

# **Kildare Pathways Tracking and Mentoring Annual Report 2004**

## **Tracking and Mentoring Mission Statement**

*'The Tracking and Mentoring Project will guide and empower young people between the ages of 15- 20, who have left school early, or are in danger of doing so, to explore and make meaningful choices from the full range of options available to them. The Project will also support and enable Early School Leavers, through different measures, to make the progression on to training, further education or employment'*

## **Introduction**

The Kildare Tracking and Mentoring Project nationally known as Pathways, began its existence in 1996, when it was initially funded under the ESF Youthstart Initiative, which was targeted at disadvantaged young people. It is one of three sites operating in Waterford, Tralee and Northwest Kildare. For the year 2000 and 2001, FÁS and the Department of Education funded the project. Pathways Kildare managed to continue its programme in the years 2002-4 due to funding from FÁS.

The issue of Early School Leaving has been at the forefront of educational interventions over the last twenty years and during this time the profile of early school leavers in terms of age and personal circumstance has changed, particularly over the last ten years due to factors like the ever-increasing emphasis on the acquisition of academic capital and the role that the labour market has played in influencing the school curriculum.

During 2004, issues such as rural isolation, poor transport systems, limited access to information on further education and training options and poor social skills continued to be immense barriers to the progression for the many young people involved in the Tracking and Mentoring Project. Research has shown that the impact of young people leaving school early with no formal qualifications is strongly related to poor employment prospects, restraints on the transition to adulthood and the risk of long term unemployment leading to poverty. In addition, young people from lower social-economic background are almost five times more likely to leave school with poor qualifications. (Department of Health and Children).

The Pathways model in North Kildare, despite its geographical challenges, has made a significant difference to the lives and the future of many young people. The Tracking and Mentoring Project is unique in its approach to the young people it

works with. As the number of those leaving school early each year seems to accumulate, local Youth Services are often the first port of call for many, which places Kildare Youth Services in a prime position to receive them.

There are three main strands to the Tracking and Mentoring Project:

**Tracking-** This encompasses all elements of finding the early school leaver from agency referral, self referral, school referral right down to door to door outreach and street work.

**Mentoring-** Mentoring takes place as both need and the young person dictate. The key to the process is establishing a relationship of mutual respect and trust between the mentor and the young person. This can take the form of informal conversation, a meeting to supply required information right up to an intensive piece of work with the young person spanning over 6-8 months and involves assisting the young person to source further services they require for e.g., literacy training or perhaps counselling.

**Gateway Programmes-** The Gateway Programme offers the young person support on several levels. Firstly, it provides a new, peer support group environment for the young person to be part of; secondly it is an opportunity for the group members to begin reflecting on their experience of school and their hopes for their future life. The Gateway Programme also has a strong career progression element including workshops from a trained careers counsellor. The groups also visit their further training options such as the Fás Youth Training and Development Centre in Newbridge, Youthreach in Leixlip and RACE in Kildare Town.

## **Key Achievements in 2004**

- **112 new referrals.**
- **86 young people tracked**
- **25 engaged in Mentoring**
- **14 participants in the Gateway programme**

[See details, including progression, in the 'Results in 2004' section](#)

- **Voluntary Participation**

A key success of the year has been the voluntary engagement and commitment of the young people involved. Most of them have *never* been consistent in their attendance in school or perhaps anywhere. Indeed one participant, aged 14 has *never* attended secondary school.

- **Networking with the Fás Advocate**

The relationship between the project and the Fás Advocate is a key one. In addition to a number of meetings together during the year the Advocate hosts the pathway's visits to the Youth Training and Development Centre and will engage the Tracking and Mentoring co-ordinator if a young person who has been referred to the YTDC requires support. The Mentor and Advocate have also met to share information regarding the compilation of a database.

- **Networking with Schools**

Over the past twelve months, greater trust has built up between the project and the schools it works with locally, including Rathangan Post Primary, St. Farnans Post Primary School, Prosperous. Scoil Mhuire, Clane and in Kildare - The Vocational School, De La Salle Academy and the Presentation Secondary School.

This partnership has taken many different forms to assist ESLs:

- Further progressing the support relationship with some of the most hidden young people out of schools through referral from the school
- One on one advice for teachers from the project around early school leaving.
- One on one advice for parents (identified by the schools) of children at risk of leaving or who have already left school.
- Several requests have been made in the past for the mentor to come to the schools to speak with groups of young people who wish to leave and present their options to them. This was done before with good effect, and will be part of our strategy for 2005.

- **Kildare ESL Task Group**

The Kildare ESL Task Group was set up following a recommendation from a key piece of research on early school leaving which was conducted in 2002. The Tracking and Mentoring co-ordinator gives important advice and insight to the task group that has been in existence for almost a year now. The group have lobbied for an Education and Welfare officer in Co. Kildare, whose appointment is now imminent and is planning the consolidation of a comprehensive database for Kildare using the DB from the project, Fás and other sources. During the year guest speaker Andy Battell (Waterford Pathways) demonstrated his method of compiling a database in partnership with FAS locally.

- **Presentation to the E&W board**

In September, the Kildare Pathways Tracking and Mentoring Co-ordinator along with the two others from Waterford and Tralee gave a presentation to the Education Welfare Board on the work of the three sites and presented a vision for the future of the project. The work of the three sites was commended and acknowledged as providing an invaluable support for the ESL where formal education had failed.

[To see information on the Education Welfare Act see appendix 2](#)

- **Launch of the Composite Report**

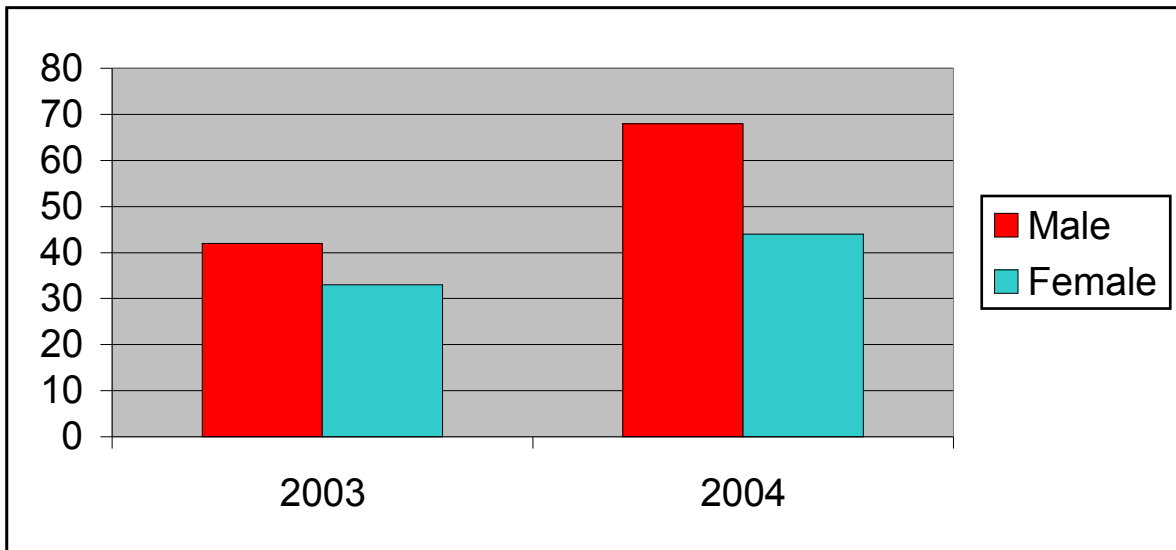
In September 2004, the three Tracking and Mentoring sites launched a composite report by Minister Brian Lenihan. [See Appendix 1.](#)

## Results in 2004

### Tracking:

The Tracking and Mentoring service traditionally had a caseload of 60-80 young people annually. Throughout 2004, 112 **new** young people have come to the attention of the service. There were also 10 young people that the project had regular contact with from 2003 caseload.

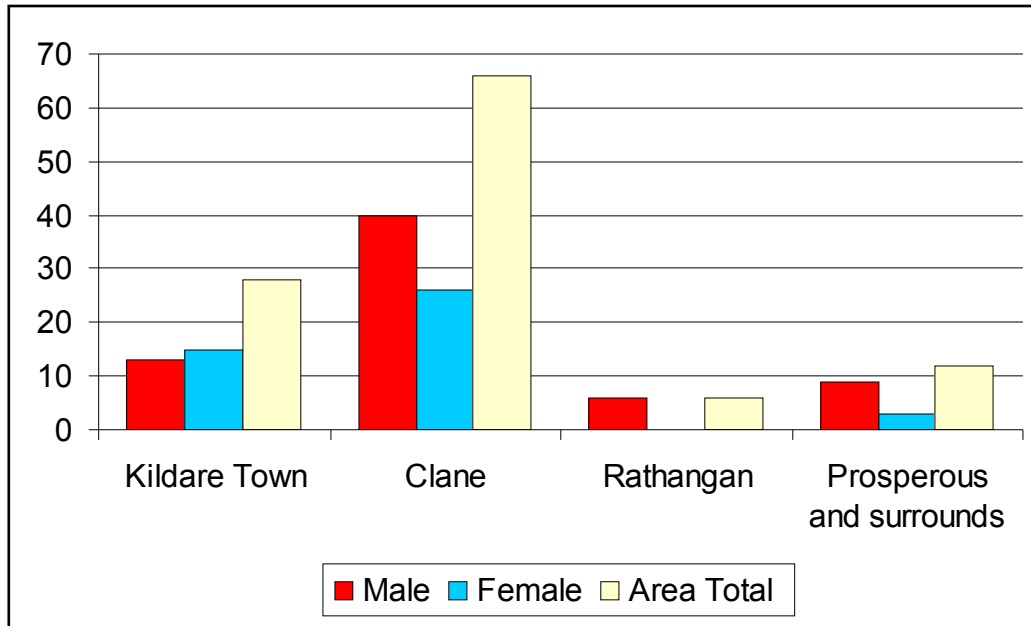
### **Number and % of ESL's who came to the attention of the Tracking and Mentoring Project in 2003/2004.**



	<b>2003</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>2004</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Male</b>	42	56%		68	61%
<b>Female</b>	33	44%		44	39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>			<b>112</b>	

*Note:* there has been a significant increase in the numbers of young ESLs referred to the project in 2004.

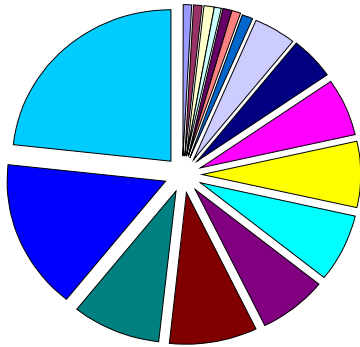
**Breakdown in Early School Leavers per Area, as identified in 2004.**



Area	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Area Total</b>	<b>% of total figure( % of 112)</b>
<b>Kildare Town</b>	13	15	<b>28</b>	16%
<b>Clane</b>	40	26	<b>66</b>	60%
<b>Rathangan</b>	6	0	<b>6</b>	5%
<b>Prosperous and surrounds</b>	9	3	<b>12</b>	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>112</b>	

Given the increase in numbers from 2003, 86 of the 112 have been tracked to date and the remainder need to be contacted with regard to their current unknown status.

## Summary of Tracking in 2004



VTOS	Youthreach
p/t school	RACE
Pregnancy	Other training
Acorn Project	Return to school
Moved away	p/t work
FAS	New school
Apprentiship	Kildare Progression Programme
f/t work	Ongoing efforts to engage
Unknown	

VTOS	1
Youthreach	1
p/t school	1
RACE	1
Pregnancy – Working in the home	1
Other training	1
Acorn Project	1
Return to school	5
Moved away	5
p/t work	7
FAS	8
New school	8
Apprentiship	8
Kildare Progression Programme	10
f/t work	10
Ongoing efforts to engage*	18
Unknown	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>112</b>

\* Several contacts have been made with these 18 young people but as yet no status has been determined nor has any participation in the programme been agreed to.

### Commentary:

The tracking of young people in 2004 was somewhat easier than in 2003, due mainly to the strong local links made from the year before. Door to door outreach and street work still remains part of our methods for identifying young people along with agency networking and continuing to make links within the local community. A number of agencies and organisations make referrals to the Tracking and Mentoring Project:

- ⇒ **Schools – Principals and Home School Community Liaison Teachers**
- ⇒ **Gardai – Junior Liaison Officers**
- ⇒ **FÁS Community & Employment Services**
- ⇒ **Probation and Welfare/Service**
- ⇒ **VTOS**
- ⇒ **Community Training Workshops**
- ⇒ **OAK Partnership**
- ⇒ **Youthreach Centres**
- ⇒ **Parents/Carers/Guardians**
- ⇒ **Self-Referrals**
- ⇒ **Community Training Projects**
- ⇒ **Community Youth Workers**
- ⇒ **County Council Development Worker**

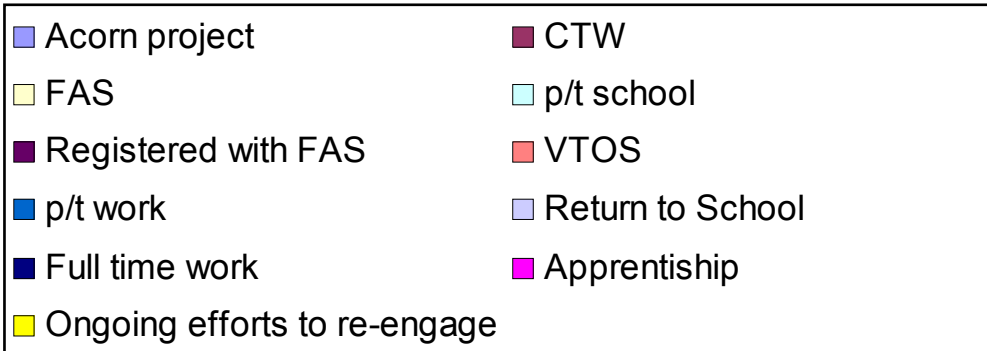
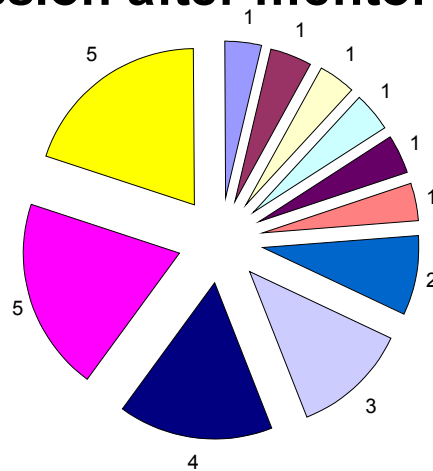
When young people are referred to the service they may either be:

- out of school but wishing to progress
- in school, but at risk of leaving
- in temporary or low paid employment, but looking to progress to further training or education

### **Mentoring:**

25 young people were mentored in 2004. Some of these young people had attended the Gateway Group and arising from that had developed a relationship with the project and required individual support.

## Progression after mentoring 2004



### **Commentary:**

The mentoring process involves building a relationship with a young person and entering into a mentoring agreement with them, setting up regular individual meetings and signing a voluntary mentoring contract. The mentor identifies the main reasons why the young person left school, thus helping the young person establish where they are in terms of future life goals.

From the information obtained, the Pathways Co-ordinator establishes the needs of the young person and offers information, advice and guidance. The mentor then identifies possible routes with the young person and supports them to take the first steps into further training and/or employment.

### **Gateway:**

Three Gateway groups have taken place this year one in Kildare town, which took place in the Day Care Centre and 2 in Clane, which took place in the Parish Offices. The Gateway groups in 2004 were run over week long programmes. 14 different young people attended these groups and for the project this is an excellent indicator

of success. All those who attended had previously or subsequently attended Mentoring.

### **Programme content:**

The Gateway Programme contains a range of learning for the Early School Leaver. Informal social education and the needs of the particular group drive the programme content.

[Please see Appendix 3 for example of programme.](#)

### **Summary of Issues arising from the participants:**

- Low literacy skills
- Poor social skills
- Low motivation
- Lack of support
- Long gaps between leaving school and when they are identified making progress even more difficult.
- Lack of transport
- Few further training opportunities locally
- Drug and alcohol related issues

# Summary of 2004

## **S.W.O.T Analysis**

### **Strengths**

- Dedicated Local Staff
- Part of and existing county and national Youth Project Organisation
- Strong support from parents, local community and organisations established
- Support from Fás – Regional and Local
- Large numbers of young people already identified
- Established contacts and expertise

### **Opportunities**

- Introduction of a Literacy Programme element
- Expansion of the project to add a Stronger Transitional Youth Work element.
- More intensive 1:1 work with young people
- Existing requests from local schools for workshops and programmes with young people at risk of ESL

### **Weaknesses**

- Insecure Funding
- One worker for a large geographical area
- Lack of premises and space in areas being worked
- Young people require more intensive 1:1 support work before engaging in group activity or moving into a more formal training circumstance.

### **Threats**

- Discontinuation of the project and its local credibility
- Abandonment of support for ESLs
- Vital links severed with parents and the community which would take time to re-establish
- Break in the three region Pathways partnership.

## **Commentary on S.W.O.T analysis:**

In order to overcome the current threats and weaknesses, maintain the current strengths and advance opportunity, we have come up with a focus plan for 2005.

Some highlights of the plan are:

- To meet the need that has emerged for more intensive 1:1 work needed before engaging at group level by focussing the mentoring/gateway piece for a longer period in one area of the county, e.g. Clane/Prosperous for 6 months, while continuing to track across North Kildare.
- To tackle the staffing and geographical issue, along with the emerging need for more transitional youth work, by attempting to gain the financial support of a broader number of agencies to increase the staff and scope of the project. Currently, an application has been made to the OAK partnership and in early 2005 it is planned to convene an inter-agency meeting to seek commitment to an integrated youth initiative for the ESL.
- To develop a three point partnership to increase the effectiveness of outreach and support to the ESL through – **Home, School and Community**. This would involve the programme being advisory, to enable Parents, Teachers, Schools, Community groups and professionals to take positive and preventative action.

## Focus plan for 2005

**Outlined below are the current focus areas for 2005**

Goal	Actions	Owner	Partners	Outputs
<b>Tracking the remaining 26 young people on the list from 2004</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Source contact information where applicable</li> <li>• Carry out door to door contact</li> <li>• Track progress or engage in suitable pathways options</li> </ul>	T&M Co-ordinator	Community leaders; Schools; Parents; Fás	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status of 26 Young People achieved</li> <li>• Progression options to Mentoring/Gateway</li> </ul>
<b>Target 60 new referrals in 2005</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to update the existing database with added assistance from <b>EWO</b>, once appointed</li> <li>• To provide analysis</li> <li>• To seek and receive returns from other partners</li> <li>• Follow up the referrals</li> </ul>	T&M Co-ordinator	Community leaders; Schools; Parents; Fás; JLOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status of new referrals documented.</li> <li>• Progression options to Mentoring/Gateway</li> </ul>
<b>To engage 25 Young people in a Mentoring Relationship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain Parental Permission</li> <li>• Set up 1to1s where appropriate</li> <li>• Document Meetings</li> <li>• Draw out common threads</li> <li>• Referral to group work where appropriate</li> <li>• Referral to Fás</li> <li>• Meetings with Parents/School/Fás</li> </ul>	T&M Co-ordinator	Community leaders; Schools; Parents; Fás;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth project to engage young people in regular meetings</li> <li>• Provide clear direction and options</li> <li>• Further training/ school / employment</li> </ul>
<b>To incorporate a transitional youth work element into Pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify developmental needs that may be an obstacle to progression</li> <li>• Use gateway format to introduce new elements e.g. Anger management, Literacy training</li> </ul>	T&M Co-ordinator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To tackle the obstacles that may be standing in the way of progressing to more structured training or employment</li> </ul>

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<b>To expand the partnership for funding and support for the Pathways programme in North Kildare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To Leverage current partnerships and forge new ones</li> <li>Source additional funding to expand the scope and staffing of the project</li> <li>To convene an inter-agency (with the SIM group) to seek commitment to the ESL in the form of an integrated youth initiative</li> </ul>	KYS Regional & Programme Manager. T&M Co-ordinator	OAK, VEC, DSFA, Dormant accounts, ASK, KCEP, Fás; SIM; KCC and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hiring of an additional FT or PT staff member for the programme</li> <li>Possible Establishment of a Youth Project in Kildare in the second half of 2005</li> </ul>
<b>To Focus Mentoring and Gateway elements in one area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To establish more effective 1:1 and group work in one Geographical area of north Kildare e.g. Clane/Prosperous</li> </ul>	T&M Co-ordinator	Community leaders; Schools; Parents; Fás; JLOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More intensive work 1:1 with ESLs</li> <li>Stronger relationships and progression in the area due to less transience.</li> </ul>
<b>Expand partnership with Home, Schools and Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentor has already been requested to host talks in schools presenting the options and risks to young people who are considering leaving school early</li> <li>To offer advice and support from the programme to parents, professionals, volunteers and Schools to be able to support ESLs and those at risk.</li> </ul>	T&M Co-ordinator.	Schools; Parents; JLOs; Youth leaders; Health Professionals; Social Workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enabling partners to provide support to ESLs.</li> <li>Broader effectiveness of the programme.</li> </ul>

## **Final Summary**

The NW Kildare Tracking and Mentoring Project is showing its strength at a local level like never before. As time has gone on, the months of networking at local level are paying dividends. Slowly but surely the project is standing out as a key provision for the young person who has left school or who wishes to. It is now usual to hear the project being spoken of and referred to as a reliable link for the Early School Leaver and their immediate family.

It is envisaged that a multi-agency partnership in approach in commitment will be needed in order to successfully provide the intensity of support for this *most* disadvantaged group of young people in the county of Kildare.

In conclusion, the key to the success of the Pathway's programme in 2005 lies in a number of factors which have been incorporated into our focus plan:

1. The maintenance of the Tracking, Mentoring and Gateway programme with our current staff member.
2. The continued funding from our most dedicated partner, Fás.
3. The expansion of the partnership supporting the programme:
  - a. In early 2005, it is planned to convene an inter-agency (with the SIM group) meeting to seek commitment to the ESL in the form of an integrated youth initiative for, perhaps, the Clane/Prosperous area to include the elements of Tracking, Mentoring and Gateway and
  - b. Working with the young person in the context of a home, school and community partnership.
  - c. KYS already has an application to the OAK partnership for additional partnership and funding of the Pathways programme.

This key strategy is in line with *all* current research and recommendations at both local and national level.

4. The need has arisen during 2004 to intensify the 1:1 one work needed before engaging at group level. This could be achieved in 2005 by focussing the mentoring/gateway piece for a longer period in one area of the county, e.g. Clane/Prosperous for 6 months, while continuing to track across North Kildare
5. To introduce the element of transitional youth work using the gateways model to tackle the obstacles that may be standing in the way of progressing to more structured training or employment.
6. To expand and consolidate the Kildare Pathways database and other databases, hopefully with a more accurate and centralised source information in the light of the Education and Welfare act, and with the support of the new Kildare EWO, once appointed.

7. Overall, to uphold the rights of young people to appropriate support, particularly in situations of disadvantage and to assist those at risk of early school leaving to return to school, partake in further training, enter the workforce or provide an environment of informal education to meet the wide range of needs that arise.
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## Appendix 1.

### **Launch of the Composite Report**

In September 2004 the three Tracking and Mentoring sites launched a composite report by Minister Brian Lenihan. The purpose of this report was threefold:

- To identify where and how the Tracking and Mentoring Model (Pathways), fits into the framework of supports available to Early School Leavers.
- To identify what critical differences the Pathways Model makes in the lives of the young people it works with and **how** it achieves these differences.
- To present a case for the mainstreaming of the Pathways initiative and development of further Pathways sites.

Fás have played a key role in the running of the three Pathways Sites as they have been the sole funders of the project since 2002.

**Gus O’Connell (Manager, Community Based Training Support Unit)** in his foreword on the FAS Perspective on Pathways said:

FAS have continued to support the three sites in Waterford, Tralee and NW Kildare, for the relevance they each have to the Fás objective;

*‘To mobilise labour supply from all available sources and to stem the flow into long term unemployment’*

(FAS Statement of Strategy, 2002- 2005, Goal 3)

He also acknowledged the changes that have taken place since the birth of the project in 1996. For example how at this time Fás was the first port of call for almost all Early School Leavers and raised the question as to whether the Pathways Project in terms of funding should be core youth work.

## Appendix 2.

### **The Education Welfare Act**

2004 has been a key year for the Education Welfare Board, as the first national data on Irish school attendance levels provides benchmark information for development of education services. Despite Kildare having a RAPID area (Athy), and the Education Welfare Board making a commitment to have at least one EWO in each county it was only late in 2004 that an Education Welfare Officer was approved for Kildare, however the position however has yet to be filled.

Eddie Ward, (CEO, National Education Welfare Board) said;

*“We now know the scale of difference in attendance levels between primary and Post-Primary, between the most disadvantaged and least disadvantaged schools and between urban and rural areas”*

He also said:

*“Further research is needed to explore in greater detail the reasons for absences so that we can respond more effectively. The study also shows that non- attendance is a major issue nationally and is not confined to the most disadvantaged areas”*

The Tracking and Mentoring Project welcomes the approval of an Education Welfare Officer in Kildare. Young people will benefit greatly from this additional element within the youth services partnership.

## **Appendix 3.**

### **Example of Gateway Programme**

#### Monday

- Introductions of young people and staff
- Introduction to KYS and counselling service and Tracking and Mentoring Project
- Ice- breaker
- Hopes and fears for the week/ group rules. The group rules are set out by the young people in the group and the leaders. Each young person signs the rules in order to have ownership and responsibility around them.
- Facilitated discussion around possible needs of the group which can be met this week. This is used to inform any adjustments which need to be made in the coming days, particularly what the group would like to do on their day out.
- Game
- PhotoSpeak session. The PhotoSpeak pictures are used to facilitate feelings and discussion around school and what has brought the young person to where they are now. It is used to draw out their perception of themselves and how they feel about their lives at this present time. This may be accompanied by a piece of art work such as a collage or clay modelling.
- Lunch
- Afternoon Activity
- Evaluation of day

## Tuesday

- Ice- breaker and team building games
- Life- Maps. Each young person will complete a life map, mapping their school lives their home life and possibilities for the future. The life- map is used to positively identify supports in the young person's life and other achievements to date. This may also have an artwork element.
- Team building and trust games
- Lunch
- Session with career progression counsellor. The Tracking and Mentoring Project have accessed a career guidance counsellor who works with the group for a full morning or afternoon session. Using various materials the counsellor and mentor work with the individual young person to identify where their strengths lie for future careers.
- Evaluation of day
- Cinema trip/ bowling trip

## Wednesday

Re- look at group rules and any additional rules for the day depending on where the group are going. Possibilities for day trip are outdoor adventure activities, team building activities, a days shopping trip, cinema / bowling, swimming and lunch out or any other activity which the group have expressed an interest in doing. The objective of the day trip is to engage the young person in new activities in which they can share ownership and a decision around. It is also if possible to develop new skills and become aware of skills they already possess.

## Thursday

- Ice- breakers and team- building game
- Evaluation of previous day
- Reflection of week so far and what the group have achieved
- Job visits- depending on what the group have expressed a desire in doing, it has been possible in the past to have a visit with someone who already does this job and the young person has the opportunity to visit their working environment and learn about the job. For example hairdressers, beauticians, mechanics, army.
- Lunch/ afternoon meal
- Evaluation of day

## Friday

- Visit to FAS CTC to speak with the FAS Advocate. Here the young person learns what the Community Training Workshop has to offer how to apply and all other information they require regarding this.
- Visit to RACE Training Academy Kildare.
- Possibly also visit YouthReach. However both YouthReach Training centres are quite far from where the young person may live (Edenderry, Co. Offaly and Athy) so is sometimes not a desired option for them.
- Lunch
- Horse- riding
- Back to centre for evaluation and plan for future mentoring or meetings with the group.