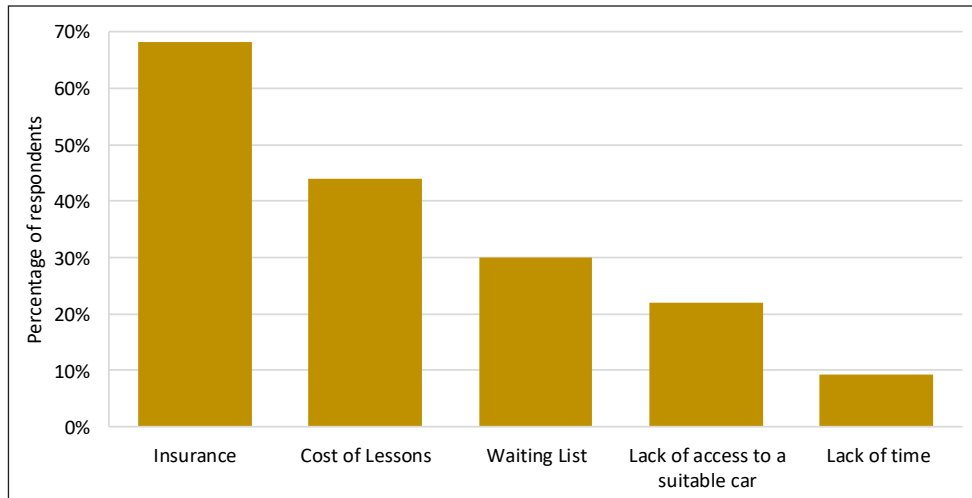
As the graph shows, over a quarter (26.4%) of females did not acquire their provisional driving licence until aged nineteen or over. Among males, the corresponding proportion was eight percent. With respect to the acquisition of their full driving licences, most (61%) males, but only slightly over a quarter (26%) of females had acquired their full driving licence before their nineteenth birthday. Eighteen is the modal age at which males acquire a full driving licences, while among females, the modal age is nineteen.

The cost of insurance emerges as the single largest barrier to the acquisition of a driving licence. This factor was cited by over two thirds of respondents. Almost half (44%) report that the cost of lessons was a barrier to their acquisition of a driving licence, while the waiting lists to sit the driving test emerges as the third-most significant barrier. Over a fifth (22%) of young adults report that the lack of access to a suitable car is a barrier to their acquisition of a driving licence.



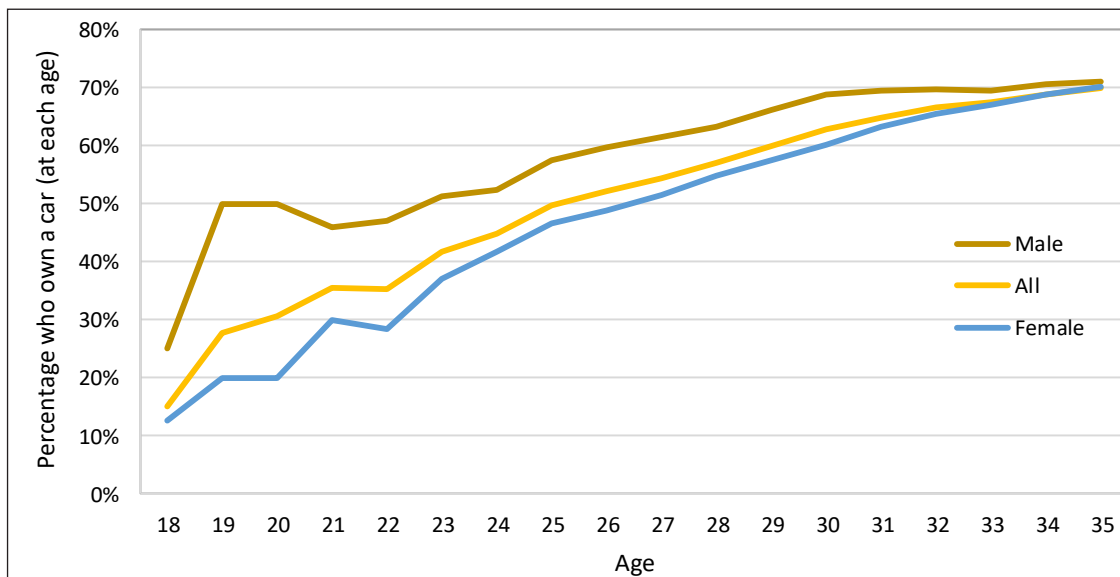
The ability to drive is hugely important in rural areas. IRD Duhallow has supported young people acquire their driving licence through many of their youth targeted programmes.

Fig. 4.23: Barriers to acquisition of a driving licence



The majority (71%) of young adults are car owners. While overall ownership levels are the same among males and females at age thirty-five, males are more likely, than are females, to acquire cars during their late teens and twenties, as the following graph illustrates. Almost half of twenty-year old males own a car, while only one fifth of females do so.

Fig. 4.24: Car ownership levels by age and gender



Among car owners, annual insurance premia range from €330 to €3,000, and the mean and modal premia are €980 and 1,000 respectively. As the following table shows, females tend to have lower insurance costs; the mean cost for females is €43/ annum lower than for males.

Table 4.4: Annual car insurance costs by gender

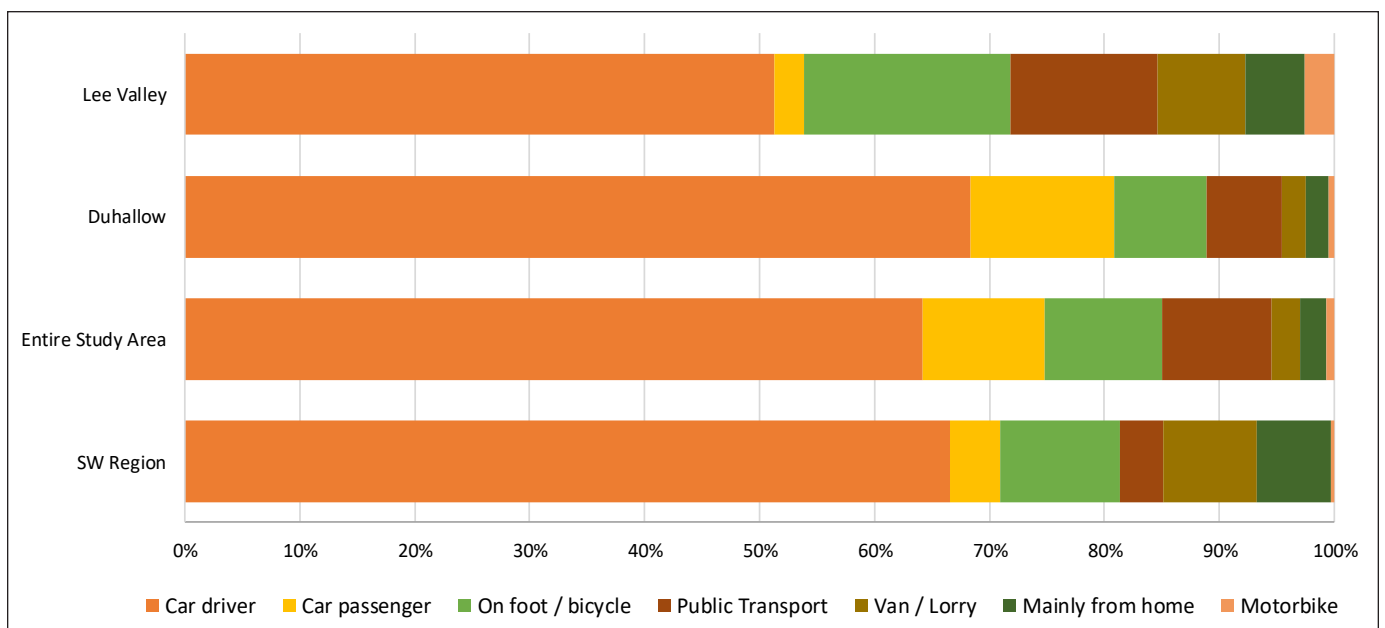
	Females	Males
Mean	€964	€1,007
Mode	€800	€1,000

Among car owners, the modal price at which insurance would become unaffordable is also €1,000. This suggests that many young adults are weighing up the possibility of continuing to own a car or not. The mean insurance cost at which it would no longer be feasible for young adults to own a car is €1,656.

When asked if they would consider moving to an urban area due to the unaffordability of insurance, over a quarter (26%) of young adults stated ‘yes’, while a further twenty percent stated ‘maybe’.

The following chart shows the current modes of travel to work / college among young people in Duhallow and the Lee Valley and all commuters in the South-West Region. The data show the pervasiveness of private transport use. The Lee Valley exhibits a slightly different profile from the other geographies presented here; almost a fifth (18%) of Lee Valley commuters walk or cycle to work, while the corresponding figures in Duhallow and the South West Region are eight and ten percent respectively. The higher figure in the Lee Valley is associated with proximity between place of work and place of residence in Macroom Town and its immediate environs. The Lee Valley also has the highest level of public transport use; the figure stands at seventeen percent, compared to seven percent in Duhallow and four percent in the South West Region. This is associated with the bus services between Macroom and Killarney / Cork City.

Fig. 4.25: Modes of travel to work, in comparative context



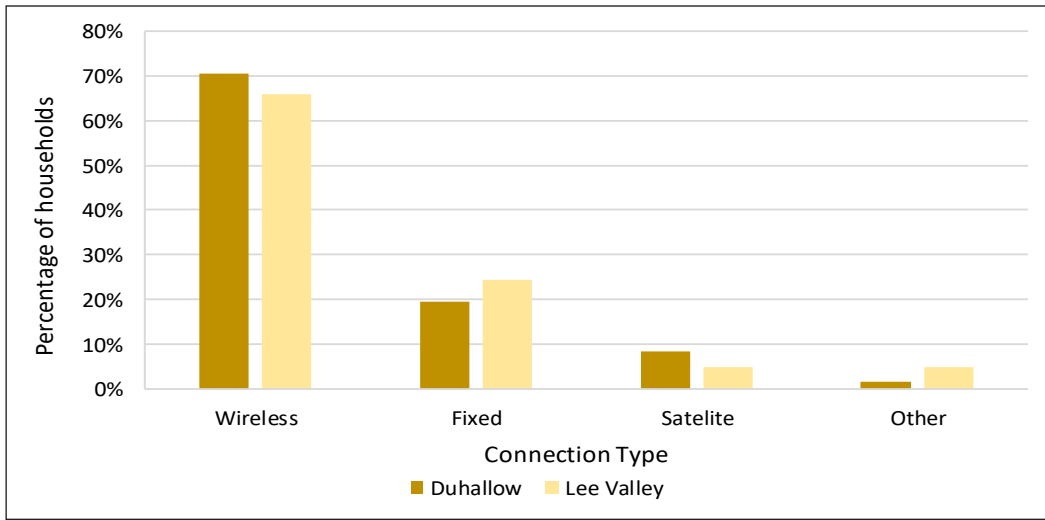
Since this survey was undertaken, the proportion of people working from home has increased very considerably. This offers potential for rural areas in terms of keeping and / or attracting residents whose employment lends itself to remote / digital working.

4.7 Digital Connectivity

Three quarters of respondents stated that there is adequate mobile phone coverage in their locality. The proportion is slightly lower (71%) in the Lee Valley, than in Duhallow (76%). This may be associated with the nature of the local landscape; Duhallow has more extensive rolling countryside, while parts of the Lee Valley are more enclosed.

Almost all (94%) of homes have an internet connection. As the following graph shows, most have a wireless facility, whilst one fifth has a fixed connection.

Fig. 4.26 Types of household internet connections



Month household costs for an internet connection range from €20 to €100. The following table presents the mean and modal household internet costs.

Table 4.5: Monthly internet costs per household

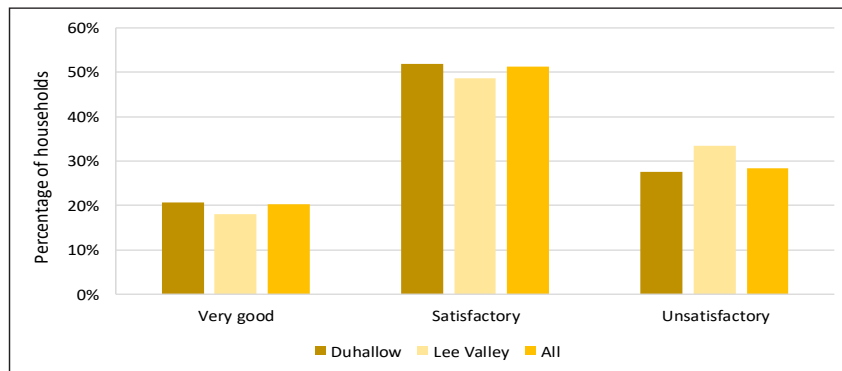
	Duhallow	Lee Valley	All
Mean	€42.97	€42.44	€42.88
Mode	€30	€30	€30

Broadband speeds range from a low of 1 mb/second to a high of 250 mb/second. While the latter speed is adequate for most home environments, including remote working, they are well below the 1GB/second available in e-towns, such as Skibbereen. The mean household internet speeds are as follows: Duhallow 36.6 mb/sec; and Lee Valley 33.9mb/sec. As the following graph shows, just over seventy percent of respondents consider their home internet connection to be very good or satisfactory, while almost thirty percent consider it to be unsatisfactory.



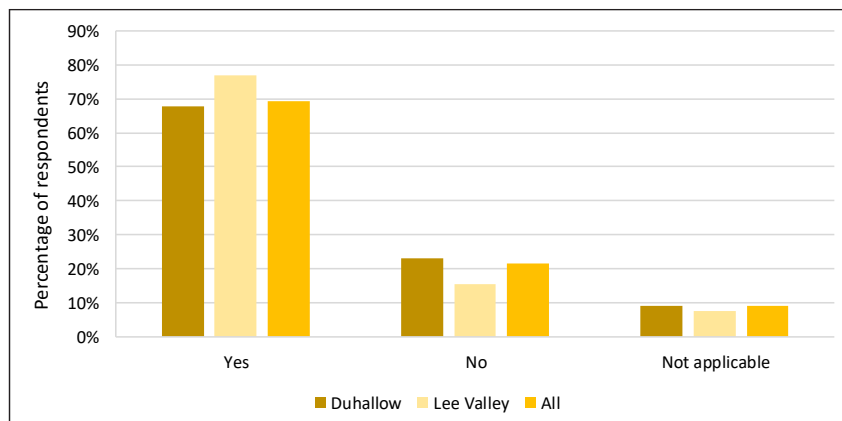
Young person remote working from home

Fig. 4.27: Assessment of household internet connection's quality



Over three quarters of young adults in the Lee Valley and over two thirds in Duhallow use the internet to work and / or study from home, as the following graph illustrates.

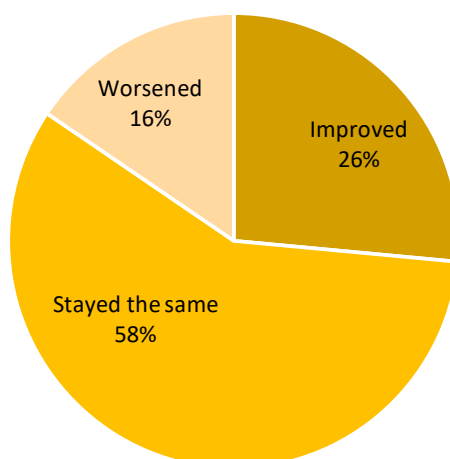
Fig. 4.28: Percentage who use the internet to work / study from home



Just over a quarter (27%) of respondents (32% in the Lee Valley and 26% in Duhallow) state that the availability (or not) of broadband would affect their employment prospects.

Despite the growing significance of broadband – as a route to employment and a means of accessing public services, just over a quarter of young adults believe the broadband service in their locality has improved over the past five years. One-in-six people believe the service has worsened. The following graph presents their perceptions. Values are similar in Duhallow and the Lee Valley.

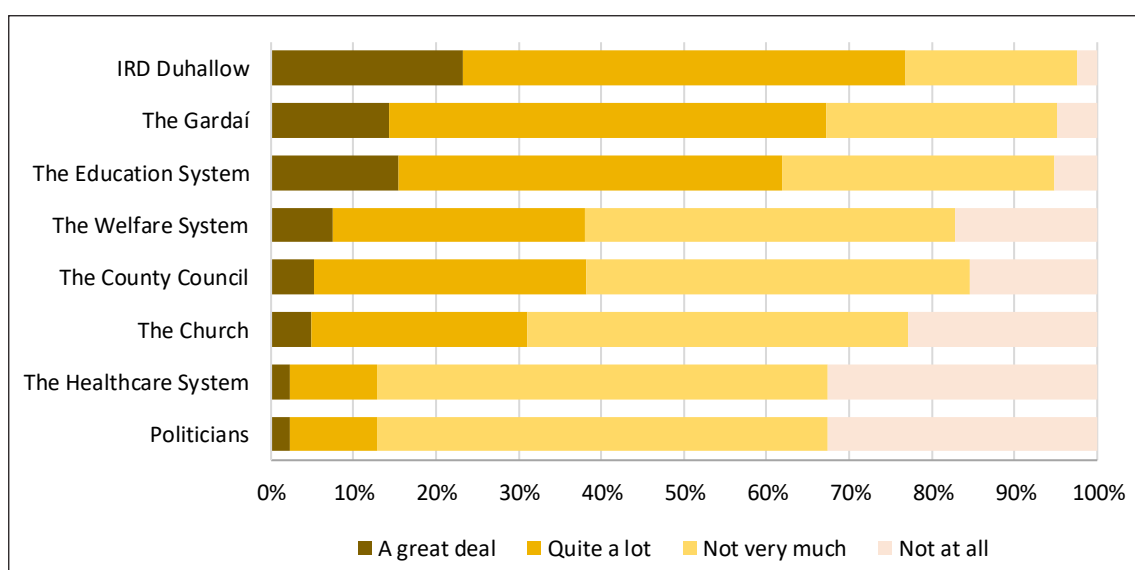
Fig. 4.29: Perceptions of changes in broadband quality over the past five years



4.8 Institutional Trust

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of trust in eight institutions / agencies / cohorts, as listed in the following graph. The results illustrate that, of the options presented, young adults have relatively high levels of trust in IRD Duhallow and An Gardaí Síochána. Conversely, they have relatively low levels of trust in politicians and the healthcare system. As the graph shows, seventy percent of young adults trust IRD Duhallow ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’. The corresponding figures for An Gardaí Síochána and the Education System are sixty-nine and sixty-three percent respectively. Fewer than half (38%) of young adults report trusting the welfare system and the county council either ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’. The corresponding figure for the Church is lower – at thirty percent, while only fourteen and thirteen percent respectively trust the healthcare system and politicians.

Fig. 4.30: Levels of institutional trust¹⁷



4.9 Civic Participation

The vast majority (90%) of young adults are registered to vote. A small number (2%) are not eligible to vote in Ireland, while eight percent claim that they are not on the electoral register.

Their reported and intended voting behaviour reflects higher levels of participation than those that have pertained in recent elections, as the following table shows:

Table 4.6: Intended and actual voter behaviour

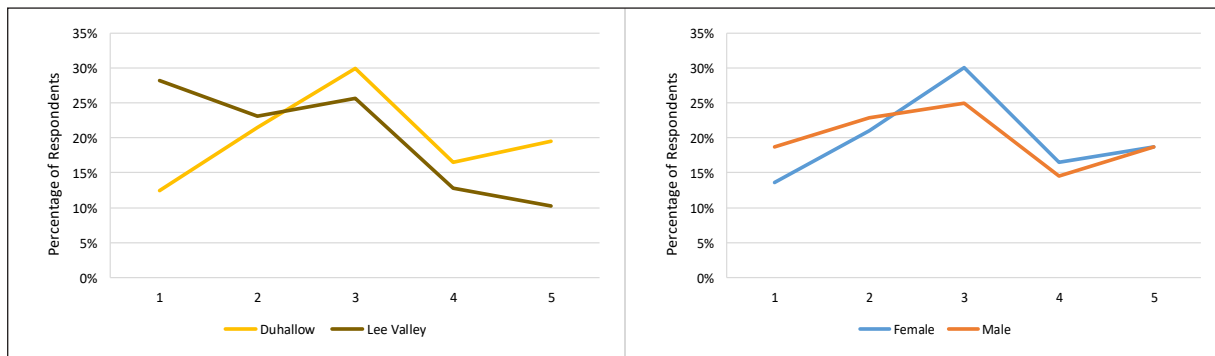
		Presidential Election	General Election	European Parliament Election
Youth turnout reported (presidency) and intended (Dáil and EP)		78%	81%	75%
Actual voter turnout in most recent plebiscite	Ireland	56%	62%	50%
	Cork North			
	West	61%	65%	53%

Despite having relatively high levels of reported and intended electoral participation, young adults do not exhibit a high level of interest in politics or current affairs. They were asked to indicate their level of interest on a five-point

¹⁷ Figures exclude those who ‘don’t know’ or have no opinion.

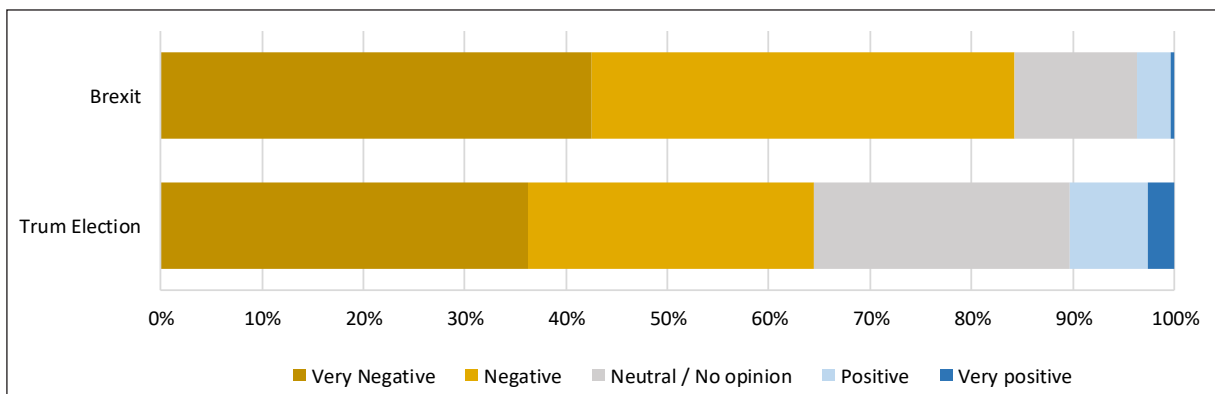
scale, on which 1 implies no interest and 5 implies a high level of interest. As the following graphs show, levels of interest are slightly higher among those who reside in Duhallow, rather than in the Lee Valley. The mean values are as follows: 3.15 in Duhallow and 2.54 in the Lee Valley. In terms of gender, females exhibit a higher level of interest in politics than do males. While the modal value for both genders is three, the mean values are as follows: 3.1 among females and 2.9 among males.

Fig. 4.31: Level of interest in politics and current affairs, by geography and gender



As the following graphs illustrate, most young adults have negative perceptions of Brexit and of the 2016 election of Donald J. Trump, as the President of the USA. The values are broadly the same among males and females¹⁸.

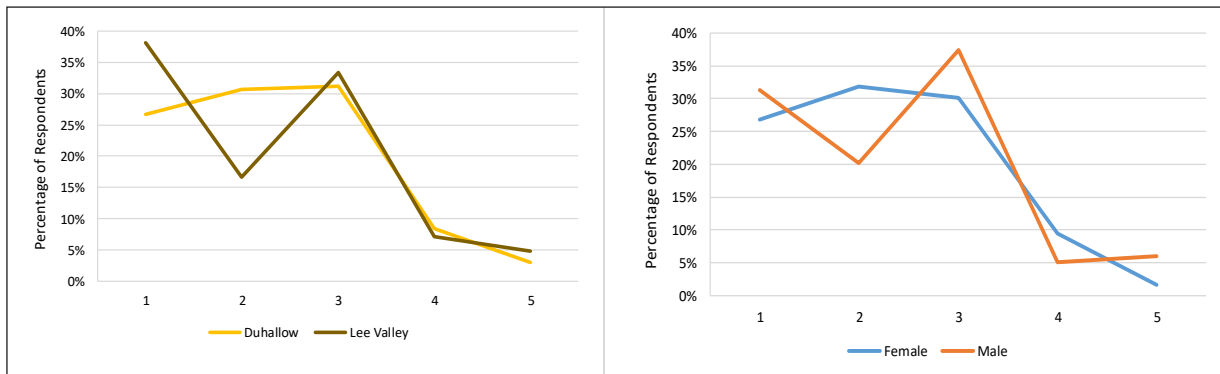
Fig. 4.32: Perceptions of Brexit and of the 2016 Election of President Trump



Respondents were asked to indicate the level of influence they feel they can exert over how decisions are made in their community – on a scale ranging from one to five (1 implies very low; 5 implies very high). As the following graphs show, the modal value in the Lee Valley is one, while the modal value in Duhallow is three. In both geographies, the proportion of persons who give a rating of one is over five times higher than the proportion who give a rating of five. The mean values are as follows: 2.29 in Duhallow and 2.34 in the Lee Valley. The second graph demonstrates that there are negligible differences between male and female attitudes regarding the influence they exert. The modal value among females is two, and among males it is three. The mean values are as follows: 2.27 among females and 2.32 among males.

¹⁸ The questionnaire asked: In your opinion, was the election of Donald Trump, a positive or negative step for the USA? In your opinion, is Brexit a positive or negative step for the UK?

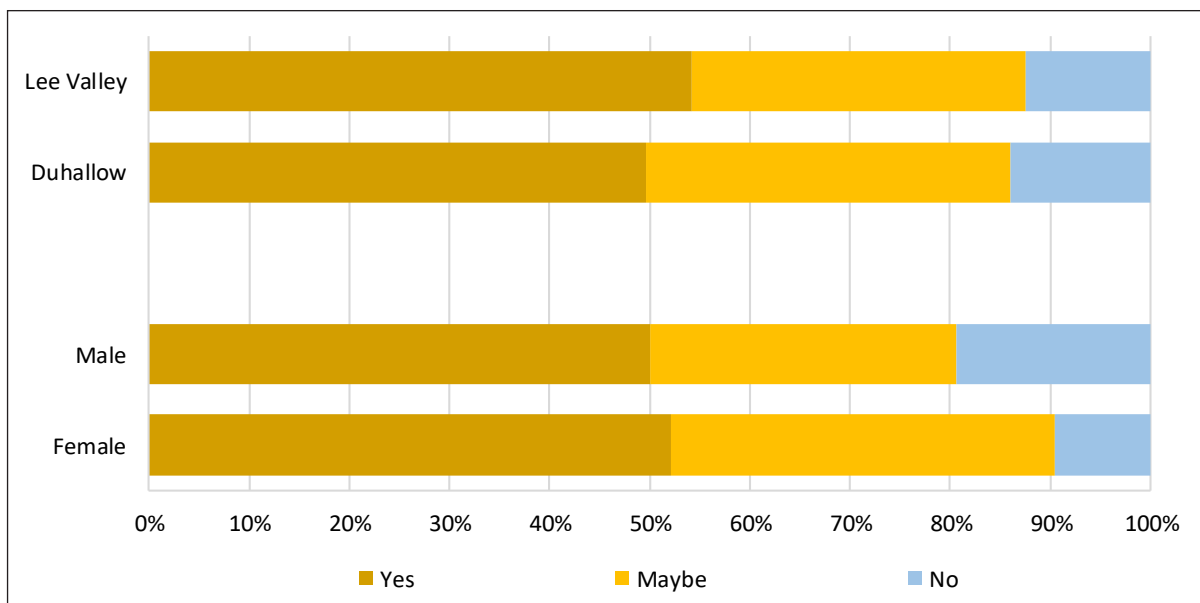
Fig. 4.33: Level of ability to exert influence over community decisions, by geography and gender



Respondents were asked if, over the preceding twelve months, they had done something with others in their community/village/parish for the benefit of the community. The majority (59%) report that they have, and this level was the same among males and females. The value is higher (67%) in the Lee Valley than in Duhallow (57%).

Over one third (36%) of young adults are members of a community group / organisation. The proportion is more or less the same among males and females. Sporting organisations are the most prominent type of group to which people belong. Among those who are not members of any group / organisation, a 'lack of time' is most frequently cited as the reason for their non-membership. As the following graph shows, the majority of those who are not group members would consider joining one – as indicated by the proportion of persons who responded 'yes' or 'maybe'. Values are similar in both the Lee Valley and Duhallow and among males and females.

Fig. 4.34: Willingness to consider joining a group / organisation (if not currently a member of one)

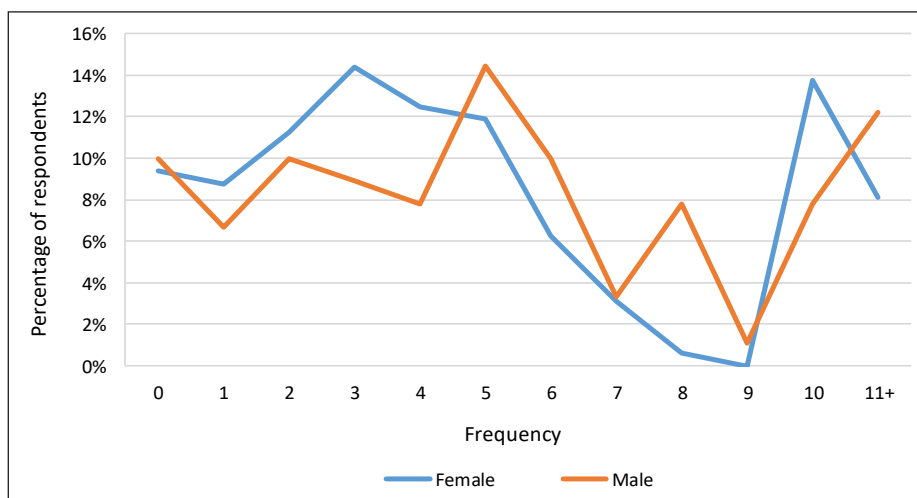


4.10 Social Life

Gender emerges as a notable determinant of the frequency with which young adults socialise with friends and engage in sporting / recreational activities with others. The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate approximately how many times, over the previous month, they had met with people in a public place either to talk or to have food or drinks. The mean frequencies are as follows: 5.3 times among females; 6.3 times among males; and 5.7 times overall. The proportions of people who socialised at least five times or more are as follows: 36% of females; 44% of males and 39% of all persons. As the following graph shows, almost ten percent of young adults have not socialised at all

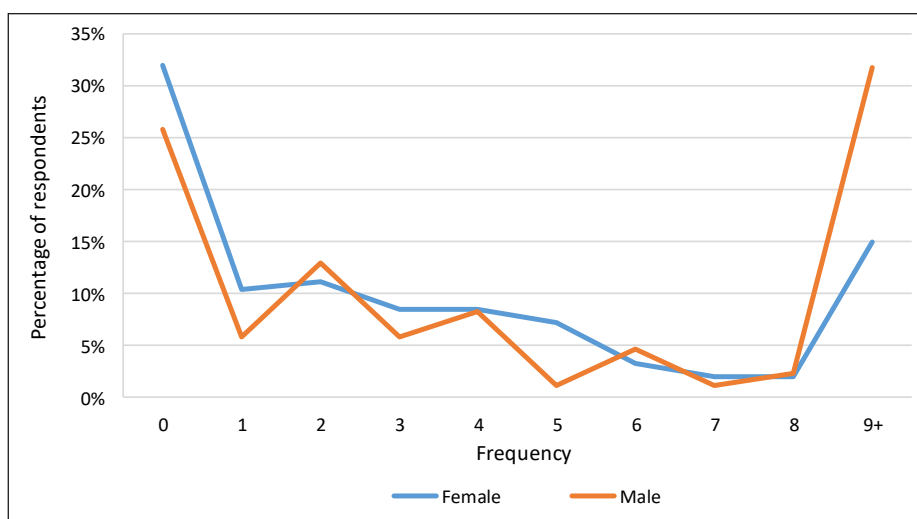
(over the previous month). In contrast, twenty percent of people (both genders) have socialised at least ten times.

Fig. 4.35: Frequency of meeting with friends for food or drinks over the previous month, by gender



The survey findings reveal that, over the previous month, males are more likely, than are females, to have played games or engaged in sporting or recreational activities with others. The mean frequencies are as follows: females 4.4 times; males 7.8 times; and both genders 5.6 times.

Fig. 4.36: Frequency of engaging with others for sporting or recreational activities over the previous month, by gender



It is important to have social outlets and activities for young adults in the region.

As the following table shows, the local pub remains the preferred place for social gatherings.

Table 4.7: Where young adults like to socialise¹⁹

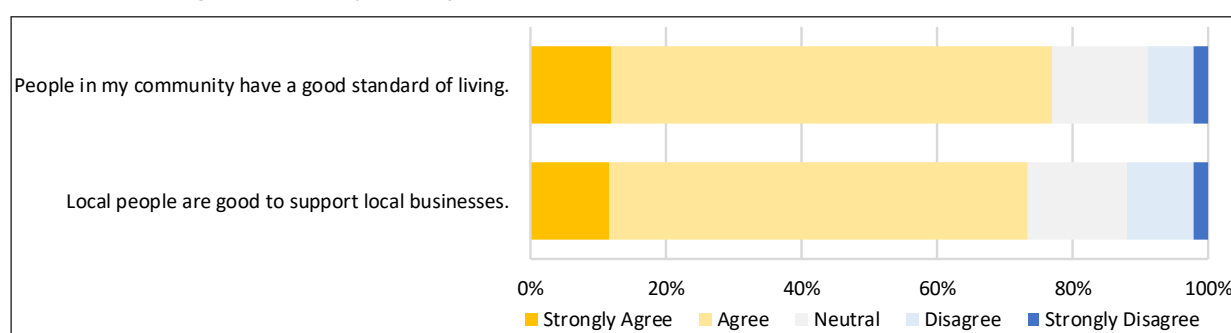
Preferred Location	Total	Female	Male	Duhallow	Lee Valley
In my local pub	77%	27%	65%	48%	65%
Killarney	75%	33%	46%	54%	16%
Cork City	67%	27%	45%	40%	57%
Kanturk	47%	22%	25%	38%	3%
Millstreet	47%	22%	25%	38%	3%
Newmarket	47%	22%	25%	38%	3%
Mallow	25%	12%	12%	20%	0%
Limerick City	15%	6%	10%	10%	0%
Other	12%	5%	9%	7%	8%

4.11 How young adults describe their communities

Both sets of survey questionnaires contained a series of statements about local communities, and respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with them. The purpose of the questions was to gauge young adults' perceptions of the levels of vibrancy in their communities. The following section presents their perspectives of the vibrancy of their home communities on a selected range of economic, socio-cultural and environmental indicators (Stolte and Metcalfe, 2009; O'Keeffe, 2015).

Of all the measures of economic vibrancy and service provision the two statements with which young adults expressed the highest levels of agreement are those illustrated in the following graph. Over three quarters (77%) of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that people in their community have a good standard of living, while almost as many (73%) agree with the statement that local people are good to support local businesses.

Fig. 4.37: Perceptions of the links between local businesses and communities



Levels of agreement drop to below fifty percent in respect of local service provision – with the exception of schools / education services. Less than one third of respondents agree with the statements indicating that other selected services i.e., policing, healthcare and public transport, are satisfactory. Public transport records the lowest level of satisfaction. Only one-in-ten respondents considers it to be satisfactory, while over three quarters (78%) of respondents disagree with the statement that public transport services are sufficient to

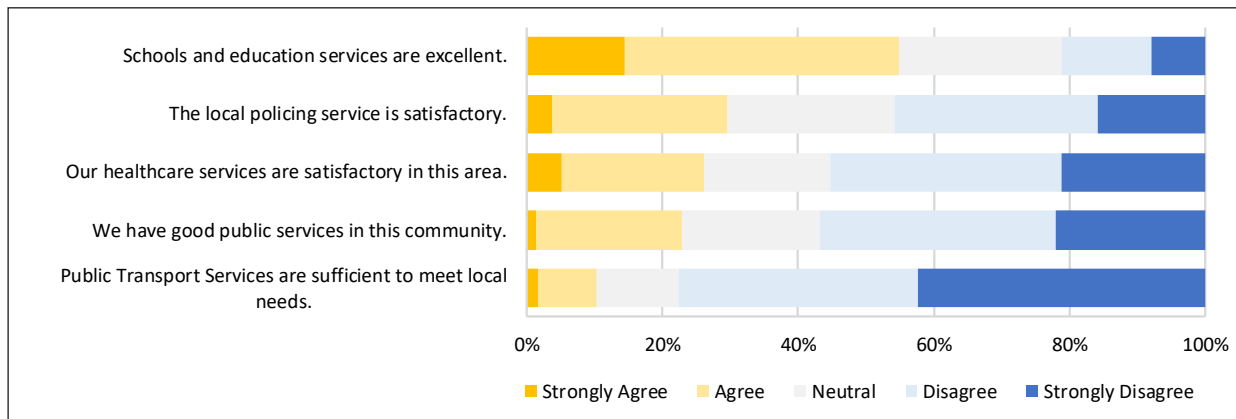


Sinead Murphy from Ballydesmond has developed her own skin product range Blumain Organics. Seventy-three percent of young adults agree with the statement that local people are good to support local businesses.

¹⁹ Figures exceed 100%, as respondents could select multiple options.

meet local needs. Just over a quarter (26%) agree, while over half (55%) disagree with the statement that they are satisfactory. In response to the general statement ‘we have good public services in this community’, almost a quarter (23%) agree, while over half (55%) disagree and one fifth of people are neutral; they neither agree nor disagree.

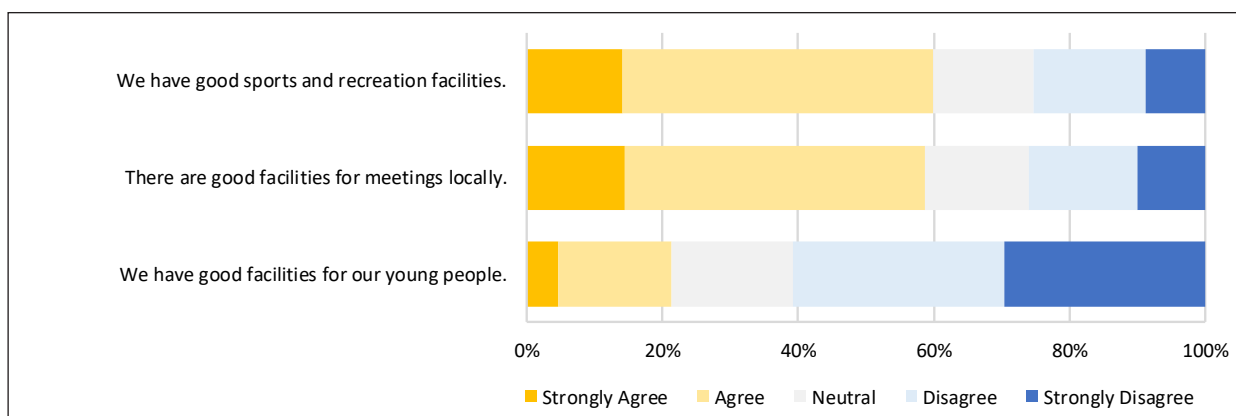
Fig. 4.38: Perceptions of public service provision



While there were relatively low levels of satisfaction with public (statutory) service provision in Duhallow and the Lee Valley, there were relatively levels of satisfaction with community services²⁰. As the following graph shows, most people believe sporting / recreational and meeting facilities to be satisfactory. Sixty percent of people agree with the affirmative statements indicating that these are satisfactory, while one quarter disagree. Levels of agreement (indicating satisfaction) are higher in the Lee Valley than in Duhallow.

The graph also illustrates, however, that most young adults disagree with the statement, ‘we have good facilities for our young people’. Only one fifth (21%) agree with this statement, while over six in ten (61%) disagree with it. These findings indicate that there are deficits with respect to public service provision and youth services locally, while community facilities – for sport and meetings – are generally deemed to be more satisfactory.

Fig. 4.39: Perceptions of community and youth facilities



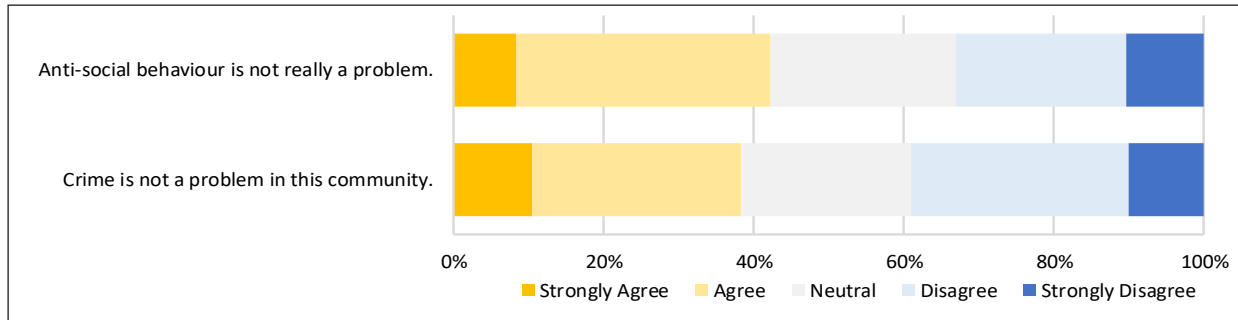
Despite their reported behavioural differences (see chapter four) in respect of sport and recreation, there are no attitudinal differences between males and females in respect of their perceptions of sporting and recreational facilities.

The responses in respect of socio-cultural variables reveal mixed perceptions of local communities. As the following graph illustrates, less than half (44%) of young adults agree with the statement, ‘anti-social behaviour is not really a problem in the community’, while one third (33%) of them disagree with it. A quarter of respondents neither agree

²⁰ This is evidenced by the relatively low levels of agreement with the affirmative statements about public service provision and by the relatively high levels of agreement with the affirmative statements about community service provision.

nor disagree. Respondents are almost evenly split as regards perceptions of crime in their locality; thirty-eight percent agree with the statement that crime is not a problem, while thirty-nine percent disagree. Males are slightly more likely, than are females, to agree with both these statements.

Fig. 4.40: Perceptions of anti-social behaviour and crime

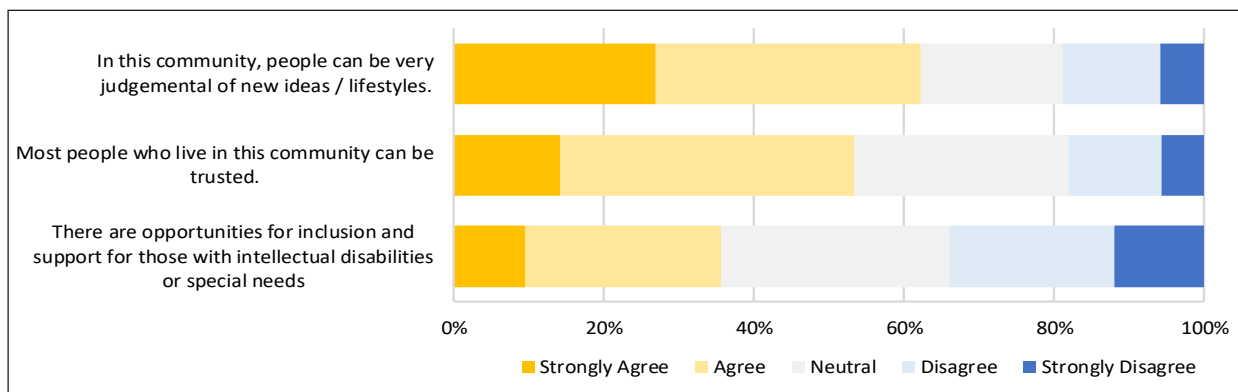


The majority (62%) of young adults believe that people in their community can be very judgemental of new ideas and lifestyles. The proportion of young people who either agree or strongly agree with this statement was significantly higher in the Lee Valley (83%) than in Duhallow (58%). Judgemental or prejudicial attitudes are more likely to affect young people and newcomers, more than middle-aged and older people. It is noteworthy that the small number of respondents who stated that they are transgender or who did not state their gender (in responding to the survey questionnaire) strongly agreed with this statement. These findings, coupled with the fact that most young adults express dissatisfaction with youth facilities, point to the need for investment in physical and human capital and services in Duhallow and the Lee Valley.

The survey findings also reveal that most (53%) young adults believe that most people in their communities can be trusted. Approximately one in six (18%) disagree with this view.

A minority (36%) of young adults believe that there are opportunities for inclusion and support for those with intellectual disabilities or special needs. A similar proportion (34%) disagree with this statement, while just under one third (31%) neither agree nor disagree.

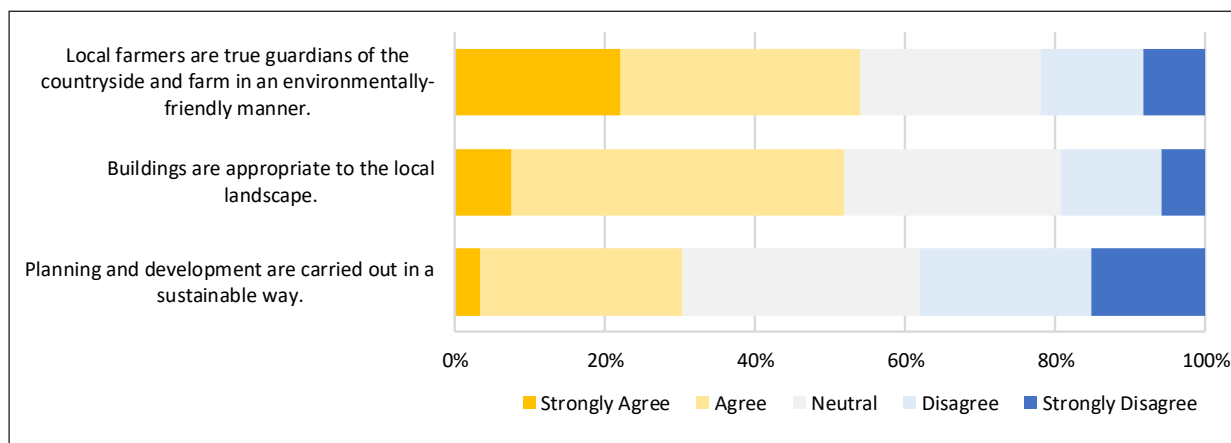
Fig. 4.41: Perceptions of community attitudes and inclusion



The final question in this section asked young adults to respond to three statements about landscape and the environment. As the following graph shows, just over half (54% and 52% respectively) agree that local farmers are guardians of the countryside and farm in an environmentally friendly manner and that buildings are appropriate to the local landscape.

The graph also shows that more young adults disagree (38%) than agree (34%) that planning and development are carried out in a sustainable manner. As climate action events of the past two years demonstrate, young people are well informed about environmental and global development issues, and are keen to see policy and practice changes that would bring about a more sustainable future for all.

Fig. 4.42: Perceptions of the environment and planning



The following pages present wordclouds that summarise how young people perceive their communities. The text presented here is derived from the second-last question in the questionnaire; that asked respondents to provide three words to describe live for young adult in their communities. The following table presents the words most frequently cited. These are stratified by gender (male / female). As the table shows, the word that was used with greatest frequency was 'bored', followed by 'quiet', 'isolated' and 'community'.

Table 4.8: Ten most frequently used descriptors of local communities by gender

Entire Sample	Females	Males
Bored	Bored	Bored
Quiet	Quiet	Friendly
Isolated	Isolated	Good
Community	Community	Isolated
Friendly	Lack	Enjoyable
Lack	Peaceful	Quiet
Good	Friendly	Rural
Fun	Fun	Fun
Lonely	Lonely	GAA

The following wordcloud presents all the words used to describe life for young adults in the communities of Duhallow and the Lee Valley. The sizes of the words are in proportion to the frequency with which they were mentioned. The wordcloud reveals a very diverse range of words; some are very complementary, while others reveal a sense of frustration with local problems.

4.12 Young adults and community development

The findings presented here serve to provide useful pointers in respect of making Duhallow and the Lee Valley more attractive places for young people - giving them the choice and opportunity to live and / or work locally. As chapter four has demonstrated, they have strong ties to their home communities and are keen to live there and to be active citizens locally. Indeed, many are actively involved in local civil society. This survey provides insights into how they believe investments ought to be targeted. The findings indicate that while there is some scope for improving community facilities, particularly in Duhallow, the main needs are in respect of public service provision – most notably transport and healthcare. The survey findings also point to the need for greater investment in the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour and the causes thereof. There is also an expressed need to challenge and redress any judgemental or prejudicial attitudes and to provide more opportunities for the inclusion of people with disabilities and special needs. Across all communities,

there is a clear need for new and improved socialisation and self-development opportunities for young people.

In their recommendations on how life can be improved for young people in Duhallow and the Lee Valley, respondents referred to the following with greatest frequency:

- Improved public transport;
- Events / gatherings for young families (especially to introduce newcomers);
- More sporting / recreational opportunities, in addition to GAA e.g. a swimming pool;
- Family support services (especially for children with special needs);
- Alternative social outlets to pubs;
- Safer roads for walking and cycling;
- Better quality housing in towns and villages and easier to get planning permission in the countryside; and
- More supports for community and voluntary groups.



IRD Duhallow plays an important role in supporting young families in the region.

5. Young People and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, there has been an understandable focus, in public health, on older people and those who have underlying health conditions. Older people are generally more susceptible to serious illness and death, as a result of COVID-19, than are young and middle-aged people. While COVID-19 is a physical disease – it primarily affects the lungs and other internal organs, the pandemic has had considerable effects on people’s mental health and well-being (Margolius et al., 2020; Nearchou et al., 2020). These effects are associated with worry and concern for older and vulnerable people. They are also associated with the public health restrictions that governments have put in place in order to stem the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Several international studies indicate that such mental health and well-being impacts have disproportionately affected young people – relative to other population cohorts. Indeed, some studies have raised concerns about the medium- to long-term implications for young people’s mental health and well-being as a result of their lived experiences since public health measures came into place in March 2020 (Cowie and Myers, 2020; Irish Youth Council, 2021; YoungMinds 2020a; 2020b). Citing a study in *the Lancet*, Branquinho *et al.*, observe, “*these public health measures, although necessary, can not only impact the health and well-being of young people, but can also affect their development* (2020: 2). They refer specifically to restricted face-to-face relationships with their peer group; the cancellation of plans; postponements; the uncertainty about the future; and the potential threat that the virus may pose to themselves and their family.

Therefore, considering the significance of the pandemic in respect of young people’s health, well-being and development, and its implications for our society and the economy, IRD Duhallow undertook a specific piece of research about young people and COVID-19. This research complements and adds value to the information presented in chapters three and four of this report. Indeed, the studies that inform both those chapters took place before the pandemic’s arrival. Thus, in addition to examining a highly significant factor in young people’s lives, this specific research ensures that this study, by IRD Duhallow, is up to date in 2021. The findings that are presented in this chapter are based on an online survey questionnaire, and the data were collected over a three-week period in January 2021. Two hundred and twenty (n=220) completed

questionnaires were received. In addition, the researcher facilitated a focus-group discussion with nine young people, which explored how the pandemic has affected young people locally.

The survey questionnaire covered the following areas:

- i. Education;
- ii. Work / employment;
- iii. Physical and recreational activity;
- iv. Well-being;
- v. Social interactions; and
- vi. Societal and policy perceptions.

The Duhallow / Lee Valley-based findings are, where possible, benchmarked against other studies. As universities and public bodies undertake further research over the coming months, further benchmarking will be possible, and IRD Duhallow looks forward to collaborations with others in responding to research findings, so that evidence-based approaches are pursued in ensuring that young people are enabled to be more fully resilient and to overcome the setbacks that are evidently associated with the current pandemic.

5.1 Education

The closure of schools (March – June 2020 and January – March 2021) has had a disruptive effect on young people’s education. Their academic progression has been adversely affected, and the closure of schools has also had the effect of reducing their social contacts with peers and with the wider community. During the 2020 lockdown, schools and colleges struggled to make on-line learning available to students. In September 2020, students were back in the classroom, but classrooms and play spaces were different from what they had been during the previous school year; windows were open, mask wearing was compulsory and social distancing measures were in place. Student-student and student-teacher interfaces have changed considerably – in both online and in-school contexts. During 2021, the closure of schools, obliged students to sit in front of screens and to engage in online learning. For many, access to ICT has been an inhibiting factor, and some initiatives have been put in place to overcome the digital divide that COVID-19 has exacerbated. In its special COVID-19 survey report, *Growing-up in Ireland* notes, “*Those from lower income households were less likely to have the space and equipment to study. The findings suggest that learning loss over the first period of school*

closure is likely to have been greater for more disadvantaged groups, highlighting the need for differentiated supports to address this learning gap as schools re-open” (2021: 19).

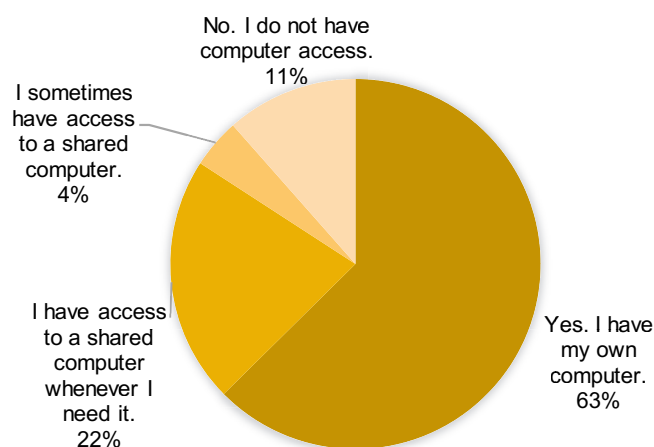
Across Europe, governments have sought to prioritise the opening of schools over the opening of other public facilities. Indeed, Ireland was the only EU member state to suspend teaching and learning for those with special needs, and the Irish government and education stakeholders worked to ensure that this cohort of children / young people was the first to resume receiving direct tuition from teachers and support staff (with effect from early February 2021). The cancellation of the 2020 and 2021 Junior Certificate Examinations, the introduction of calculated grades, in 2020, and the application of a hybrid mode of assessment for Leaving Certificate 2021 are indicative of the fluid and challenging context in which education has been obliged to operate. The changed education landscape, of 2020 and 2021, and the associated uncertainties have played on the minds of young people and have obliged them to alter their behaviour in many respects.

The following pages present students’ experiences and perceptions of being learners in 2020 / 2021. Of the 220 persons, who responded to the survey, almost two thirds (63%, n=139) are currently in full-time education. Of these, over three quarters (77%, n=107) are in second-level education, while most of the remainder (n=29) attend a third-level institute.

5.1.1 Engagement in Education

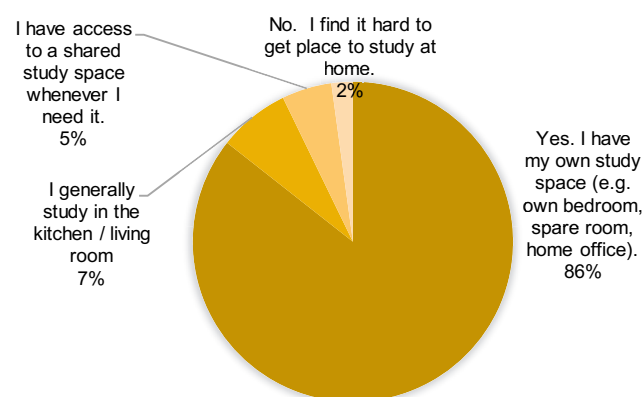
The move from classroom-based to online learning has meant that access to ICT and a suitable home-based study space are fundamental for young learners. As the following graph shows, the majority of young people, in Duhallow / the Lee Valley, have access to a computer or other equivalent device to enable them to engage in online learning. Almost two thirds have independent access to a computer, and a further fifth (22%) have shared access to one. However, almost one in eight students lack a computer. These young people have had to try to use smart phones, or they have been unable to engage in online learning, and are therefore at considerable risk of disengaging from formal education.

Fig. 5.1: Students’ access to computers in the home



The survey findings also reveal that while the vast majority of students have access to a designated study space, many do not, as the following graph illustrates.

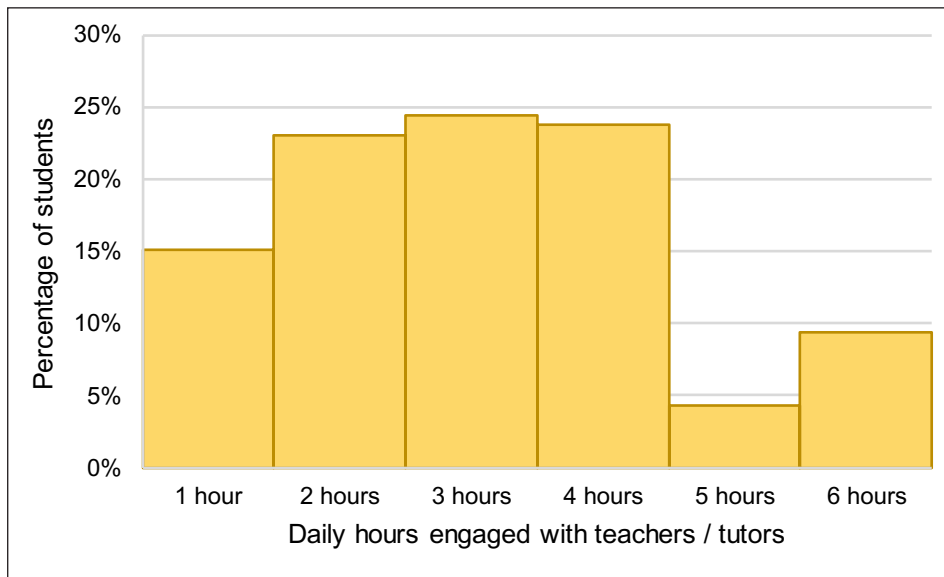
Fig. 5.2: Students’ access to study spaces in the home



These findings illustrate the importance of the home environment in ensuring that students have equality of opportunities in education. This importance has been heightened in the context of COVID-19.

When asked how frequently they engage with their teachers through online learning (when schools are closed), the vast majority (84%) report that they do so five days per week. Almost one in ten students engaged in online learning three or four days per week, while the remainder (7%) only does so one or two days per week. As the following graph shows, the modal number of hours per day during which students engage online with their teachers / tutors is three. The survey findings show no differences between those in second-level and third level-education.

Fig. 5.3: Average number of hours per day spent in online engagement with teachers / tutors

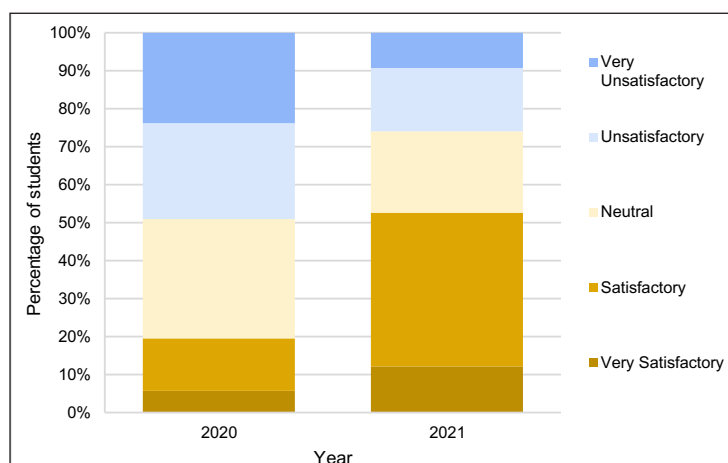


The IRD Duhallow survey findings, in respect of student-teacher engagement / interaction, are similar to those reported in a study conducted in the USA (Margolius et al., 2020). Among young people covered by the American survey, the modal number of contact days with teachers was five (48% of students), while the modal contact time (46% of students) was 3 to 4 hours per day.

The survey results reveal that there is a cohort of students who have particularly low levels of engagement with their schools. This cohort is vulnerable – not just academically, but socially and psychologically. As noted in a UK study, *“Although the effects of the pandemic will have been particularly acute on the teenagers who were already vulnerable before COVID-19, especially those who were ‘falling through the gaps’, with schools closed to most pupils for half an academic year, and face-to-face social care provision being stopped, these young people risk becoming even more ‘invisible’ than before”* (Cowie and Myers, 2020: 65).

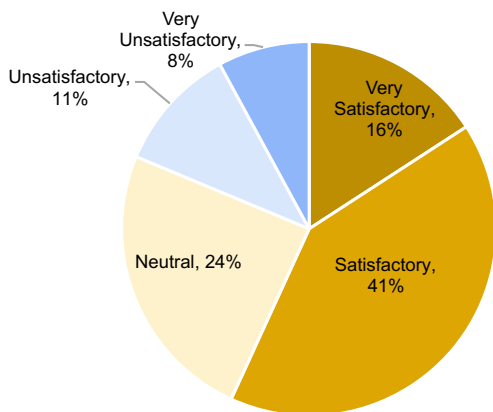
As the following graph shows, there was a notable increase, between 2020 and 2021, in the proportion of students who described their online learning experience as ‘satisfactory’ or ‘very satisfactory’. There was a corresponding decline in the proportion of students for whom online learning was ‘unsatisfactory’ or ‘very unsatisfactory’. These findings are associated with the interim efforts of schools and colleges to improve distance-learning interfaces and the capacity of their staff to engage with students through ICT.

Fig. 5.4: Students’ perspectives of online learning in spring 2020 and January 2021



During summer 2020, education providers went to considerable lengths to prepare for the opening of schools and colleges in September 2020. They upgraded their ICT systems, provided training for staff members and reconfigured spaces in line with public health guidelines. As the following graph illustrates, the majority of students believe that the transition into the classroom in September 2020 was satisfactory.

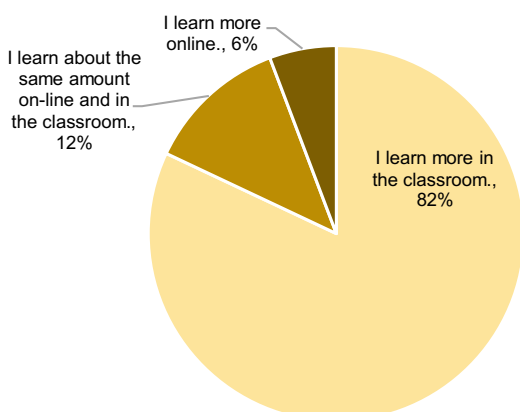
Fig. 5.5: Students' perceptions of the transition back to school / college in September 2020



The survey findings (particularly as illustrated in figures 5.4 and 5.5) indicate that despite the overriding disruptive effects the pandemic has had, the academic year 2020-2021 has, thus far, been more satisfactory than the early part of 2020 – in both on-line and face-to-face contexts.

While the survey findings are affirmative in respect of the steps schools / colleges have taken to enable online learning, students are overwhelmingly of the view that they learn more in a classroom environment than they do via online platforms. The following graph summarises their opinions.

Fig. 5.6: Students' perspective of learning environments

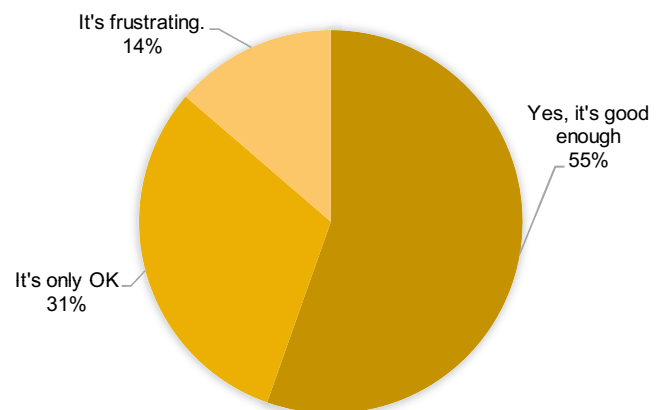


The IRD Duhallow survey findings tally with those that emerge from research undertaken by the International Labour Organisation (2020), in which the following results are reported:

- 65% of young learners report that they are learning less (now, than before the pandemic);
- 51% believe that their education is being delayed; and
- 9% believe that their education (as they had envisaged) might fail.

Although public health authorities are rolling out vaccines, stakeholders in education, particularly those in third-level settings, acknowledge that remote / distance learning will continue to be a significant delivery mode post 2021. In that context – in anticipating future needs, and in order to further understand students' current experiences, the survey asked: 'Is your broadband / internet connection good enough for home-study?' As the following graph shows, slightly over half responded affirmatively, almost a third describe it as 'only OK', while one in seven online learners faces significant connectivity challenges.

Fig. 5.7: Students' experiences of current broadband suitability for home-study purposes



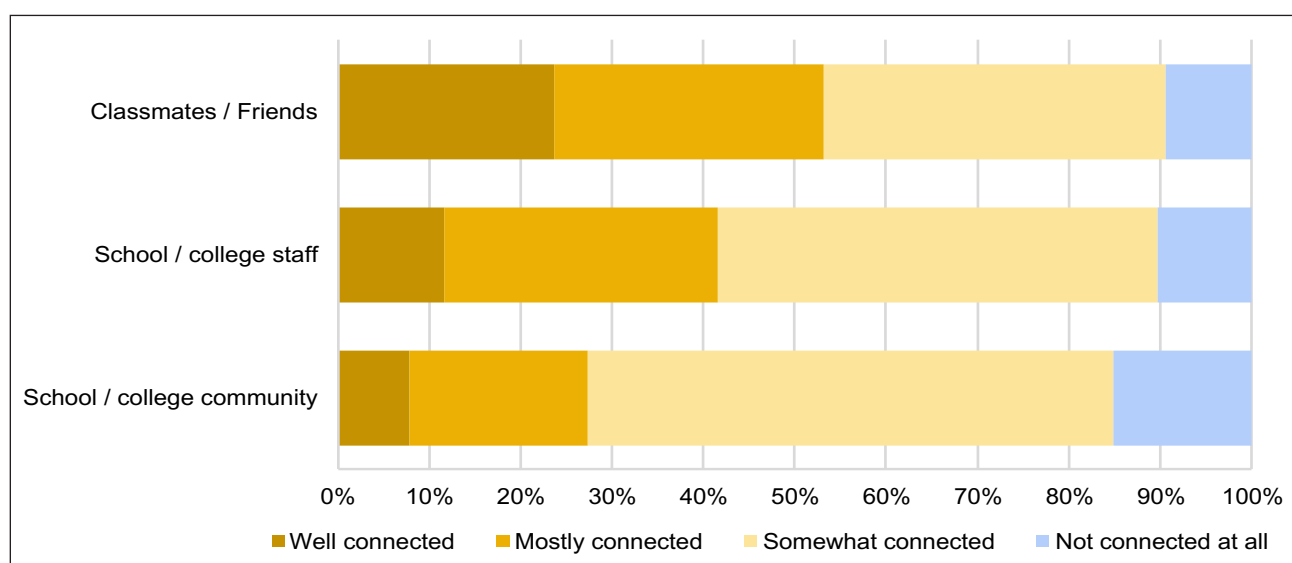
5.1.2 Education and Social Interaction

While schools and colleges are primarily places of education (academic formation), they are important places of social interaction in which young people ordinarily engage and interact with their peers / classmates, school staff and the wider community (e.g. bus drivers, peers' parents and other adults). Such engagements and interactions have a formative effect on young people, and the absence and / or diminution of such interactions, during the pandemic, have had

negative consequences for their social formation and general well-being.

A recent study in the UK (YoungMinds, 2020a) quantifies the importance of school-related interactions on student mental health. Students reported that, during the pandemic, there are positive mental health associations with seeing classmates and teachers and engaging in extra-curricular activities. With schools being closed, young people are increasingly reliant on ICT platforms to ‘see’ others. The YoungMinds study found negative mental health implications arising from social distancing – including while travelling to school and during lessons. In Duhallow and the Lee Valley, as the following graph shows, only a minority of students feels ‘well connected’ to other members of the school community.

Fig. 5.8: Extent to which students feel connected with others



As the following table shows, the levels of connectedness felt by students in Duhallow and the Lee Valley is notably lower than that felt by students in the USA who were asked the same set of questions. These differences may be associated with more stringent lockdown measures in Ireland, relative to most states in the USA.

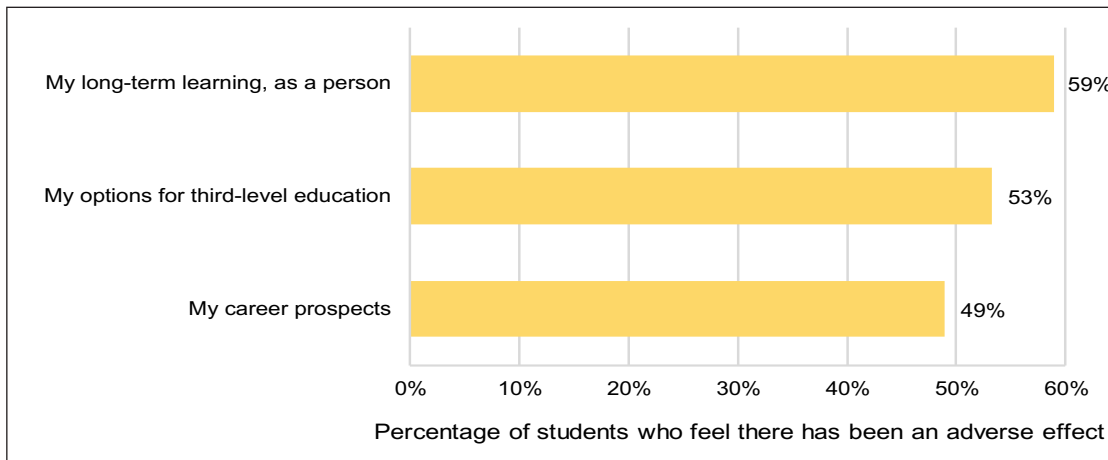
Table 5.1: Comparative levels of connections students feel to school-related cohorts

Level of connection	School / college community		School / college staff		Classmates / Friends	
	IRD Duhallow	Margolius <i>et al.</i>	IRD Duhallow	Margolius <i>et al.</i>	IRD Duhallow	Margolius <i>et al.</i>
Well connected	8%	22%	12%	29%	24%	23%
Mostly connected	19%	50%	30%	47%	29%	43%
Somewhat connected	58%	19%	48%	16%	37%	25%
Not connected at all	15%	9%	10%	8%	9%	9%

Several studies (Nearchou *et al.*, 2020) have underscored the importance of such connections, and the findings (of the local and international research) point to the need for concerted efforts to establish and sustain them as soon as possible.

The aforementioned literature (e.g. Cowie and Myers, 2020; YoungMinds, 2020b) has noted the possible medium- and long-term potential damage the pandemic can do to young people’s progression. As the following set of findings, from among those currently in second-level education, indicates, over half of young people in Duhallow and the Lee Valley feel that the pandemic has already had an adverse effect on their long-term learning, as a person, and on their options for third-level education. Almost half believe it has negative implications for their career prospects.

Fig. 5.9: Percentage of students who perceive that the pandemic has had negative effects on aspects of their development



Studies have also noted the mental health consequences of the pandemic – particularly of school closures. As one study notes, “since their school buildings closed, young people’s levels of concern about the present and future have increased, and indicators of overall health and well-being have suffered. For example, 30% of young people say they have more often been feeling unhappy or depressed, and nearly as many say they are much more concerned than usual about having their basic needs met” (Margolius et al., 2020: 1). Successive studies by YoungMinds have noted that while the disconnect from school is associated with mental health challenges, the changed learning environment (both in school and online) and uncertainties around exams have negative effects on students’ mental health. In fact, their research, and that undertaken in Duhallow and the Lee Valley finds that students’ mental health is now under greater pressure than was the case prior to the return to school, as the following graph and table illustrate.

Fig. 5.10: Students’ perceptions of their mental health

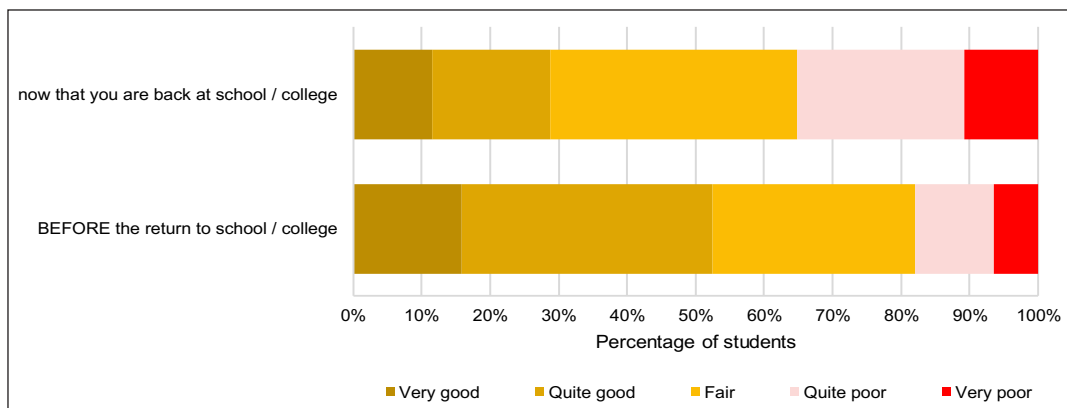


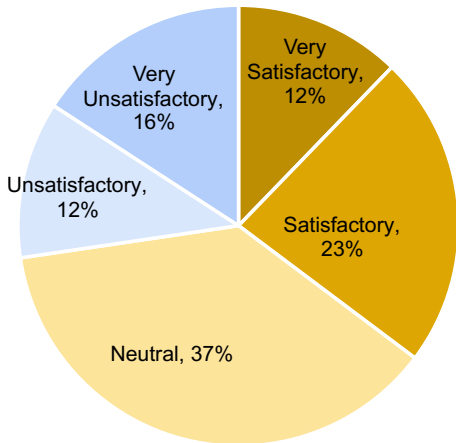
Table 5.2: Students’ perceptions of their mental health – inter-study comparative analysis

Mental Health Status	Duhallow Sample		YoungMinds Sample	
	BEFORE the return to school / college	now that you are back at school / college	BEFORE the return to school / college	now that you are back at school / college
Very good	16%	12%	6%	2%
Quite good	37%	17%	14%	9%
Fair	29%	36%	22%	19%
Quite poor	12%	24%	35%	31%
Very poor	6%	11%	23%	38%

Note: Comparisons are based on YoungMinds (2020a).

The aforementioned studies have also noted the important roles schools play – directly through staff interventions and indirectly through social interactions – in providing young people with social and emotional supports. As the following chart shows, students are somewhat ambiguous in their assessment of the social and emotional supports on offer in their schools. Over one third (35%) believe the supports are either ‘very satisfactory’ or ‘satisfactory’, while over a quarter (28%) believe them to be ‘very unsatisfactory’ or ‘unsatisfactory’. The modal response is ‘neutral’, indicating that students may not have enquired about, or accessed, supports.

Fig. 5.11: Students’ perceptions of the social and emotional supports offered by schools



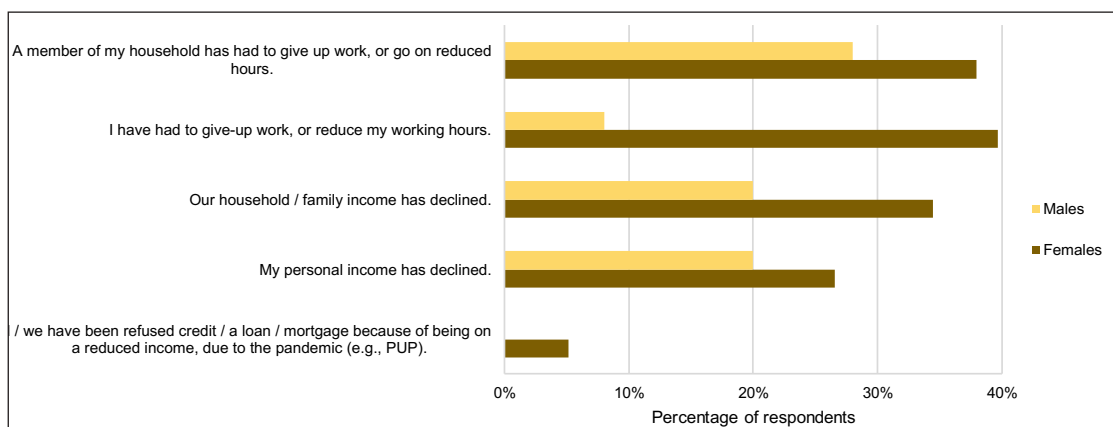
The findings presented here in respect of education reveal that COVID-19 has had a disruptive effect on young people’s learning and socialisation. While the findings affirm the steps education providers have taken to ensure safe and supportive learning environments, the effects on young people’s education progression are not insignificant, and integrated supports will have to be put in place – in homes, schools / colleges and communities to mitigate them.

5.2 Work / employment

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) notes that even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, young people had to contend with a challenging labour market. Enforced business closures led to many young people, among others, losing their jobs. Young people, especially those in education, have traditionally secured seasonal and part-time employment in the hospitality sector, which is one of the sectors that has been most adversely affected by restrictions on economic activities and public gatherings. ILO research (2020) shows that younger youths (those aged 18 to 24) are more likely than are older youths (those aged 25 to 34) to have lost their jobs due to the pandemic. Their data also show that young males are more likely than are young females to have lost their jobs. Meanwhile, many of those who have succeeded in holding on to their jobs have been affected by reductions in working hours and loss of income. Having regard to the issues identified by the ILO, the IRD Duhallow survey questionnaire included specific questions that mirror those in ILO surveys – thereby enabling international benchmarking of local experiences.

As the following graph shows, between a quarter and one third of young people in Duhallow and the Lee Valley have been adversely affected, in economic terms, by the pandemic. The survey findings show, in contrast to the ILO datasets, that females have been more adversely affected than males. This may be accounted for by male dominance in agricultural employment locally, and while agriculture has been affected by the pandemic, the economic effects thereon are not as clearly quantifiable as in sectors in which employees have fixed annual incomes.

Fig. 5.12: Economic impacts of the pandemic among young adults in Duhallow and the Lee Valley



The following table compares and contrasts COVID-19-related economic impacts locally and internationally – drawing on the IRD Duhallow and ILO survey results.

Table 5.3: Comparative economic impacts of the pandemic in Duhallow / Lee Valley and internationally²¹

Economic Impacts	IRD Duhallow			International Labour Organisation
	All	Females	Males	
My personal income has declined.	25%	27%	20%	34%
I have had to give-up work, or reduce my working hours.	30%	40%	8%	46%
I am working from home, either partly or fully, since the onset of the pandemic.	63%	70%	43%	63%

The local and international data point to the significance of home-working (also referred to as connected-working and tele-working) since the advent of the pandemic. As noted in the previous section (in relation to education), an individual's ability to study and / or work in the home environment is associated with his / her prior access to ICT and the strength of ICT networks where he / she lives. In addition, in respect of home-working, employers' attitudes are an important determinant, and while the public health advice has been that employers should facilitate their staff to work from home, not all employers have been able to, while some have refused to do so.

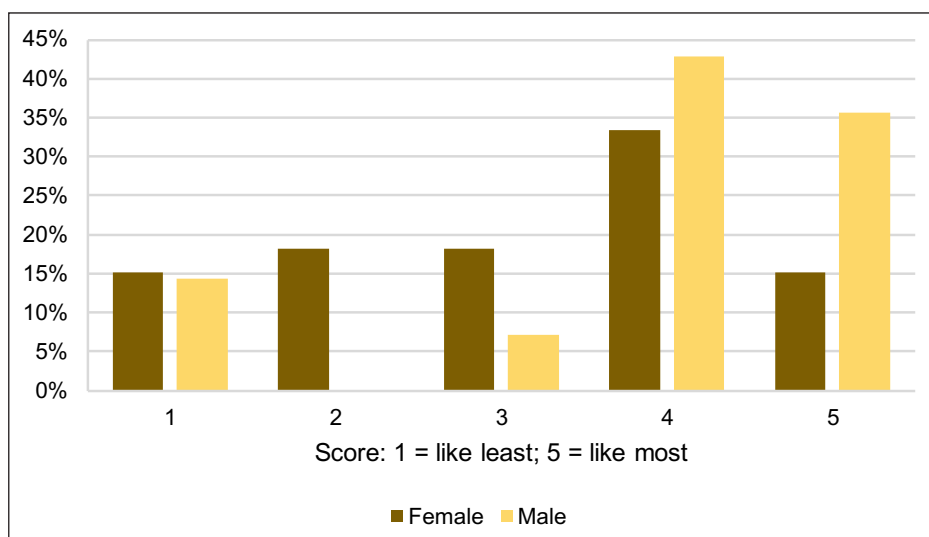
Among those, in Duhallow and the Lee Valley, who have not worked from home during the pandemic, most (64%) report that their jobs cannot be done remotely. Almost one in twelve state that their broadband connectivity is not good enough, while over a quarter (28%) state that their employer does not support homeworking.

Among those, locally, who work from home, the majority (70%) do so on a full-time basis, while the remainder (30%) do so on a part-time basis or intermittently. Among homeworkers, in Duhallow and the Lee Valley, almost one third (30%) report having had regular or ongoing broadband problems.

The IRD Duhallow survey also asked workers if they like working from home and if they thought they would like to continue to do so (in a post-pandemic scenario). Respondents were asked to give their opinions on a scale ranging from 1 to 5 (where 1 = I do not like and 5 = I like very much). As the following graph shows, males have a more favourable perception of homeworking than do females; almost half (48%) of females and over three quarters (78%) of males award a score of four or five.

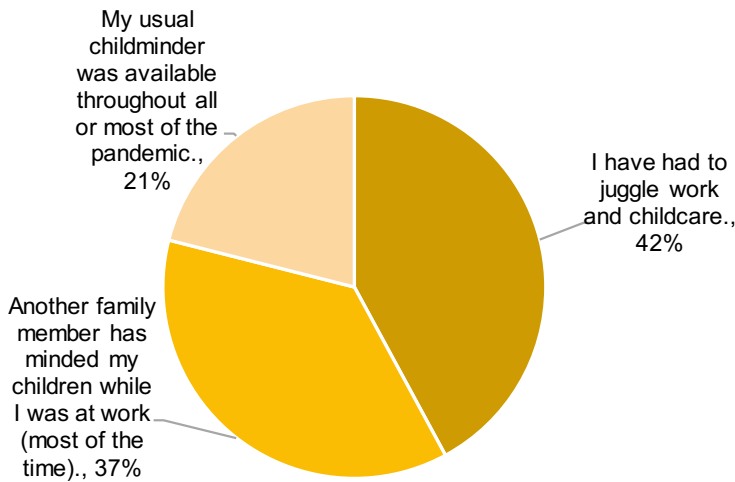
Fig. 5.13: Current perceptions of homeworking by gender

While both genders report positive perceptions of home-working, the lower (positive) proportion among females may be associated with an obligation – real and perceived – to balance professional home-working with domestic duties, particularly home-schooling and childcare, as the following graph suggests. Almost eighty percent of those engaged in home-working had to juggle employment and childcare or had to rely on a family member to assist with childcare.



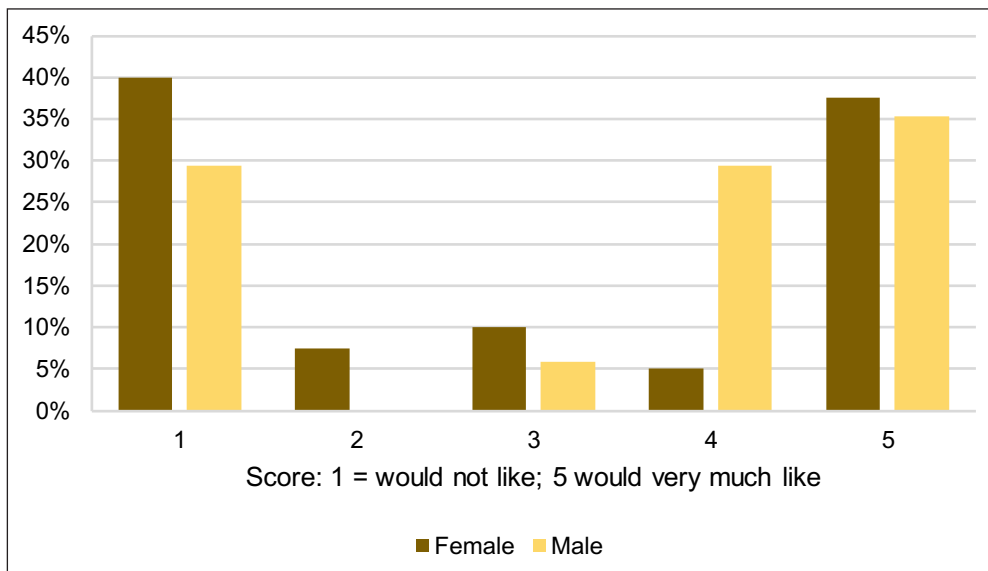
²¹ The ILO data presented in this table relate to higher-income countries (including Ireland) only.

Fig. 5.14: Childcare access for those working from home²²



The survey also asked workers if they would like to have the option of home-working (in a post-COVID) context. As the following graph illustrates, most males are favourably disposed to it; almost three-quarters of males award a score of three or higher. Among females, opinions are more divided; almost equal proportions (40% and 38% respectively) award scores of one and five.

Fig. 5.15: Perceptions of having the option to work from home in the future (post COVID)



In January 2021, the Irish Government published a remote working strategy. Its core elements are as follows:

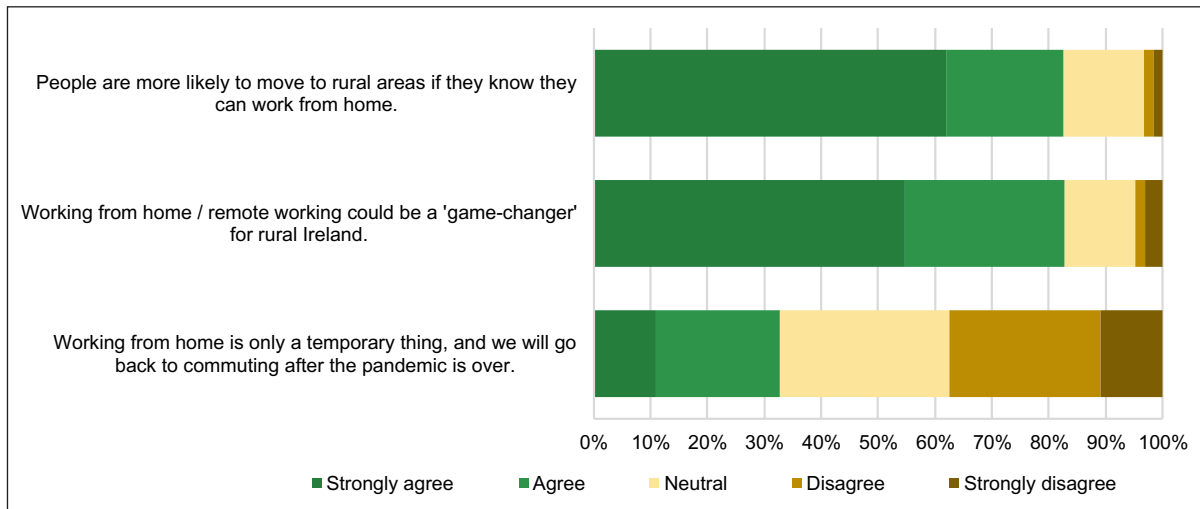
- Legislating to provide employees with the right to request remote working;
- Introducing a legally admissible code of practice on the right to disconnect from work;
- Investing in ICT hubs;
- Accelerating the National Broadband Plan;
- Revising the tax treatment of remote working; and
- Mandating home-working for twenty percent of public service employees.

The strategy's publication indicates that government views home-working, not simply as a pandemic-induced necessity, but, as a mainstream mode of working in the future. Indeed, over the course of 2020 and 2021, there have been several media reports of people and families re-locating from urban areas to rural Ireland – in order to take advantage of home-working opportunities. As the following graph shows, workers who are based in Duhallow and the Lee Valley believe that home-working will be an integral feature of the workplace landscape in the future, and

²² As the number of males (excluding farmers), who now work (at least part time) from home is less than fifty, it is not advisable to run statistical tests to explore any possible association between gender and experience for this variable. However, the persistent gender imbalances in Irish households, in respect of homemaking and childcare duties, are well documented.

that it is potentially transformative for rural areas.

Fig. 5.16: Perceptions of the future of home-working



5.3 Physical and recreational activity

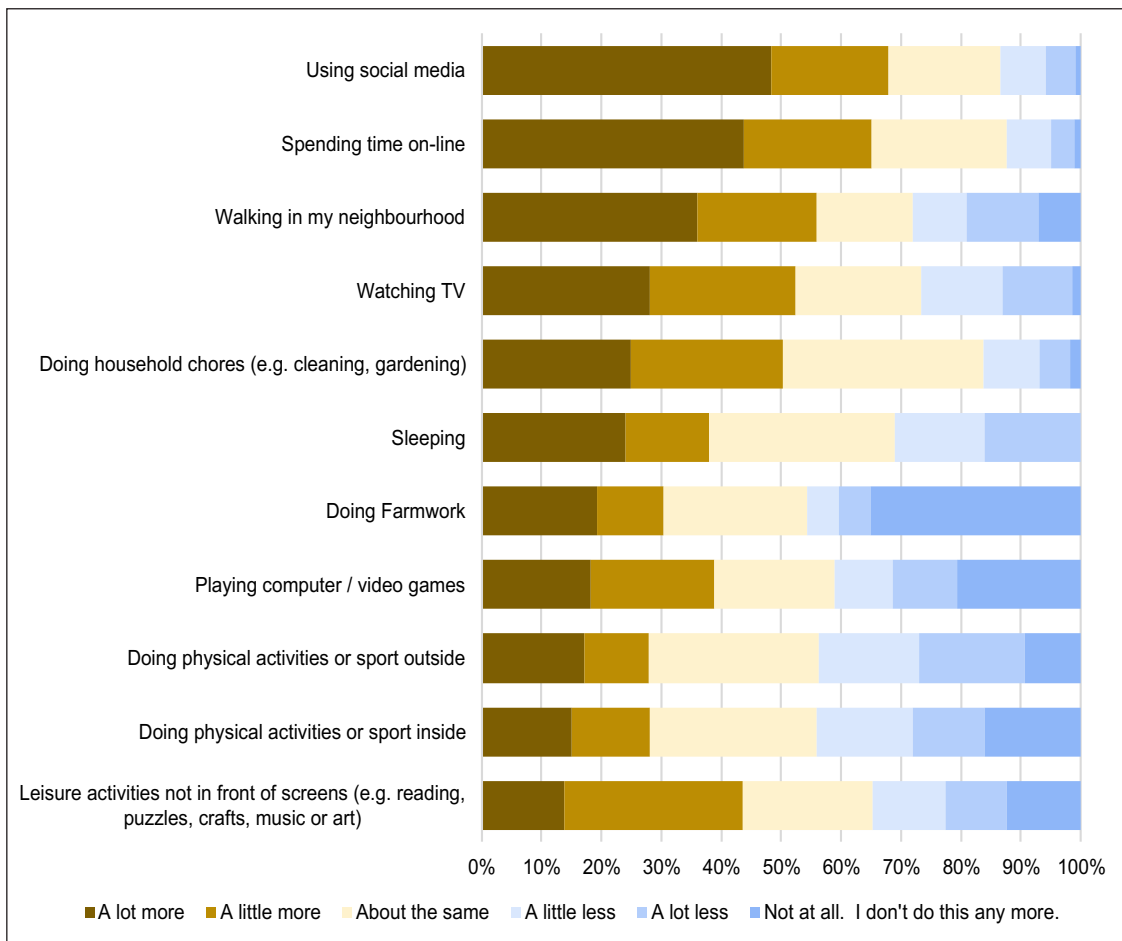
The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about fundamental changes in the ways in which young people (among others) engage in physical and recreational activities. Engagement has generally been confined to activities that are outdoors and are available within a 5km radius of home. Gyms have been closed for long periods, and team sports have been severely curtailed. In effect, young people have been prevented from engaging in many of the physical and recreational activities recommended by health professionals, which are fundamental to maintaining physical and mental health. In addition, young people have been obliged to find alternative activities – to fill the voids associated with cancellations and curtailments. As a result of the pandemic, many of the positive behaviours that are documented in chapters three and four of this report have been curtailed or abandoned.

The IRD Duhallow survey asked respondents to indicate if there has been an increase or decrease (more or less) in the amount of time they devote to particular activities – pre- and post-March 2020. As the following graph shows, young people are spending considerably more time in front of screens – both online media and television. Over a third are also spending more time playing video games. These trends are negative, in physical health terms, although they have become integral to enabling social contact. Positively, over half of young people are now spending more time walking in their neighbourhoods and doing household chores. These trends have been reported among other age cohorts as well (Ward et al., 2021), and in January 2021, the Government announced €3.2m in funding for 173 projects under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.



IRD Duhallow has developed six loopwalks which are used by all ages in the community, especially during lockdowns.

Fig. 5.17: Changes in the amount of time devoted to selected recreational activities

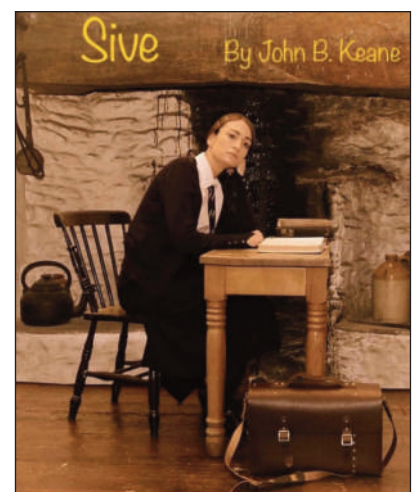


Focus group participants spoke at length about the cancellation / deferral of GAA activities, including training and matches. They also referred to the closure of entertainment venues. They reported that the public health restrictions are limiting their ability to undertake physical exercise, but above all, they stated, “we miss our friends”; “people are looking for things to do”; and “people are isolated”.

The findings from the IRD Duhallow survey resonate with a more extensive study (with over 600 participants) undertaken across Canada (Moore et al., 2020), which found that, “Children and youth experienced a significant decline in all physical activities, except household chores. The most dramatic decline was with outdoor physical activity and sport (2.28/5.00 and 1.96/5.00 for children and youth, respectively), whereas leisure screen time and social media use was reported as much higher than before the COVID-19 outbreak (leisure screen time 4.10/5.00 and 4.21/5.00 for children and youth respectively; social media 3.30/5.00 and 3.78/5.00 for children and youth, respectively)” (Moore et al., 2020: 4).

The Canadian authors conclude that their study provides evidence of “immediate collateral consequences [and highlights] the need for a balance of disease prevention and health promotion efforts” (2020: 9).

Among the IRD Duhallow survey cohort, there is evidence of an uptake of new leisure activities. The findings reveal, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and related restrictions:



Activities such as drama in the LEADER funded Glen Theatre, act as a valuable social outlet for young people in the region.

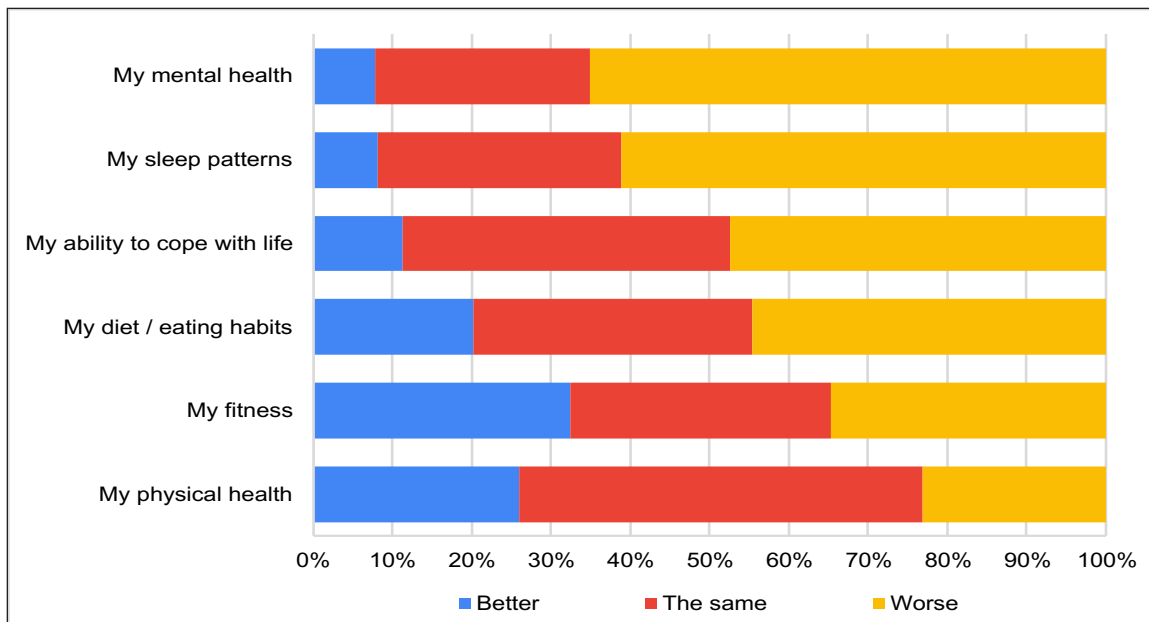
- 50% have taken up a new leisure activity or hobby;
- 32% have received encouragement from parents or other family members to devote more time to hobbies and leisure activities; and
- 14% report that their family has begun a new hobby or leisure activity.

Walking, running, cooking / baking and Pilates / yoga emerge as the individual leisure activities that have grown most in popularity. Among families, the most popular new leisure activities are quizzes, walking / hiking and sewing / knitting.

5.4 Well-being

The aforementioned international studies have highlighted the impacts of the pandemic and associated restrictions on young people’s well-being. In order to garner data on their manifestations locally, the IRD Duhallow survey asked young people to assess changes in their mental and physical health before and after the advent of the pandemic. The following graph presents their responses in respect of six indicators of well-being. As the findings show, over sixty percent report that their mental health and sleep patterns are worse, and almost half report a decline in their ability to cope with life and their eating habits. The latter may be surprising, given that people are eating at home more frequently – due to the closure of eateries. Respondents are almost evenly divided in respect of the pandemic’s impact on their fitness levels and their physical health. This latter set of findings tallies with those presented in Section 5.3, which recorded that while many people devote more time to walking, a larger cohort are spending considerably more time in front of screens. The absence of community-based sporting activities is also an adverse factor in this regard.

Fig. 5.18: Perceptions of the pandemic’s impact on well-being



Cowie and Myers (2020) note that the pandemic has provoked stresses and traumas among young people. They refer to the increase in cases of domestic violence and the absence of access to supportive networks as being detrimental to the well-being of children and young people. A study by YoungMinds (2020a: 17) records, “additionally, many young people have undergone traumatic experiences during lockdown, struggled to cope with the loss of social connection, or have had reduced access to their support systems. Even for those who have adjusted well to the restrictions, the return to a ‘new normal’ may bring profound challenges”.

The IRD Duhallow study found occurrences of traumatic experiences among young people, as the following table shows.

Table 5.4: Percentage of respondents replying 'yes' to specific questions about experiences of trauma

Question	Female	Male	All
Have you experienced any trauma or distress due to the pandemic?	43%	32%	40%
Has any member of your family experienced any trauma or distress due to the pandemic?	39%	33%	37%
Has any of your friends experienced any trauma or distress due to the pandemic?	44%	40%	43%

When asked to identify the provenance of the traumas and distresses, they referred, with greatest frequency, to the following:

- Being bereaved, but unable to attend a relative's funeral;
- Worrying about older relatives' / neighbours' vulnerability to the virus;
- Loss of loved ones to the virus;
- Fear of catching the virus;
- Loneliness / isolation / disconnect from friends;
- Tensions within households; and
- Financial problems.

Noting the impacts that pandemic-induced traumas can have, Nearchou et al., (2020: 13) observe, *"this new situation with the imposed social and physical restrictions may have also introduced additional barriers to accessing informal and formal help-seeking for mental health problems in youths... In addition, young people may now have restricted exposure to elements that operate as protective agents against mental health difficulties"*.

Their observations indicate the importance of ensuring that schools, youth leaders and communities are equipped and supported to enable young people to overcome the negative impacts of the pandemic and to strengthen their resilience to deal with possible future disruptive social forces. The focus group participants referred to the role of the media in informing the public about how to ameliorate the effects of COVID-19. They expressed the view that there has been too much negativity in the coverage to date, and they recommended that media outlets focus more on coping strategies and on examples of neighbourliness and good citizenship. As one participant stated, "it's all about what you can't do, but what about doing good things?"

Survey participants were presented with a list of pandemic-related issues, and they were asked to identify up to three (3) of them that have been most challenging. The following graph presents the percentage who ticked each issue:

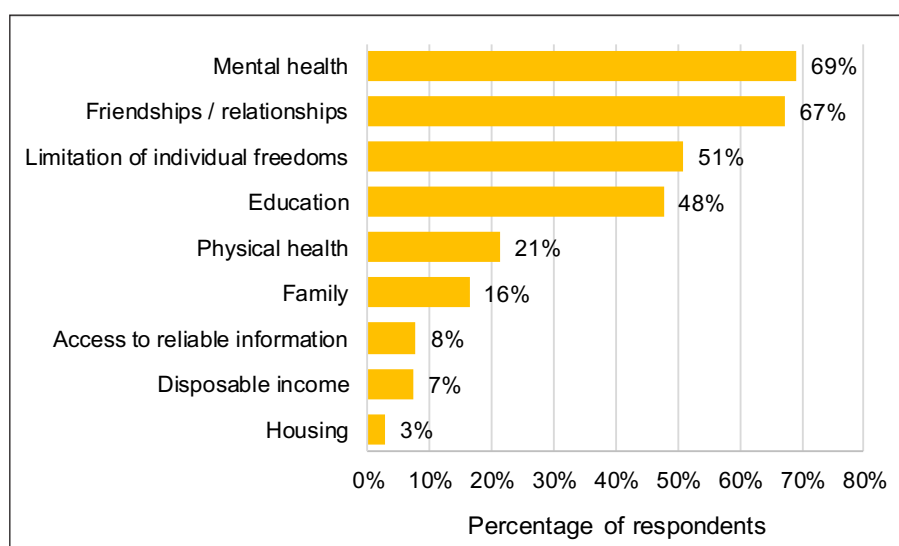


Fig. 5.19: Percentage of respondents affected by particular issues

5.5 Social interactions

Citing the United Nations Programme on Youth (2020), the International Labour Organisation (2020: 36) notes that “young people’s social activism and behaviours are contributing to mitigating the economic and social impacts of COVID-19, through compliance with government measures, volunteering, donations and research”. In its research among young people on the impact of the pandemic, the ILO presented a series of statements to its survey respondents and invited them to indicate the extent (high, medium or low) to which each statement best describes their behaviour since the advent of the pandemic. The IRD Duhallow study replicated this approach, such that the following set of tables provides a comparative analysis of the responses to both surveys.

Table 5.5: Comparative levels of social activism and active citizenship

I stayed at home.

Responses	IRD Duhallow			International Labour Organisation		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
To a high extent	78%	68%	75%	84%	75%	80%
To a medium extent	22%	29%	24%	9%	14%	12%
To a low extent	0%	3%	1%	7%	10%	8%

I reached out to my friends, family and other loved ones to find out how they were coping.

Responses	IRD Duhallow			International Labour Organisation		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
To a high extent	42%	30%	38%	69%	62%	66%
To a medium extent	45%	49%	46%	18%	20%	19%
To a low extent	13%	20%	15%	13%	17%	15%

I volunteered for initiatives to help others affected by the virus / restrictions.

Responses	IRD Duhallow			International Labour Organisation		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
To a high extent	5%	6%	5%	28%	34%	31%
To a medium extent	18%	22%	19%	21%	20%	20%
To a low extent	77%	72%	76%	51%	46%	49%

I donated to charities working on the response to the corona virus outbreak.

Responses	IRD Duhallow			International Labour Organisation		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
To a high extent	10%	9%	10%	26%	27%	27%
To a medium extent	25%	36%	29%	17%	20%	18%
To a low extent	65%	55%	62%	57%	53%	55%

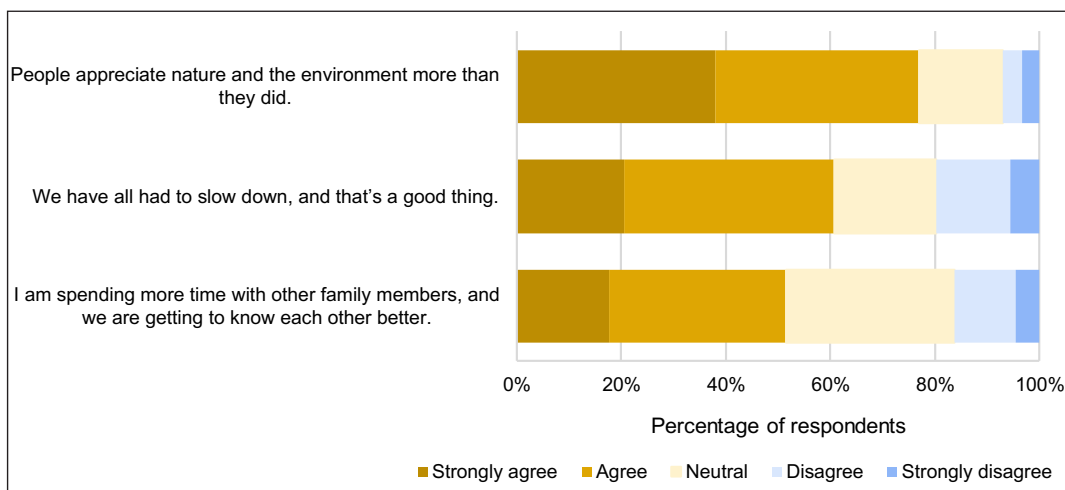
The findings show – across both survey cohorts – that females were more likely to comply with the public health authorities’ request, to citizens, to remain at home, while males were slightly more likely to participate in initiatives involving voluntary and charitable organisations. Longitudinal data collected by the ILO indicate that levels of youth volunteerism increased over the course of 2020.

5.6 Societal and Policy Perceptions

Since spring 2020, several researchers, policy-makers and leaders in politics, business and NGOs have repeatedly stated that ‘we are never going back to business as usual.’ It is evident that society – locally, nationally and globally – has changed. Remote working and distance learning are being mainstreamed. ICT is much more significant in enabling human communication and citizen access to services. International travel has been dramatically reduced, and domestic journeys have become much shorter and infrequent. The separation of spaces of work and family, which has been with us since the industrial revolution, is dissipating. People are spending more time in their localities, but not necessarily with their communities. Many of the changes that have been brought about by the pandemic will be with us in the medium- to long-term. Therefore, societies will have to adapt and to learn. In order to garner some of the initial learnings and to devise some signposts for life beyond COVID-19, the IRD Duhallow survey asked young people about how they view their communities and our country – now and in the medium term.

As the following graph illustrates, the vast majority (over 75%) of young people either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ that people have a greater appreciation of the natural environment. Most also believe that the slower pace of life, induced by COVID-19, is a good thing. They are three times more likely to agree than to disagree with the statement (below) that they are getting to know other family members better.

Fig. 5.20: Perceptions of lifestyle changes

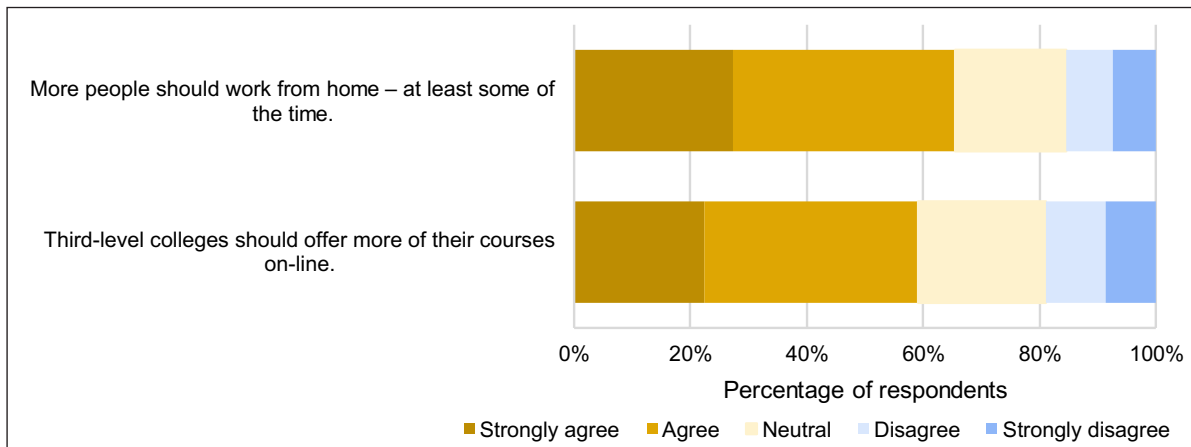


Notwithstanding the challenges associated with remote / distance learning and home-working, the survey findings indicate majority support for these ways of learning and working. As noted earlier, the reliance on on-line learning, particularly at second level, can deprive students of access to important social outlets and supports. Therefore, any expansion of on-line learning platforms needs to be gradual, equitable (particularly in respect of access to ICT) and accompanied by investment in outreach youth support services, notably preventive measures.



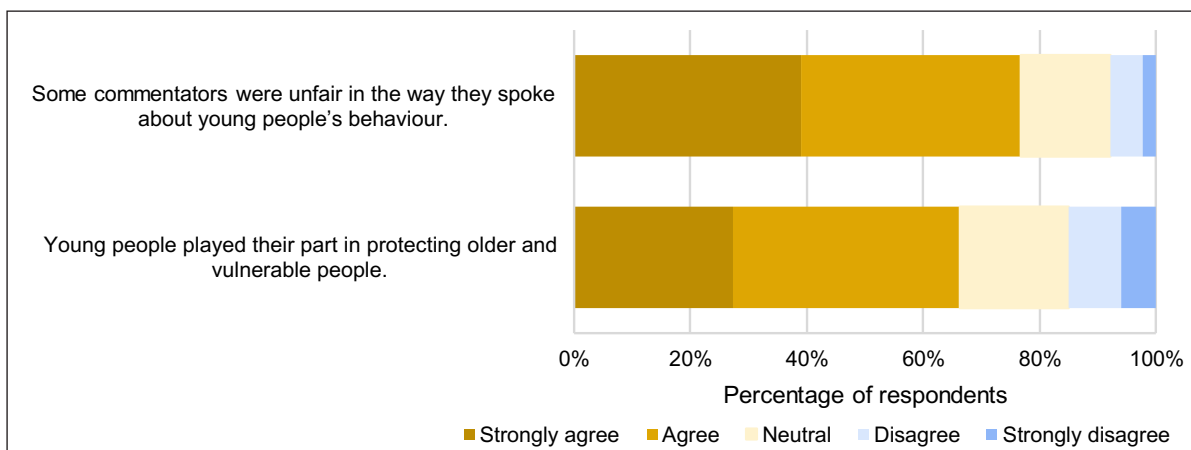
IRD Duhallow has a strong track record of teaching young people about the environment. Through programmes such as the EIP and LIFE we have supported a number of extremely successful young scientist projects which have won awards at National Level. 75% of young people say that they appreciate nature and the environment more than they did prior to COVID-19.

Fig. 5.21: Perceptions of work and study changes



As noted at the start of this report, the nature of the COVID-19 virus is such that it has had a more immediate, visible and enumerable effect on older people than on any other cohort in society. Therefore, public bodies have been obliged to focus their energies and resources on supporting and protecting older people. Decision-makers and their advisors, including those in public health bodies, have openly discussed how best to strike a balance between economic interests and the need to protect vulnerable population cohorts from the virus. Thus, public discourse has been dominated by stakeholders other than young people. Indeed, when young people have featured in public debate, the main focus has been on the Leaving Certificate, to a greater extent than other issues. Moreover, in the first half of 2020 and when third-level colleges re-opened in September, young people were the subject of derisory remarks and coverage in relation to shortcomings in respect of compliance with social distancing. While some criticism of certain incidents was warranted, generalisations were inaccurate and unhelpful, and, as the following graph illustrates, most young people believe that their generation has played a positive part in protecting vulnerable members of society, and that they have been the subject of some unfair commentary.

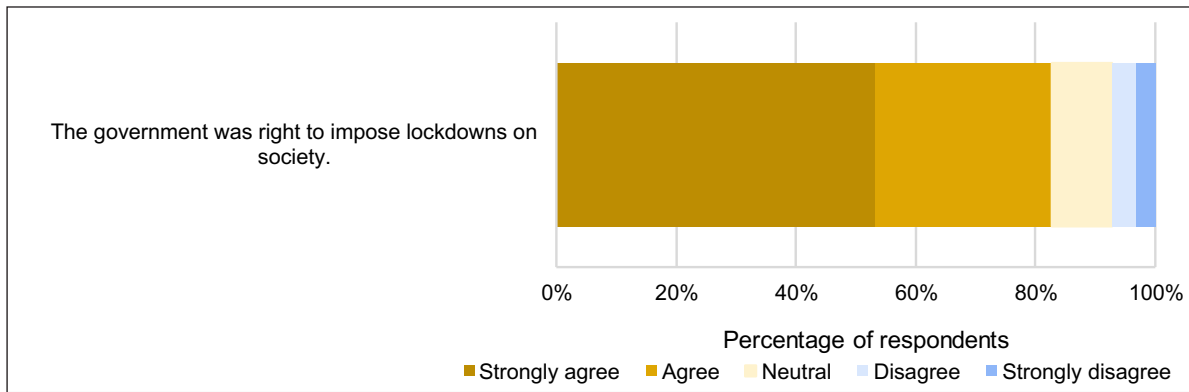
Fig. 5.22: Perceptions of youth responses to the pandemic



Exactly half of those who own a smartphone use the COVID-tracker application.

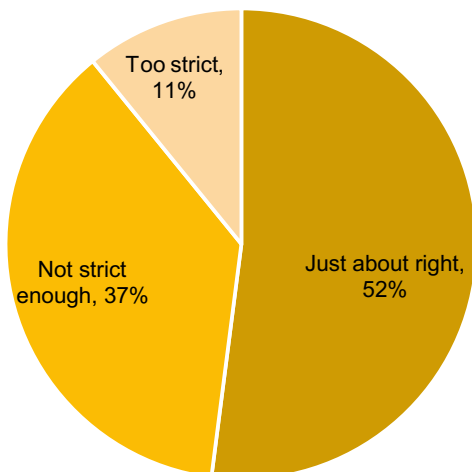
As is the case in other studies already referenced in this report (ILO, 2020), there is strong support, among young people, for societal restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In Duhallow and the Lee Valley, over eighty percent agree with the government's decision to introduce Level 5 restrictions at the end of 2020.

Fig. 5.23: Extent to which young people agree with the current Level 5 restrictions



When asked specifically about the current (January 2021) restrictions, just over half said they were correct, while a substantial minority stated that they would prefer stricter measures.

Fig. 5.24: Perceptions of current Level 5 restrictions



5.7 Implications of the survey findings

Observations made by Nearchou et al. (2020), in respect of young people who have been affected by COVID-19, underscore the importance of this particular research. Indeed, the general thrust of the IRD Duhallow findings, presented in this chapter, respond to, and chime with Nearchou et al.’s study. Their research concluded,

“International health organisations have warned governments to be prepared to tackle the mental health complications associated with COVID-19. While there is increasing empirical evidence indicating the mental health complications of COVID-19 in adults, our knowledge of the impact of the pandemic on youth mental health remains significantly restricted” (2020: 15).

IRD Duhallow hopes that the findings presented here have, to some extent, addressed the deficits in terms of research and public concern for the well-being of young people. The findings indicate that while young people have sought to be responsible and stoic in the face of the pandemic and its associated threats and uncertainties, they have had to face complex challenges in an environment that has been characterised by a decline in formal and informal supports. Thus, many have experienced setbacks, and others have had their development and progression trajectories altered, punctured, truncated or blocked. While authorities are understandably focusing on those most immediately vulnerable to the physical effects of COVID-19, some of the findings presented here resonate with studies from elsewhere, as stated by Margolius et al.: *“Taken together, these findings suggest that students are experiencing a collective trauma, and that they and their families would benefit from immediate and ongoing support for basic needs, physical and mental health, and learning opportunities. Without that support, this moment in time is likely to have lasting negative effects for this cohort of high school students”* (2020: 1).

The findings presented here note the significance of parents, teachers, community leaders and other personnel in supporting and enabling young people. It is, therefore, important to ensure that they have the appropriate tools and backup to enable them to address current issues and to anticipate and respond to legacy and residual challenges. In this respect the IRD Duhallow findings reflect those that emerged from a national study in Portugal, which observed, *“there is an urgent need to address the needs reported by AYA²³ (e.g. increased training of teachers and students for*

²³ AYA: adolescents and young people.

online learning; a load of homework adapted to the new context; health professionals supporting the establishment of healthy routines) that were raised by the pandemic situation, and to establish a routine that can foster positive effects and mitigate negative ones” (Branquinho et al., 2020: 11).

The IRD Duhallow survey findings point, above all, for the need for greater mental health and well-being supports for young people. The pandemic has provoked several forms of disconnect – between young people themselves (their peers) and between them and adults who are generally ‘there for them’ and active in supporting their progression, development and

wellbeing. It is evident that ‘significant adults’ (parents, teachers, community leaders and coaches) will require upskilling and systemic supports, so that they can effectively and constructively enable, nurture, mentor and counsel young people. The data presented here also highlight the need for investment in physical infrastructure, particularly rural broadband and further outdoor recreational amenities. While this survey is based on a sample of young people who have ICT access (the survey was available online), it highlights, nevertheless, the existence of social and economic inequalities, thus underscoring the importance of equality proofing the measures and supports that need to be put in place.

6. Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile

6.1. Building on the partnership approach and evidence base

This report, on behalf of IRD Duhallow's Youth and Education Working Group reflects and gives effect to LEADER principles and approaches, including the promotion of area-based development, stakeholder engagement and bottom-up engagement. The extensive survey findings presented here represent an articulation of young people's perspectives in respect of several aspects of rural living. Over 640 young people (aged 16 to 35) responded to the bespoke survey questionnaires, making this one of the largest and most representative samples in any sub-national study undertaken in Ireland. The surveys were specifically devised with regard to national policy objectives and seminal studies on child and youth development including the ESRI's Growing Up in Ireland research. While many of the issues covered, in this structured engagement with young people, are universal, the research also focuses on local experiences – in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. Thus, the findings presented here are relevant to statutory bodies with regional and national briefs, NGOs and local organisations, including community and voluntary groups.

The data collection would not have been possible without the support and engagement of the second-level schools in Duhallow and the Lee Valley, and schools will be integral to the implementation of the recommendations arising from this research. Since its inception, IRD Duhallow has had a close relationship with local schools – primary and post-primary. Indeed, one of IRD Duhallow's first sub-committees was 'Schools and Education'; this was established in 1990, and it subsequently evolved, over time, into the current Youth and Education Working Group. The Working Group brings together young people, educators, community leaders, service providers and statutory representatives – in a partnership format. This structure, which harnesses the diverse expertise of its constituent stakeholders embodies strong knowledge capital, and the survey results presented here serve to enhance and strengthen that knowledge. The Working Group is part of IRD Duhallow's governance structure, and it feeds directly into decision-making at the level of the Board of Directors. Moreover, the working group members take the local lessons, insights and experiences to wider platforms – thus enabling a bottom-up shaping of regional and higher tier responses to meeting the

needs, and supporting the potential, of young people in Duhallow and the Lee Valley.

The survey findings, presented in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are foregrounded in a detailed demographic and socio-economic analysis – see Chapter 2, as recommended in the value for money audit undertaken by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2014b). This profile maps the youth population in Duhallow and the Lee Valley and it describes the context in which they live, work, socialise and interact in respect of several variables including education, employment, health, wellbeing, connectivity and accommodation. The data and spatial analysis presented in Chapter 2 provide a fine-grained local-level evidence-base, which stakeholders can utilise to make informed decisions and ensure resources are directed towards the areas of greatest need. When the original research proposal was devised (in 2018), it was anticipated that the demographic and socio-economic statistics would be complemented with data from agencies – in a manner similar to that presented in the county-level profiles collated by the Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs). To this end, IRD Duhallow convened an inter-agency meeting, in May 2019, at which the (then outline) demographic profile and preliminary survey results were presented. Agency representatives noted the merits of garnering specific data for Duhallow and the Lee Valley, and while this process stimulated in-house conversations in agencies, it has not delivered local-level agency data in the manner that had been envisaged. Agencies will need top-down support and resourcing in enabling them to collect and publish data for smaller-scale units than many currently do. It is essential that there are tangible moves in this direction, as Duhallow and the Lee Valley have an area and population that are comparable with several smaller counties, and these areas are currently being lost in the current reporting systems.

Following the initial collation of the survey data, the researchers prepared summary documents (two pages each) of the main survey findings, so that these could be circulated to stakeholders, thereby ensuring that the evidence to support informed decision-making was being made available in advance of the publication of this document. This is indicative of IRD Duhallow's commitment to evidence-based decision-making and to the sharing of data in support of the efforts of statutory bodies, NGOs and community groups in devising and

promoting projects that benefit Duhallow and the Lee Valley.



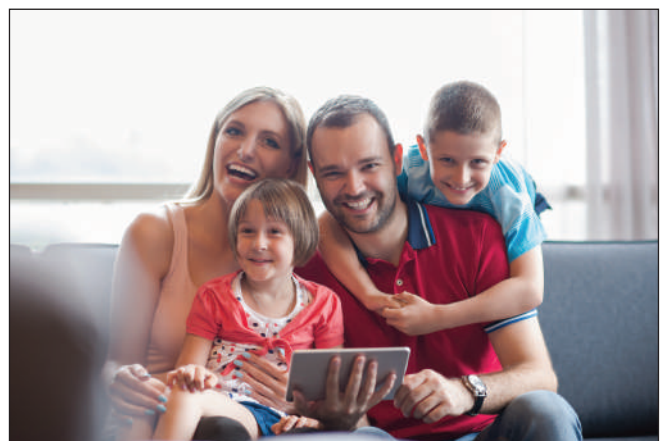
6.2 Giving effect to the findings

The demographic and socio-economic profile, presented in Chapter 2, identifies strengths, challenges and opportunities in respect of youth needs in Duhallow and the Lee Valley. It notes that the area has a significant youth population; persons aged 0 to 35 represent in excess of forty percent of the local population. While the area's total population is growing, this growth is uneven, and there are some communities – mainly in Western Duhallow - that continue to experience structural weaknesses. The main areas of overall growth – characterised by high numbers of young families and strong demographic vitality - are the Lee Valley and South Eastern Duhallow.

It is evident from the maps, presented in Annex 1, that there is a positive association between proximity to Cork City and Mallow and rural demographic health. These parts of the IRD Duhallow catchment area benefit from relatively good access to education and employment opportunities in Cork. Communities in South Eastern Duhallow have also experienced a boost to their housing supply over the past twenty years, thereby increasing the options for young people to live locally, even if they are studying and / or working in Cork City and its environs. Despite traffic congestion challenges, Macroom continues to be a strong service centre. It has frequent bus connections to Cork and Killarney, some of which also serve villages in the Lee Valley. The town's economic and service functions and its connectivity are drivers of development and of opportunities for young people, and it is important to ensure that current levels of service provision are retained and enhanced. Indeed, there is scope to

improve the bus station and to increase the range and coverage of services provided by statutory bodies. Thus, as the town prepares for its long-awaited by-pass, it is essential to ensure that while traffic will bypass it, services will not, but will be retained and expanded.

CLLD (community-led local development) is a significant factor in the relatively strong performance of South Eastern Duhallow. Community and voluntary groups in Banteer, Bweeng and Donoughmore, among other communities, have, with IRD Duhallow's support, devised and implemented multi-annual strategic plans that have brought about significant improvements in community facilities and amenities. These enhance local citizens' quality of life, and they make rural communities attractive places in which to live and to rear a family. The survey results, presented in Chapters 3 and 4, identify issues that civil society leaders in many communities in SE Duhallow have also identified and anticipated. Moreover, these communities have purposefully engaged young people and families in project planning and development, and have responded to their needs in respect of sporting, recreational, childcare, educational and infrastructural needs. The strategic, community-led local development (CLLD) approach pursued in Banteer, Bweeng and Donoughmore offers a template for other communities. It represents the LEADER approach in action, and this ought to be mainstreamed and resourced.



Seventy-seven percent of young adults surveyed said that there was a good standard of living in their community.

Kanturk and Newmarket are the main population centres in North-Eastern Duhallow, and as Chapter 2 describes, Kanturk has performed reasonably well over the past twenty years – stimulated and nurtured by



Residents of Drishane who took part in a computer skills programme funded through Digital Citizens.

support from IRD Duhallow and enabled by an increase in the housing supply and improved coordination among local civil society. These factors have combined to give Kanturk and the surrounding areas a renewed vibrancy, and enabled the communities to bounce back from the de-industrialisation they experienced over the 1980s and 1990s. However, the town and the nearby communities, including Castlemagner and Dromtarriffe have faced challenges since the advent of the current recession, and they merit support to ensure the local economy is enabled to develop and that newcomers are encouraged and empowered to be active local citizens. Quality of life issues merit particular attention, as Kanturk has the highest proportion of long-distance commuters (persons travelling >45minutes to work) of any settlement in the SW Region. Newmarket, Lismire and Tullylease are demographically weaker than Kanturk, and as emerges from the survey findings, they have been adversely affected by the changing transport and socialisation patterns in rural Ireland. Freemount emerges as being more vibrant than its neighbours, and while the community is losing people in their late teens and twenties, it has a reasonably strong population of children, and with due investment and support can attract people back to the community. Similar observations may be made in respect of Taur/Glash, which appears to be exhibiting a burgeoning vitality. Chapter 2 indicates, and the survey results confirm, the need for substantially increased investment in social

amenities and community infrastructure across North-Eastern Duhallow.

Millstreet exhibits some distinctive features, including a high level of ethnic diversity, which, if properly harnessed, can stimulate inter-cultural innovation and creativity. Other communities in the Millstreet Rural District, notably Ballydaly, Cullen, Derrinagree and Knocknagree exhibit demographic weaknesses associated with youth out migration. These communities lack public transport connectivity, which, as evidenced by the survey findings, is an important consideration for young people. They also lack community-based childcare options, and they have recently lost retail / commercial and public service functions. Such losses make them less attractive to young people and families. The lack of a housing supply is also a significant contributory factor to their demographic weaknesses, and this needs to be redressed. These communities, along with Ballydesmond, Gneeveguilla, Knockclarig, Kiskeam and Tureencahill are in close proximity to Munster Joinery – an indigenous enterprise, which employs in excess of 1,000 people. As Munster Joinery’s workforce expanded, since the mid-1980s, the benefits accrued to Castleisland, initially, and to Killarney, more recently, as a significant proportion of the workforce resides in these two towns. Commuting from Killarney to Lacka Cross (c.30km one-way) is less sustainable than enabling

employees to live locally. Over the past fifteen years, there have been some housing developments in Rathmore and Millstreet that enable shorter-distance commuting to Munster Joinery and ALPS Electric (Duhallow's second-largest employer), but the form of these housing developments – predominantly three-bed semi-detached houses – contributes to them being perceived as transitory, rather than permanent. Thus, the analysis emerging from Chapter 2, which is substantiated by the survey findings, indicates a need for a CLLD approach to be brought to bear on spatial planning and housing provision.

The survey findings, presented in Chapters 3 and 4, demonstrate that most young people have a strong affinity with their local community. The vast majority, particularly among those aged 18 to 35, have a strong desire to live locally. However, not all are optimistic that they will be able to do so. Optimism levels are lower among teenagers than among young adults, but it is also positive that young people experience other places, cultures and environments, and, hopefully, have the option to return to Duhallow / the Lee Valley in their twenties / thirties. Among the attractions are proximity to family and friends, the natural environment, a healthy quality of life and the local culture. Future strategies need to safeguard and sustain these features of rural living. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened public awareness of attractive and accessible recreation and amenity spaces. It has also revealed that connected-working, from rural locations, will be part of the future configuration of many sectors, and this offers potential for places like Duhallow and the Lee Valley, which have strong local social capital and an attractive environment.

Among the impediments to young people living locally, however, are deficits in public service provision – especially transport, lack of supports for those with special needs and reduced opportunities for social interaction. The latter is among the main causes of Duhallow / Lee Valley being perceived as 'boring'. The survey results underscore the importance of investing in social infrastructure and community amenities, in addition to economic development. The findings from the survey among second-level students reveal that while most young people perceive their teachers and other adults as providers of support and guidance, many face challenges in respect of mental health and wellbeing, and the use of alcohol and illicit drugs gives

cause for concern. They survey findings indicate that sizeable numbers of young people are struggling to articulate the challenges they face, and many are lacking an outlet in which to discuss their needs and their queries about life and growing up. In this vacuum, they are turning to unreliable sources, including on-line, which can expose them to exploitation. Thus, there is a need for adults – in families and in formal and non-formal youth settings - to be more facilitative of communication and to ensure that young people have access to accurate, timely and reliable information.

The common questions in both surveys reveal that young people acknowledge the work of local civil society organisations, and of IRD Duhallow, in developing and providing amenities and facilities. They note that most communities have decent meeting places and that there are active community and voluntary groups locally. They also acknowledge the important role of community-based organisations, such as the GAA and other sporting bodies, in enabling them to meet with their peers, in addition to supporting them to develop their skills and to pursue particular interests and endeavours. LEADER has acted as a catalyst and enabler of many such projects, and community groups have been supported to provide and enhance community infrastructure. Given the need for continued investment on this front, including to expand the range and choice of recreational, sporting, social and creative options available locally, LEADER needs to continue to support such investments and to develop the capacity of promoters to nurture and sustain youth engagement in project development as well as in wider local decision-making.



With the support of LEADER Freemount Development Association have set up a Youth Space within the community hall allowing a safe space for young people to come together after school hours.

The specific survey (January 2021) in respect of young people's experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic reveal tremendous respect for the lives and wellbeing of those who are most vulnerable to the Corona Virus. Young people understand and accept the need for public health guidelines and restrictions on economic and social activities. However, as the survey reveals, these restrictions have had troubling impacts on their mental health and wellbeing. The scale and scope of these negative impacts has generally been under-represented or not fully appreciated in public discourse, and as society begins to discuss post-COVID trajectories, it is important to ensure that young people are actively involved in shaping those.

6.3 IRD Duhallow Investment in Youth Projects 1991 – 2020

Over thirty years, IRD Duhallow has directly invested over €5.3million in youth-related projects in Duhallow. This figure has been computed on the basis of reported project expenditure through LEADER and the various local development / social inclusion programmes over the past three decades. In addition to such direct and project-specific investments, IRD Duhallow has supported several youth projects and initiatives through the following:

- The expertise and time of its Youth and Education Working group, among other sub-committees / working groups;
- Staff time and inputs by way of animation, capacity building and project mentoring – for young people and with those who promoted projects involving young people;
- Administrative support / backup;
- Referrals to other funders / supports;
- One-to-one supports to individual young people (e.g. mentoring and advice); and
- Programmes that have youth participants, but which are open to people of all ages.

These intangible, yet significant, contributions to youth development, wellbeing and progression are difficult to quantify precisely. It should also be noted that due to the nature of IRD Duhallow's work on those fronts, and specifically the pursuit of the integrated approach, the scale of intervention cannot be accurately quantified. Moreover, the impacts they may have had for individual young people, their families and their communities tend to be under-reported.

The following tables deal, therefore, exclusively with the financial contributions to projects, through the main funding streams. Notwithstanding the methodological limitations on the computation of IRD Duhallow's investment in young people, the project-specific expenditure alone is indicative of a very significant longitudinal and extensive commitment. The following computations include 530 projects.

IRD Duhallow has provided funding for a range of project types, as the following table shows.

Table 6.1: IRD Duhallow investment in youth, by project type

Project Type	IRD Duhallow Investment	
	€	%
Infrastructure	3,363,704	63%
Enterprise Development	561,055	11%
Education and Training	509,195	10%
Clubs & Groups	239,834	4%
After-Schools Clubs	207,086	4%
Progression	170,128	3%
Wellbeing	116,800	2%
Capacity-Building	55,338	1%
Culture	54,592	1%
Information & Networking	38,293	1%
Camps	22,675	0%
Total	5,338,699	



Through SICAP the development officers in IRD Duhallow provide support to youth clubs such as Newmarket Foroige (Pictured here). This support can take many forms such as animation and capacity building as well as funding towards the purchase of capital items.

Investment in infrastructure has enabled young people to access an enhanced range of meeting, sporting, recreational and social spaces, amenities and activities. These investments have served to broaden the range of sporting and recreational opportunities available to young people, and they cater in particular for so-called ‘minority’ sports / interests, including cycling and boxing. IRD Duhallow’s investment in enterprises owned and / or promoted by young people has enabled many to work locally and to create jobs. Investments in education, training and progression-related projects have served to enable young people to generate economic opportunities and to refine their skillsets in order to access the labour market and to be active citizens in their communities. As the table also shows, IRD Duhallow has invested considerably in clubs, groups, cultural undertakings and camps²⁴ that provide vehicles to enable young people to express their creativity and to gain new skills.

As the following table shows, LEADER has provided the bulk of the funds invested by IRD Duhallow.

Table 6.2: Funding streams from which investments were sourced

Programme Stream	IRD Duhallow Investment	
	€	%
LEADER	4,804,303	90%
LD / SI	534,397	10%
Total	5,338,699	

LD / SI = Local Development / Social Inclusion

Community and voluntary organisations were responsible for the promotion of over two thirds of the projects relating to young people. In addition to providing the finance to enable such projects to happen, IRD Duhallow invested in animating the project promoters and in building their capacity to initiate and manage projects. In many cases, IRD Duhallow board and staff members provided ‘boots on the ground’ - assisting in the running of projects.

Table 6.3: Funding streams from which investments were sourced

Type of Promoter	IRD Duhallow Investment	
	€	%
Community	3,675,719	69%
IRD Duhallow	1,013,242	19%
Schools	348,408	7%
Private	301,330	6%
Total	5,338,699	

IRD Duhallow has acted as the promoter for several projects. The organisation has done so particularly in order to promote innovation and to provide demonstration projects that other promoters could then adapt for local / community circumstances. This is most evident in respect of projects dealing with youth mental health and wellbeing. IRD Duhallow has also been as the promoter for several projects that enable young people, schools, families, communities and service providers to access information and to network with one another. IRD Duhallow has provided considerable resources to the local second-level schools. Initially, these resources focused on enabling the schools to establish and run homework support and after-school clubs, but, over the past ten years, they have expanded to ensure school-based supports in a wide range of areas including overcoming challenges associated with dyslexia and dyspraxia, bereavement / loss and addictions. Indeed, these interventions are already responding to many of the issues identified in Chapter 3 of this report. Thus, relationships are in place, such that further investments to enable schools and communities to further support young people’s wellbeing stand to be impactful.

In assessing these figures, it should also be noted that, additionally, several hundred young people have benefited, both directly and indirectly, from IRD Duhallow investments in initiatives such as those to support farming households’ profitability. Young people have also benefited from IRD Duhallow’s support to their parents/guardians in respect of accessing the workforce.

In terms of geography, IRD Duhallow has achieved a good degree of balance in terms of the distribution of its project investments, as the following table shows.

²⁴ Some of the camps supported by IRD Duhallow are included in the categories labelled ‘clubs and groups’ and ‘culture’, as the promoters ran those camps as part of an on-going set of interventions. The label ‘camps’ refers specifically to bespoke, once-off, pilot and / or specialist projects – usually run during summer holidays.

Table 6.4: Distribution of investment in youth-related projects by community forum area

Location	IRD Duhallow Investment	
	€	%
Duhallow-wide	1,088,537	20%
NE Duhallow	1,515,125	28%
Western Duhallow	1,393,614	26%
SE Duhallow	1,341,423	25%
Total	5,338,699	

6.4 Community vibrancy and resilience

The promotion of community vibrancy and resilience is integral to the work of IRD Duhallow. The organisation does so primarily through its partnership mode of governance that is based on the principles and practices of community-led local development (CLLD). It also promotes vibrancy and resilience through animating, delivering and enabling project development, and by supporting project promoters to develop their capacities – fostering knowledge and cultural capital. As IRD Duhallow’s strategic framework outlines, it strives for integration and mutually re-enforcing actions in respect of human, ecological, cultural and knowledge capitals. The company’s strategies in these regards are underpinned by endogenous knowledge, and they are also informed by technical know-how and action research. This report presents one important set of research outputs that enables young people to influence the review and direction of IRD Duhallow’s actions. Furthermore, the findings highlight issues that IRD Duhallow, independently and in conjunction with other agencies, can address over the coming years.

Having identified the issues that could be covered within the scope of this research, IRD Duhallow stratified those, by age cohort – for teenagers and young adults respectively, so as to ensure a bespoke approach. At the same time, there were commonalities across both research strands, and as the following table (overleaf) shows, there is a high level of convergence in the perceptions, among both cohorts, in respect of issues that IRD Duhallow and its strategic partners can address over the coming years.

The survey findings demonstrate that the vast majority of both sets of respondents believe that local people are good to support local businesses, and that people in Duhallow and the Lee Valley have a good standard of

living. These perceptions are indicative of important economic assets, the consolidation of which ought to be factored into future plans. Across both cohorts, there are very similar perceptions of local service provision. Levels of satisfaction are lower in respect of public services than they are in respect of community-based and community-run services. The relatively high levels of satisfaction with the latter are indicative of a strong capacity among local organisations and community leaders, many of whom, as demonstrated earlier, have promoted projects with investment from IRD Duhallow. The findings, including the inventory of community projects in Duhallow, point to the potential for further development of community-led projects, including in the social economy and community enterprise spaces.

The responses, from both cohorts, indicate a need to further promote feelings of safety and security – in line with the national policy framework – *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*. As the survey findings have shown, on-line activities can present challenges to young people’s sense of themselves, their wellbeing and their sense of security.

Young people – in both survey cohorts – perceive a need for the further development of opportunities to include and support people with intellectual disabilities and / or special needs. There are excellent service providers locally in Duhallow and the Lee Valley, and their knowledge and experience represent solid foundations on which to build further initiatives. Smart technologies – as evidenced through the smart village movement -



The ability programme supports young people with disabilities in the region to gain confidence and self-esteem.

can have an enabling role in this regard. Such technologies can also play a role in enabling local farmers to best protect natural resources. IRD Duhallow's experiences in delivering EU LIFE programmes stand the organisation in good stead in further amplifying and expanding ecological initiatives.

Table 6.5: Both survey cohorts' perceptions of place, on selected indicators²⁵

Statement	Cohort	% Agree	% Neutral	% Disagree
Local people are good to support local businesses.	Young Adults	73%	15%	12%
	Teenagers	83%	12%	5%
People in my community have a good standard of living.	Young Adults	77%	14%	9%
	Teenagers	83%	13%	4%
Public Transport Services are sufficient to meet local needs.	Young Adults	10%	12%	78%
	Teenagers	32%	22%	46%
We have good public services in this community.	Young Adults	23%	20%	57%
	Teenagers	37%	28%	35%
The local policing service is satisfactory.	Young Adults	30%	25%	46%
	Teenagers	38%	34%	28%
Schools and education services are excellent.	Young Adults	55%	24%	21%
	Teenagers	56%	23%	21%
We have good facilities for our young people.	Young Adults	21%	18%	61%
	Teenagers	33%	17%	50%
There are good facilities for meetings locally.	Young Adults	59%	15%	26%
	Teenagers	53%	23%	24%
We have good sports and recreation facilities.	Young Adults	60%	15%	25%
	Teenagers	74%	11%	15%
Crime is not a problem in this community.	Young Adults	38%	23%	39%
	Teenagers	51%	29%	20%
Anti-social behaviour is not really a problem.	Young Adults	42%	25%	33%
	Teenagers	49%	30%	21%
There are opportunities for inclusion and support for those with intellectual disabilities or special needs.	Young Adults	36%	31%	34%
	Teenagers	41%	37%	22%
Local farmers are true guardians of the countryside and farm in an environmentally-friendly manner.	Young Adults	54%	24%	22%
	Teenagers	60%	30%	10%

²⁵ Annex 3 presents a fuller breakdown of the following figures.

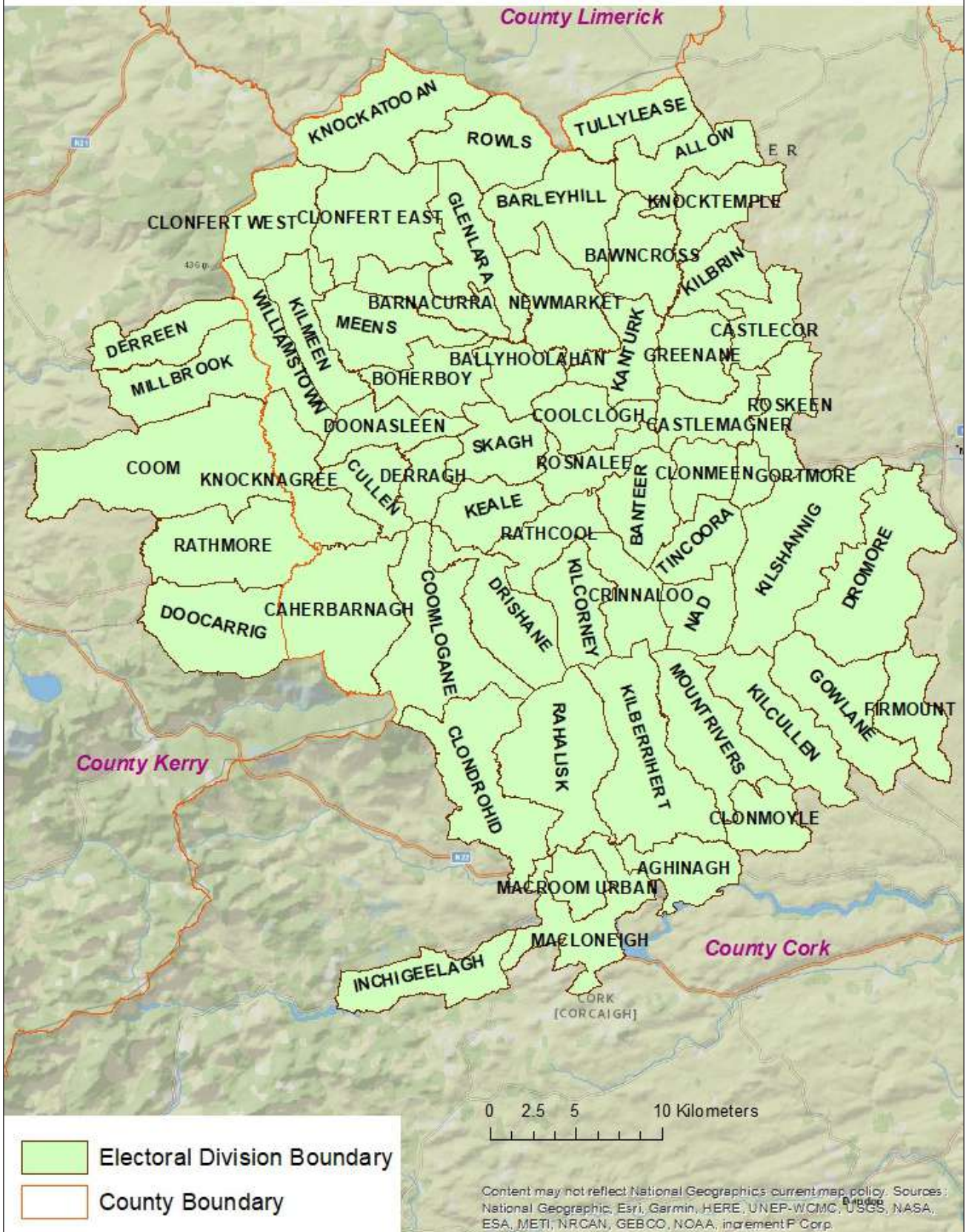
Appendices

Annex 1: Maps accompanying the demographic and socio-economic profile

1. Electoral Divisions (EDs) in Duhallow and the Lee Valley
2. Number of Persons Aged 0 to 4 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2016
3. Number of Persons Aged 5 to 12 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2016
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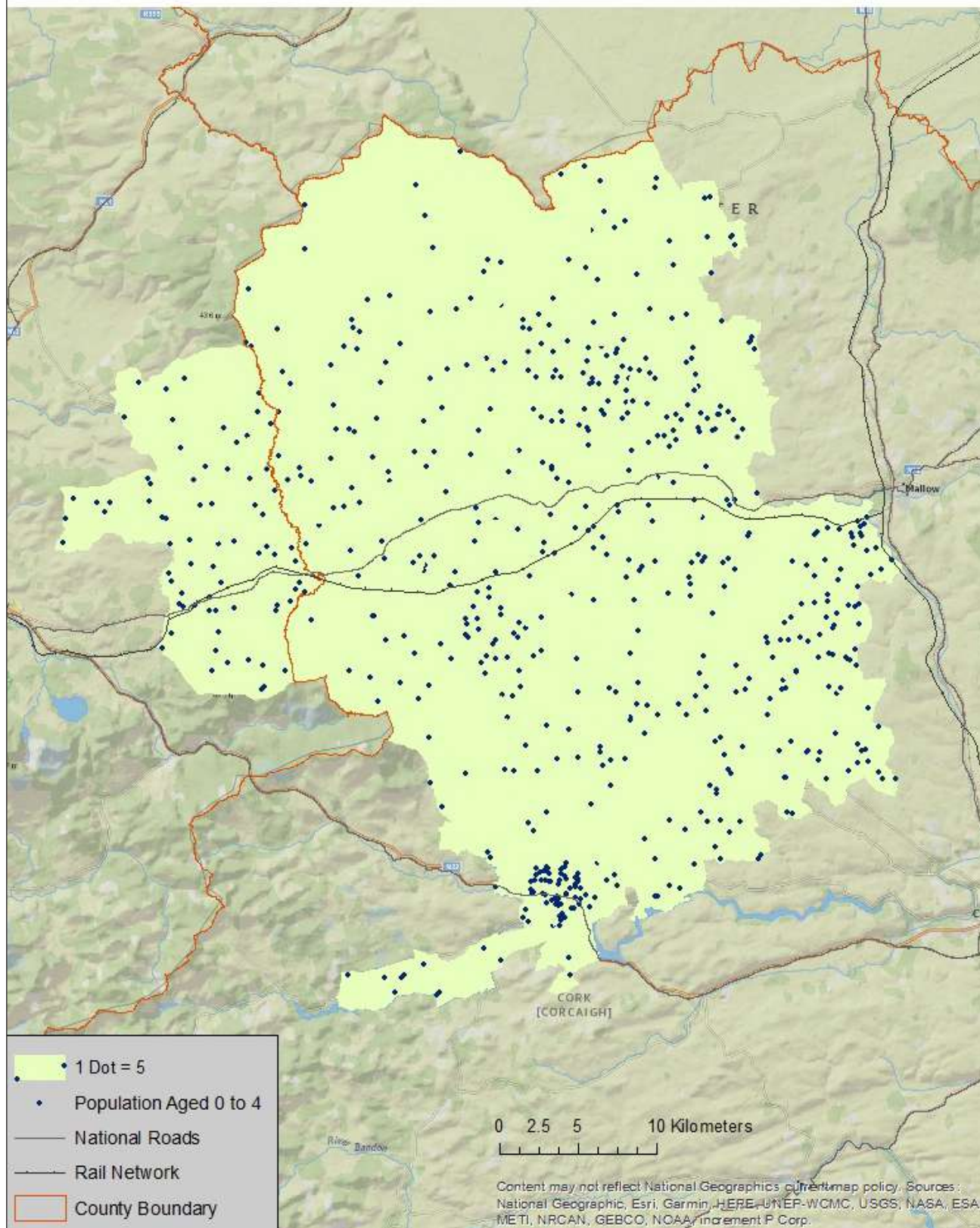
- at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016
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 54. Relative Affluence and Deprivation Score, as measured on the Haase Index, at ED (Electoral Division) Level in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2016

61 Electoral Divisions of Duhallow



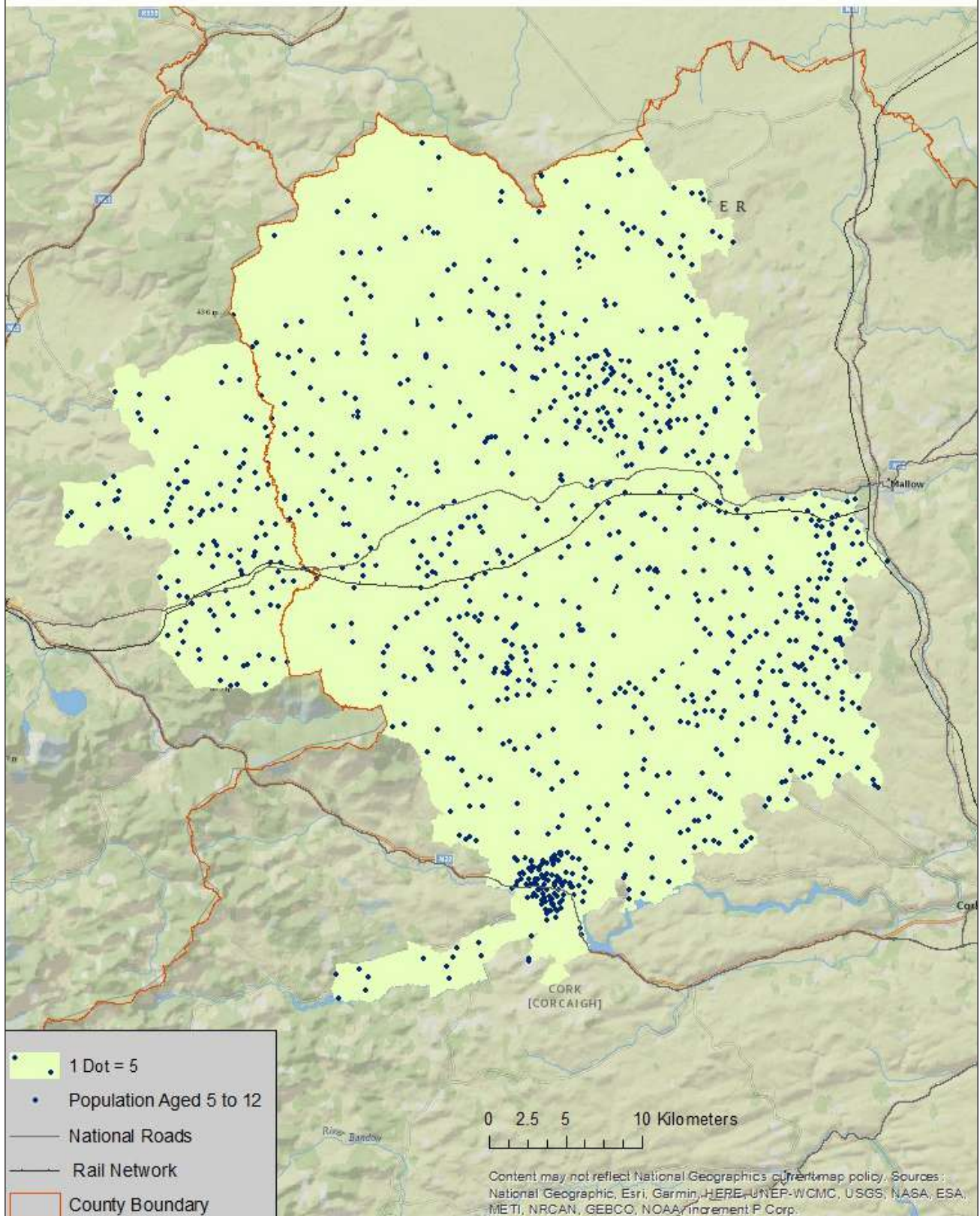
1. Electoral Divisions (EDs) in Duhallow and the Lee Valley

Total Number of Children (Aged 0 to 4 years) Living in Duhallow and Lee Valley, 2016



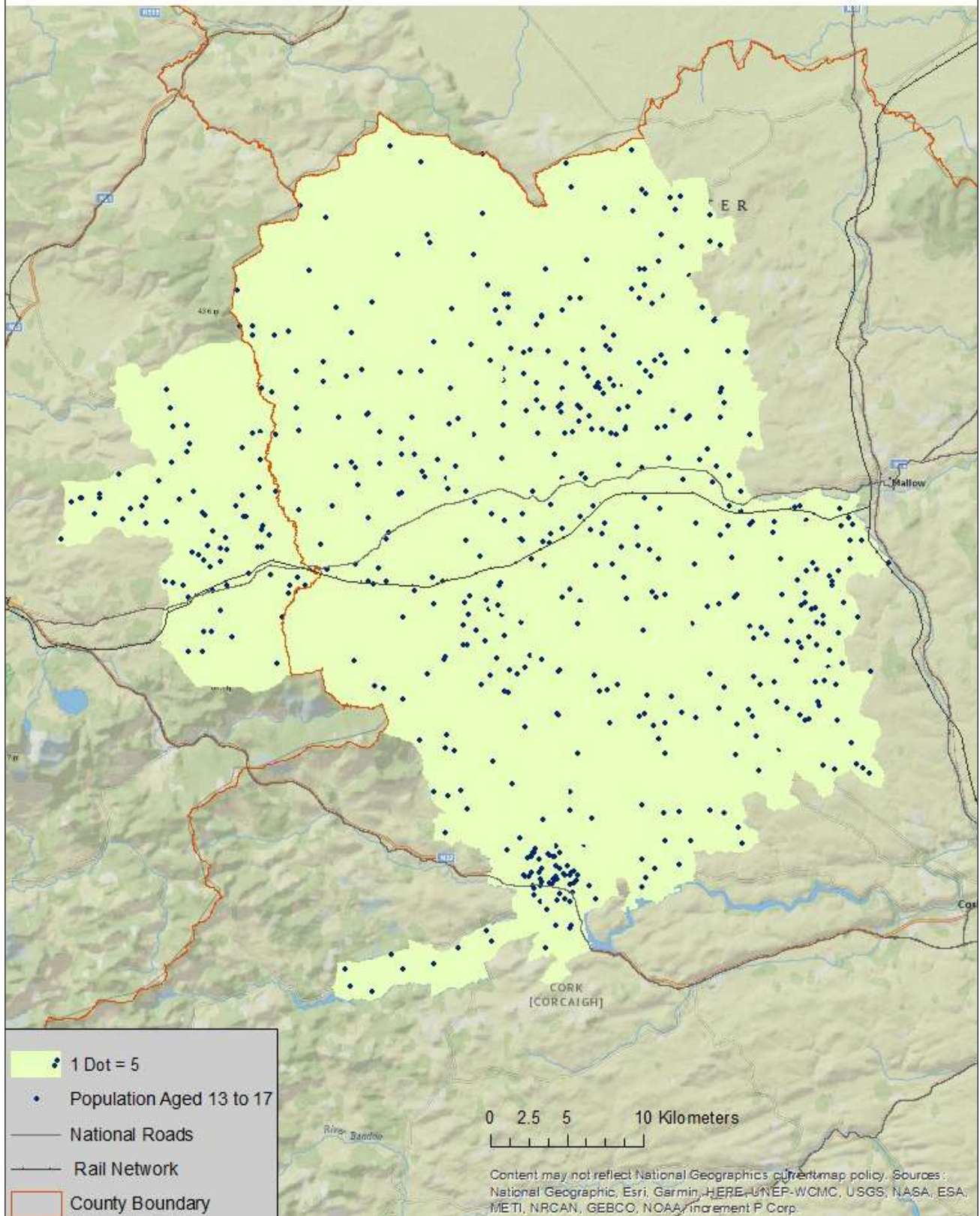
2. Number of Persons Aged 0 to 4 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2016

Total Number of Children (Aged 5 to 12 years) Living in Duhallow and Lee Valley, 2016



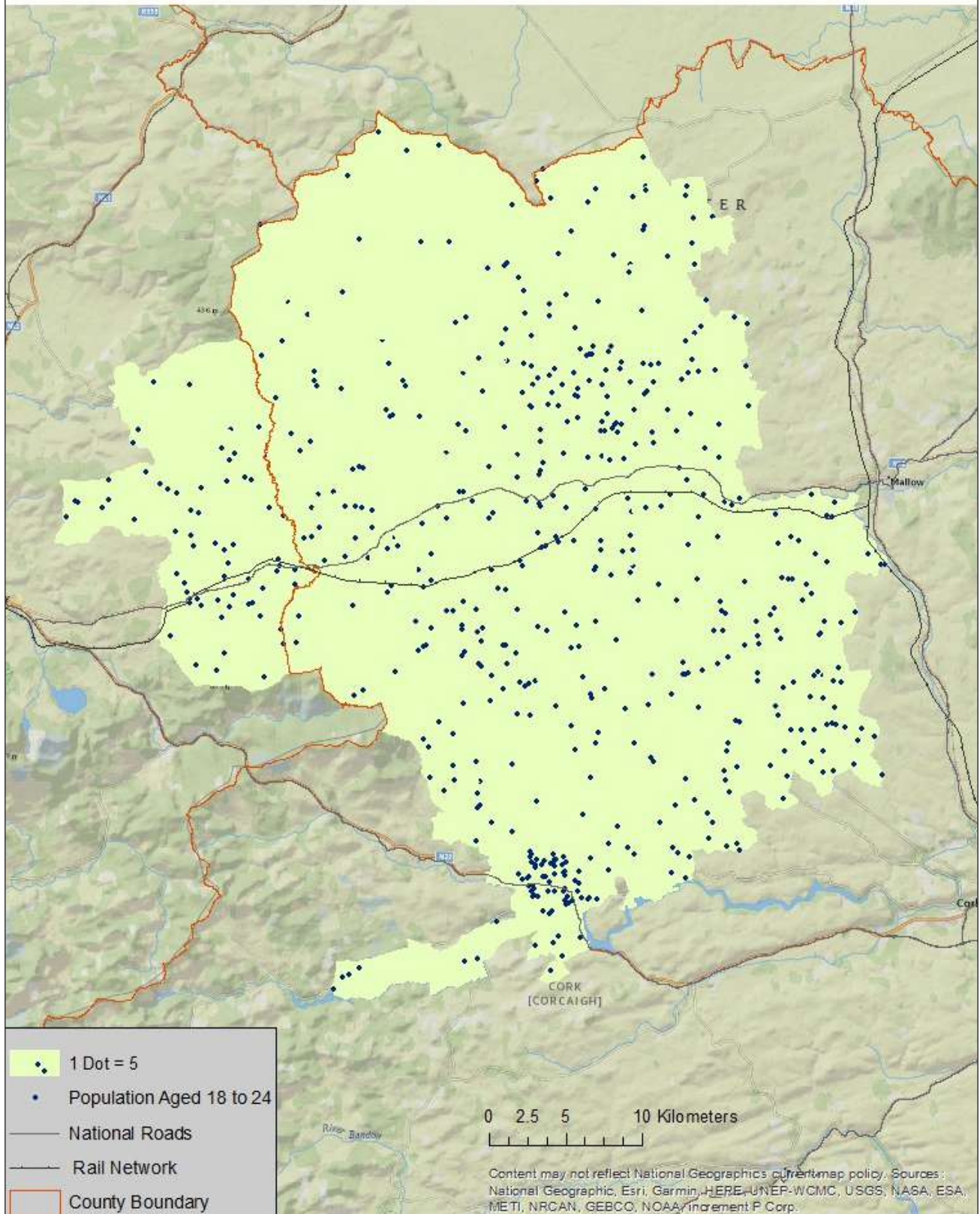
3. Number of Persons Aged 5 to 12 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2016

Total Number of Children (Aged 13 to 17 years) Living in Duhallow and Lee Valley, 2016



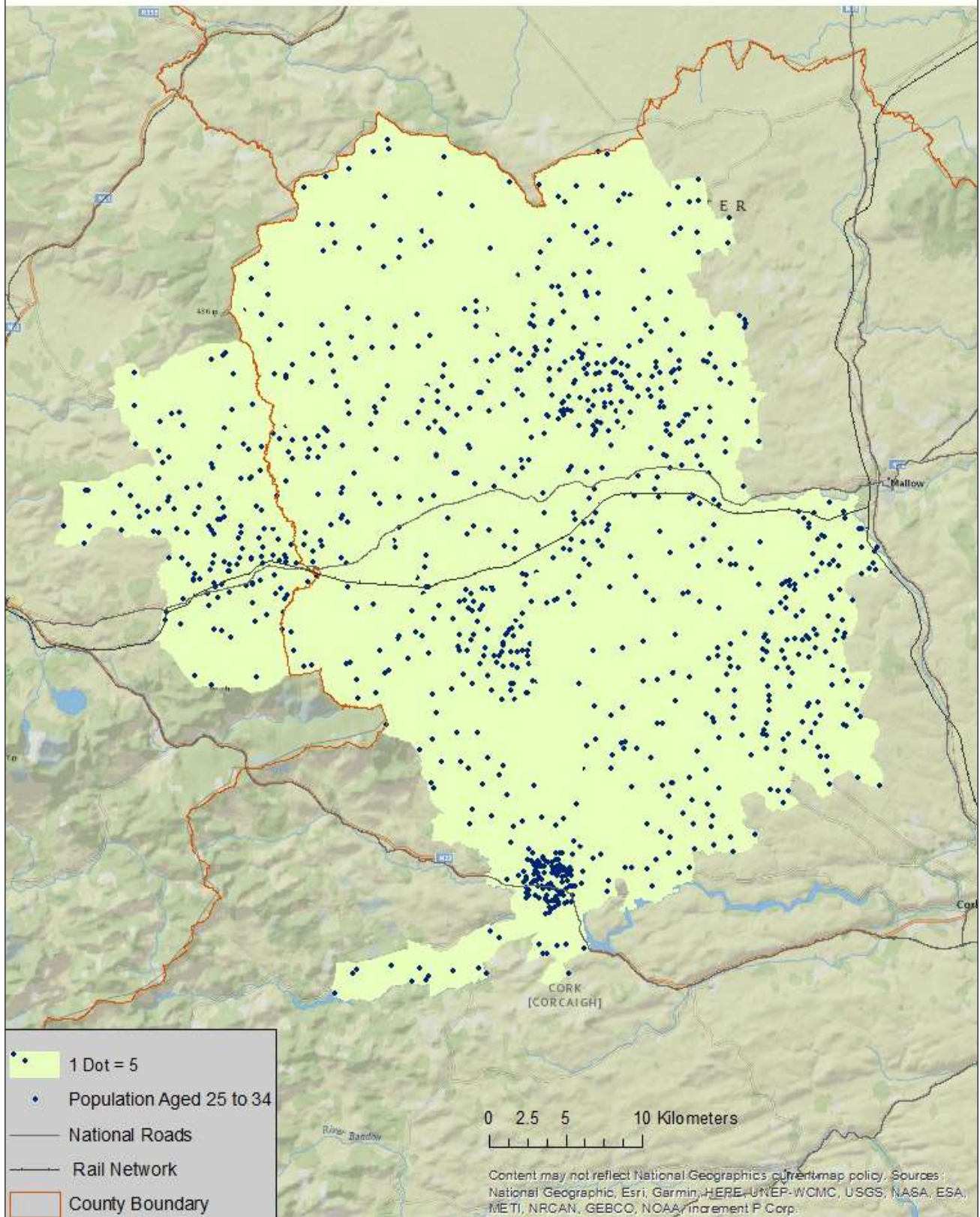
4. Number of Persons Aged 13 to 17 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2016

Total Number of Children (Aged 18 to 24 years) Living in Duhallow and Lee Valley, 2016



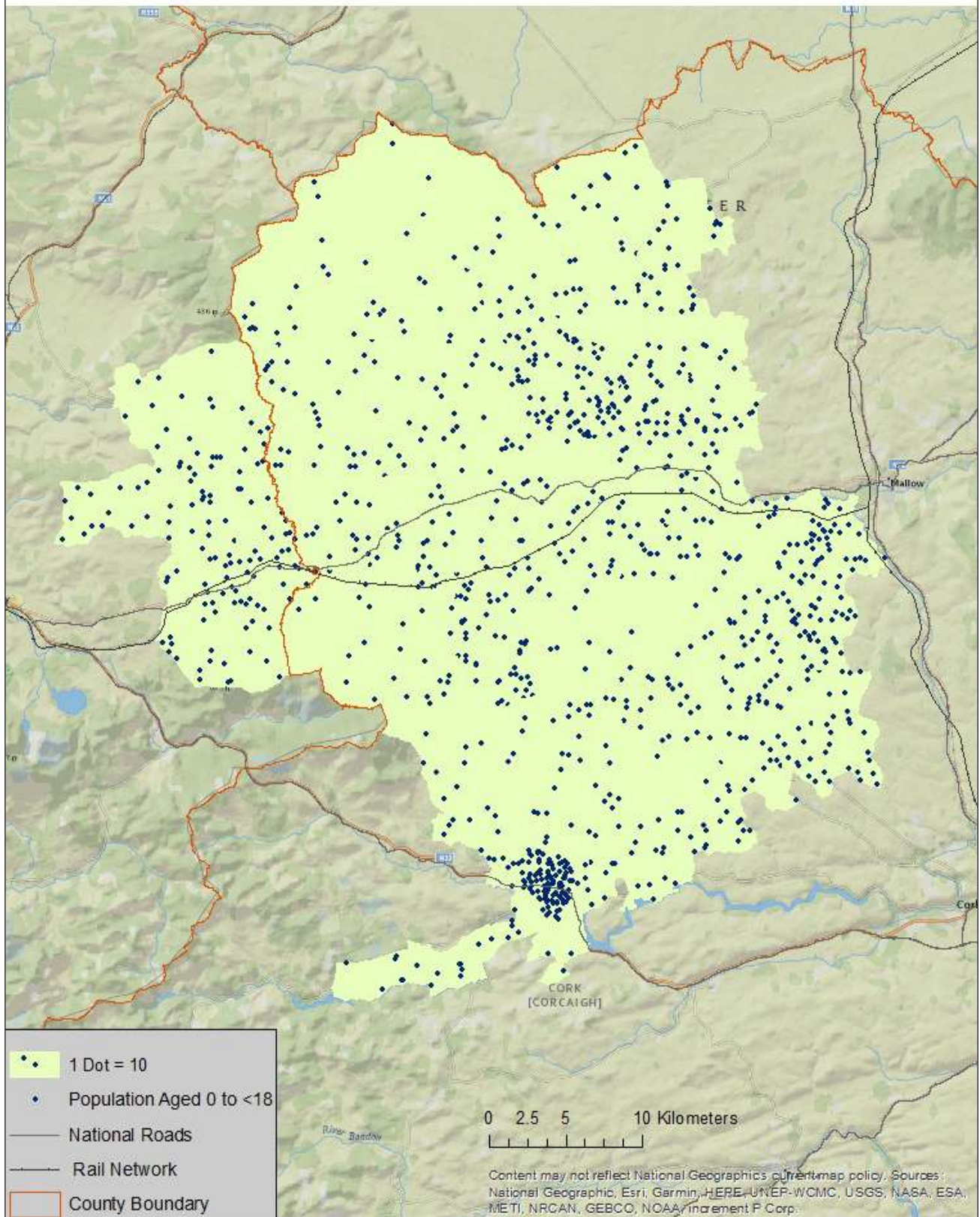
5. Number of Persons Aged 18 to 24 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2016

Total Number of Adults (Aged 25 to 34 years) Living in Duhallow and Lee Valley, 2016



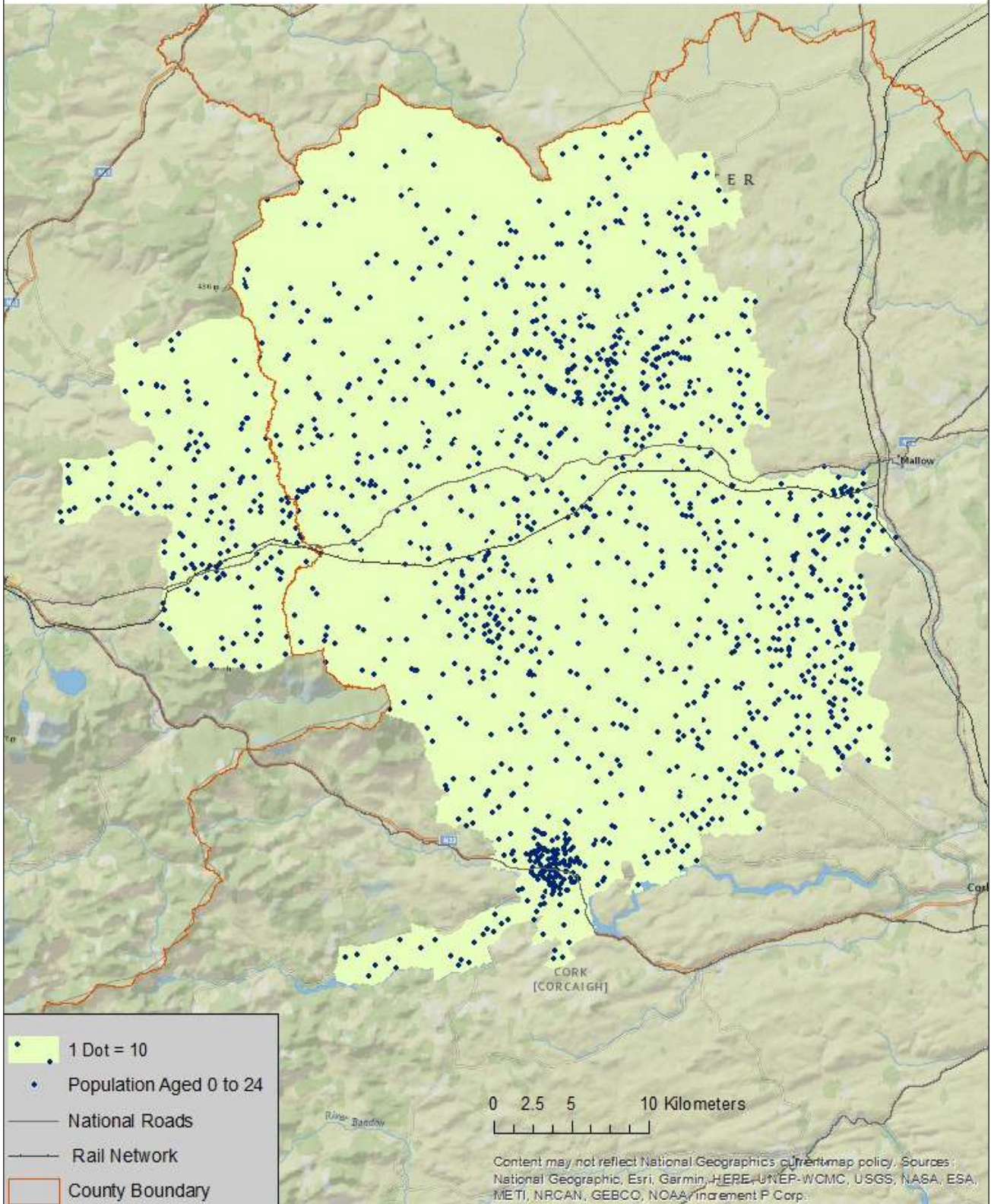
6. Number of Persons Aged 25 to 34 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2016

Total Number of Children (Aged 0 to 17 years) Living in Duhallow and Lee Valley, 2016



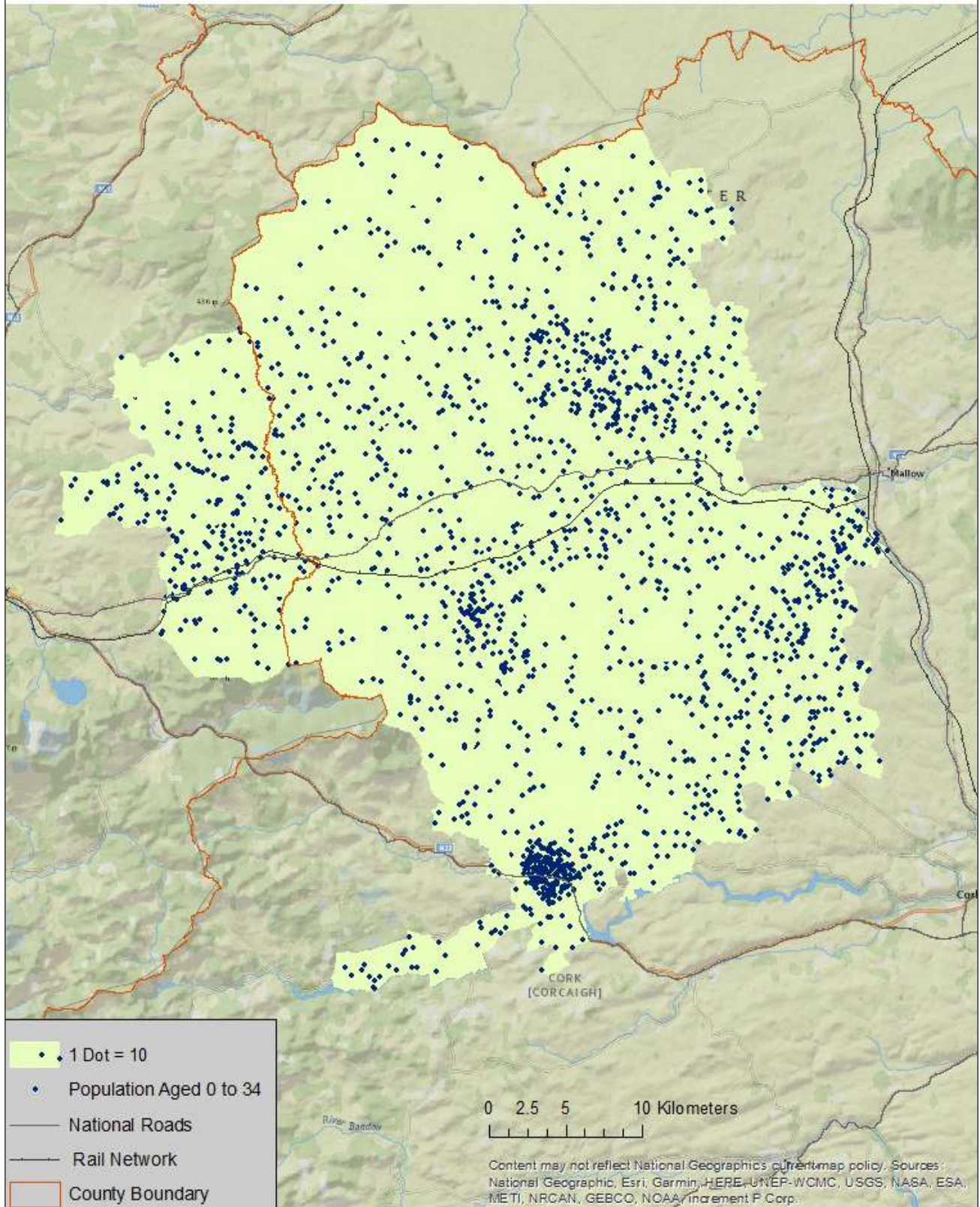
7. Number of Persons Aged 0 to 18 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2016

Total Number of Children and Young People (Aged 0 to 24 years) Living in Duhallow and Lee Valley, 2016



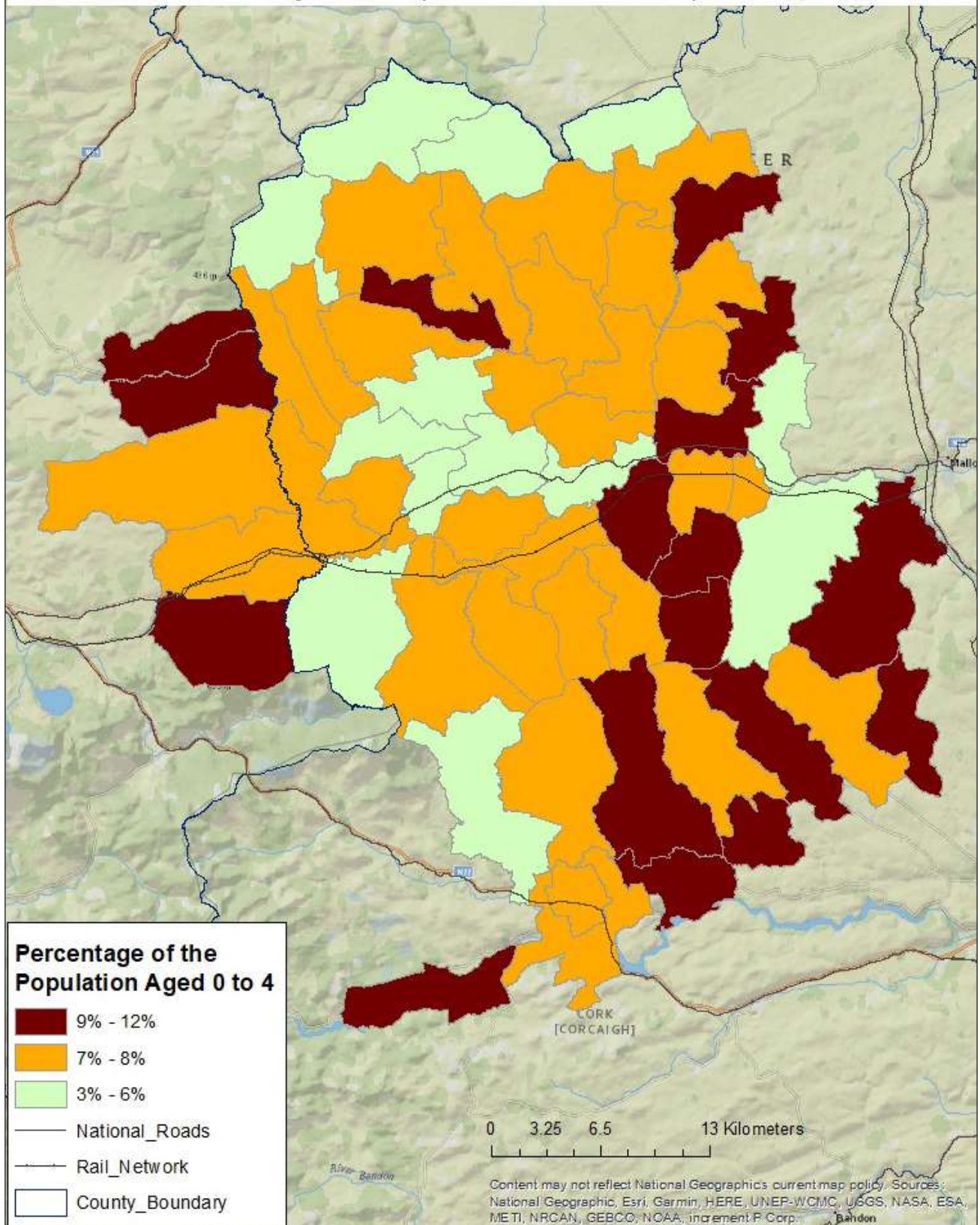
8. Number of Persons Aged 0 to 24 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2016

Total Number of Children, Young People and Adults (Aged 0 to 34 years) Living in Duhallow and Lee Valley, 2016



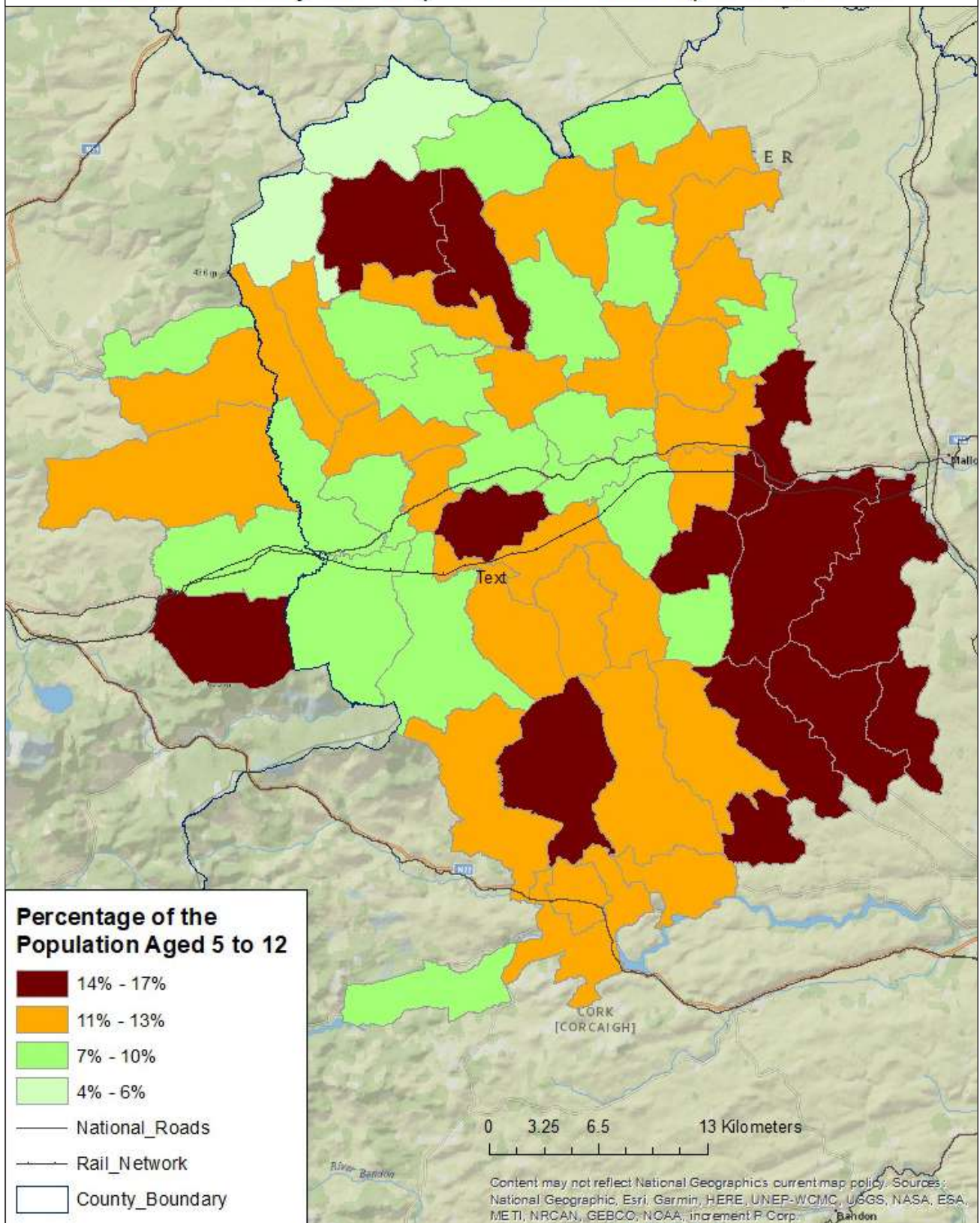
9. Number of Persons Aged 0 to 34 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2016

Percentage of the Population Aged 0 to 4 years in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



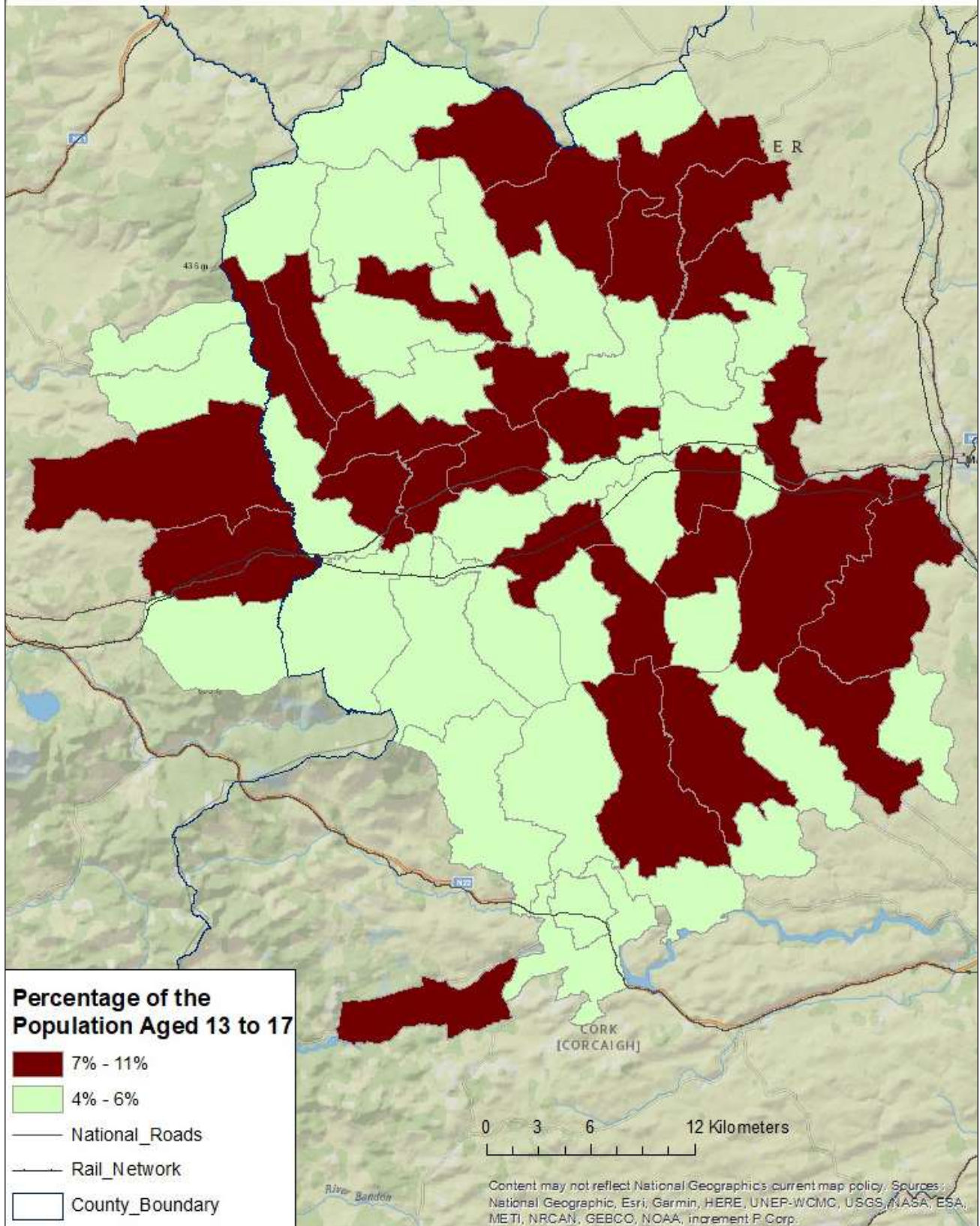
10. Percentage of the Population Aged 0 to 4 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of the Population Aged 5 to 12 years in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



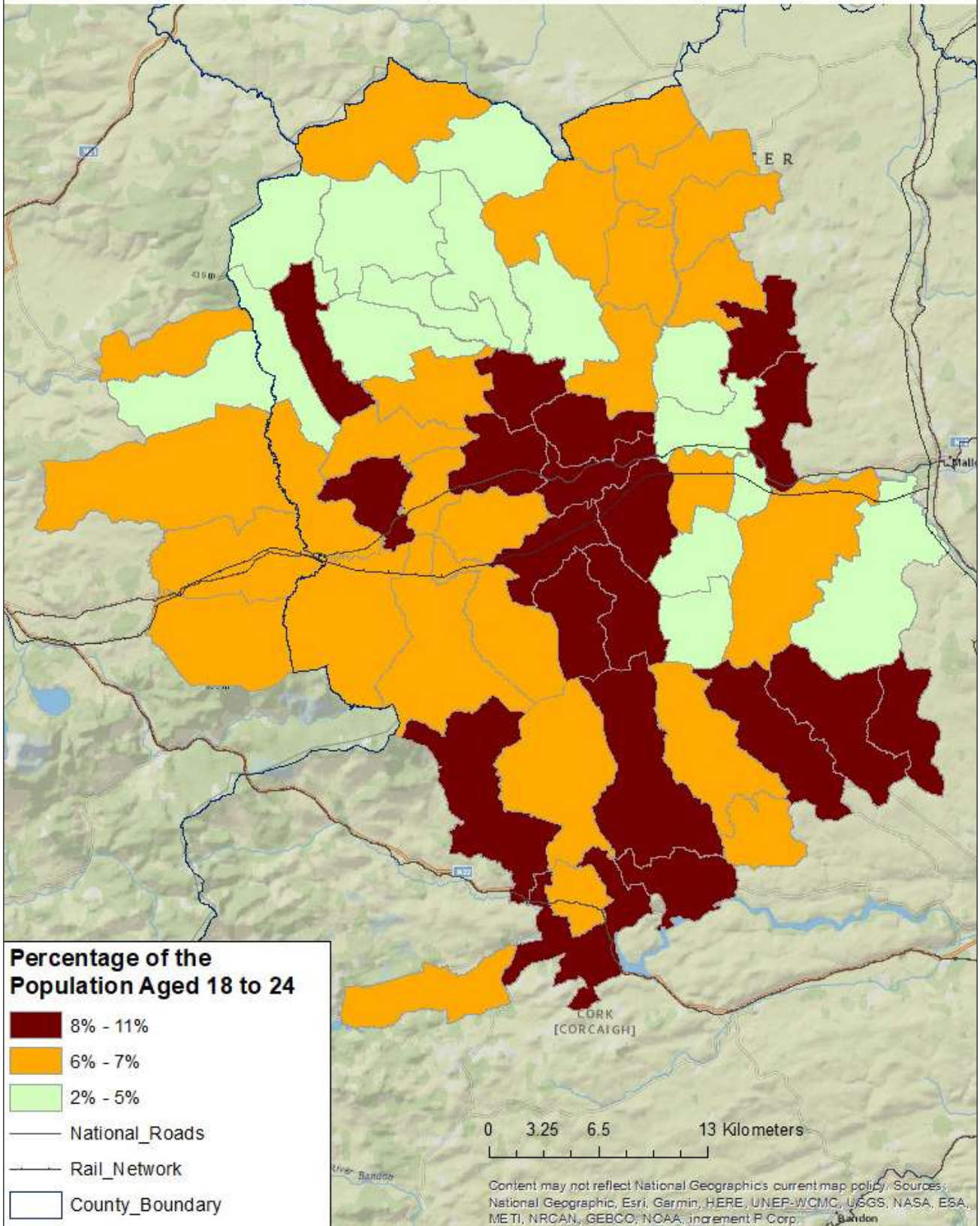
11. Percentage of the Population Aged 5 to 12 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of the Population Aged 13 to 17 years in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



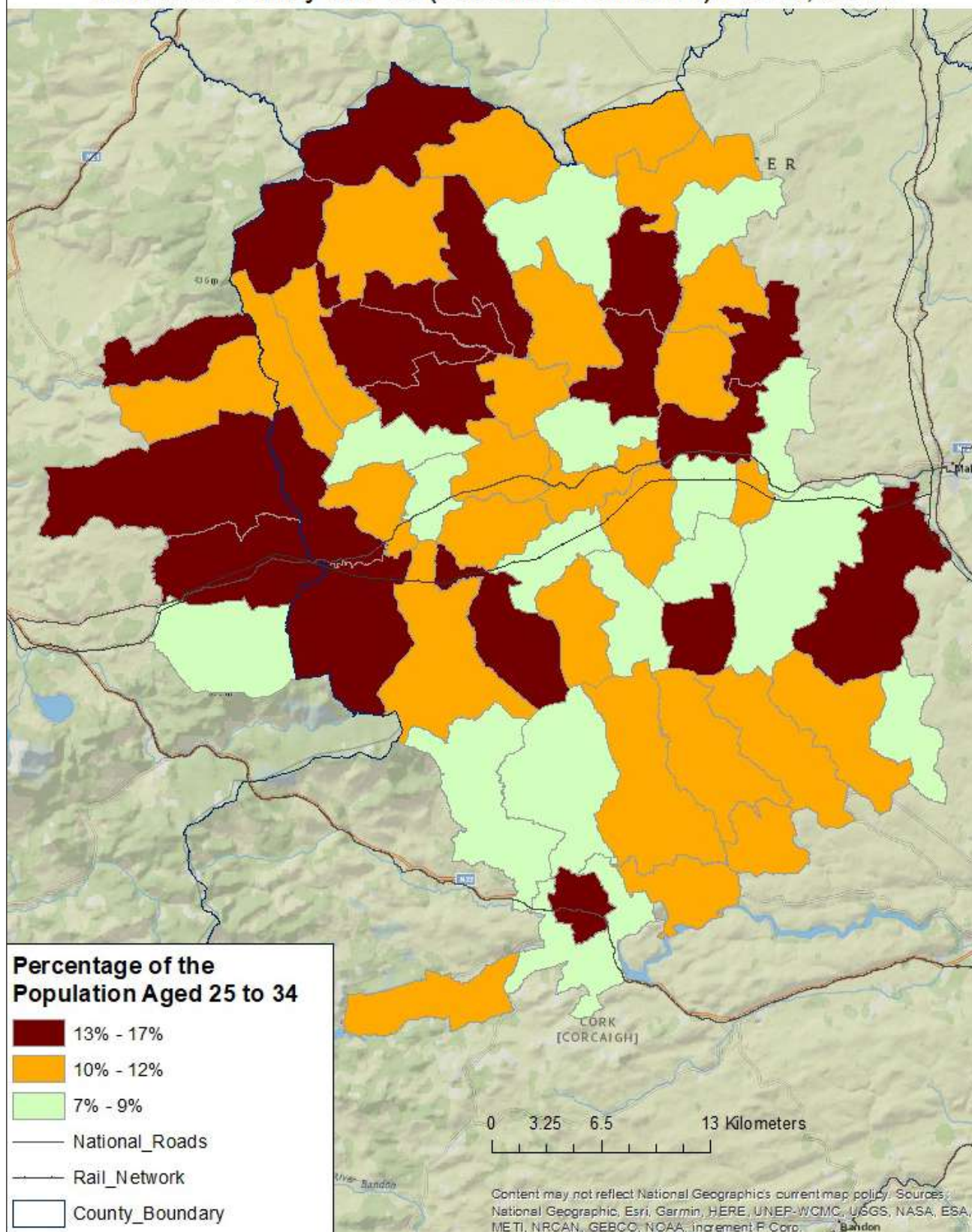
12. Percentage of the Population Aged 13 to 17 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of the Population Aged 18 to 24 years in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



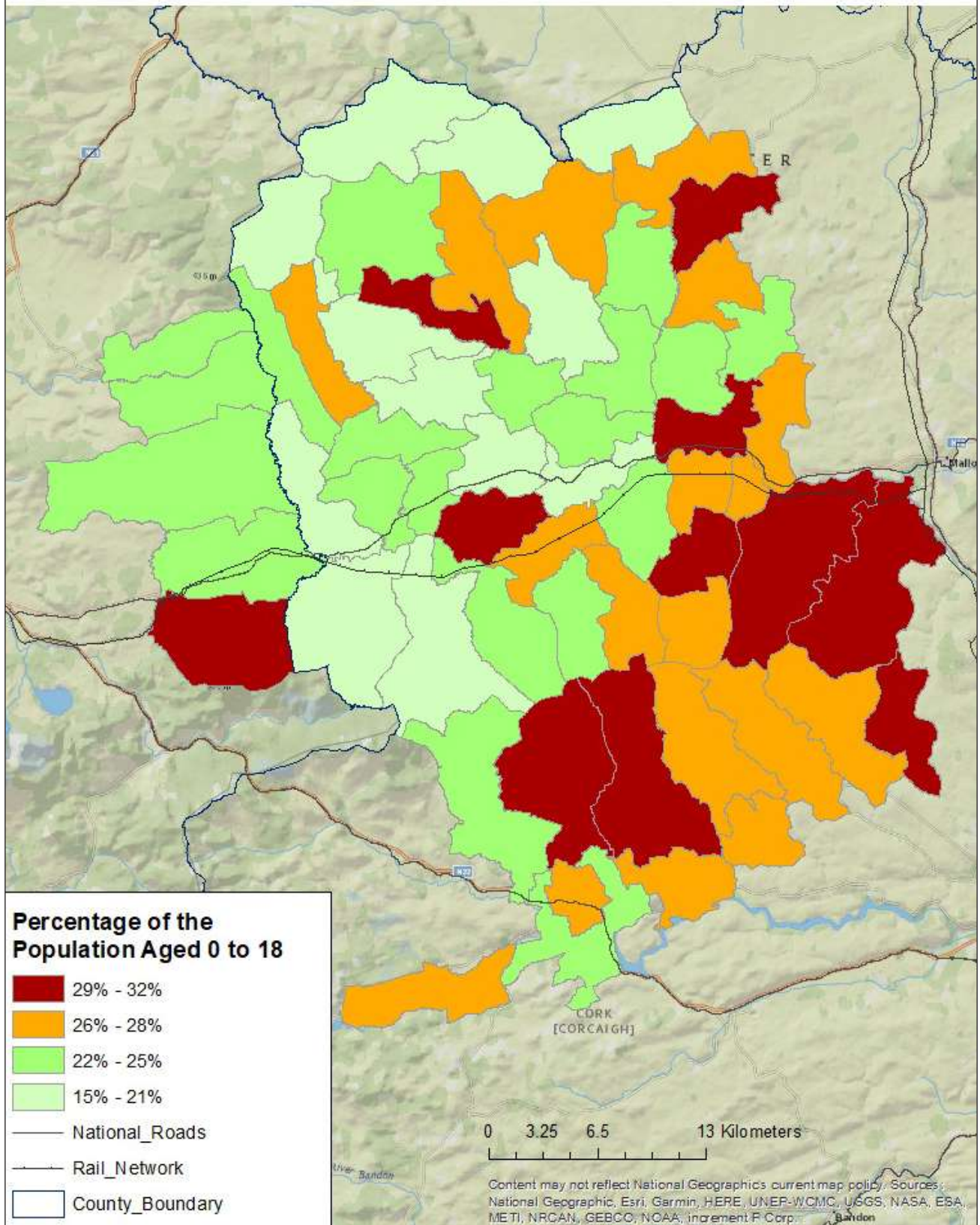
13. Percentage of the Population Aged 18 to 24 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of the Population Aged 25 to 34 years in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



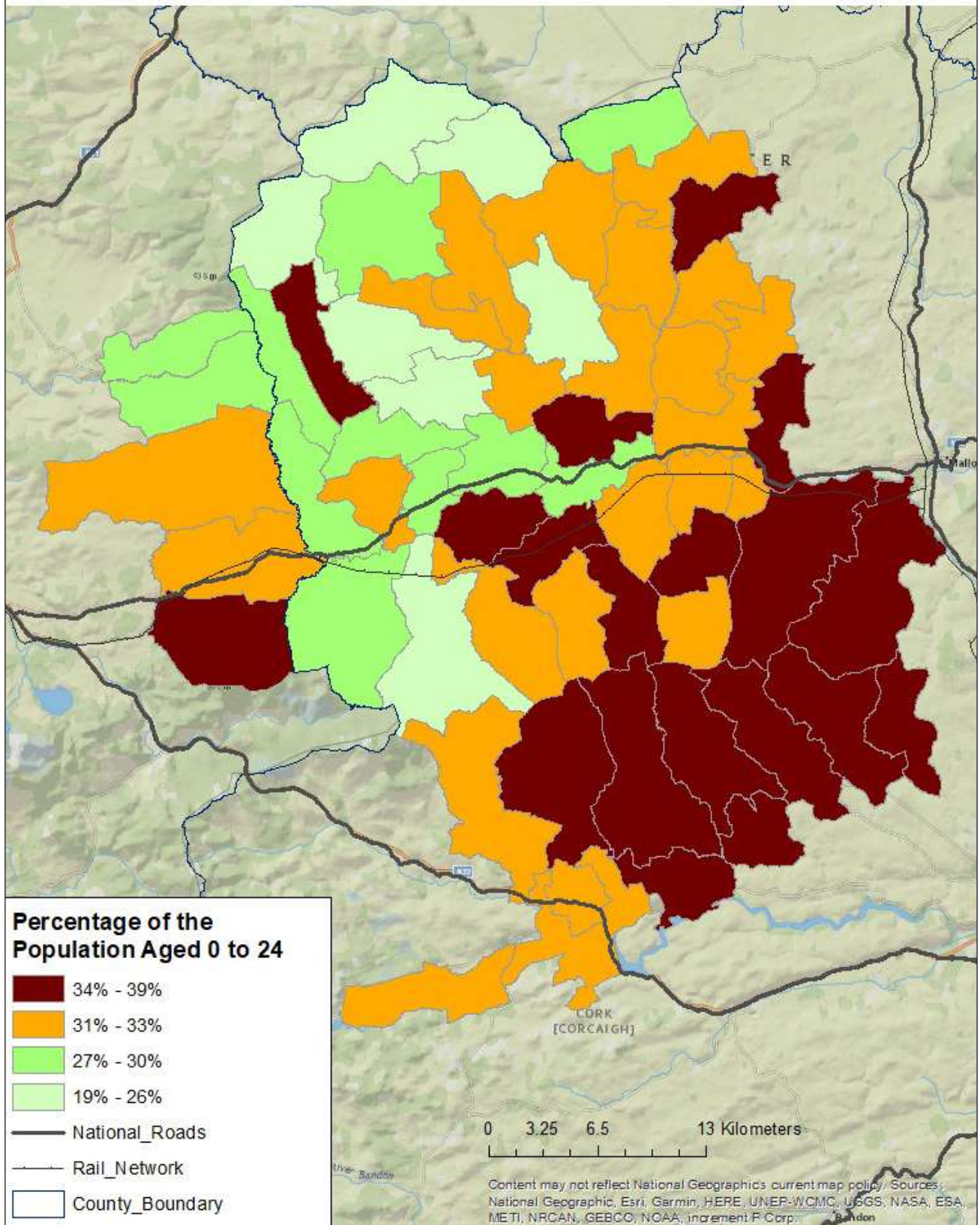
14. Percentage of the Population Aged 25 to 34 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of the Population Aged 0 to 18 years in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



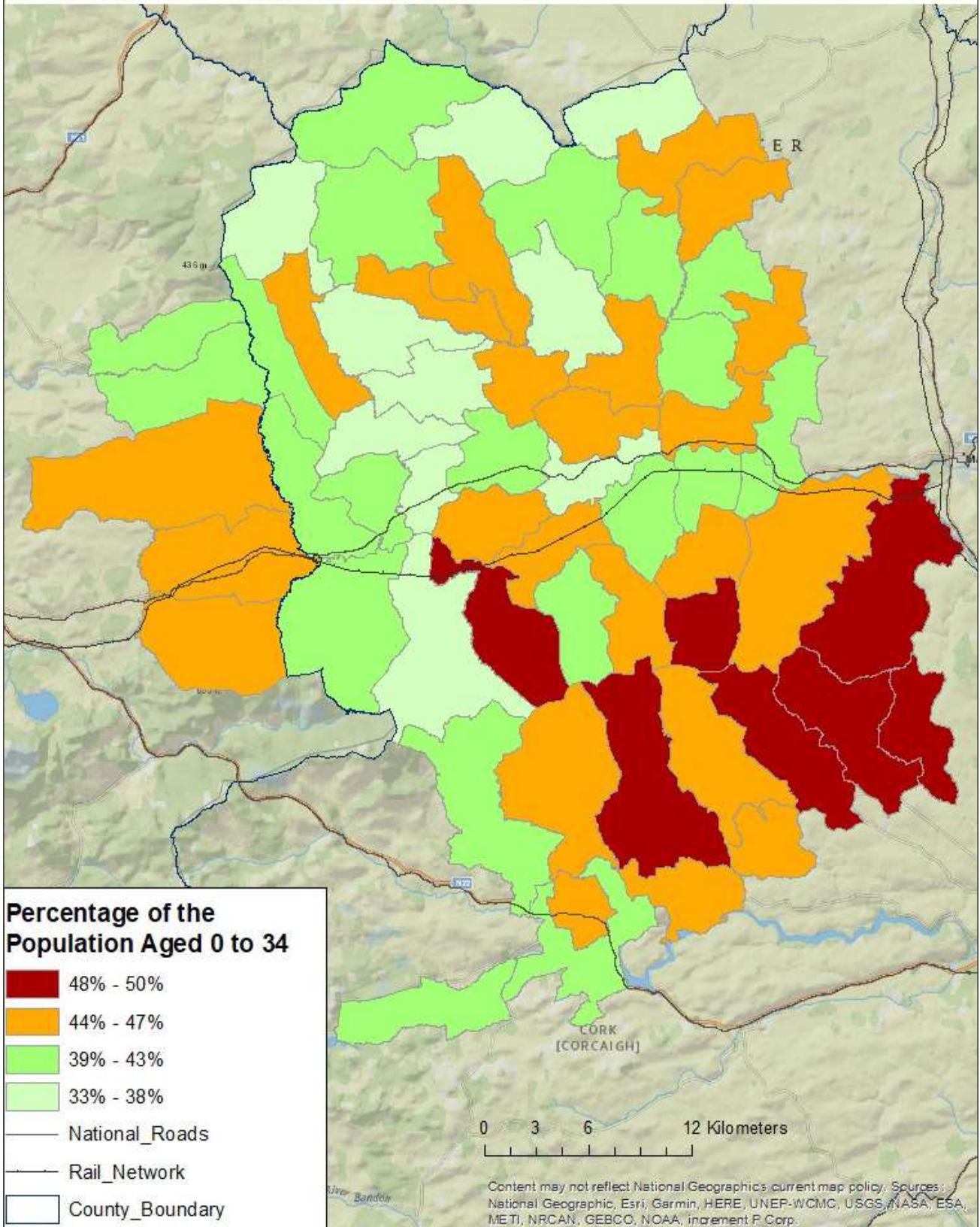
15. Percentage of the Population Aged 0 to 18 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of the Population Aged 0 to 24 years in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



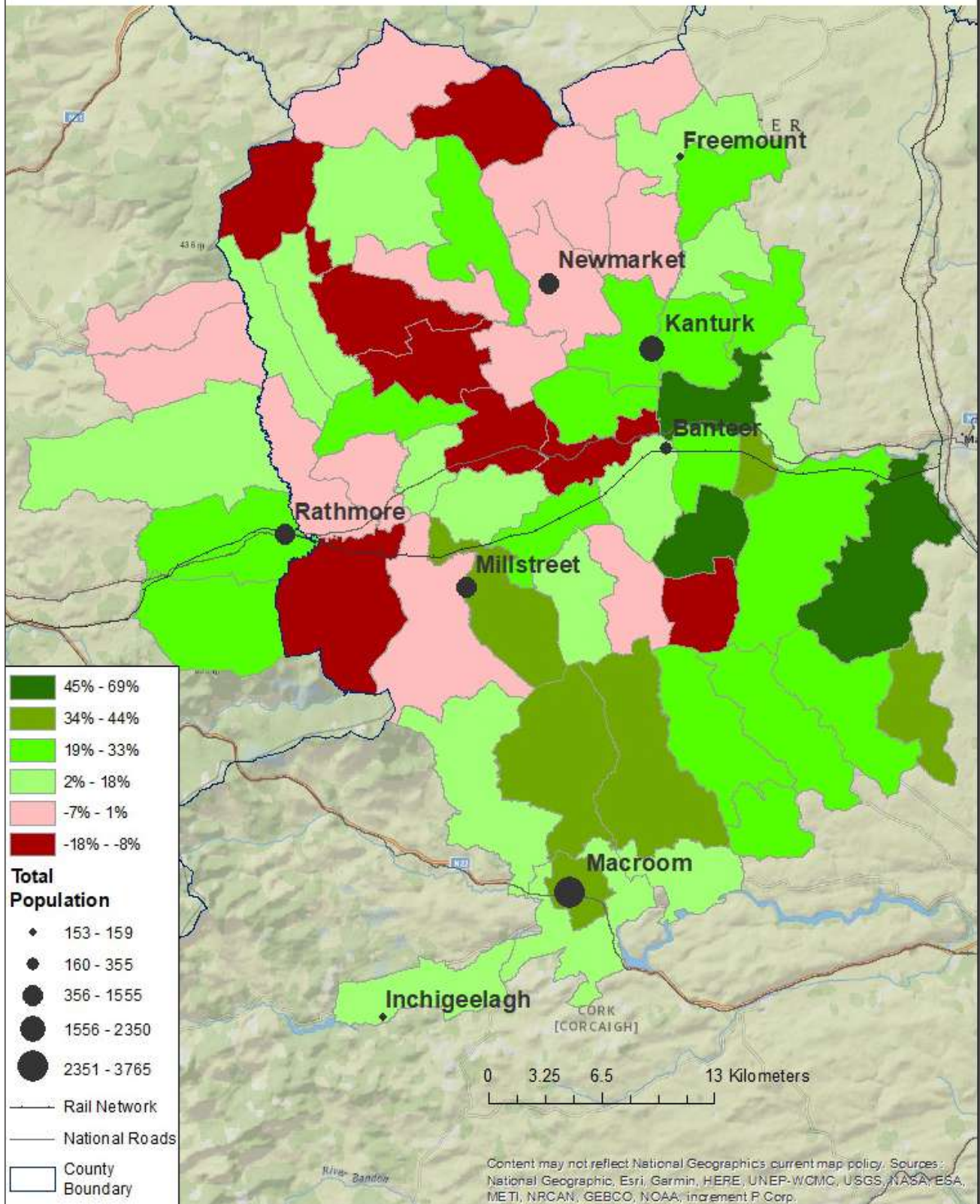
16. Percentage of the Population Aged 0 to 24 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of the Population Aged 0 to 34 years in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



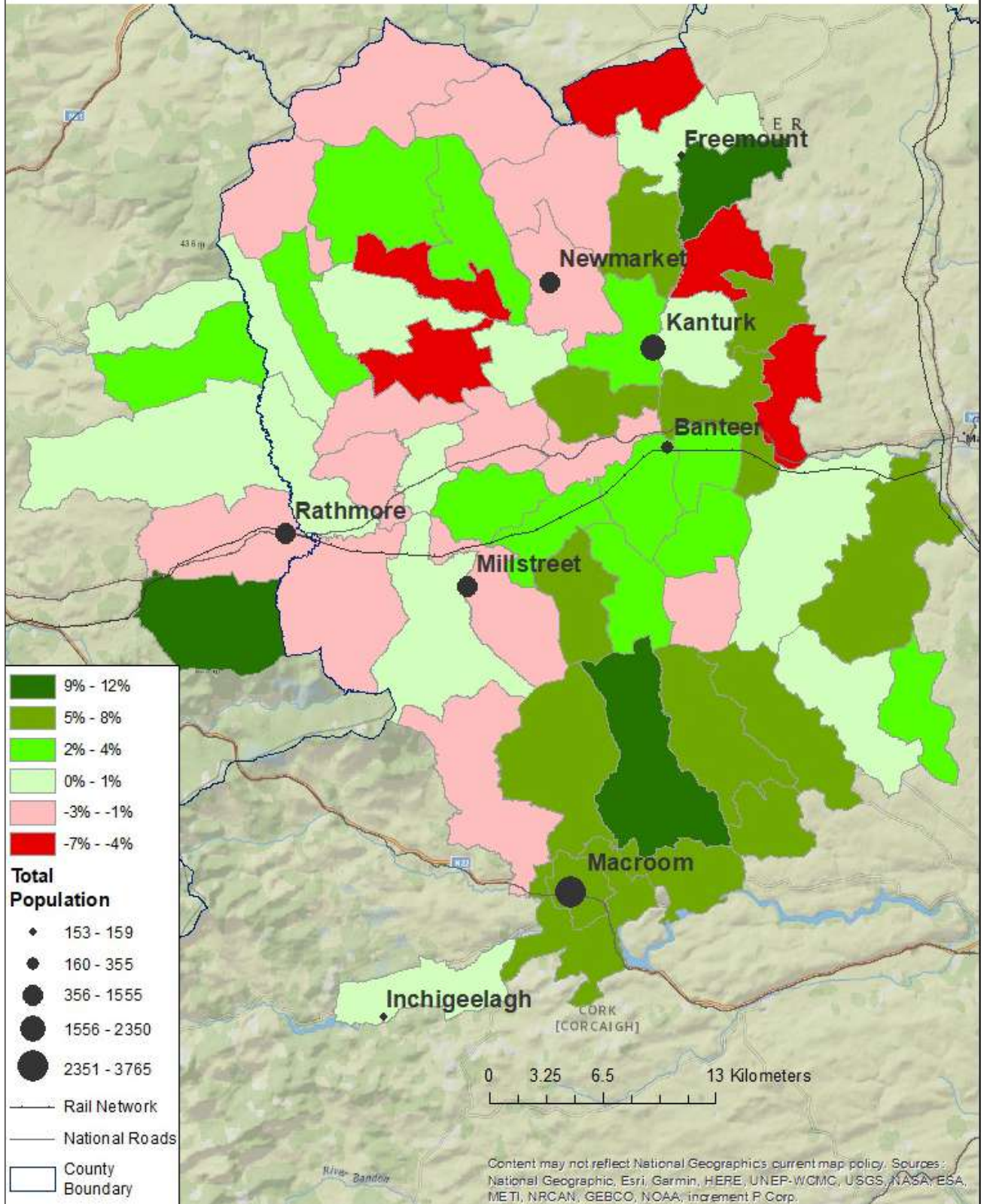
17. Percentage of the Population Aged 0 to 34 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Population Change 2002 to 2016 in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



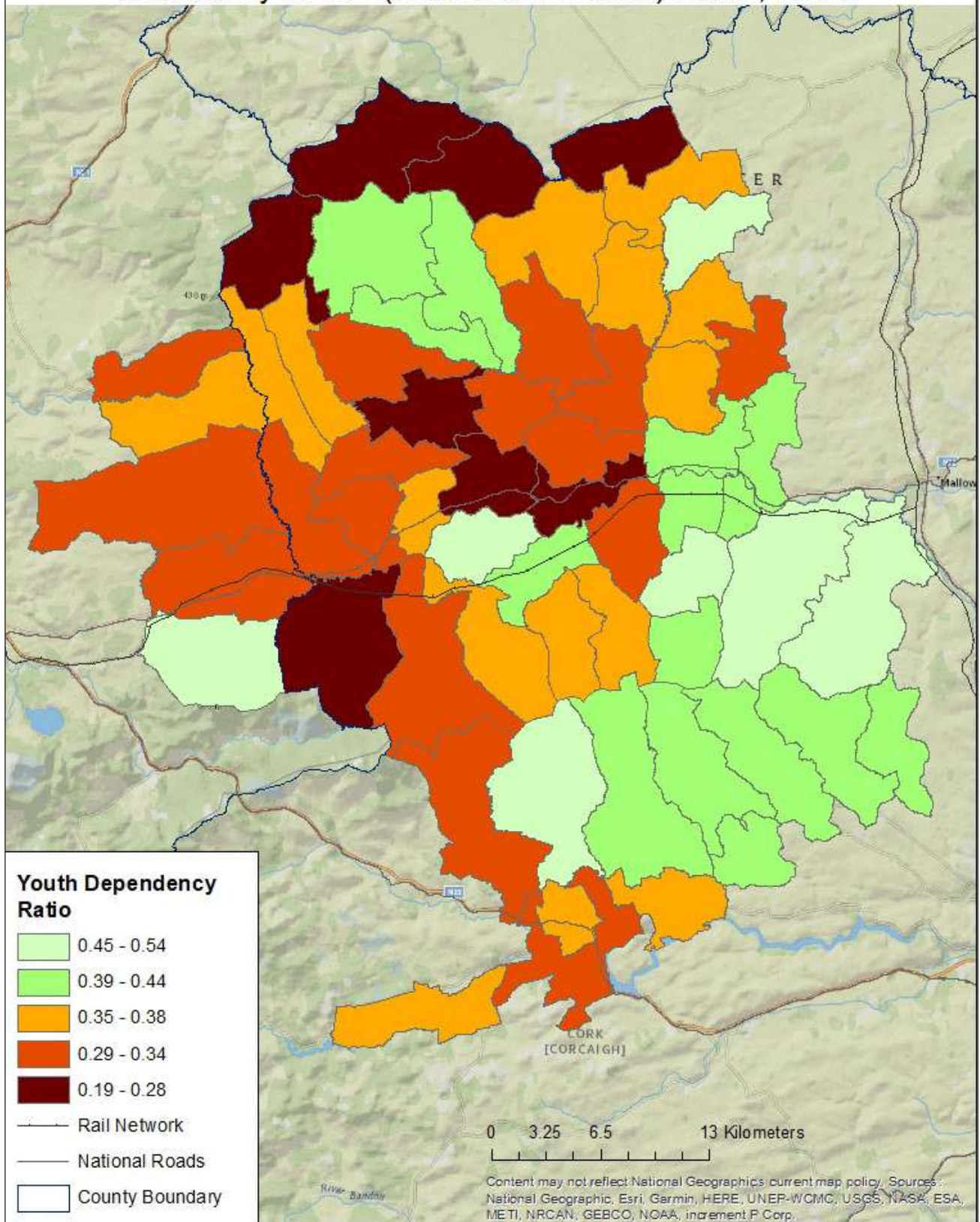
18. Percentage Population Change 2002 to 2016, in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level

Percentage of Population Change 2011 to 2016 in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



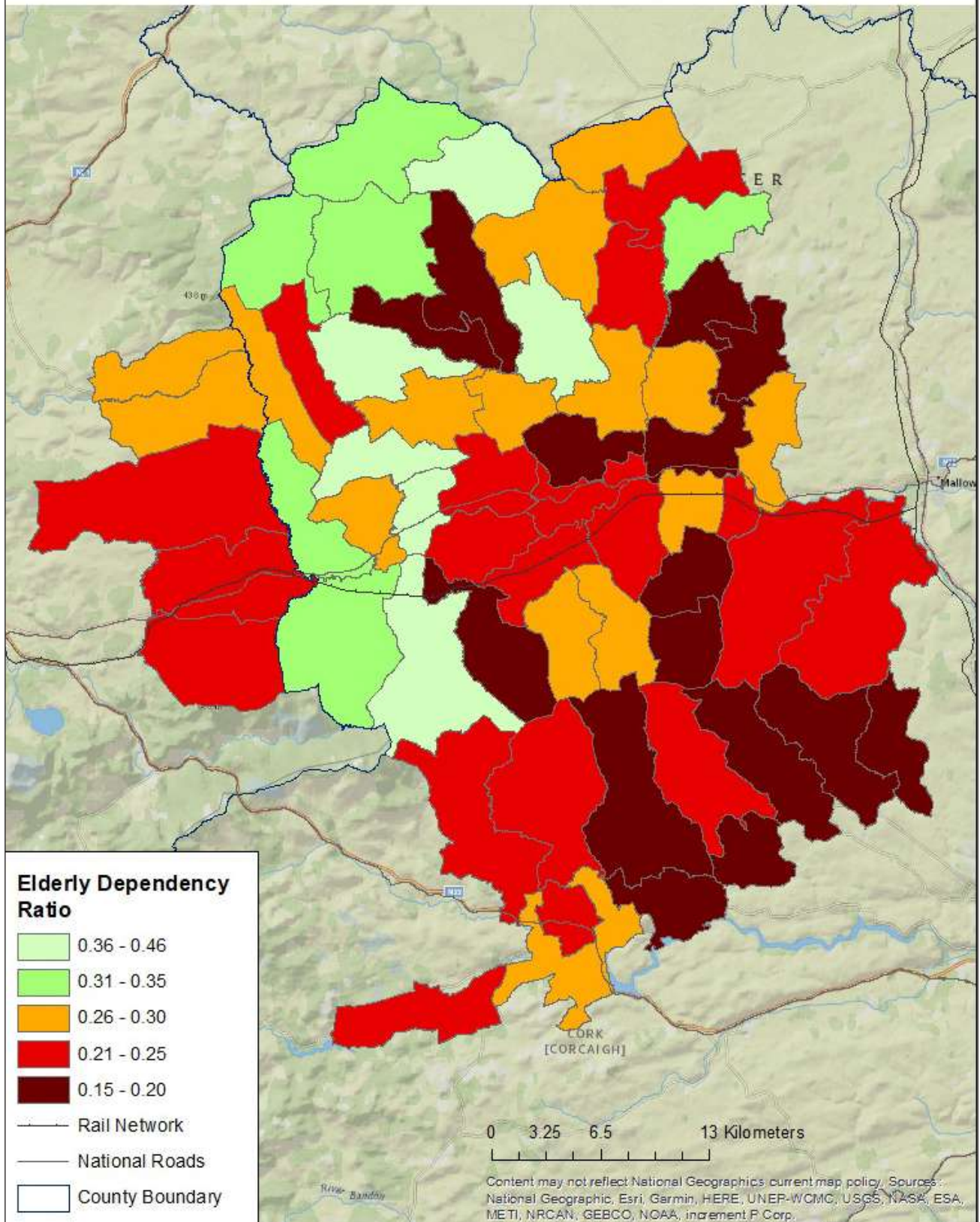
19. Percentage Population Change 2011 to 2016 in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level

Youth Dependency Ratio in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



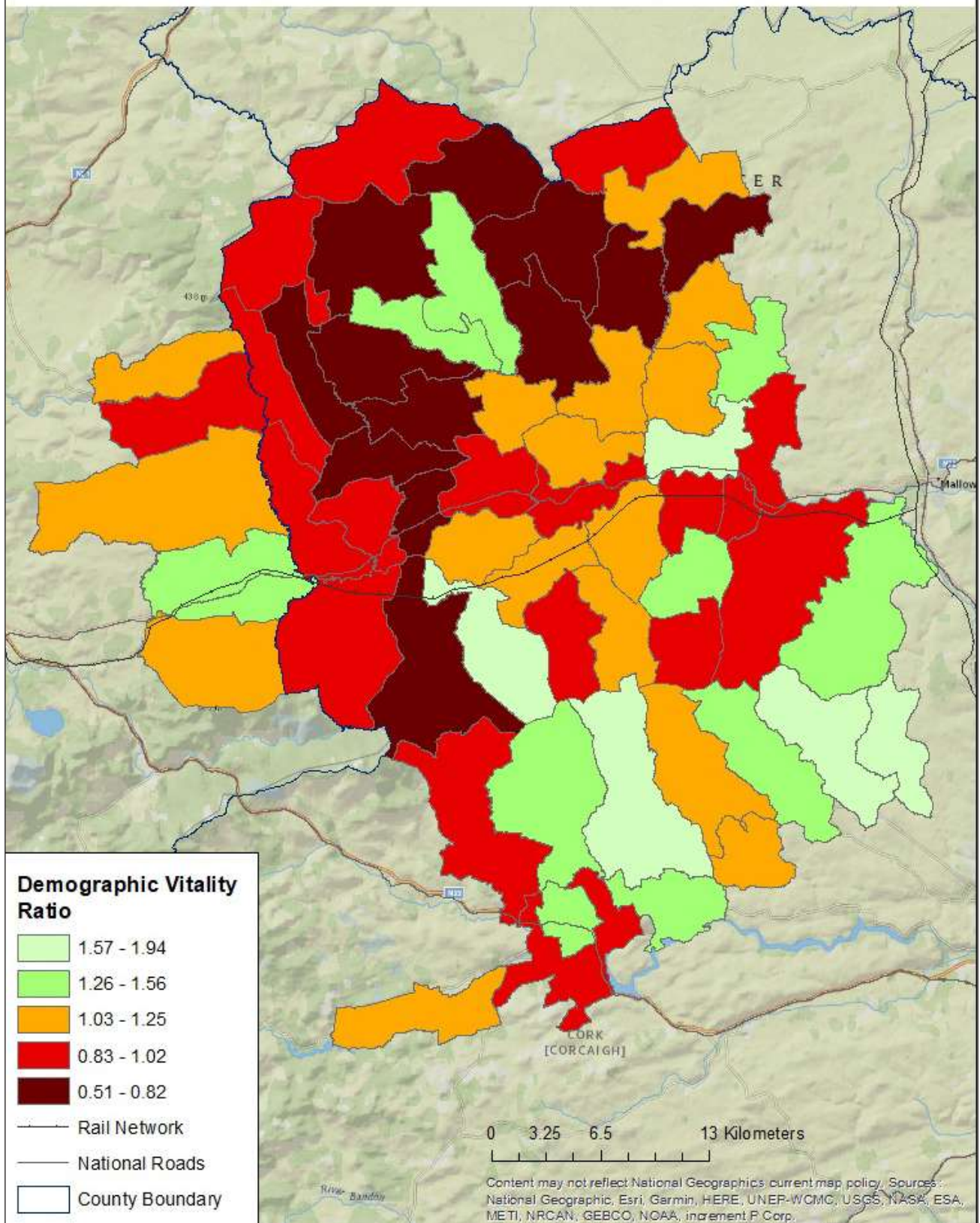
20. Youth Dependency Ratio in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Elderly Dependency Ratio in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



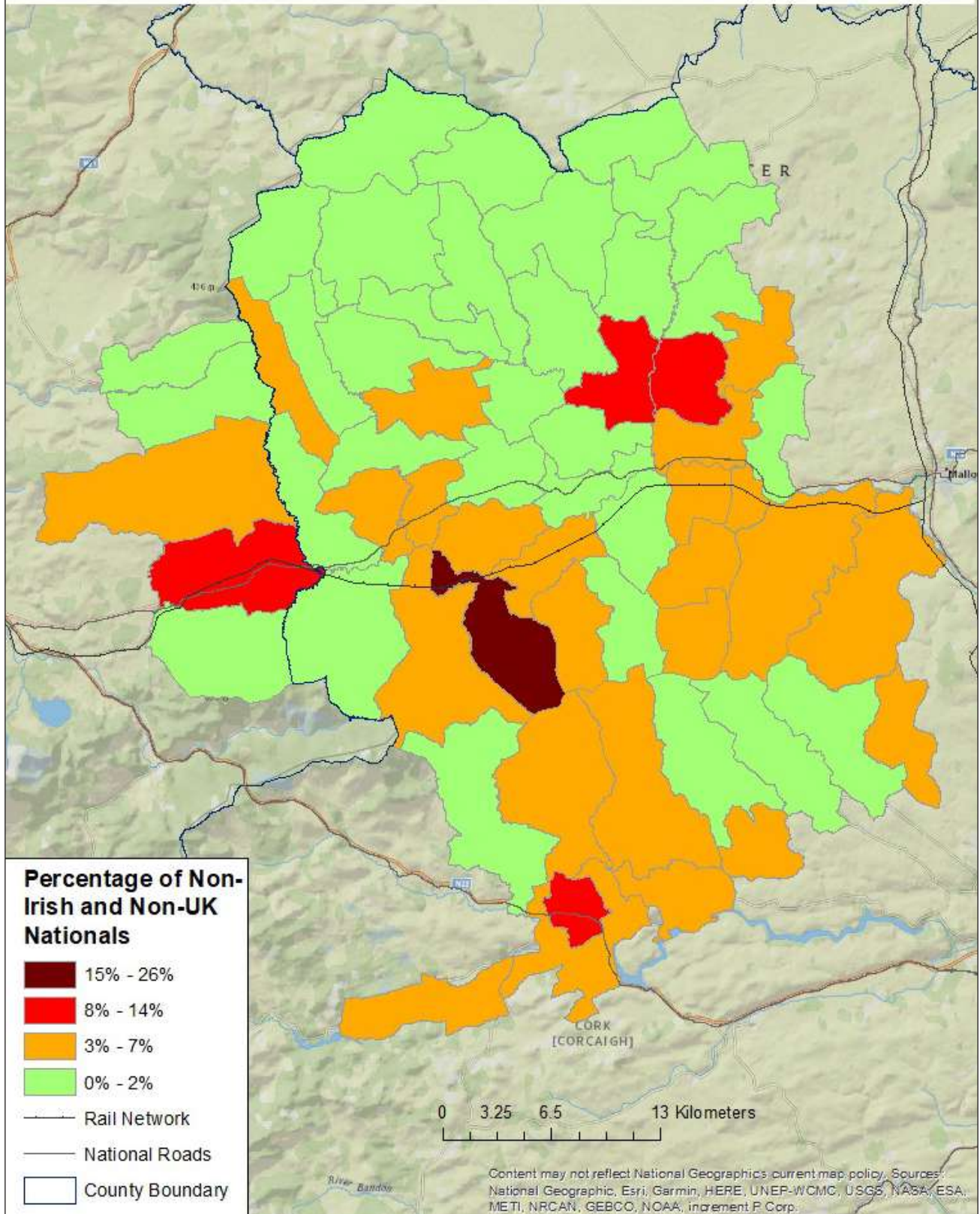
21. Elderly Dependency Ratio in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Demographic Vitality Ratio in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



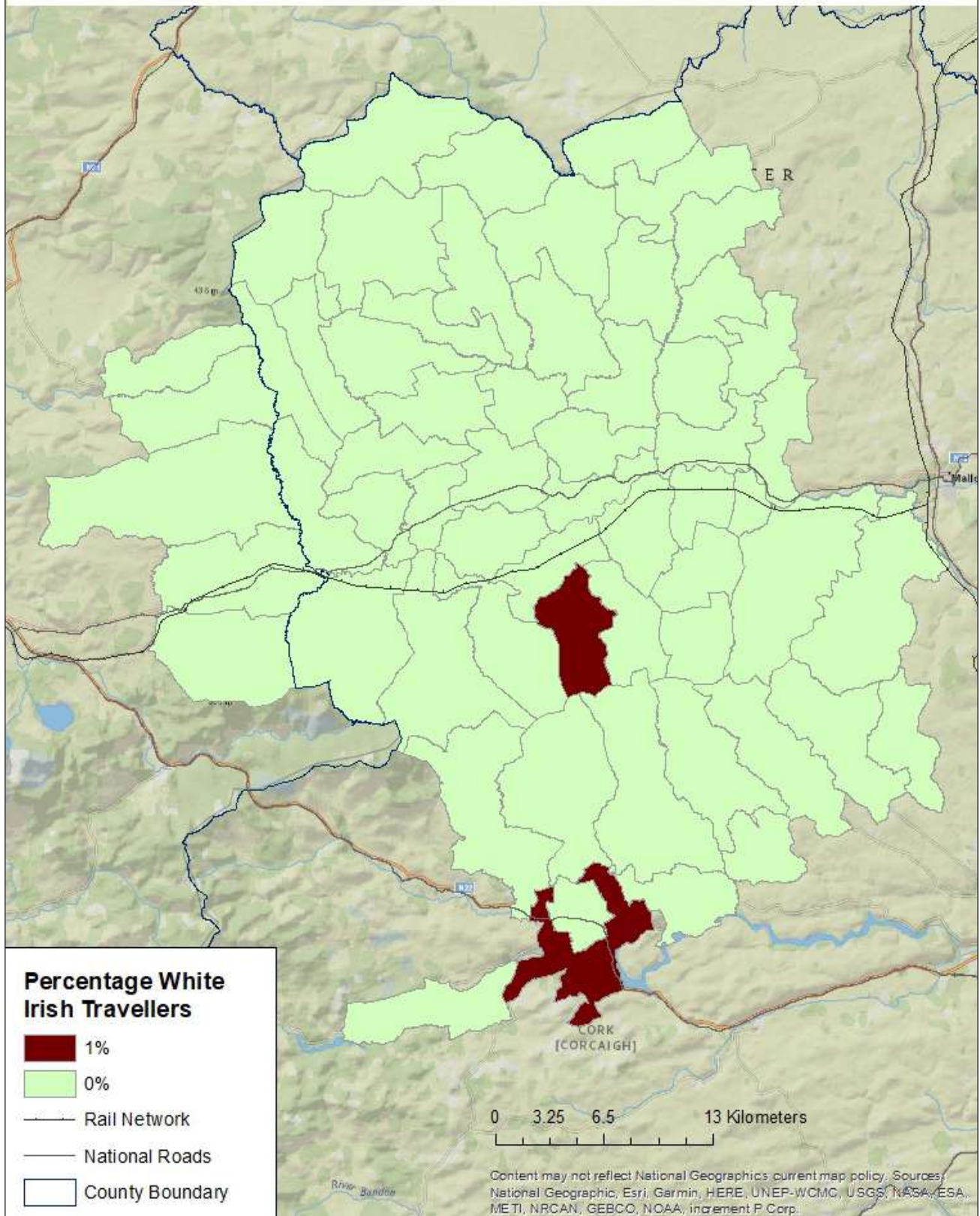
22. Demographic Vitality Ratio in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Non-Irish and Non-UK Nationals in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



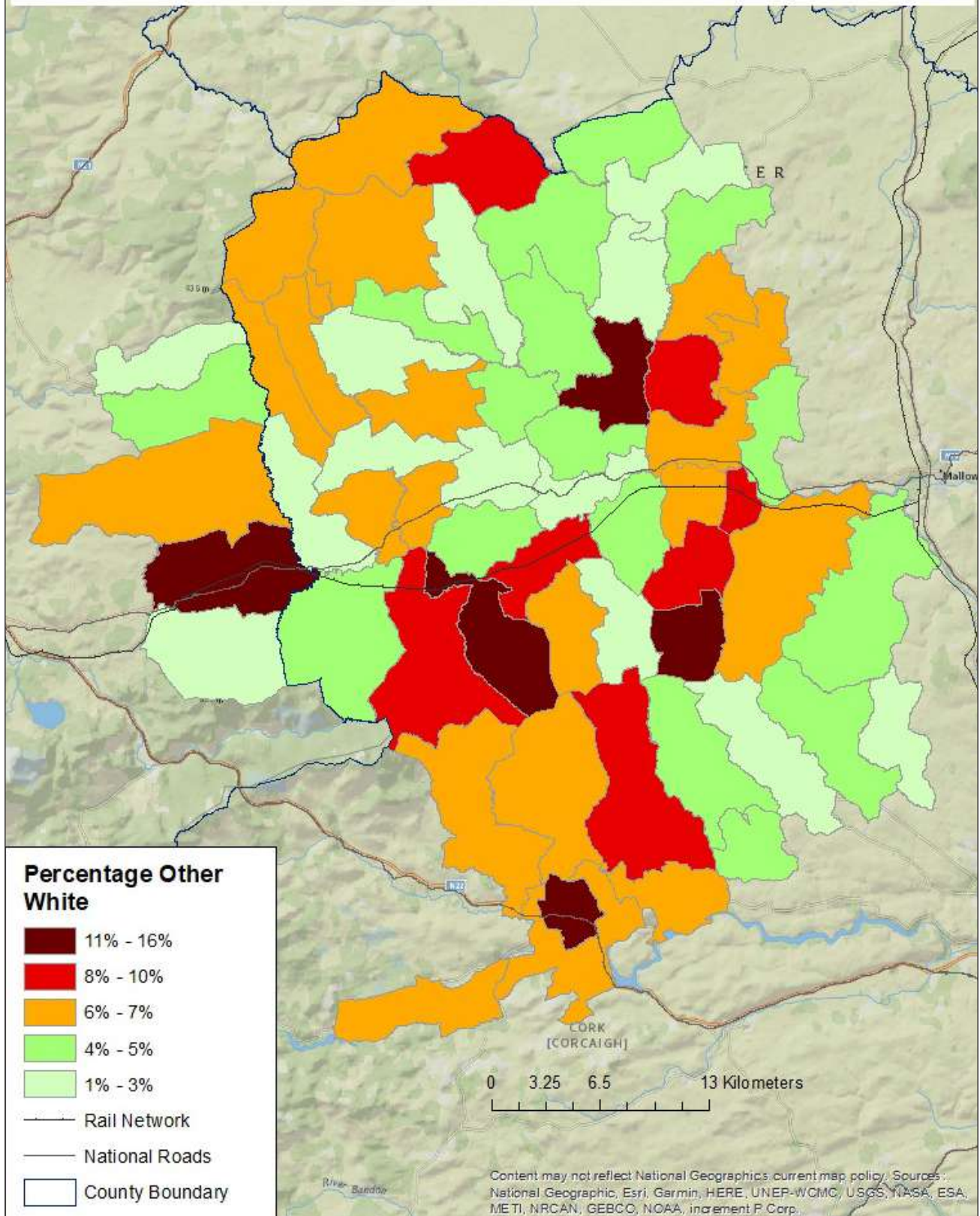
23. Non-Irish and Non-UK Nationals as a Percentage of the Population in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of White Irish Travellers in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



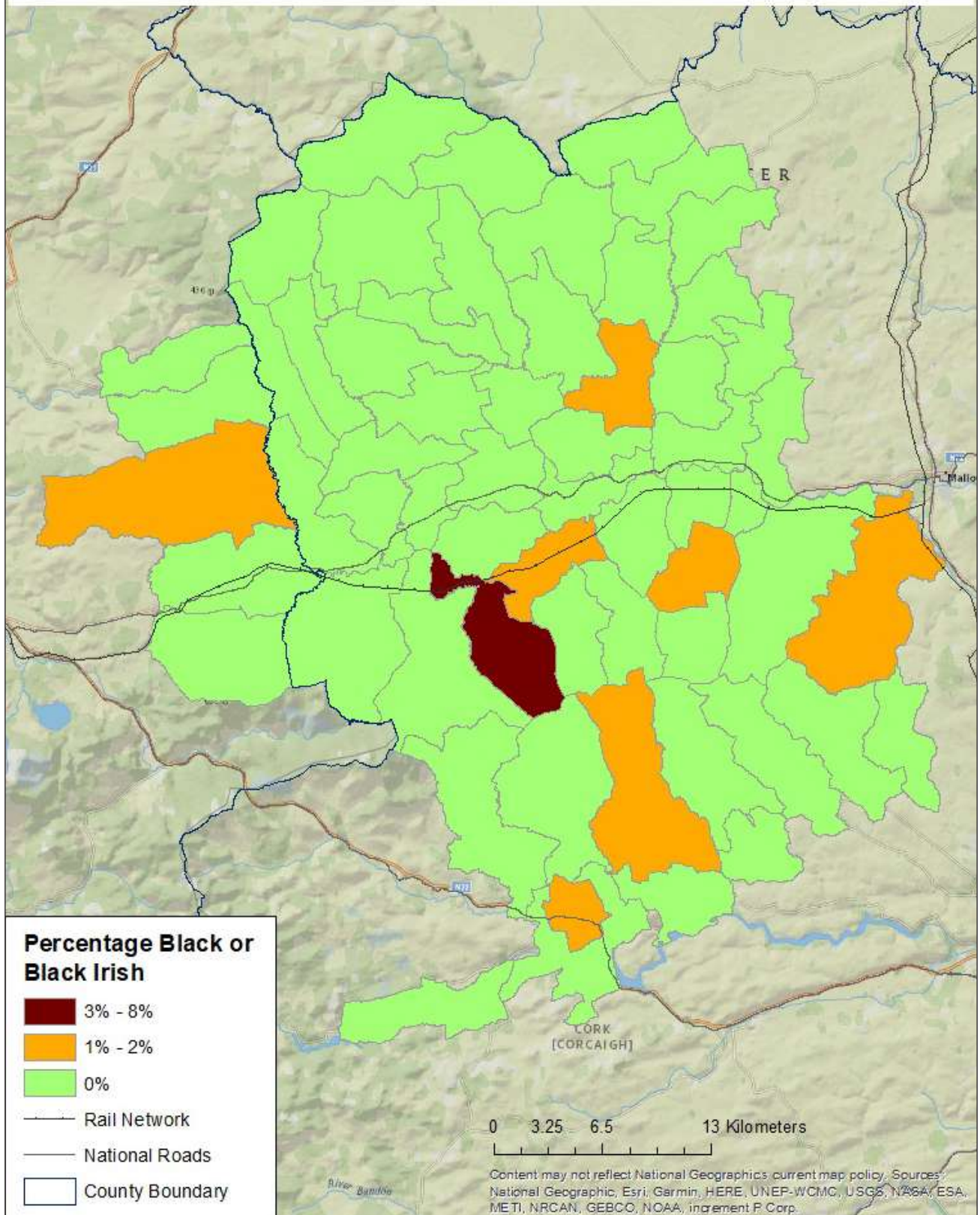
24. White Irish Travellers as a Percentage of the Population in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Other White in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



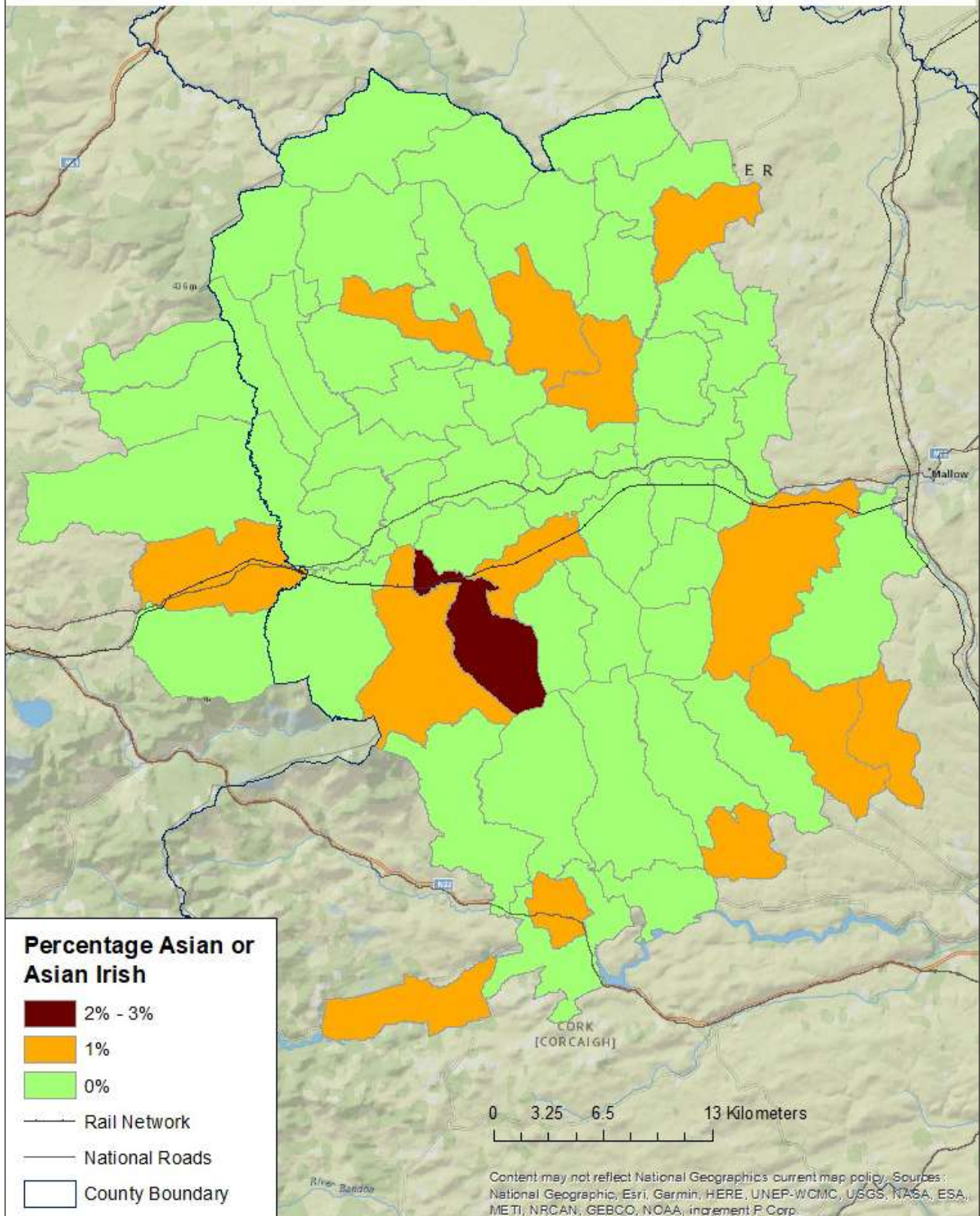
25. Other' White Persons as a Percentage of the Population in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Population who are Black or Black Irish in Duhallo and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



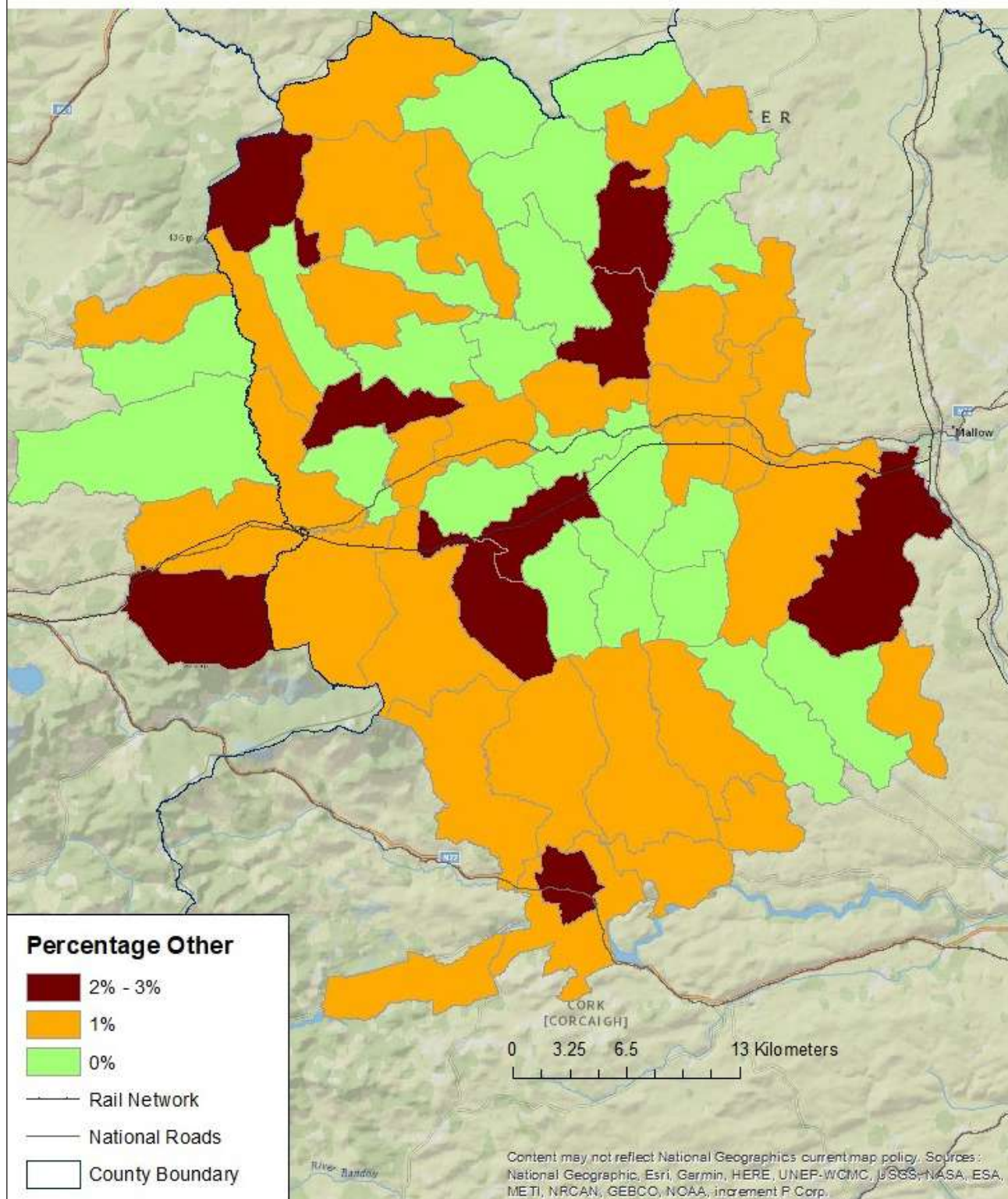
26. Black and Black Irish Persons as a Percentage of the Population in Duhallo & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Population who are Asian or Asian Irish in Duhallo and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



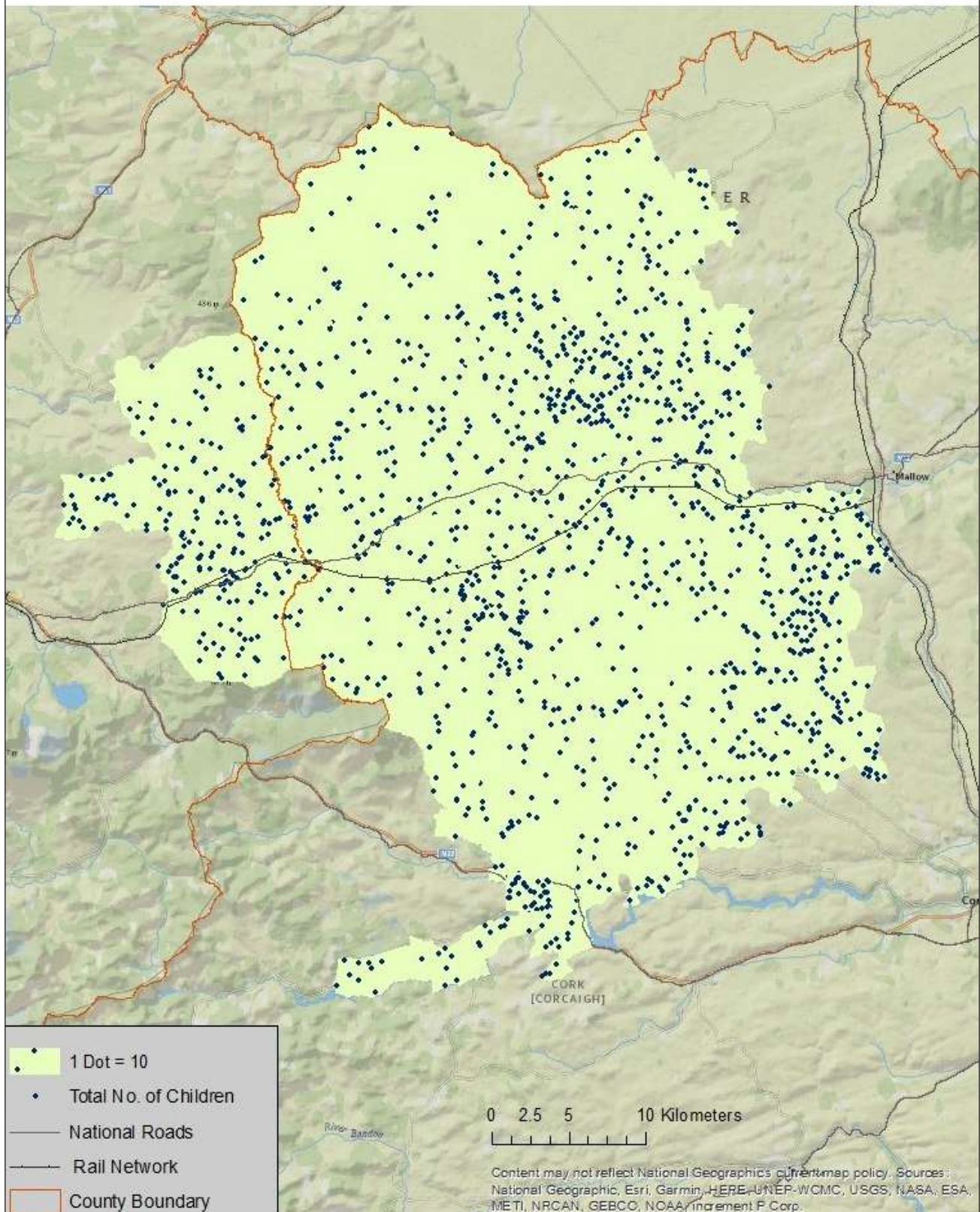
27. Asian and Asian Irish Persons as a Percentage of the Population in Duhallo & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of the population whose ethnicity is classified as 'other', at ED level, in Duhallow and the Lee Valley, 2016



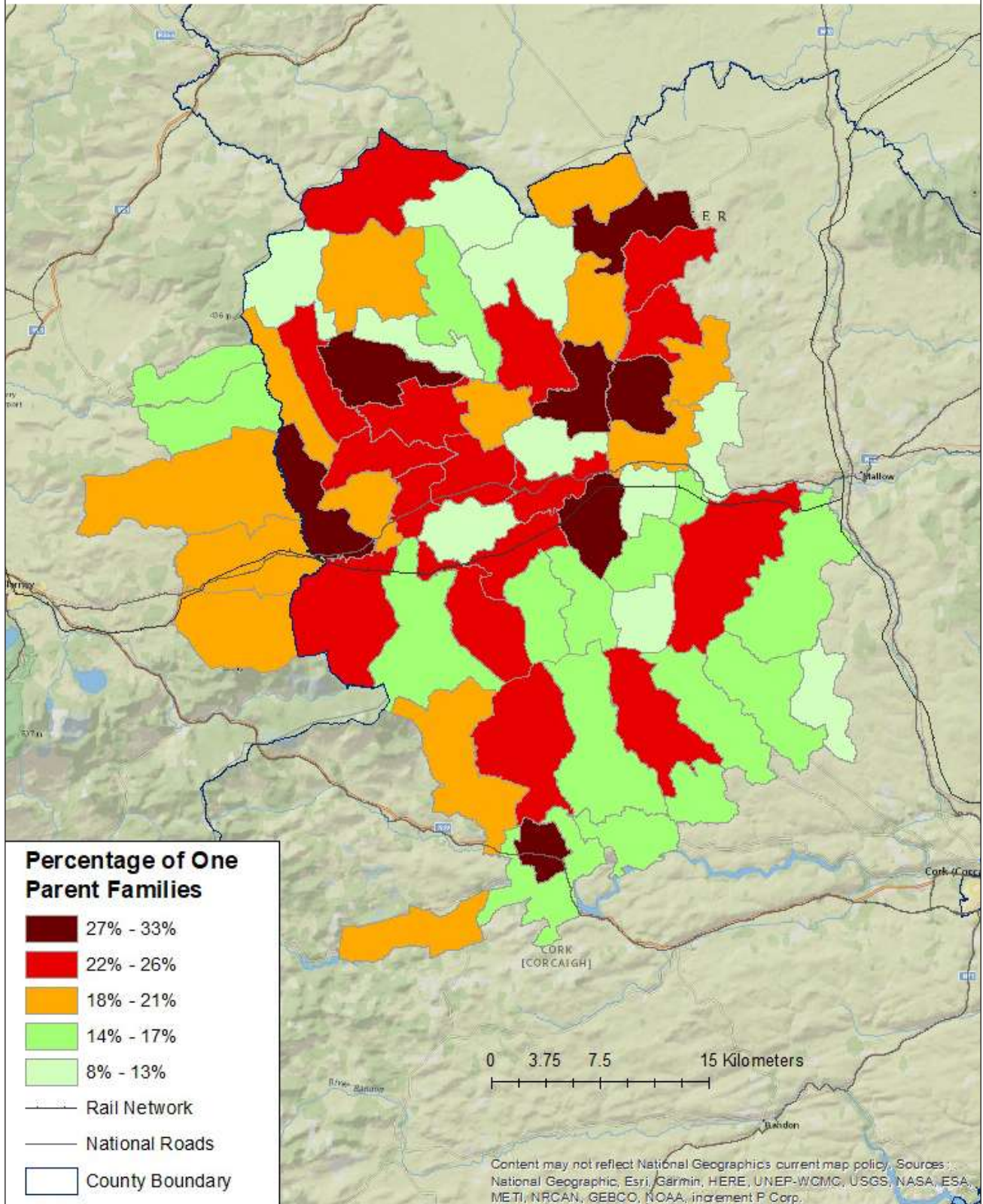
28. Persons of 'Other' Ethnicities as a Percentage of the Population in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Total Number of Children Living in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



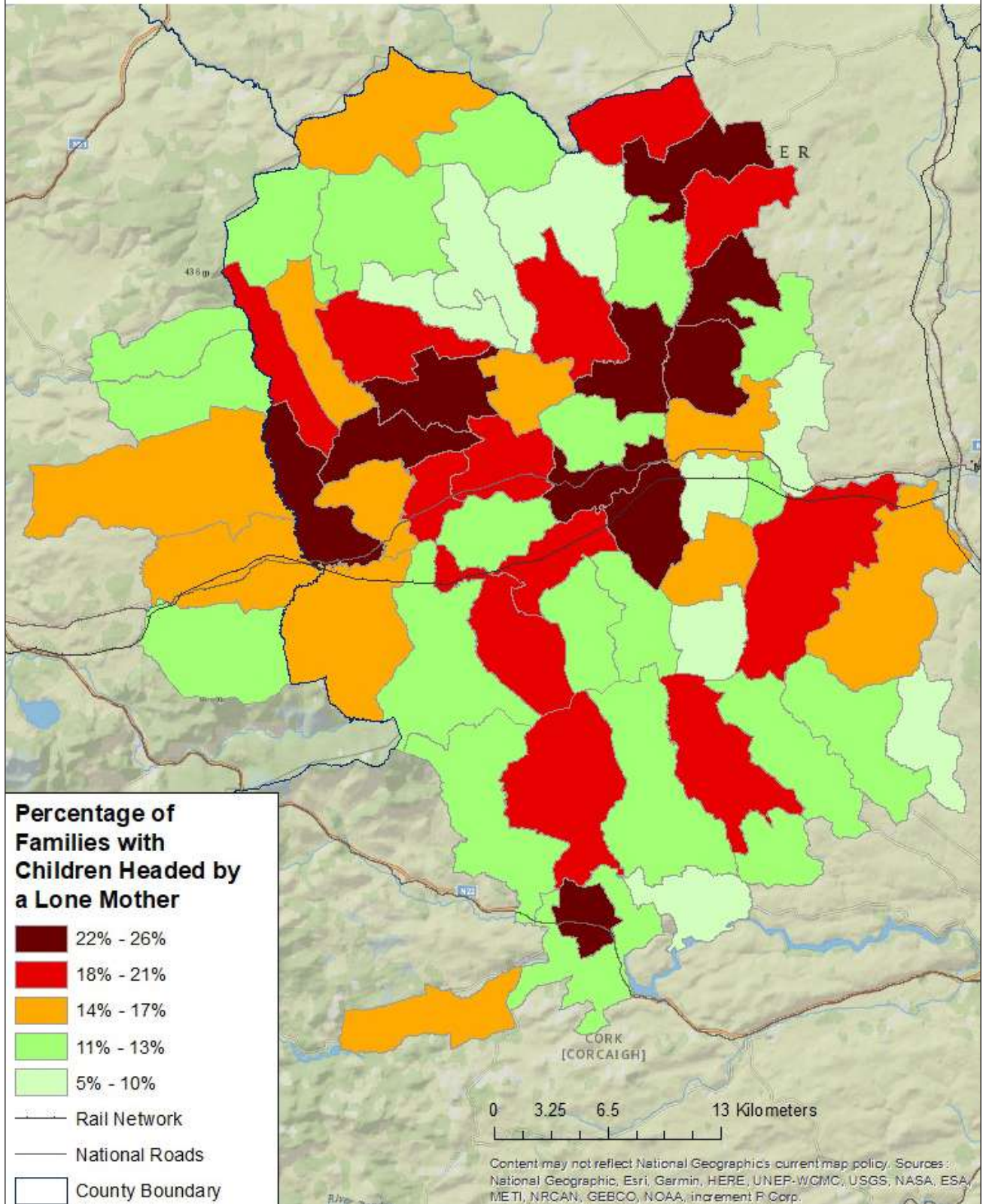
29. Total Number of Children (Aged 0 to 15) in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of One Parent Families in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



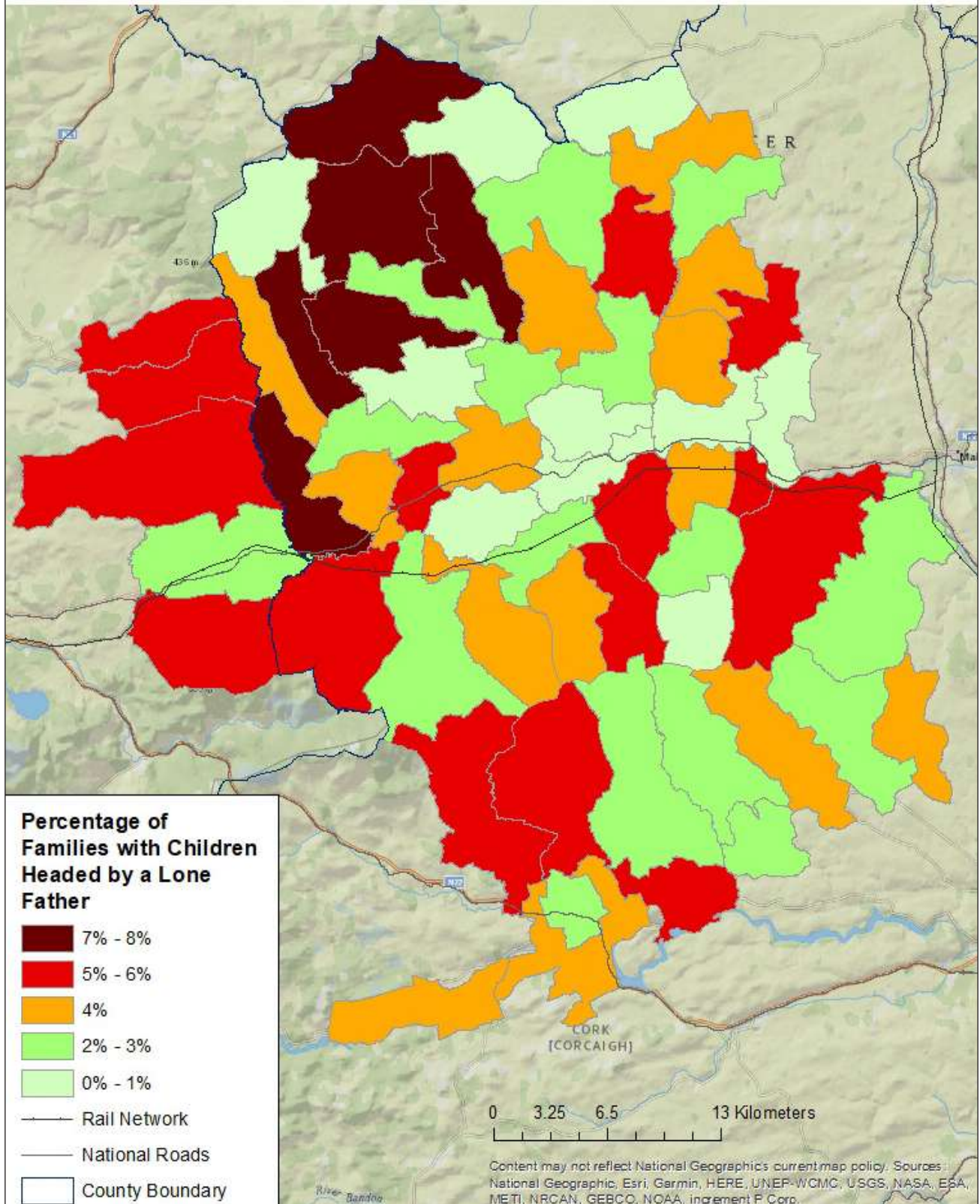
30. One-Parent Families as a Percentage of All Families with Children in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Families with Children Headed by a Lone Mother in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



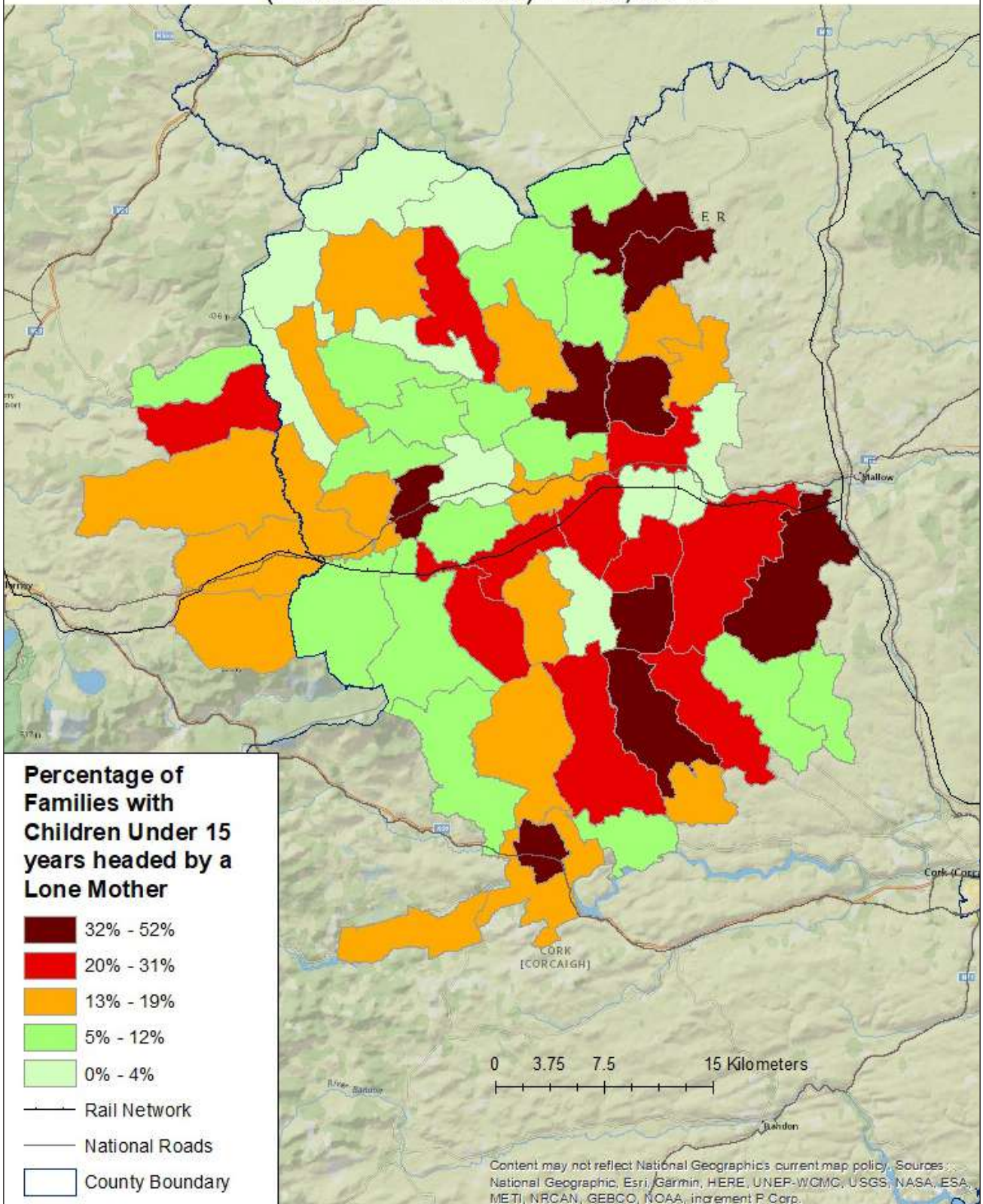
31. Families with Children, headed by a Lone Mother, as a Percentage of All Families with Children in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Families with Children Headed by a Lone Father in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



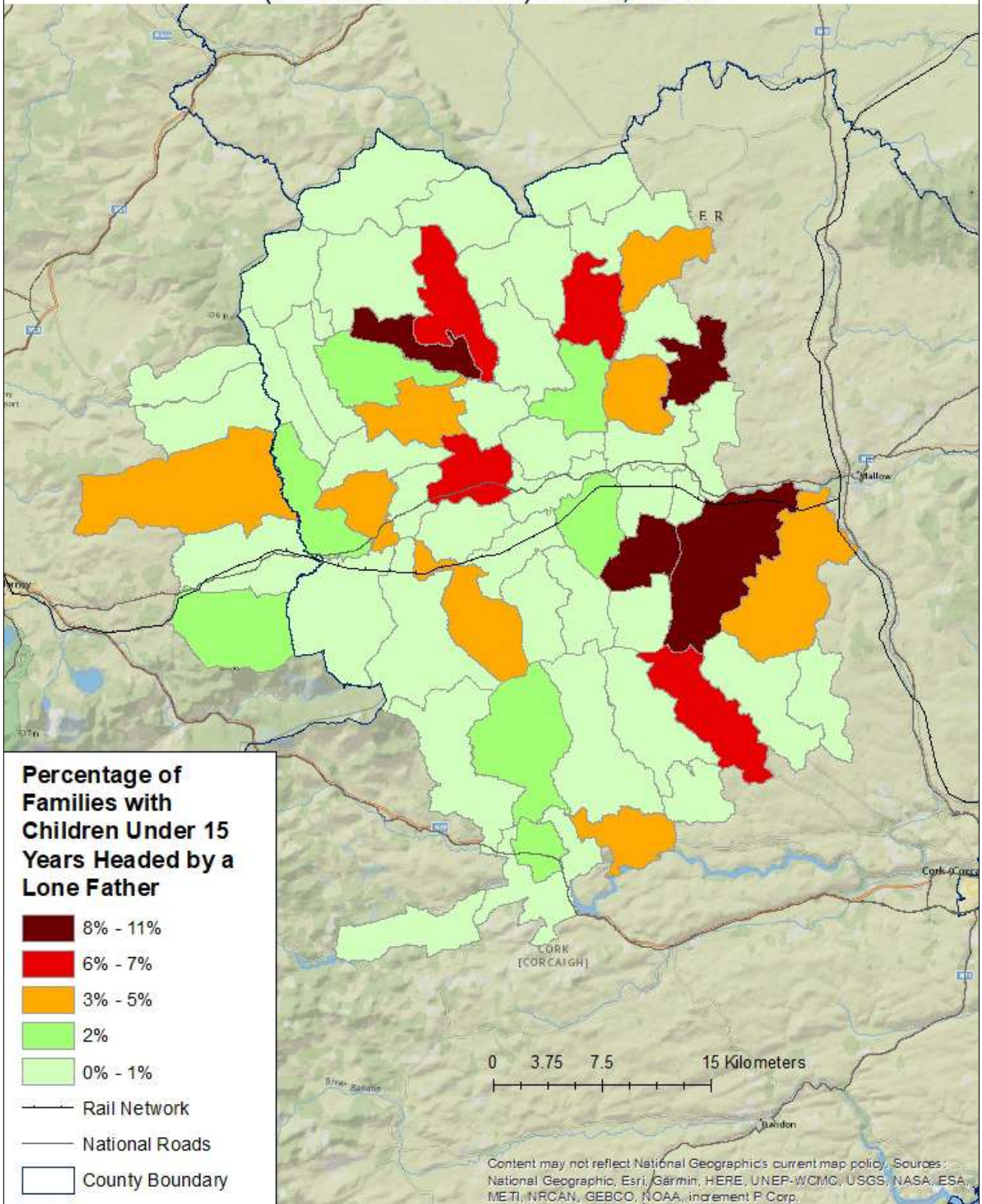
32. Families with Children, headed by a Lone Father, as a Percentage of All Families with Children in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Families with Children Under 15 Years Headed by a Lone Mother in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



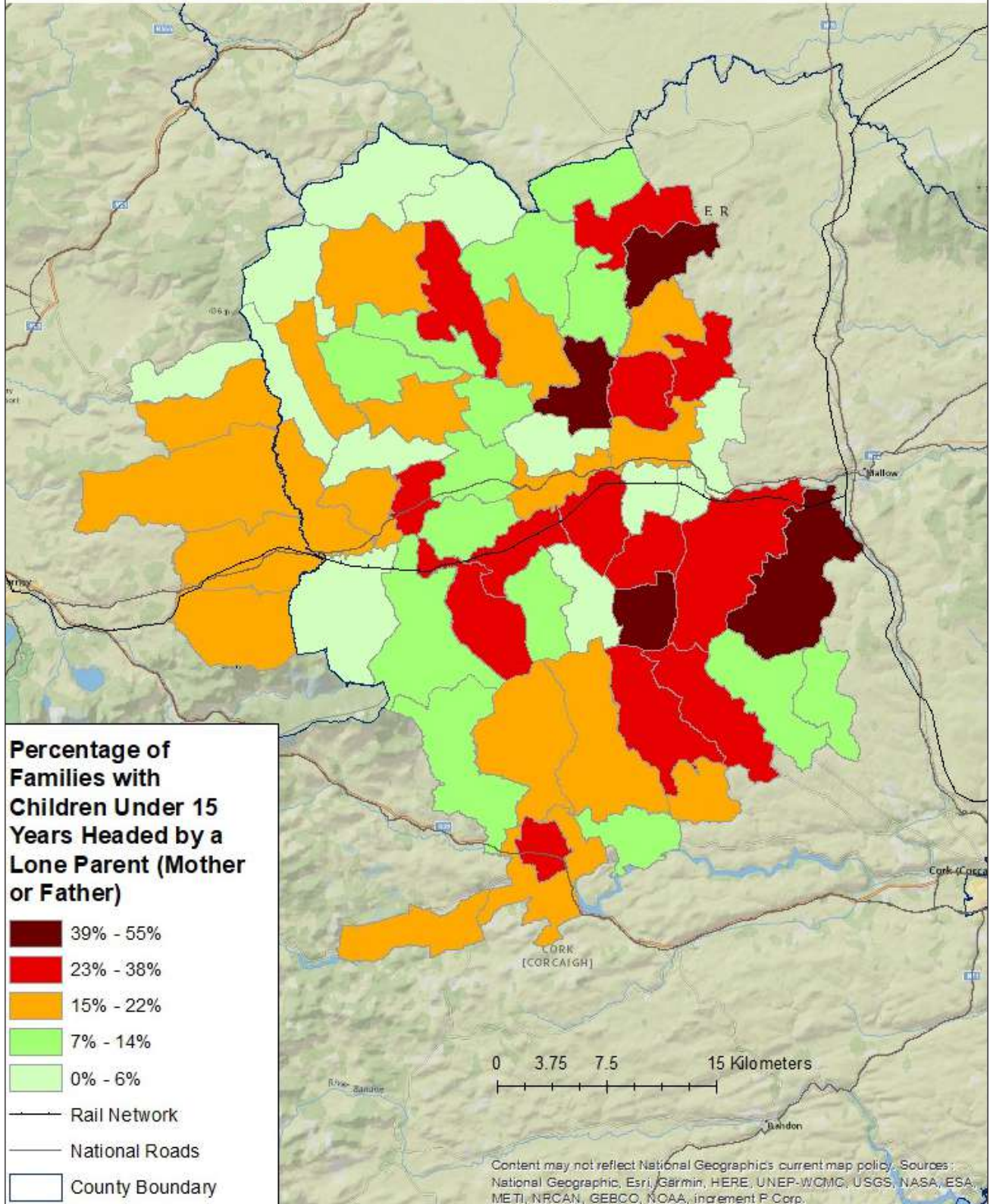
33. Percentage of Families with Children Under 15, headed by a Lone Mother in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Families with Children Under 15 Years Headed by a Lone Father in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



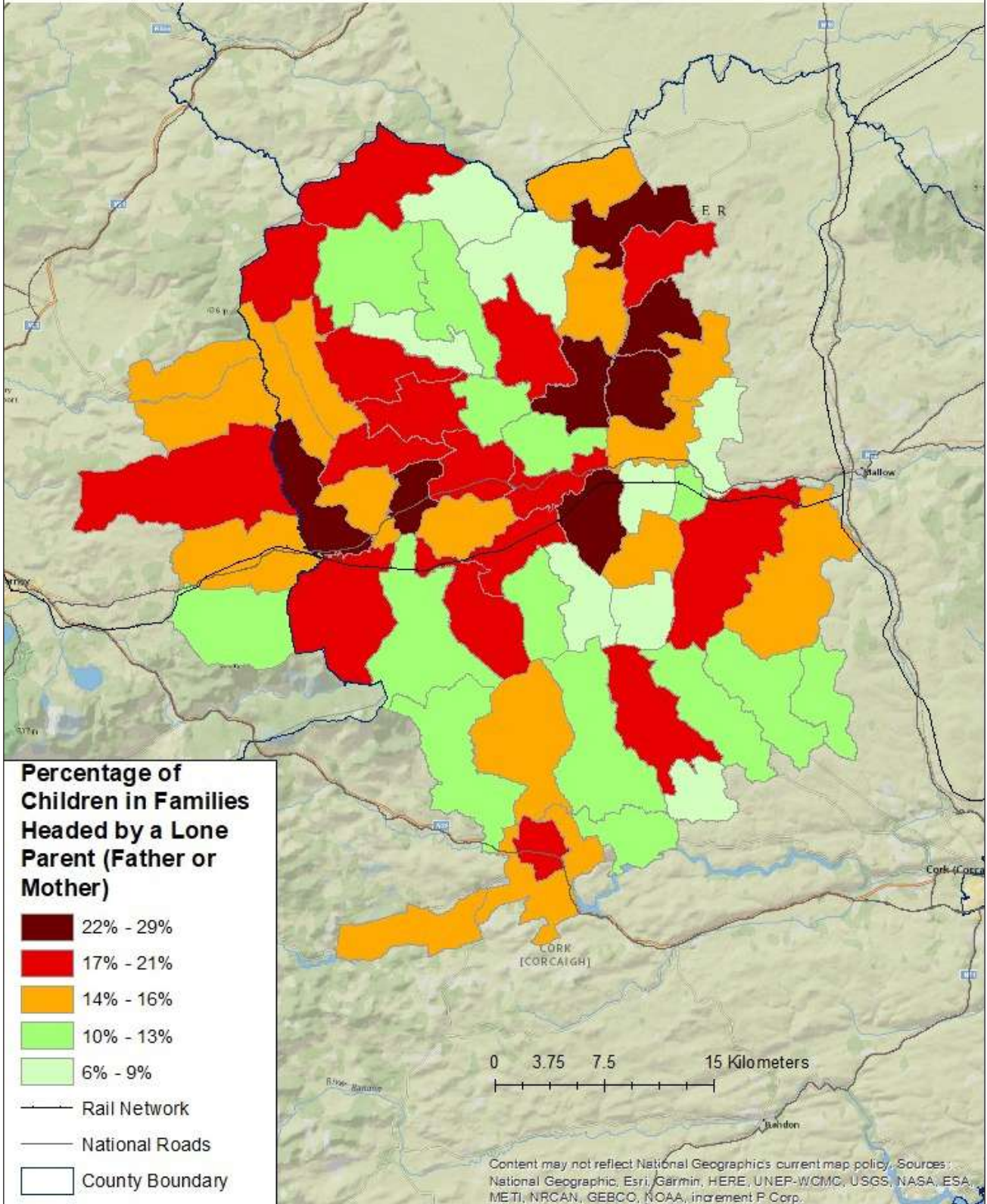
34. Percentage of Families with Children Under 15, headed by a Lone Father in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Families with Children Under 15 Years Headed by a Lone Parent (Mother or Father) in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



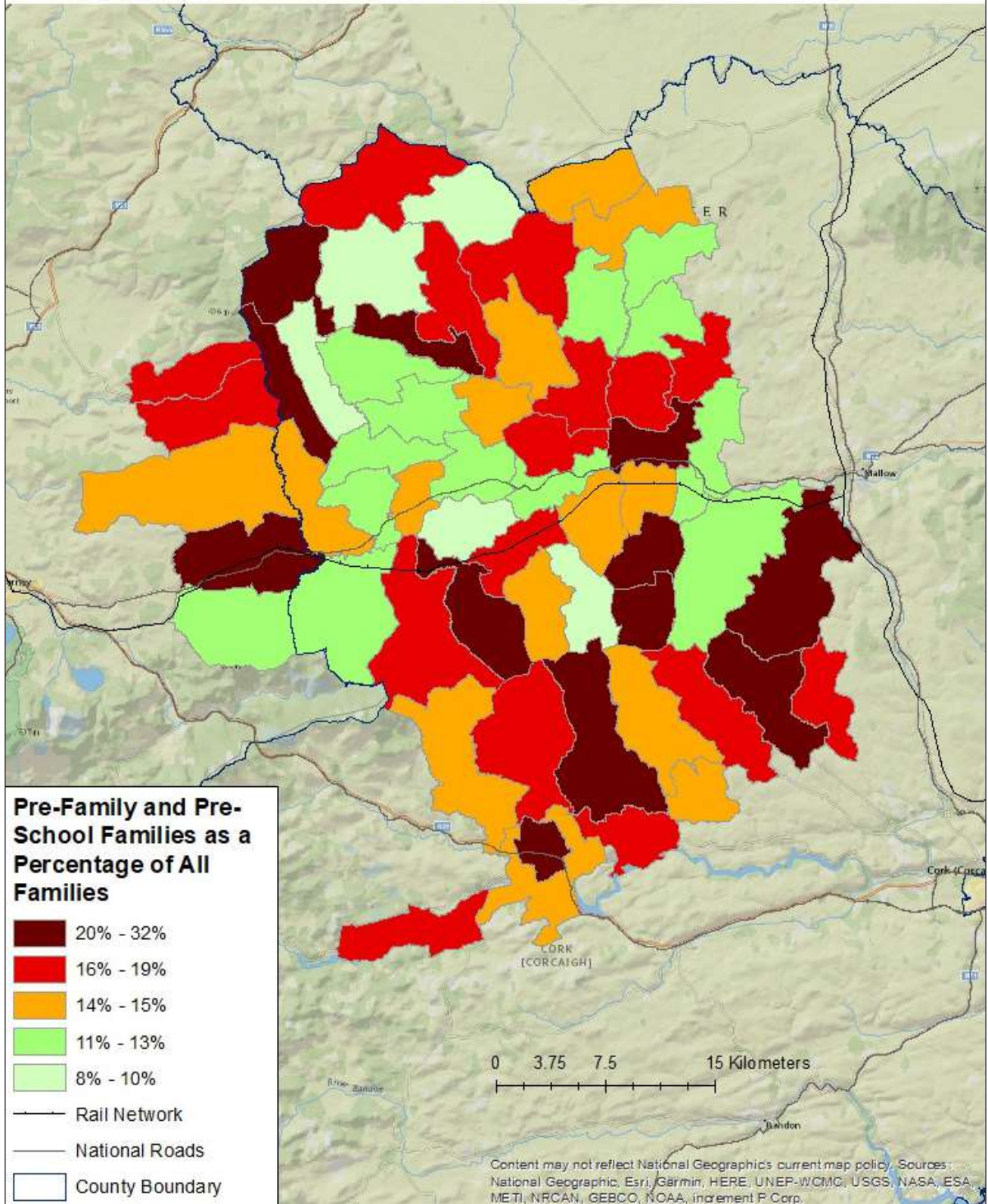
35. Percentage of Families with Children Under 15, headed by a Lone Parent (mother or father) in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Children in families headed by a lone parent in Duhallow and the Lee Valley, at ED level, 2016



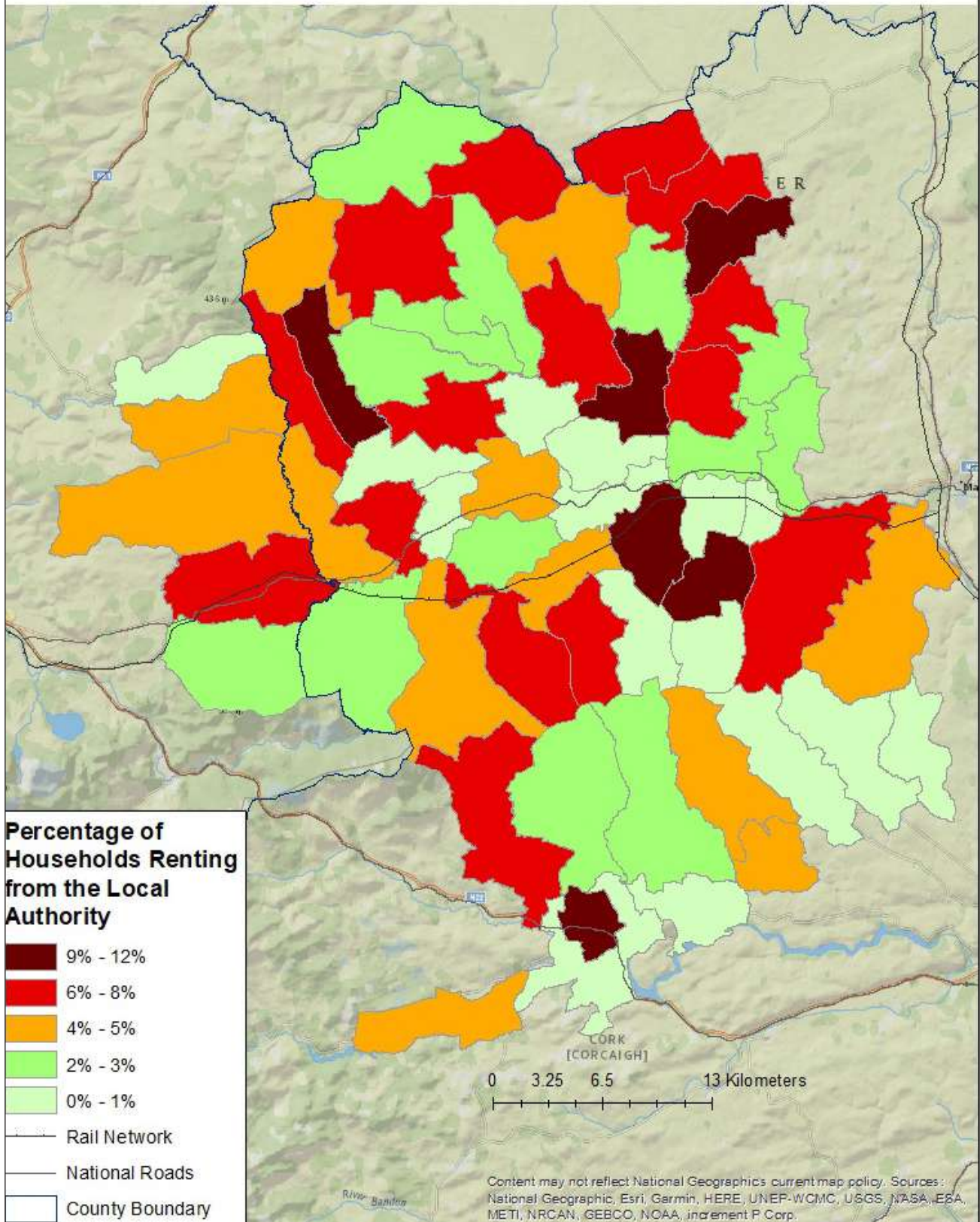
36. Percentage of Children in Families headed by a Lone Parent (father or mother) in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Pre-Family and Pre-School Families as a Percentage of All Families in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



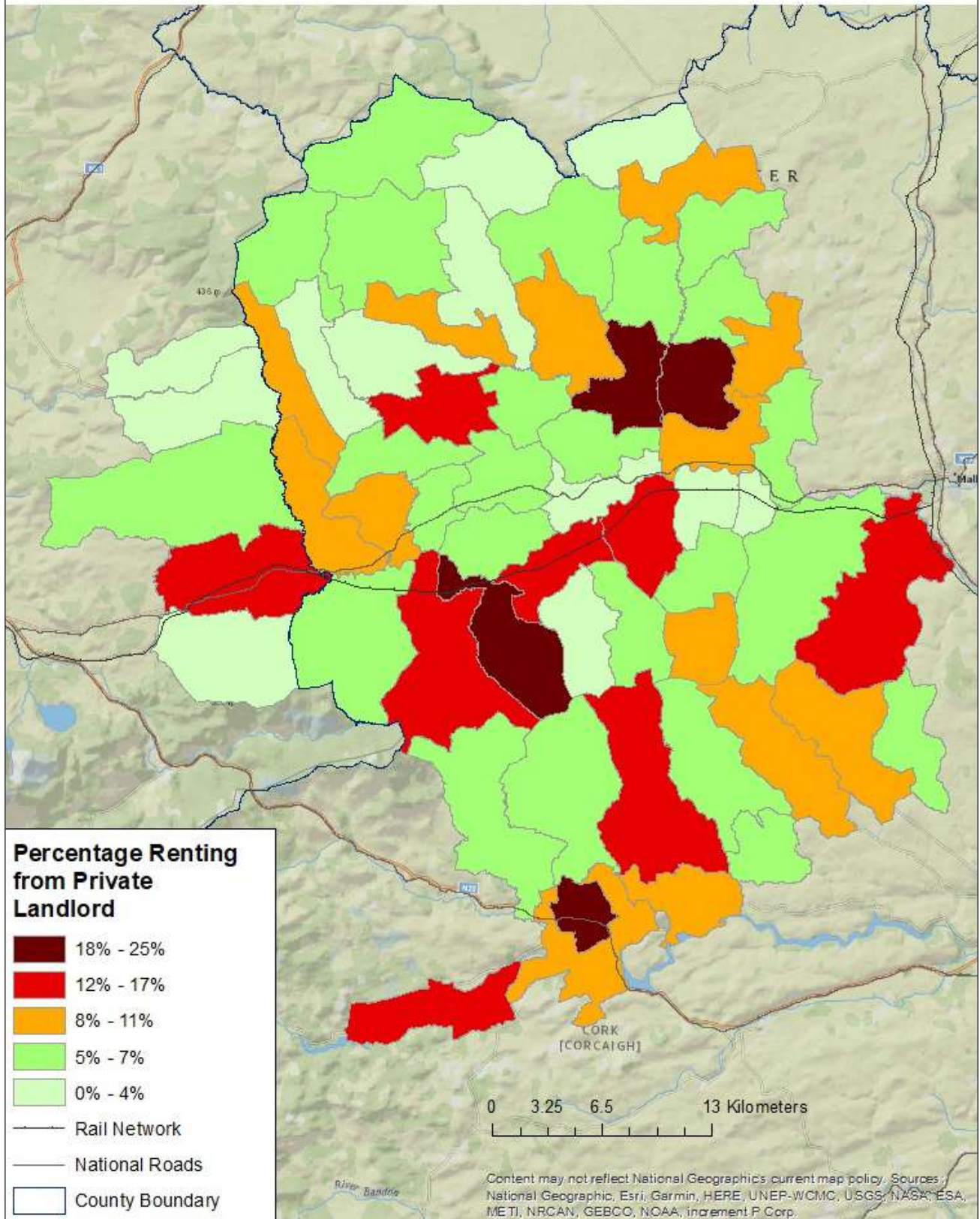
37. Pre-Family and Pre-School Families, as a Percentage of All Families in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Households Renting from the Local Authority in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



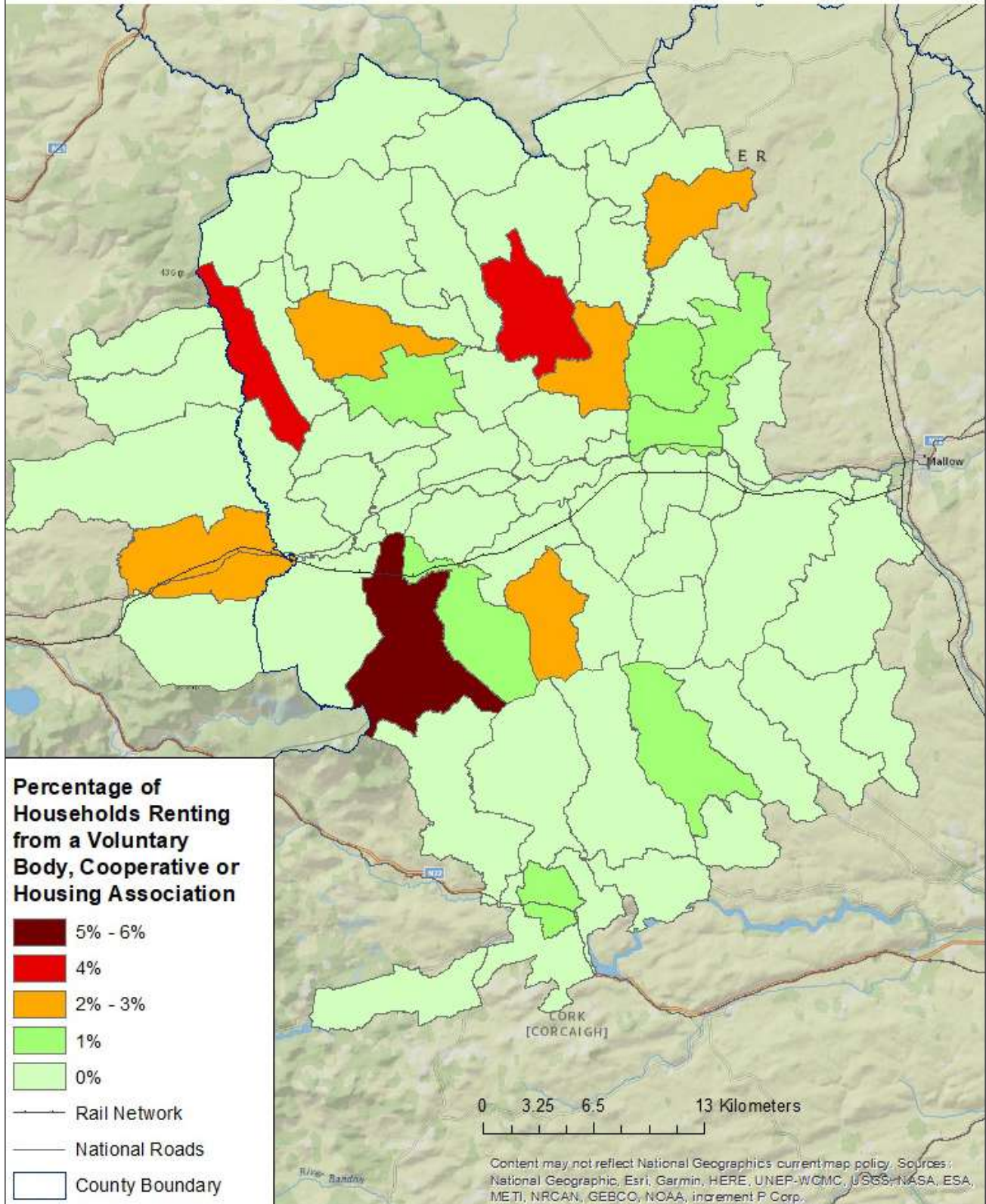
38. Percentage of Households renting from the Local Authority in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Population Renting from Private Landlord in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



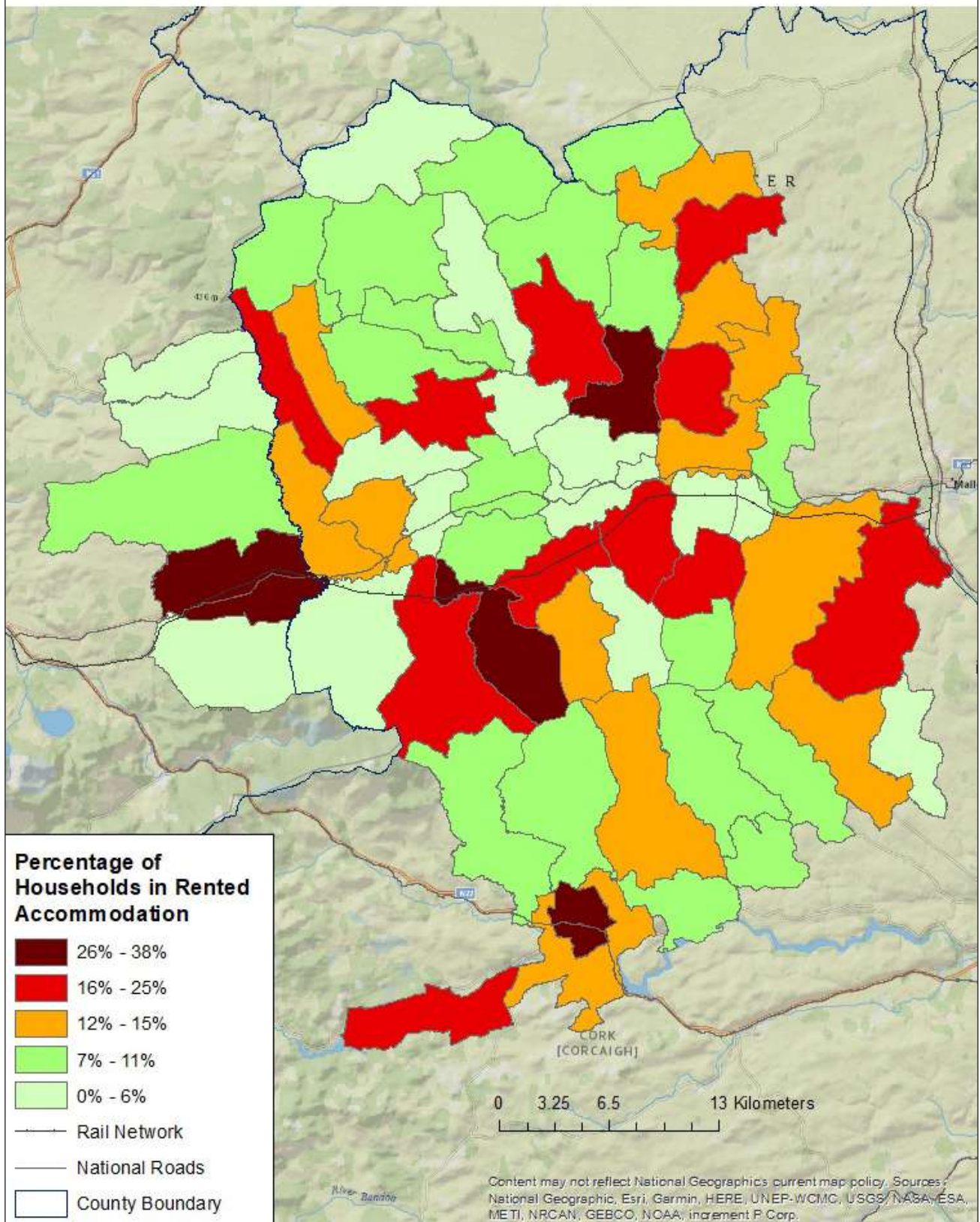
39. Percentage of Households renting from a Private Landlord Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Households in Rented from a Voluntary Body, Cooperative or Housing Association in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



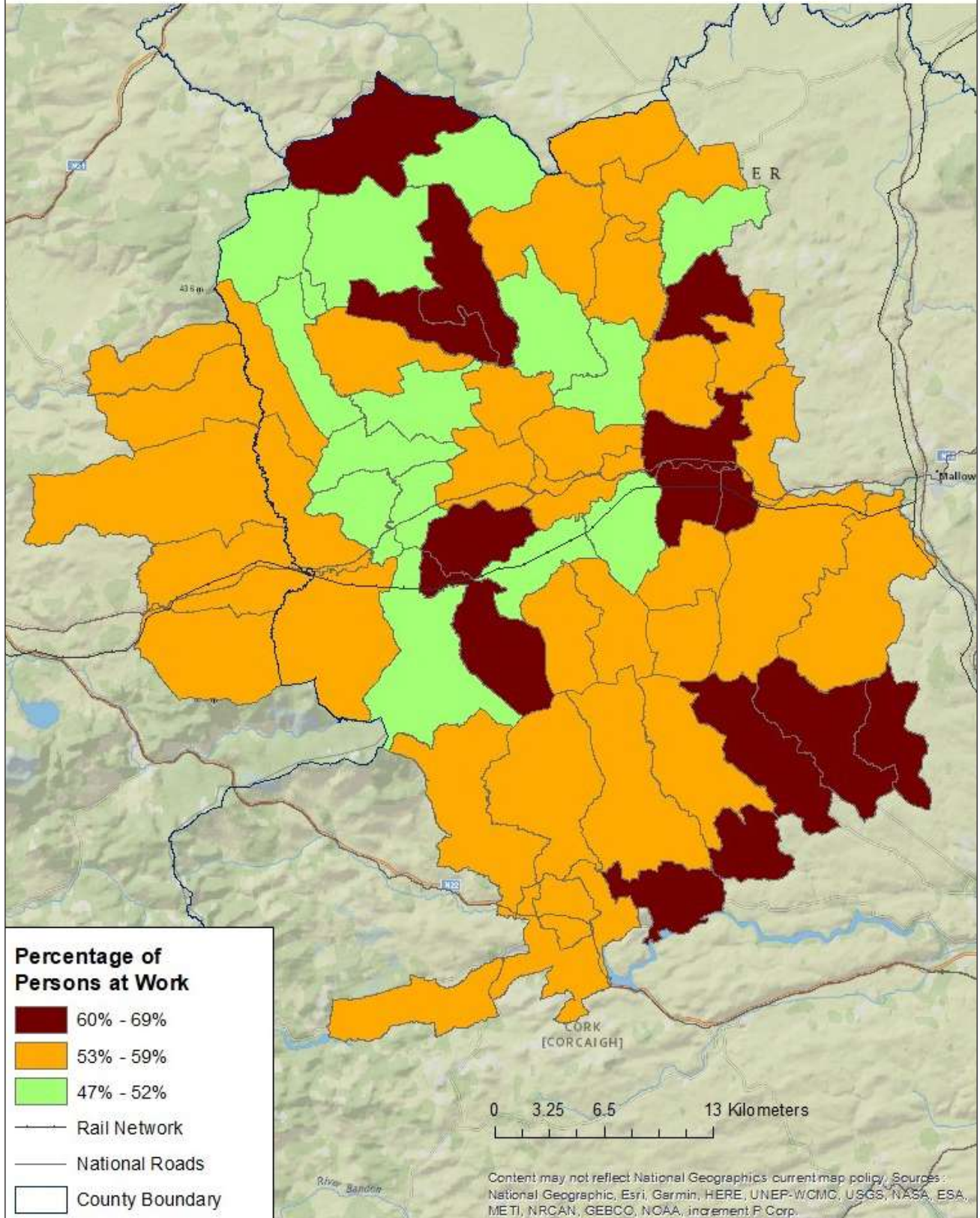
40. Percentage of Households renting from a Voluntary Body, Cooperative or Housing Association in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Households in Rented Accommodation in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



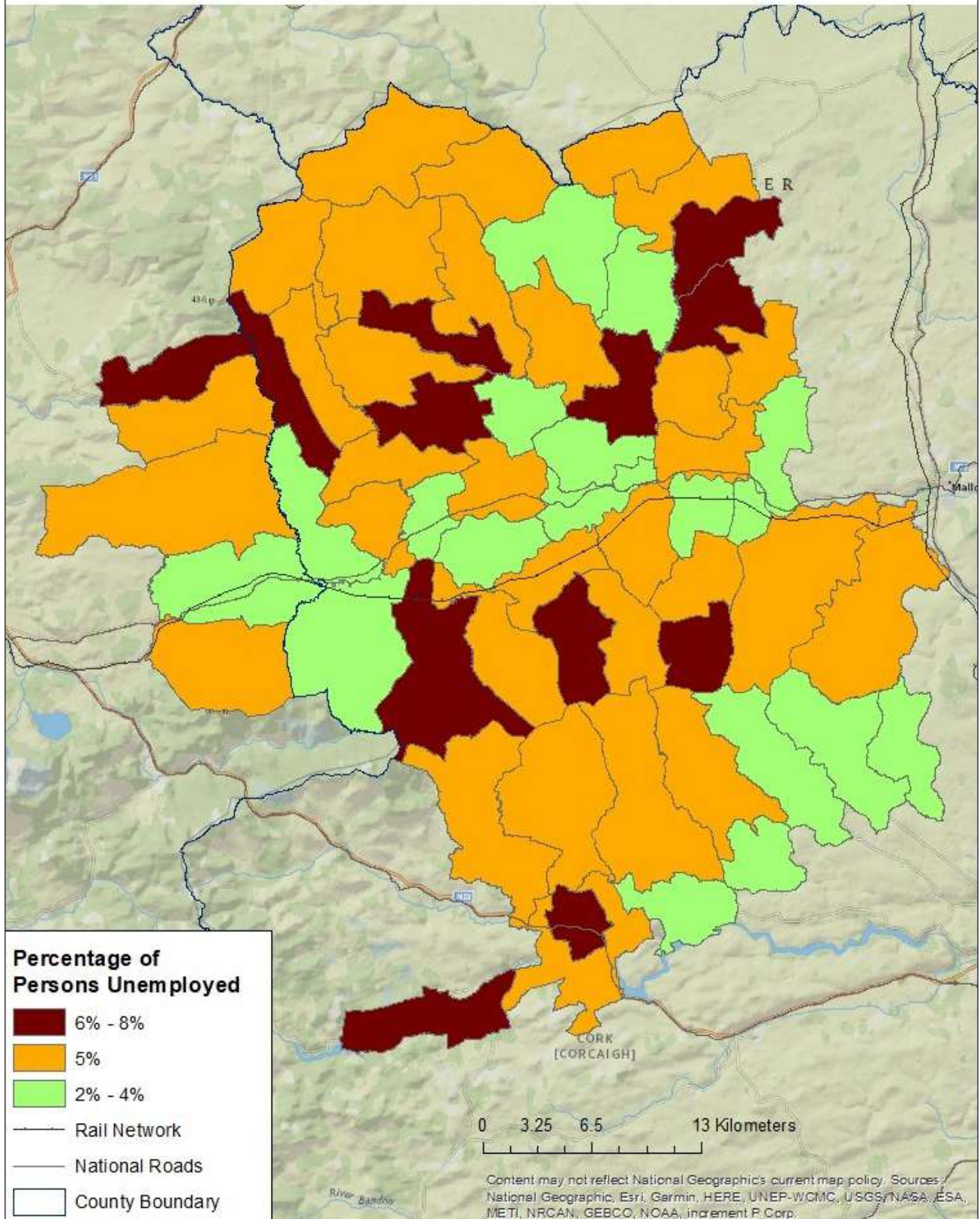
41. Percentage of Households in Rented Accommodation in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of the Labour Force at Work, in Duhallow and the Lee Valley, at ED Level, 2016



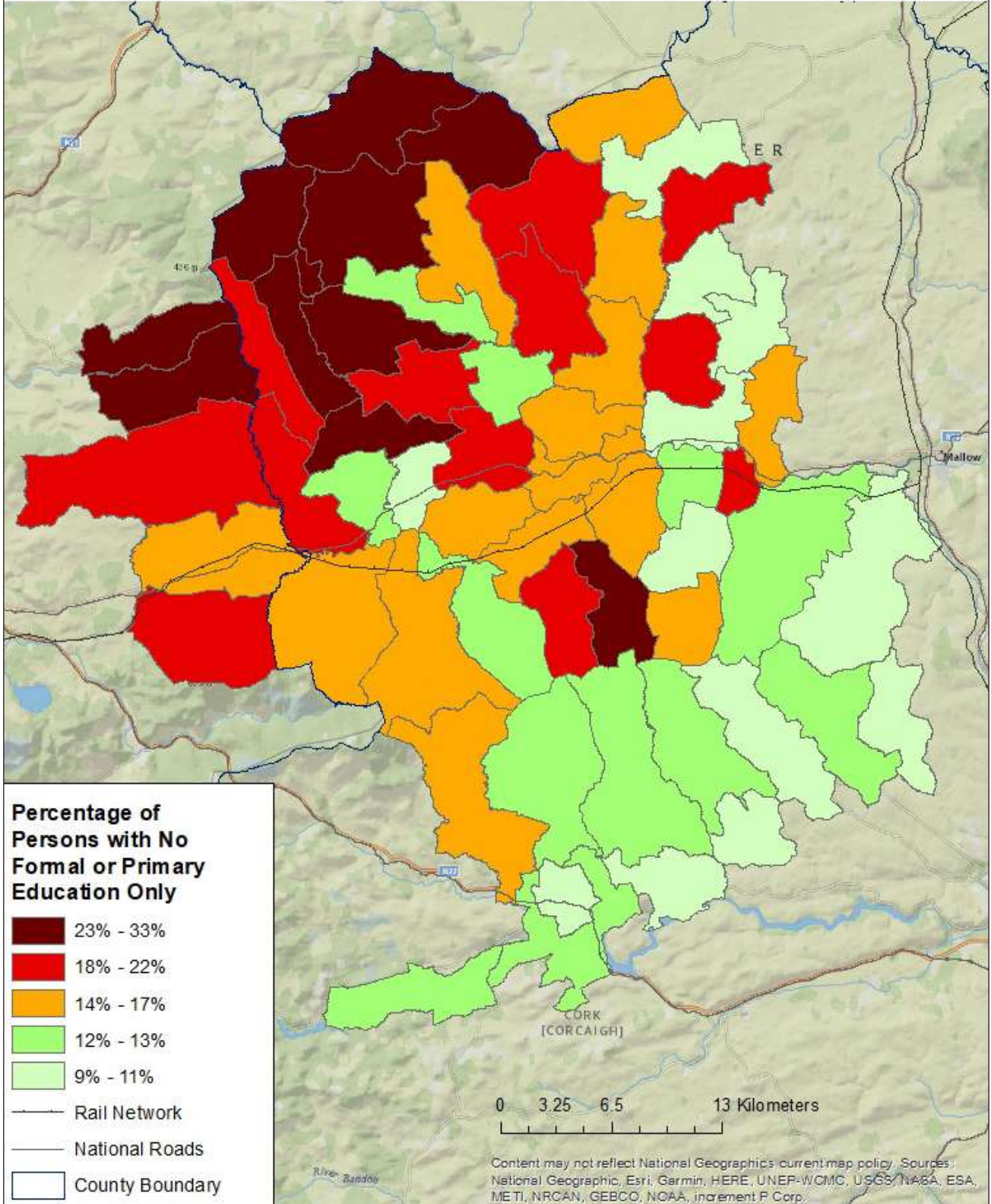
42. Persons at Work as a Percentage of the Labour Force in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of the Labour Force who are unemployed in Duhallow and the Lee Valley, at ED Level, 2016



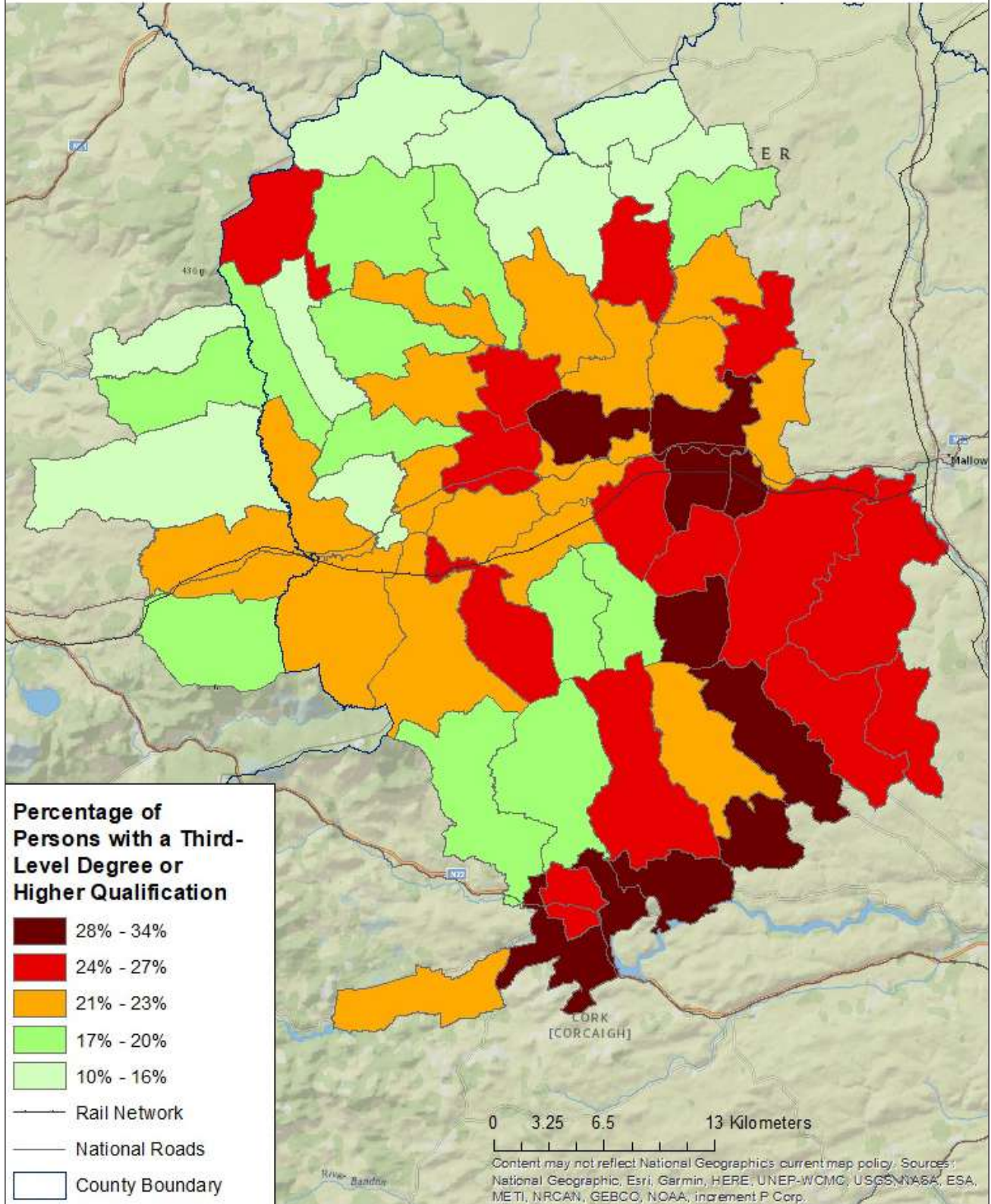
43. Unemployed Persons as a Percentage of the Labour Force in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Persons with No Formal or Primary Education Only in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



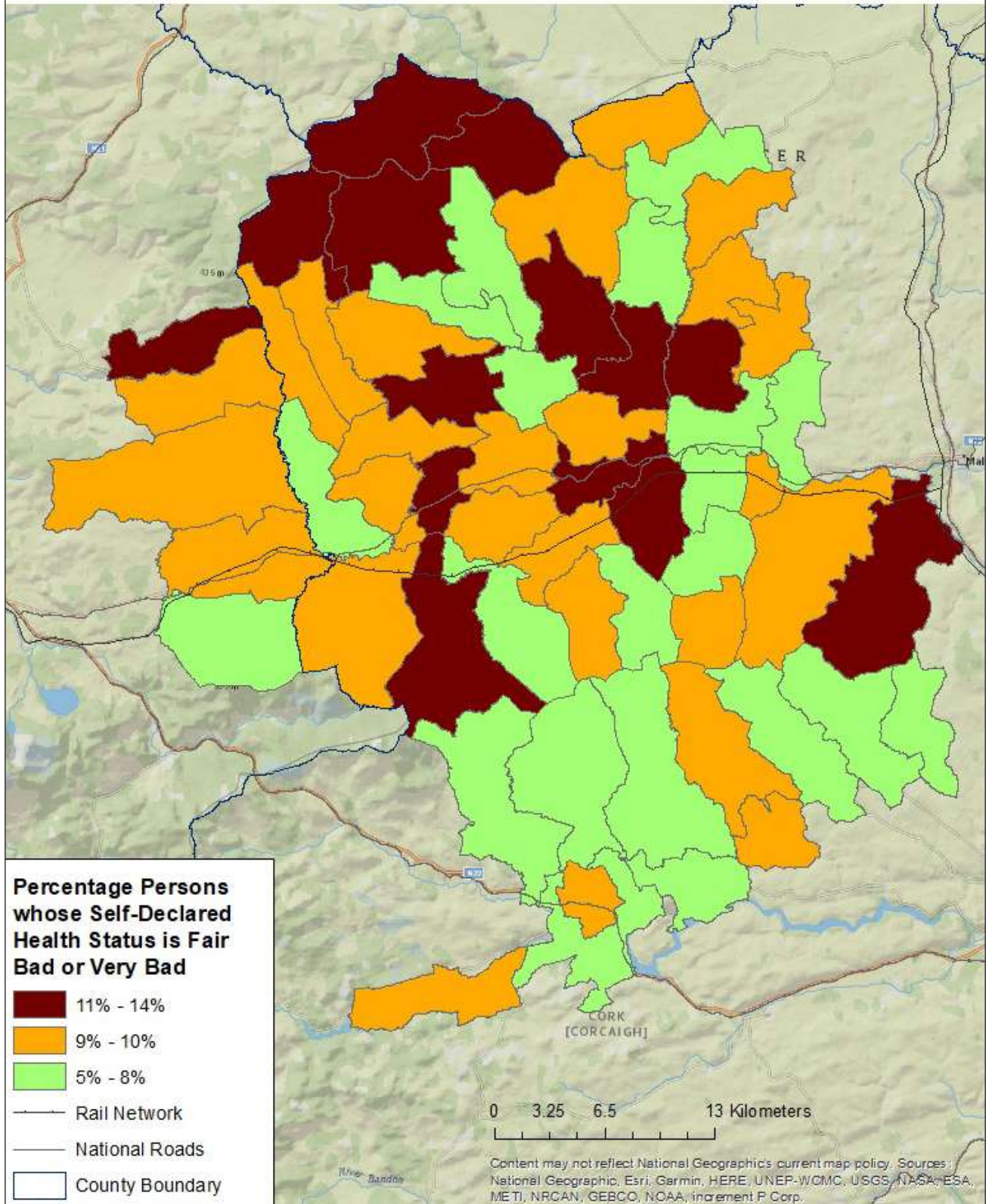
44. Percentage Persons with No Formal or Primary Education Only in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Persons with a Third-Level Degree or Higher Qualification in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



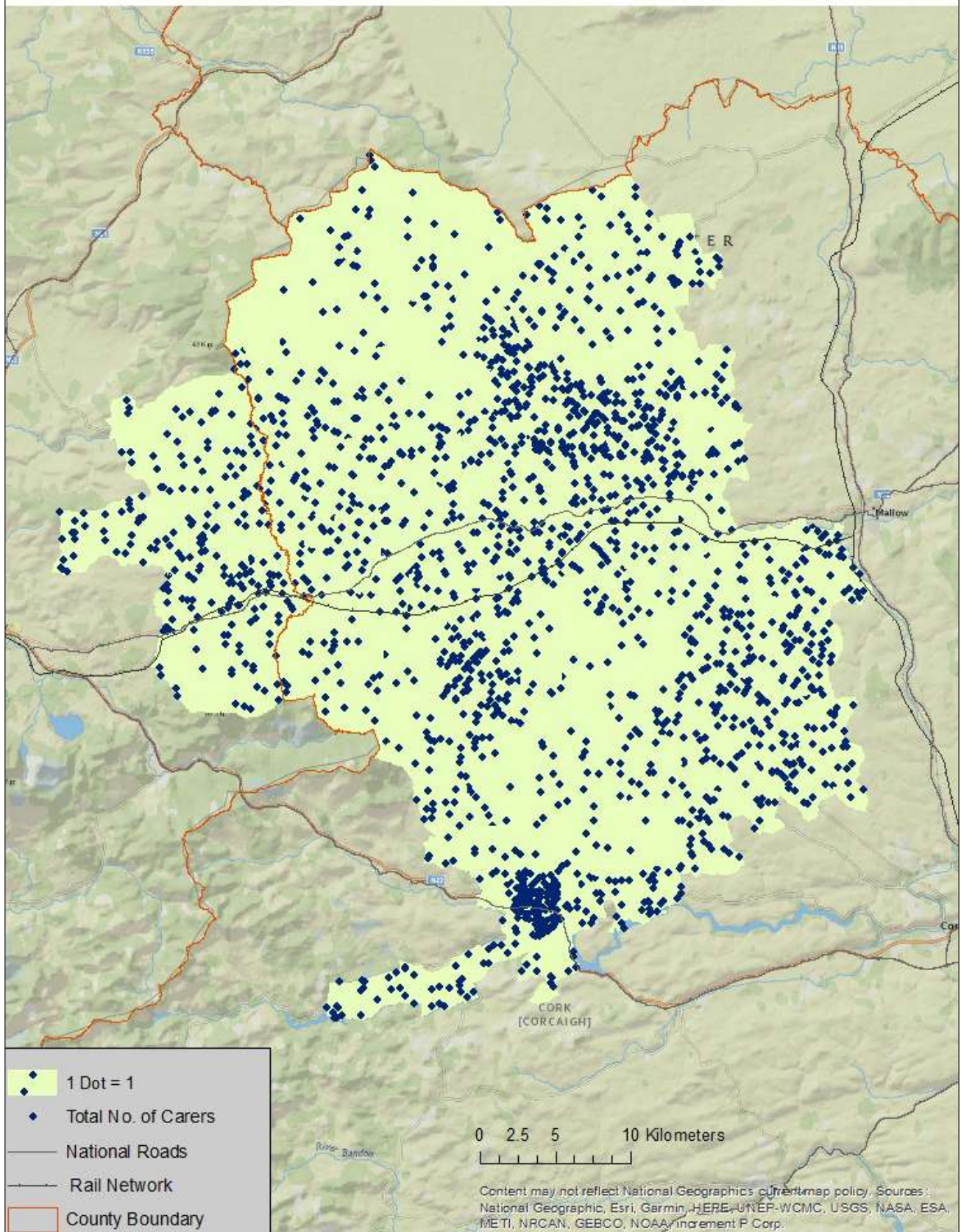
45. Percentage Persons with a Third-Level Degree or Higher qualification in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Persons Whose Self-Declared Health Status is Fair, Bad or Very Bad in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



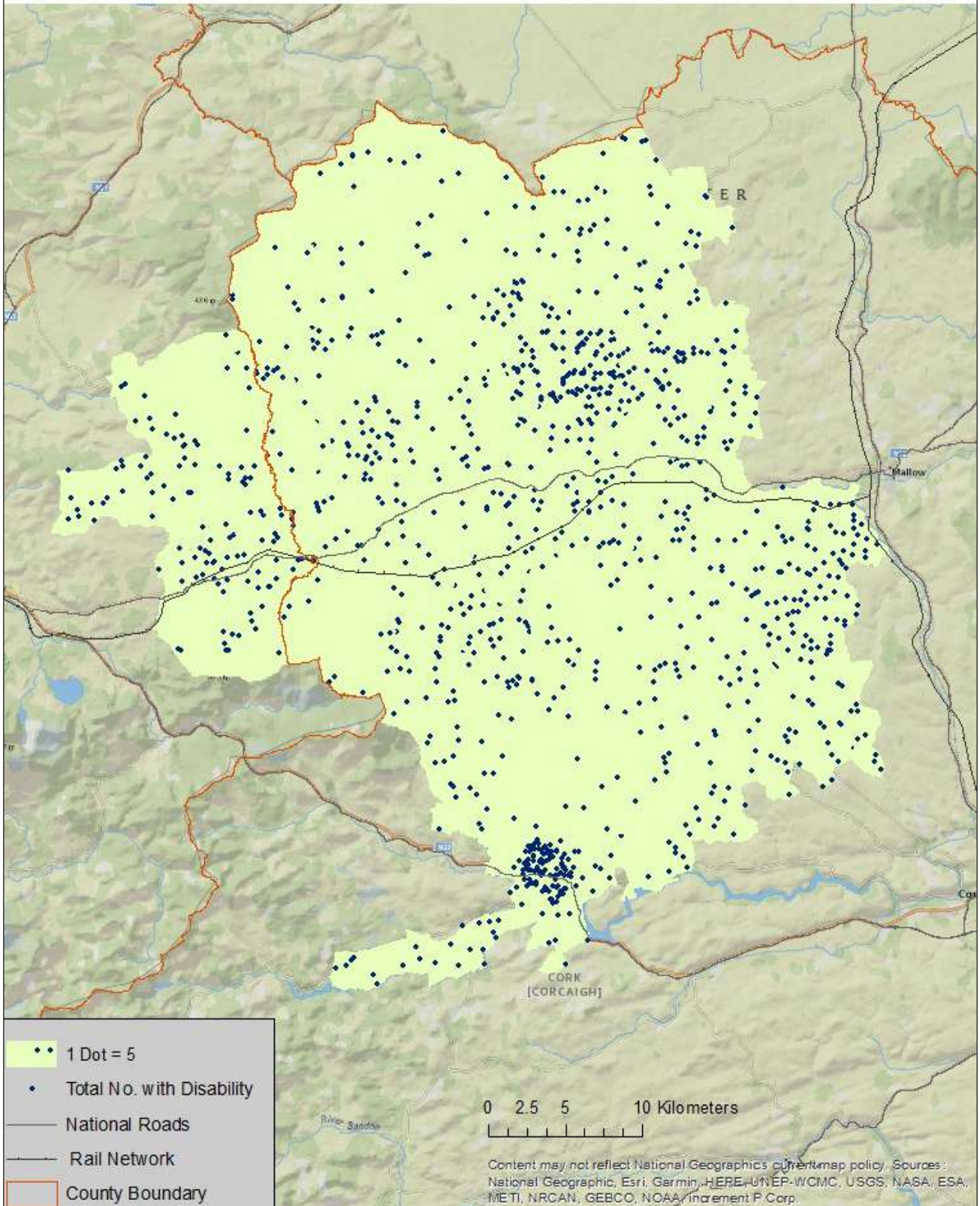
46. Percentage Persons whose Self-Declared Health Status is Fair, Bad or Very Bad in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Carers Living in Duhallow and Lee Valley, 2016



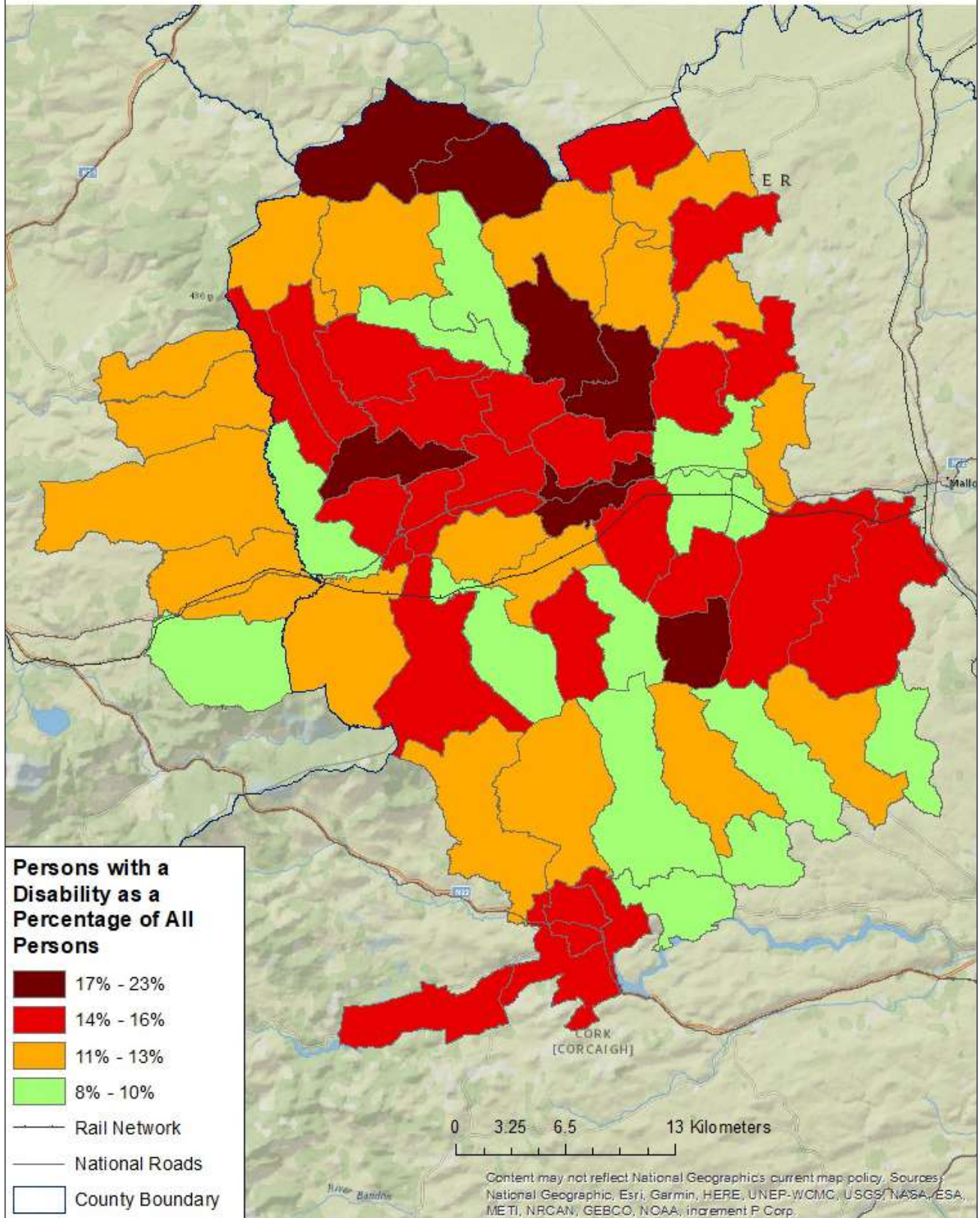
47. Number of Carers in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2016

Total Number of People with a Disability Living in Duhallow and Lee Valley, 2016



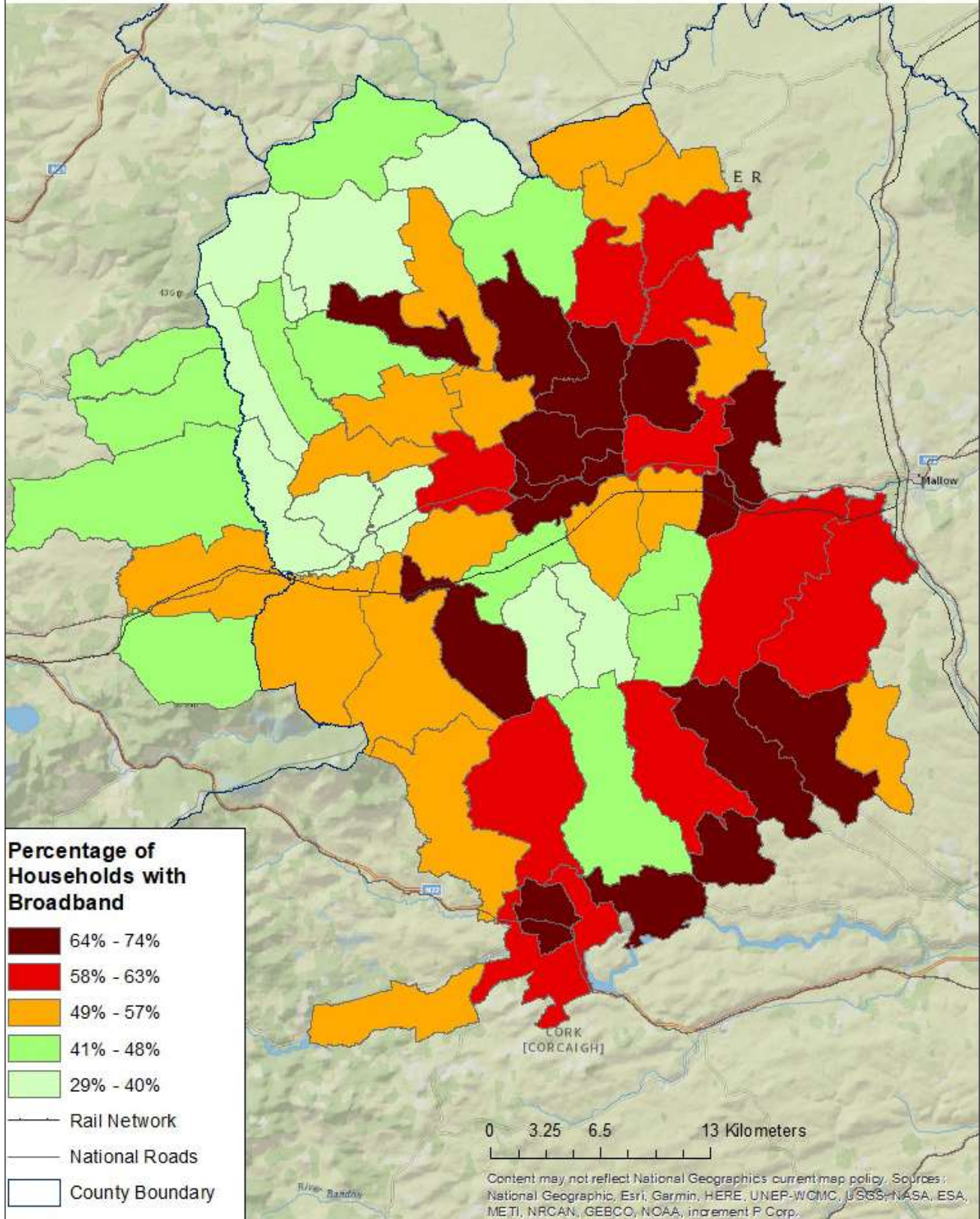
48. Number of Persons with a Disability in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2016

Persons with a Disability as a Percentage of All Persons in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



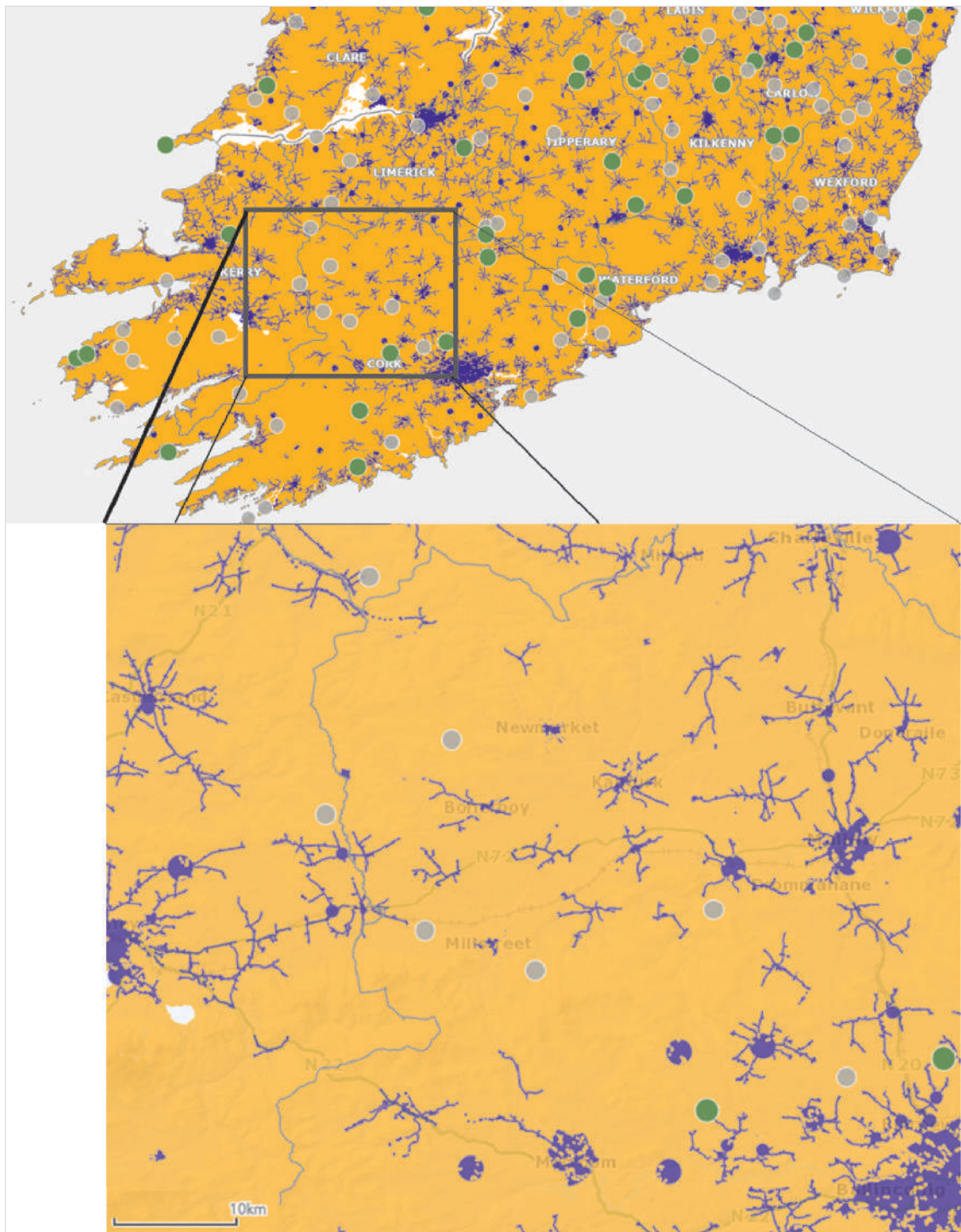
49. Persons with a Disability as a Percentage of All Persons in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Percentage of Households with Broadband in Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



50. Percentage Households with Broadband in Duhallow & Lee Valley, at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016

Status of the rollout of the National Broadband Plan, October 2020



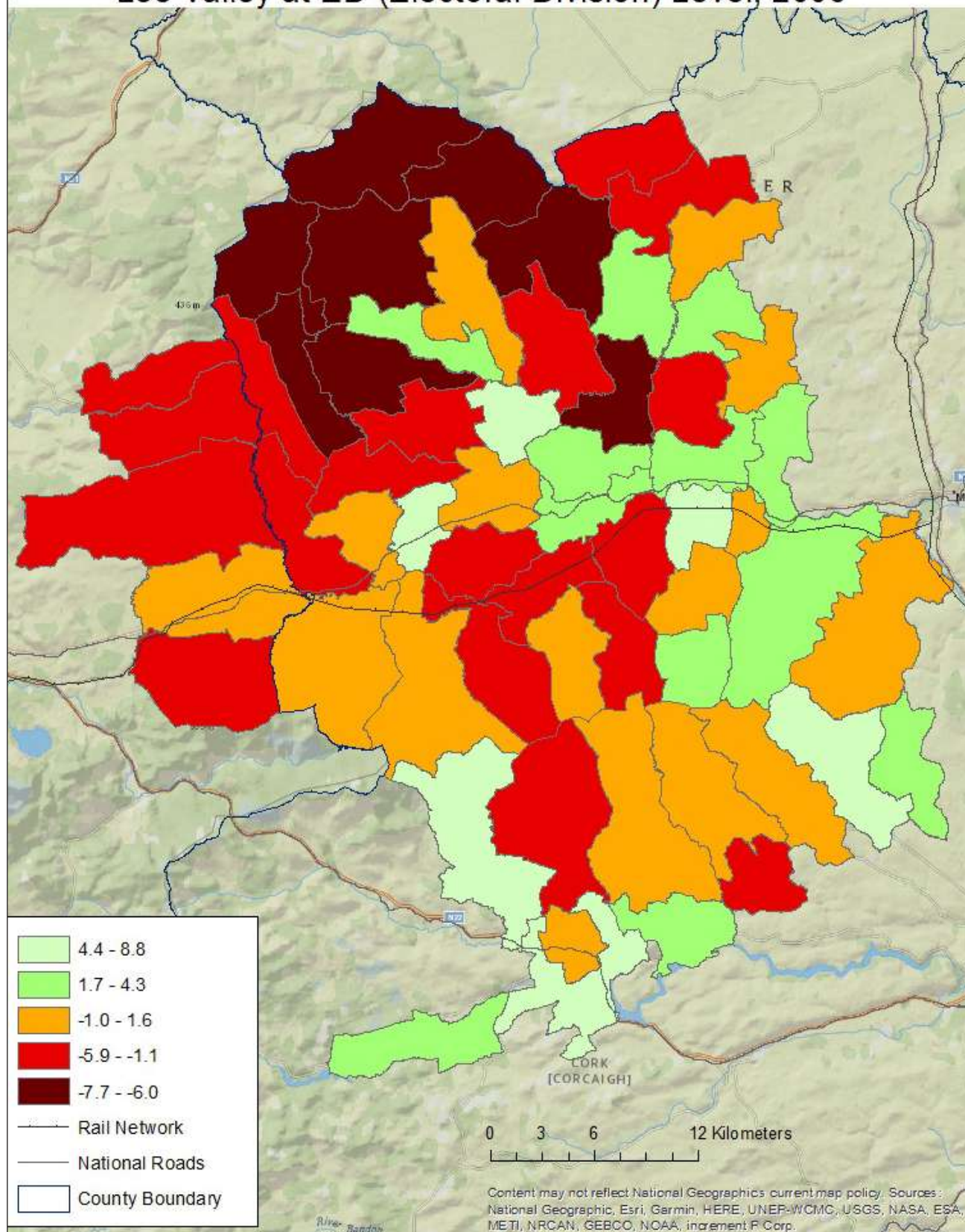
Blue signifies connected areas.

Green dots signify connected community hubs.

Grey dots signify proposed community hubs.

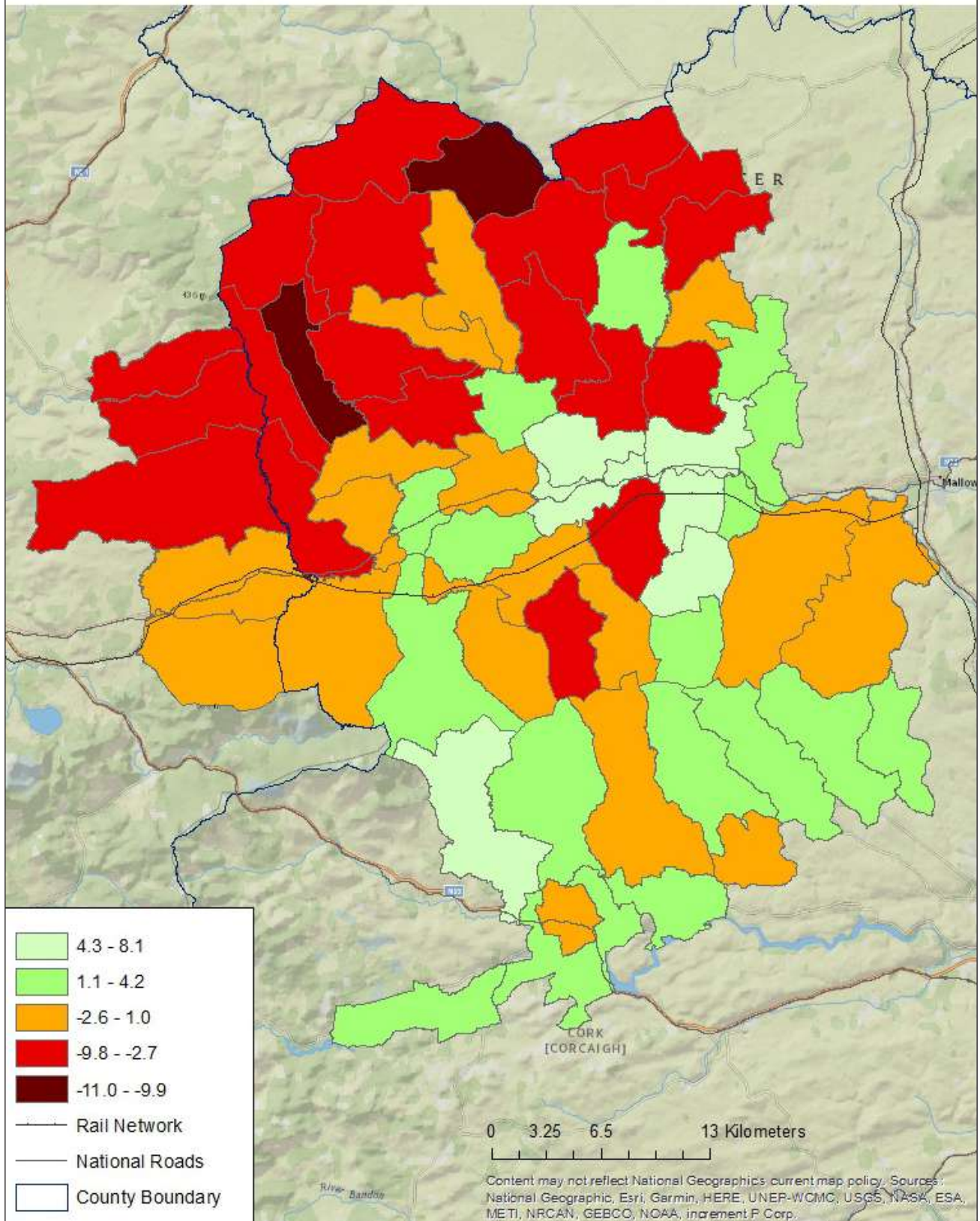
51. Broadband accessibility - based on the rollout of the National Broadband Plan (Q4, 2020)

HP Deprivation Index for Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2006



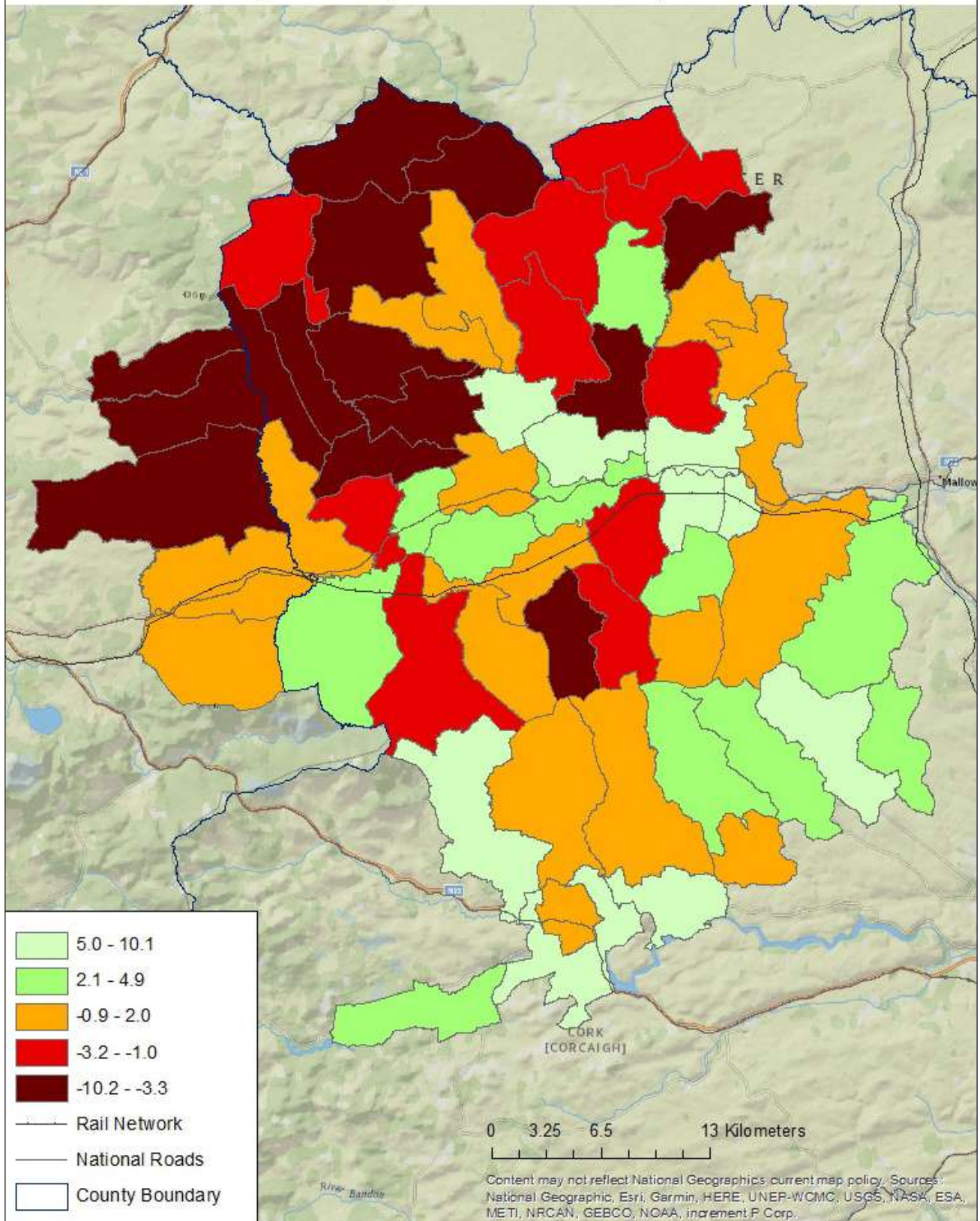
52. Relative Affluence and Deprivation Score, as measured on the Haase Index, at ED (Electoral Division) Level in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2006

HP Deprivation Index for Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2011



53. Relative Affluence and Deprivation Score, as measured on the Haase Index, at ED (Electoral Division) Level in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2011

HP Deprivation Index for Duhallow and Lee Valley at ED (Electoral Division) Level, 2016



54. Relative Affluence and Deprivation Score, as measured on the Haase Index, at ED (Electoral Division) Level in Duhallow & Lee Valley, 2016

Appendices

Annex 2: Comments in response to open-ended questions

Boherbue

What other facilities would you like to see in place?

Swimming Pool

A park for kids

Public transport

Sports facilities, gyms

Better clubhouse at the pitch

Park

A place where 16-18 year olds can go

Playground (Ballydesmond)

Swimming Pool

Park (Ballydesmond)

Cinema

Transport services

More transport services – buses

Abattoir

Mart

A shop and a chipper

A gym

More shops

More facilities, such as a gym

Better public transport systems

Gym

More social gatherings

Playground (Kiskeam)

More activities

Jobs

Youth club or Study club (Ballydesmond)

Youth club

Basketball / tennis courts (outside and accessible)

Reopen the park

Transport services to Killarney, or at least to Rathmore / Millstreet to access trains.

Better gym equipment

Footpaths

Train station

Swimming Pool

A gym for everybody – not just GAA boys (Dromtarriffe)

A gym (Knocknagree)

Youth club

More widely available public transport

Better facilities for young people

A place where people can go to clear their minds in a quiet and peaceful place

A park (Newmarket)

More services for young people, other than the GAA

Wheelchair accessibilities

Shop (Cullen)

Refurbished gym (Cullen)

More activities e.g., Zumba

Youth groups / facilities

An area for walking (Dromtarriffe)

An all-weather pitch for the GAA

Chipper (Meelin)

Cinema

A walking group and more for teens

Grocery shop (Dromtarriffe)

Bus station

Fashion shop

Cinema

Youth club

Cinema

Astro turf pitch

Den Joes (Kiskeam)

More fitness equipment around (Kiskeam)

Park

Cinema

Shopping Centre

Walking trail (Ballydesmond)

What steps need to be taken to improve the quality of life for young people in your locality?

Find out what the youth want.

Organise more events.

More surveys like this.

More facilities.

Improve transport services

Make things more accessible

Government decentralisation

Better local and county-wide infrastructure projects e.g., expansion of railroads, bus routes.

Stronger construction regulations to prevent expansion of urban sprawl and to increase densities within urban and rural communities.

Communalisation of farmland and reduction of its size to increase efficiency in production and distribution and allow expansion of natural environments e.g., forests.

A meeting

Make the problems known

Providing more facilities

Introduce more facilities for teenagers

More facilities

More facilities for the youth club (Dromtarriffe)

Youth club

More activities

Set up youth clubs

Youth clubs for secondary school students

Have youth clubs for 16-17 year olds

Any other comments

At times, adults can be very judgemental and prejudicial towards us. There is a lack of respect, in my opinion. I don't think enough is done for people our age. (no. 254). Male, age 17.

Government decentralisation

Better local and countywide infrastructure projects e.g., expansion of railroads, bus routes.

Stronger construction regulations to prevent expansion of urban sprawl and to increase densities with urban and rural communities.

Communalisation of farmland and reduction of its size to increase efficiency in production and distribution and allow expansion of natural environments e.g., forests. Male, 16. No. 271.

Coachford

What other facilities would you like to see in place?

A youth club for older people

More public transportation

A shop

No potholes

A bus service

More sports facilities

More shops

More classes

Gym

Shop

Pitches and all that

A place to hang out with people

A shop in Dripsey (the nearest one is in Coachford and having it at Dripsey Cross would make life easier.)

Better bus service

A shop

Better services for kids

Pitch

Facilities for young people

Cinema

Clothes shops

Park

Clubs

Badminton Club

Walks / walkways

Historical places

A cinema

A shopping centre

More buses

Foróige

Proper bus services

A restaurant

Playground

Running track

More youth facilities

A good music shop

More entertainment

More recreational activities

Golf club

Swimming pool

Nice roads

A shop

Post office

More footpaths (I walk home from school)

Petrol station

A church

Fibre Broadband

SuperValu (a big supermarket)

A shop

Theatre

Watersports

More buses

Golf course

Gym

Shop

More shops

Pitch

Playground

Better public services for transport

Shop

Post Office – kept open

Cinema

Bigger shop

School for people with intellectual disabilities

Shopping Centre

Shop

Bus Station
 Skateboard area
 GAA grounds
 Gym
 Sports facilities
 Gym
 Swimming pool
 A soccer pitch that isn't on a slanting hill
 Fitness equipment
 Playground
 Swimming pool
 More public transport services
 Better shop
 A park with benches
 Youth club
 More travel services e.g. buses
 Youth facilities
 Cinema
 Rugby club
 Multi-sports complex
 Better buses
 Better food options
 Gym
 Gym
 Good shops
 Restaurant
 Food places
 Go-karting
 Paintball
 Race track

What steps should be taken to improve the quality of life for young people in your locality?

Get them outside more and off the phones.
 More places to hang-out – restaurants or a club room
 Friend making
 More facilities for young people and organisations
 Ask young people what they want.
 Sports and recreation facilities
 Better mental health services
 A council for young people in the town
 More busses heading into different places
 To create sports ground and recreational places for young people
 To have more places to walk and adventure
 More cafés
 Give them more to do. Let young people get involved in various activities.
 Give us a voice.
 I think that there should be better sports facilities in my local area, or even a park where myself and other young people could go.
 Have more areas where young people can just be.
 More socialising places
 Drugs and alcohol control
 Youth groups for all ages
 More facilities / more clubs / better transport
 Just get young people more involved in different things who don't play sport. Have different clubs or have different activities that will get people involved. Just because they don't like sport doesn't mean they aren't interested in something else (Female, 16).

Better transport to the city. Some of my friends and I have to be dropped to a bus station, because it's past a main road that I can't walk or cycle on.

Better sports facilities and better foods.
More activities / organisations should be made available for young people.

Encourage them to play sport.

More policing of binge drinking.

Areas where we can hang out.

Any other comments

There needs to be better mental health services in schools and other places where teenagers go, as it is not easy for most teenagers to get counselling outside school. We have a counsellor in our school that is not just trained enough to deal with the things teenagers have to deal with today. Most people I know would like to get counselling, but have no way of accessing it. Most adults don't actually understand struggles that teenagers are facing. There have been improvements in mental health service over the past couple of years, but it is still not good enough (Female, 16). No. 321.

I enjoy being an adult, as I feel more important and confident, and I am able to do whatever I wish, which is very important (anonymous).

Rural areas are very boring for young people, but I guess that's what being rural is (Male, 16).

I think there should be more facilities for young people, who can gather together doing something they are interested in. This would improve the quality of life and there would be less crime (Female, 16).

No one really enjoys school, and teachers are either hostile or really bad at their job. That is the majority of them, but some are good to be fair (Male, 16).

It is hard. There are a lot of pressures from social media. Rents for college accommodation are too high. Unskilled work is declining. You have to live at home for longer. However, young adults are more accepting and loving of LGBT and people of colour

and different religions than previous generations (Female, 17).

Teachers put pressure on students in studying and exams (Male, 17).

Cheaper insurance on cars and bikes for young people (Male, 16).

Kanturk

What other facilities would you like to see in place?

A gym

Bus

A shop that stays open

Public transport

Photography club

More drama

Film

Astro turf

Gym

Good restaurants

Gym

Pool

Track

Clubs

Shops

Public seating

Walking areas

Cinema

Train

Better bus services – more routes

More places to eat and better prices

Youth facilities

Public transport

Cinema

Swimming pool

Youth club

Cinema

Sports teams

Better shops

More community activity

Cinema

More sports services

Cinema

Better shops

Nightclub

Youth clubs

Bus route

Cinema

Swimming Pool

A shop

Better school

Park or gathering place

Astro-turf

More shops

A better gym

A shop

A cinema

Park

Better public transport

Activities for teens

A sensory garden – somewhere nice to meet up

A pool

A park

A new restaurant / McDonalds

Driving lessons

More groups set up for young people

A shop

Clothes shops

Bus service to local towns

Library service

Counselling services – listen to young people on mental health and how to deal with someone who has mental ill-health problems

Better homework / after school study clubs

More shops

More discos for young people

Safe places for young people to go with their friends, so that they don't go to dangerous places instead

Parks / fitness classes
 Transportation
 Outings for people with special needs
 Youth club
 A shop (rural)
 Public transport
 A young priest
 A café where young people can hang out
 Cinema
 Library
 More work for young people
 Basketball court/ club
 Youth club
 A shop
 A gym
 Basketball court
 Indoor gym
 Cinema
 Pitch & Putt
 Restaurants
 Better gym
 Better shopping for young people
 A place for young people to hang out
 Cinema
 More businesses
 More houses
 Houses
 Bus services
 Cinema
 Shops
 Places for young people to meet up weekly
 Cinema
 A place for students to study at weekends
 Places for young people to meet without alcohol use
 LGFA members being allowed to use the main GAA pitch

What steps should be taken to improve the quality of life for young people in your locality?

Public transport
 More facilities
 Awareness of what's there – publicise more
 Modernise facilities
 More public transport
 A better night-life scene
 Better facilities
 Better running of current facilities
 More employment
 Improve facilities for younger people
 Decrease the amount of people doing week in the 'S' outside the church in Kanturk
 They should be treated with respect everywhere they go
 Job opportunities
 More information about important issues
 More speakers
 More areas for young people to stay and hang-out in
 A place to hang out with friends
 Basketball court
 More opportunities to meet people
 Swimming / Leisure centre
 A bit more trust
 More places to meet people to talk to
 More emphasis should be placed on hobbies / sport, so that they will get involved
 Youth groups, so young people can get together
 A place to gather and make friends

Older people to encourage young people to take part in the locality

We should have more places to get together that aren't too far away from each town and villages. The facilities should be easily assessable and for all ages.

Social events for under 18s

More activities for young people e.g., music in the hall / festivals in town

More mental health talks – being able to trust our elders

There isn't enough done for them, as they get branded as troublemakers; more groups and volunteering should be set up. More facilities should be set up as well, e.g., better sports' facilities (Female, 16).

More activities for teens

Training young people on mental health and how to deal with someone who has mental health problems

More public transport

Make people more included in volunteer work

More facilities

More help for mental health

More fitness facilities

Mentoring young people how to deal with mental health and how to help somebody with mental health issues

There is no library in Kanturk, which is unacceptable for the education of the town's young people.

Have more volunteer work and jobs and training for young people to prepare them for later life

To also advertise courses, because nobody knows what IRD offers

Basketball club

Think of us more when new plans are being made and if ideas are given, to take them into account

More jobs / part-time jobs, as it's difficult to find them

Any other comments

School is too stressful – too much work; too much expected of us (Female, 16). No. 61.

It can suck, but I'm alright (Female, 16). No. 62.

Transportation is difficult (Female, 17). No. 79.

Getting a job is difficult (Female, 17). No. 79.

There is nowhere for us to talk about our problems – nowhere for us to come together and talk openly about our issues and support each other (Female, 16). No. 100

No facilities for young people, therefore they're going to big towns such as Mallow and getting involved in drugs / drink (Female 16). No. 104

It's hard for young people to hang out with their friends, because of the lack of facilities. Instead, young people turn to drink with their friends, because there is nowhere else to go, which is unacceptable. The nearest place for young people to go is Mallow or to the cinema. It is too far a distance to go when there should be appropriate facilities in the Kanturk area. This problem leads to a rise in crime in the area, as young people occupy themselves with dangerous activities, such as drugs and alcohol (Female, 16). No. 109.

I feel failed by the courts system. Many in my family are affected and they have been failed. Years of abuse and nothing was done (Female, 16). No. 47.

Just because I'm not Irish, I find people treat me differently (Female, 18) No. 92.

Macroom

What other facilities would you like to see in place?

More facilities for the youth
More clothing shops and make-up shops
Somewhere to meet up with my friends
Swimming Pool
Cinema
Public Transport
More shopping facilities
More facilities for young people
Cinema
Bowling Alley
Ice skating
New and easier transportation
A gym
An area where young people can meet
A youth club
Sheltered area for the youth
Public transport from Clondrohid to Macroom
Running track
Indoor recreation e.g. bowling, arcade, pool table etc.
A place for teenagers to meet up
Places for social gatherings. Sports places
Better public transport and places where teenagers can meet together
A train and more places to hang out if the weather is bad
A youth club
More activities and fast food places
Shopping Centre
Indoor play areas
Courses for teenagers
More jobs
Space to meet with friends
Better schools

Youth café
Mental health services
Cinema
Just a chill place for us to hang out
More clubs for including different sports e.g., netball
McDonalds
More places for youth to hang out and meet up
Better transport
McDonalds
Camogie club
Hockey club
Healthy food restaurants / cafés
Transport systems
More shops
A shop
Cinema
Nando's
Somewhere for teenagers to go and not feel pressurised by adults e.g., a youth club

What steps should be taken to improve the quality of life for young people in your locality?

Build a shopping centre and places for people to hang out with friends

More inclusion – all together

More shopping facilities

A better secondary schools with teachers who actually care about wellbeing

Better public transport for the countryside

There should be more places for young people to go to.

People should not presume that when they see a group of us that we are up to something.

More facilities for young people – something to do, so they can meet up and do things instead of drinking, smoking, drugs etc..

Reduce the amount of peer pressure to drink, drugs and sex

Places for youth

Allow there to be sheltered places to hang out

More public transport and sporting facilities

More discos and indoor recreational facilities and events

Not have the gardaí being rude and belittling of our age group and remind them 'give respect to get respect'

Emphasis on mental health education in schools

Mental health services

Better transport services

Don't judge and group 'all youth' together as trouble makers who disrespect everyone and everything

Think about what they want, because they are the next generation

Mental health (more counselling)

Older generations shouldn't be so against us, and need to open up minds towards us

Starbuck's café, McDonalds, KFC

Talk to them more – often as a friend, not as an enemy

More facilities

More variety of sports

More transport with buses

A youth club

Additional Comments

I feel like being a teen is hard because whenever people see a big gang of us they presume we are up to something bad, when we actually aren't, and it's very annoying (Female, 15). No. 6.

Many adults think that we all drink /smoke / do drugs when that is not the case. People also think that we are up to something if there is a group of teenagers together (Female, 16). No. 7.

I really hope to see a change in Macroom for the youth (Female, 16). No. 11.

Being a teenager sucks, and I am not just saying that like I'm an angsty teen, but am required to take on the big bad world in a few years. We are supposed to be given rights and responsibilities, not just responsibilities (Female, 15). No. 12.

Thank you for taking the time to do this survey with us, and giving us a voice (Female, 16). 20.

It's hard (Female, 16). No. 23.

More information services and open-minded people (Female 16). No. 25.

Asking what they want (Female, 16).

More attention on mental health (Female 17). No. 28.

Need to fix the pressures that come with schools. Far too many people are upset solely because of school (Female, 16). No. 30

Better areas for young people in Macroom.

Millstreet

What other facilities would you like to see in place?

Cinema

Theatre

Better sports ground/ arena

A place for teenagers to do stuff together, like a games' hall

A place to do something fun

Put back our tennis courts

More clubs/ facilities for disabled people

A decent centre for teenagers

Gym

Swimming Pool

McDonalds

Lidl / Aldi

Cinema

Better football pitch

McDonalds

Swimming pool

Active youth clubs

Rural broadband

A park

Youth club.

More clothes shops

Swimming pool

McDonalds

A better football pitch

Somewhere warm and free to go with friends, instead of outside

Youth club

Tennis

A shop (rural)

A bus

Better internet

Running track

Swimming pool

Sports shop

A girls' soccer team

Drama club

More sports teams

Youth club

Better GAA facilities

Youth club

A place for young people to meet up

Youth club

A youth club for teen

A cinema (in Kanturk)

Swimming pool

A hurling wall

Youth club

Cinema

Swimming pool

Improved sports facilities

Regular playground checks

Teenage activities

More interests and activities

Shop or petrol station (rural)

A better athletics facility

A youth club

A swimming pool

What other steps should be taken to improve the quality of life for young people in your locality?

Making public transport more available e.g. a bus, so we don't have to rely on our parents all the time.

A gym and swimming pool – even a small one.

Put back the tennis courts.

Improve internet / broadband services in the countryside.

Youth club

More public transport

Cheaper transport for under 18s

Regarding sex education classes, I think there should be something about how non-straight people do it. We are taught how it's done between males and females, but not any other way. People might be afraid to express their sexuality, because they're inexperienced or haven't been taught what do who and what not.

A wider array of sports – not just GAA

More female sports options (not camogie) e.g., soccer teams etc., as we can't all travel for them.

The politician who took away the tennis courts should never come back.

More activities for youth.

Don't know really. Most of my problems are family related.

Somewhere they can hang out without the want for alcohol, drugs etc..

Have somewhere close to go to talk.

Have meetings for people that want to go there and get stuff off their minds.

Increase policing around under-age drinking and drug use.

Set up a youth club.

Any other comments

Most teachers are very helpful, but some just don't care. It's very hard to come to school when you're worried you'll meet a certain teacher etc., or when you are nearly sweating in their class, because they can be so nasty. You're depending on their mood, which isn't right (Female, 16). No. 234.

Growing up as a young adult today is very challenging, and it is also very pressurising. There is a need to be smart, popular and a good person, have a perfect body, have money, get likes and followers; and balancing all this is hard in a 24-hour day with the distraction of a phone (Female, 16). No. 235.

There is a lot of pressure drink / smoke or go out, and I want to go out, but I don't want to drink or smoke (Female, 17). No. 239.

Still a lot of underline sexism in this areas. Girls are not always seen fit to do 'manly things'. Sports' teams are more optimal for lads. There's soccer, football, hurling, rugby etc., everywhere for them. Girls have to travel to fine somewhere to play. Small areas have only sports teams and music. I would love more things to be brought in e.g., drama, dance (Female, 16). No. 229. From Kilcorney.

Rathmore

What other facilities would you like to see in place?

Playground
Some place to hang out
Swimming pool
Caravan park
Super Valu
Cinema
More places for young people other than football or basketball
More shops
Shops
Cinema
More discos for 16 to 18 years olds
Somewhere for teens to go
A decent basketball hall
Gym
Running track
Pathway
More clubs
Better public transport
Swimming pool
More youth facilities
Public transport
Somewhere for teenagers to go
Somewhere for young people older than third year and younger than 18 to go and meet up outside of school
More places for 16 to 18 year olds to attend
Cinema or sports clubs
Sports shop
Have more activities for teens at the age of 16 to 18.
More shops
Proper basketball hall (Gneeveguilla)
Proper facilities
More shops

More places for young people to hang out without the need for alcohol
Swimming pool
Leisure centre
KDYS
More entertainment facilities
Shop in Knocknagree village
Swimming pool
Playground
Swimming pool
Social club to hang out
Social facilities for meeting friends
Costa
Shopping Centre
Open up the shack in Killarney (donut shop)
Youth centre
Bus to larger towns
Nightclub
Golf course
Leisure centre – swimming pool
More buses
Cinema
Recreational and social
Music
Swimming Pool
More social activities
Cinema
Swimming Pool
Skate Park
Soccer club
Skate Park
McDonalds
Hang out places for teenagers
Swimming Pool
Donut shop

What steps should be taken to improve the quality of life for young people in your locality?

Clean all the litter.

More social events and community gatherings

Make young people want to be at school more and nicer teachers

Healthy diets

More places for young people to hang out

Have more things for teens to do.

Stop underage drinking.

More public transport so people can be independent of their parents

Youth cafés, somewhere young people can go to and hang out.

More stuff for them to do.

More activities

Listen to us more

Get rid of the guards.

Improve the quality of teachers.

More places to go and hang out – stuff for us to do

Alcohol awareness talks

Just more facilities, so we have stuff to do

Stop underage drinking

Get the gardaí involved with certain young people

Have different sports

Additional Comments

“The fact that we have nowhere to go to meet up outside of school time to see our friends and relax except for pubs which we are not allowed into is a big issue” (Female, 17). No. 149.

“want more freedom” (Female, 17).

“Life is fantastic in Raamore” (Female, 17).

“Life is very expensive. Cliques are a big thing” (Female, 17). No. 173.

Appendices

Annex 3: Survey cohorts' perceptions of place, on selected indicators

Statement	Cohort	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Local people are good to support local businesses.	Young Adults	12%	62%	15%	10%	2%
	Teenagers	65%	18%	12%	4%	1%
People in my community have a good standard of living.	Young Adults	12%	65%	14%	7%	2%
	Teenagers	14%	69%	13%	3%	1%
Public Transport Services are sufficient to meet local needs.	Young Adults	2%	9%	12%	35%	42%
	Teenagers	4%	27%	22%	24%	22%
We have good public services in this community.	Young Adults	1%	22%	20%	35%	22%
	Teenagers	2%	34%	28%	23%	12%
The local policing service is satisfactory.	Young Adults	4%	26%	25%	30%	16%
	Teenagers	2%	36%	34%	22%	6%
Schools and education services are excellent.	Young Adults	14%	40%	24%	13%	8%
	Teenagers	7%	48%	23%	15%	7%
We have good facilities for our young people.	Young Adults	5%	17%	18%	31%	30%
	Teenagers	6%	27%	17%	31%	19%
There are good facilities for meetings locally.	Young Adults	14%	44%	15%	16%	10%
	Teenagers	8%	45%	23%	17%	8%
We have good sports and recreation facilities.	Young Adults	14%	46%	15%	17%	9%
	Teenagers	18%	56%	11%	9%	6%
Crime is not a problem in this community.	Young Adults	10%	28%	23%	29%	10%
	Teenagers	10%	40%	29%	17%	4%
Anti-social behaviour is not really a problem.	Young Adults	8%	34%	25%	23%	10%
	Teenagers	6%	43%	30%	18%	3%
There are opportunities for inclusion and support for those with intellectual disabilities or special needs.	Young Adults	10%	26%	31%	22%	12%
	Teenagers	6%	35%	37%	17%	5%
Local farmers are true guardians of the countryside and farm in an environmentally-friendly manner.	Young Adults	22%	32%	24%	14%	8%
	Teenagers	18%	42%	30%	6%	4%

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IRD Duhallow

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James O’Keeffe Memorial Institute,
Newmarket,
Co. Cork,
Ireland.