

Hello, How Are You? Impact Report

on the first two years of an innovative national mental health campaign



A happy dog helping to spread the word -Hello, How Are You? Campaign 2023



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A note from Mental Health Ireland's CEO



Dr Lisa Cuthbert Mental Health Ireland CEO

Dr Lisa Cutlibert

Sometimes, the simplest sentences can hold the greatest power and the **Hello**, **How are you?** campaign is evidence of

that. It is also evidence of the importance of conversations and connections, the importance of being brave enough to ask the **Hello**, **How are you?** question and being open to hearing the answer. We don't always have the confidence to start those conversations; the Hello conversation card and other resources are designed to guide people, using a framework, to engage in conversations and provide options for support.

As the new CEO of Mental Health Ireland, I have been having my own "Hello" experience as I have been introduced to the organisation and to the work that is undertaken here. Mental Health Ireland's vision and mission is to create a society where mental health is valued and supported. One essential way to do this is by empowering people with the skills and knowledge to support their own mental health and also those within our communities. The Hello, How Are You? campaign is just one of the programmes which ensures that Mental Health Ireland works towards meeting our priorities as set out in our strategy, Mental Health for All, Hope, Strength, Action (2022 - 2024).

The realisation of the Hello, How are you? campaign reflects the strength of a whole organisation's response to a mental health promotion campaign. The strengths that I have observed in the Mental Health Ireland team at all levels since I took up the role of CEO can be seen in the diversity, creativity and complexity of the Hello, How Are You? campaign. It can be seen locally and nationally through the work of our incredible team, supported by our member organisations, communities and partnerships.

There is a level of enthusiasm, positivity and passion for the campaign that is beyond measure and is captured in the evaluation for all to see. It is a joyful campaign, and in a time of increasing disconnection it asks all of us to say "Hello" and to be open to connecting with others. It is a colourful and dynamic campaign and as we prepare for **Hello, How Are You?** 2024, I am looking forward to witnessing the magic in real-time.

I want to thank the team, led by Jo Donohoe (Mental Health Promotion Manager) and ably supported by everyone else in the organisation, including our member organisations such as the Mental Health Associations, Gateway, Mindspace and the Recovery Colleges and Education Services, for their work on both initiating and growing the Hello, How Are You? campaign. In addition, this evaluation wouldn't be in place without the work of Dr Ronda Barron, Mental Health Ireland's Head of National Policy and Evaluation. A special thanks must be given to all of the individuals and organisations who took part in coproducing this campaign, and who brought their skills, knowledge, experience and unbounded energy to develop the Hello, How Are You? national campaign. On behalf of Mental Health Ireland, I warmly invite you to read the impact report and to learn more about the Hello, How Are You? mental health promotion campaign. I encourage you to say Hello and to enjoy the connections and conversations that will follow. Your engagement is crucial in spreading the message of mental health awareness.



A note from the Hello, How Are You? National Lead



Jo Donohoe

Mental Health Promotion Manager and National Lead on the 'Hello, How Are You' Campaign

It has been a privilege to have been part of the **Hello**, **How Are**

You? campaign since its inception in Co. Carlow in 2015 and now as the lead of the national campaign run by Mental Health Ireland. Carlow Mental Health Association is a small voluntary team with a big heart who had an idea and an appetite to start making meaningful conversations happen locally. The Hello, How Are You? campaign, inspired by the Australian R U OK? day, provided inspiration for a campaign that encouraged connection and conversations. Carlow took this from an idea, to a local campaign that grew from strength to strength.

As a national campaign, Mental Health Ireland has brought Hello, How Are You? to organisations, communities, and households across each county. We have developed substantial resources to support events, distributed almost half a million conversation cards and have provided training to hundreds of people. The partnerships have given strength and visibility to the campaign with organisations like Irish Rail, Family Resource Centres, the HSE, Libraries, Park Runs, as well as all the community, voluntary and education organisations that have run events over the past two years and supported the coproduction of the campaign.

The Hello, How Are You? campaign has seen events that are unique and inventive created, to events that have provided opportunities for social connection through walk, talks, coffee mornings, information stands and mindfulness events. People have gotten out in nature for Hello Park Runs, hikes and swims or simply picked up the phone to a family member.

My colleagues at Mental Health Ireland have shown huge resourcefulness and creativity to make this a success. I am proud to have worked with them to bring **Hello, How Are You?** to the national stage and I am excited to grow the campaign even further.

In Ireland we are a nation of great talkers. The impact findings in this report demonstrates that this campaign has supported people to ask the question 'How Are You?' with meaning and gives people the skills and resources to engage in those significant conversations. People have felt a greater connection to their community by attending events, have been given relevant information on where to get support and have felt less isolated.



1. Introduction to 'Hello, How Are You?'

What is 'Hello, How Are You?'

Hello, How Are You? is a campaign about connection and engaging in open conversations about mental health. The campaign asks individuals, communities, workplaces, friends & family to say 'Hello' and ask the question 'How Are You?' in a meaningful way. This national campaign was developed by Mental Health Ireland in 2021/2022 with the aim of increasing meaningful connections between people and encouraging early or appropriate help seeking.

Background

The campaign drew inspiration from the **R U OK? Day**, an Australian public health promotion campaign, launched in 2009, and held each year in September. The campaign encourages utilising social support in dealing with life events and personal difficulties, with the ultimate aim of preventing suicide in the community¹.

The campaign began at a local level when the **Hello Carlow How R U?** initiative was started by Carlow Mental Health Association (MHA) in 2015. Carlow MHA developed a five-step framework for saying HELLO and asking the question, 'How are you?' Having run the campaign locally, Carlow Mental Health Association were invited to share this mental health promotion campaign at the Mental Health Ireland Information Sharing and Networking Conference in 2018. Following this, Mayo Mental Health Fair ran the campaign in Mayo in 2019 and consequently proposed to Mental Health Ireland that this should be a national campaign. In 2021, Meath and Westmeath also introduced the campaign to their counties, making significant use of online events because of Covid-19 restrictions. Drawing on the experience and learning, in mid-2021 Mental Health Ireland began its journey of developing the initiative as a national campaign. The first national **Hello, How Are You? day** was held on April 7th, 2022, and the campaign has now completed its second year on March 30th, 2023, with both years seeing events taking place in each of the 26 counties.

¹ Ross, A.M., Bassilios, B. Australian R U OK? Day campaign: improving helping beliefs, intentions and behaviours. Int J Ment Health Syst 13, 61 (2019)

History of the campaign

2015

Carlow Mental
Health Association
created the 'Hello
Carlow How R
U?' campaign and
rolled it out for
the first time.



Carlow Mental Health
Association shared the
concept of 'Hello, How Are
you?' campaign at a Mental
Health Ireland conference.

2018

2021





The campaign was introduced into Meath and Westmeath

Mental Health Ireland began its journey of developing it as a national campaign. 2019

019

HELLO MAYO HOW R U P

Mayo Mental Health Fair introduced the campaign in

Mayo for the first time and made a proposal that this campaign become national.

2023

The 2nd Hello, How Are You? campaign



2022 – the first national 'Hello, How Are You?' campaign was run across the 26 counties.

Hello HOW ARE YOU?

Hello, How Are You? Day will be celebrated annually on May 15th



Hello, How Are You? broadcast 2022 The cam

The Hello, How Are You? campaign at ATU Sligo in 2022



Evidence

The **Hello, How Are You?** campaign is grounded in theories of social support. The importance of social connection and social support for good mental wellbeing and mental health has been known about for some time². Social support is typically described as having four common functions emotional support, informational support, companionship support and tangible support^{3,4,5}; three of which are provided through the **Hello, How Are You?** campaign:











Informational support: the provision of advice, guidance, suggestions, or useful information to someone. This type of support can help to improve problem-solving skills. Exposure to the Australian **R U OK? campaign** increased the likelihood of people using services by up to three times. One aim of the national **Hello, How Are You? campaign** is to provide advice, suggestions, and useful information to people in the course of conversation and also through the use of a conversation card (see details below).



Companionship support: it offers someone a sense of belonging. **The Hello, How Are You?** campaign is based on the principles of participatory, community action. Ordinary settings in the community are used and events delivered in partnership with local community and voluntary groups as well as local formal services. This all helps to build a sense of belonging to a local community that cares about people and values connection and interaction.

² Feeney BC, Collins NL. A new look at social support: a theoretical perspective on thriving through relationships. Pers Soc Psychol Rev. 2015 May;19(2):113-47. doi: 10.1177/1088868314544222. Epub 2014 Aug 14. PMID: 25125368; PMCID: PMC5480897.

³ Wills, T.A. (1991). Margaret, Clark (ed.). "Social support and interpersonal relationships". Prosocial Behavior, Review of Personality and Social Psychology. 12: 265–289.

⁴ Wills, T.A. (1985). "Supportive functions of interpersonal relationships". In S. Cohen; L. Syme (eds.). Social support and health. Orlando, FL: Academic Press, pp. 61–82.

⁵ Uchino, B. (2004). Social Support and Physical Health: Understanding the Health Consequences of Relationships. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. pp. 16–17. ISBN 9780300127980.

Why a National Campaign

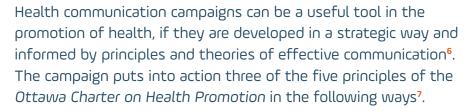
As a mental health promoting organisation, Mental Health Ireland was keen to build on the positive response to the local campaigns in Carlow, Mayo, and Westmeath. We used some of the key principles of health promotion to develop a national campaign that was easy to implement and accessible to all. We wanted to harness the Irish 'gift of the gab,' and, through providing opportunities, resources, and encouragement, go a bit deeper than the usual "**How are you?**" to really try and connect with someone and have a conversation that may be light-hearted and chatty, or may be more meaningful and personal.





The design of the **Hello, How Are You?** campaign incorporates three of the four functions of social support, with the potential to provide emotional support, and companionship support through the initiation of a meaningful conversation, usually in an informal social setting. Informational support is provided through the use of the conversation card and information provided during the conversation. The extent to which these forms of support are provided depends on the depth of the engagement of an individual with the campaign.









 Creates supportive environments – through supporting local individuals, settings, and agencies to get involved and providing resources and training to facilitate and roll out local events.
 The campaign also helps create communities than can support people and for people to feel supported by their communities



 Strengthens community action – through partnership with a range of local groups and agencies both formal health and social care agencies and community and voluntary groups.

⁶ Sixsmith J, Fox K-A, Doyle P, Barry MM. A literature review on health communication campaign evaluation with regard to the prevention and control of communicable diseases in Europe. Stockholm: ECDC: 2014.

World Health Organization. 1986. Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion. Copenhagen: WHO.

Developing the Campaign

Hello Coproduction Group 2022

Coproduction

Coproduction is a way of bringing people together to work on a shared initiative. It is a strengths-based process that looks to incorporate the



end user (people with lived experience of mental health challenges and other partners) as equal participants from the very beginning and throughout the process: planning, development, delivery and evaluating an initiative or campaign.

Work on the campaign started in July 2021. In keeping with a core principle of Mental Health Ireland, a coproduction group was formed to manage and carry out the work. Across the two years a total number of 42 people were directly involved in the coproduction process, 20 in 2022 and 22 in 2024. The coproduction group included: MHI (Mental Health Ireland) staff, people with lived experience from across Ireland, representatives of MHI Mental Health Associations and other relevant organisations. The group coproduced this campaign and brought it to the national stage. A list of all the organisations and people across sectors in the 2 years at co-production can be found in Appendix 1.

2. Campaign Overview

Campaign Objectives

The objectives of the Hello, How Are You? Campaign are to:

- 1 Improve awareness & understanding of mental health
- 2 Grow confidence in starting and normalising conversations about mental health
- Reduce loneliness through enhancing social connections for people
- Create a greater sense of community
- Increase signposting to services
- 6 Encourage earlier help-seeking / help-finding

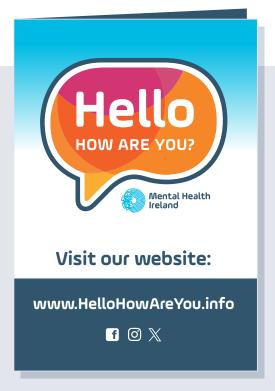
Campaign Resources

Hello, How Are You? Conversation Card

The Conversation Card was developed to be used as the main framework for the campaign. This wallet-sized card provides people with information on the **HELLO Steps**:



The **Conversation Card** also contains information on national supports and services available if signposting is needed.



Front of Conversation Card



Back of Conversation Card

Finally, it provides a link to the campaign's website where people can find out more about Mental Health Ireland, download the conversation card in 16 different languages and access other resources for the campaign including a toolkit.

- English
- French
- German
- Spanish
- Irish
- Lithuanian
- Polish
- Ukrainian
- Chinese
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Romanian
- Latvian
- Somalian
- Serbian
- Arabic



Hello, How Are You? Toolkit

An extensive toolkit to support groups to run the campaign locally and to start conversation was developed. This can be downloaded from the website and provides people with information on the campaign, its background, who MHI are, the expected outcomes of the campaign, a breakdown of the **HELLO steps**, the conversation card, a step-by-step guide to run the campaign, possible event ideas and resources needed, infographics on asking the questions and active listening, what and where to signpost, information on self-care, setting boundaries and reflecting after a conversation and there is also a full appendix of additional materials e.g. open-ended questions, phrase bank, sample budget for groups, statistics on the campaign and an event poster.

In 2023 changes to the toolkit were made specifically based upon feedback received in the 2022 campaign and recognising that, as years go on, many event organisers will have become familiar with the process and toolkits available.

The coproduction group were tasked with the following objectives:

- Condensing the current toolkit into a user guide for people who wish to run events
- Creating a shorter version of the toolkit a Quick Guide for those who wish to learn about the campaign



Hello
How Are You?

A Quick Guide to
Hello, How
Are You?

WWW.HelloHowAreYou.info

© © X

2. Quick Guide



Hello, How Are You? Website

A dedicated **Hello, How Are You?** website was created: **www.HelloHowAreYou. info.** The website was filled with information about the campaign how to get involved and highlighted the events happening across the country for **Hello, How Are You?** People can register their interest to get involved, access the toolkit, order merchandise and signpost to MHI supports/services. There are also additional resources available for people on the campaign, these include a video, becoming a **Hello, How Are You?** Champion and donating to Mental Health Ireland. A support email is also available for people to contact if they have queries relating to the campaign.

Downloadable resources, conversations cards, toolkit, posters and other digital or printable materials are available on the website.



Training Module

The 2022 training "Understanding the Hello, How Are You? Campaign" was coproduced between October 2021 and March 2022. Membership of the coproduction group included MHI training staff, a Development Officer from MHI, people with lived experience, MHI mental health promotion staff, people who had run the local HELLO campaigns locally, and a person from the International Community.

What's included in the training

The training was delivered in person and online by Mental Health Ireland's Development officers. A training page was developed with an online calendar on the **Hello**, **How Are You?** website that community groups and individuals can register with no charge.

The aim of the training is to:

- 1 Understand what the Hello, How Are You? Campaign is.
- Have a greater understanding of how the campaign could be implemented in their area.
- 3 Know where to find relevant mental health signposting information.
- 4 Be introduced to the campaign resources.
- 5 Have had an opportunity to initiate conversations using the HELLO Steps.

The training elements cover the history and context of the campaign, readiness to start the conversation, boundaries, using the HELLO steps, and information on organising an event. The training is delivered and includes small group discussions, videos, and an introduction to the resources available on the **Hello**, **How Are You?** website.



Hello, How Are You? Merchandise

A suite of **Hello**, **How Are You?** merchandise was created to promote the campaign. Items were distributed through Development Officers and staff on the ground at events as well as available for purchase through the website shop. The merchandise for sale includes bookmarks, T-shirts in two colours, keyrings, bags and pens.





T-Shirts

Merchandise







A roadside advertisement in Carlow for Hello, How Are You? 2022



Barbara Davis in Wicklow – Hello, How Are You? 2022



Mental Health Ireland staff at Carlow outside broadcast – Hello, How Are You? 2022

3. Campaign Impacts

This report celebrates the first two years of the Hello, How Are You? campaign.





Conversation Cards Distributed

over 2 years

2022: **200k** 2023: **300k**



59.5 Event Attendees

at 'Hello, How Are You?' events

2022 events: **26k** 2023 events: **33.5**k



No.1

Trending on Twitter (X)

(2023 campaign)

Online presence

 $f \times \emptyset$ in

Dedicated hashtags:

#HelloHowAreYou #MentalHealthIreland



289

Event organisers participated in training

2022 attendees: **180** 2023 attendees: **109**



'Hello, How Are You?' day events across all 26 counties

2022 events: **217** 2023 events: **274**

Impact of the Hello, How Are You? Campaign



Media and Social Media

Media and social media campaigns played a crucial role in increasing the public's awareness of the **Hello, How Are You?** campaign. Through a mix of interviews, on-air discussions, outside broadcasts and combined digital features our media campaigns allowed us successfully:

- 1 Improve awareness & understanding of mental health
- 2 Highlight the key messages of the campaign through our H.E.L.L.O. conversation framework
- 3 Create awareness of services and supports through signposting
- Create awareness about the events that were being run across the campaign
- 5 Highlighted the work of our team, events, and participating partners
- 6 Enable the public and members of our community to engage with us during the campaign



Social Media Campaign Impacts

During the periods 1st Jan - 7th April in 2022 and 2023 our social media accounts for the **Hello, How Are You?** Online Campaign saw significant growth across Facebook and LinkedIn. While Twitter engagements were down in comparison to 2022 figures, the **#HelloHowAreYou** resulted in the campaign trending number 1 on Twitter for the campaign day in 2023.

Hello, How Are You? Campaign #'s included:

Hello Social Media Accounts	2022	2023	
Total impressions	495,536	1,732,903 Up 249.7% on 2022	
Engagements (likes, shares & comments)	14,824	21,528 Up 45.2% on 2022	
Post link clicks	5,009	7,787 Up 45.5% on 2022	
Audience growth	3,184	2,120	
Hello social media accounts	2022	2023	
Facebook engagements	8,214	12,923 Up 57.3% on 2022	
Instagram engagements	1,327	1,038 Down 21.8% on 2022	
Twitter engagements	932	353 Down 62.1% on 2022	
LinkedIn engagements	4,351	7,214 Up 65.8% on 2022	



Growing confidence in starting and normalising conversations about mental health

2023 saw an increase in the number of event organisers who engaged in conversations and felt that the conversation had helped another person, with an increase of 9% from 71% in 2022 to 80% in 2023. Across both years no one felt that the conversation did not help the other person. There was a decrease of 9% in those who did not know from 29% in 2022 to 20% in 2023 as can be seen in Table 1 below.

Event Organisers that felt the conversation had helped (%)	2022 campaign	2023 campaign
Yes	71%	80%
No	0%	0%
Don't know	29%	20%

Table 1. Breakdown of event organisers' responses by percentage for 2022 and 2023 campaigns.

In 2022, 96% of people who attended events or used the conversation cards and had a conversation felt that they were listened to, 4% felt somewhat listened to, 0% responded no, they did not feel listened to. There was a slight change in 2023 with 93% of people who had a conversation feeling that they were listened to, 5% felt somewhat listened to, and 2% did not feel listened to (see Table 2).

Participants who felt listened to (%)	2022 campaign	2023 campaign
Yes	96%	93%
No	0%	2%
Somewhat	4%	5%

Table 2. Breakdown of participants responses by percentage for 2022 and 2023 campaigns.



Encourage earlier help-seeking / help-finding

There was an increase of 23% of people who said they would seek further help following the 'Hello, How Are You?' event or the campaign, from 6% in 2022 to 29% in 2023.

Participants who felt they would seek help after the event (%)	2022 campaign	2023 campaign
Yes	6%	29%
No	94%	61%

Table 3. Breakdown of participants responses by percentage for 2022 and 2023 campaigns.

Increasing Signposting to Services



For those who sought help, we asked them to select all that would apply from a range of help sources.*

Friends 53%

Family 33%

Groups with mental health focus 33%

Health professionals 20%

A colleague 13%

*most indicated in 2023

✓ Hello, How Are You? on Balbriggan beach, Co. Dublin – 2022



What does Hello, How Are You? mean to participants?

Taking time to engage in meaningful conversations

The Hello, How Are You? campaign allowed people to talk openly about what and how they were feeling. Having the time to dedicate to really asking and listening was noted as a positive for many respondents.

"Having a group come together away from the normal timetable
and take time to have a meaningful
conversation worked well.
It highlighted to the group that
sometimes we flippantly say Hello,
How Are You, and move along
without stopping to hear the
response."

Once you start the conversation it's amazing how people then start to interact and talk and people you might not expect to come forward and speak. Gets older people talking about Mental Health and making that connection."

Being in control of the conversation

Many of the respondents described how they felt that the **Hello**, **How Are You?** campaign was one that allowed people to engage and move at their own pace, with what they were comfortable talking about. That it was led by each person.

Sense of empowerment

There was a sense of empowerment for those who often require support themselves by actively engaging and supporting the events through their participation.

"Just explaining the conversation cards and the conversation flowed from there. People were forthcoming with their experiences, especially the elderly."

A unique approach to talking about mental health

The conversations around **Hello, How Are You?** were on a level playing field that was both fun and created a change in the way people were talking and thinking about mental health.

"It was fun taking part, saying HELLO and it got people talking and thinking about mental health."

Reducing loneliness through help seeking and social connection

"Many people at the end of the event came back to me and said the morning was a great success and they felt less alone. One person reported from that day she registered for primary care and got in touch with a family member who stopped calling."

For some people the Hello,
How Are You? campaign
reduced feelings of loneliness
and provided inspiration for
some to seek out new social
connections or to reconnect
with people that they had
lost touch with.

"I was so delighted I went and really immersed myself into meeting new people which I wouldn't do normally – I do live alone and this can be hard sometimes – from attending this event I am now going to become a member of the local Men's Shed."

4. Key Highlights from Hello, How Are You? Events

In the last two years:



217 (in 2022) **274** (in 2023)

Passengers at Galway train station 2023

Without your involvement and support **Hello, How Are You?** would not have happened. And while we would love to share images from all of the events, here are just some of our events and highlights over the last two years.



^

Participants at a Woodlands For Health Walk in Cavan - Hello, How Are You? 2023



Parent and Toddler group in Limerick 2023



A happy passer by at Ceannt train station, Galway – Hello, How Are You? 2023





Martin Rogan and
Jo Donohoe at the
Leinster House coffee
morning talking to
local representatives
– Hello, How Are You?
2023

Ronda, Martin, Jo and Carmen at Heuston Station, Dublin – Hello, How Are You? 2023



Rosemount Family Resource Centre Dundrum – Hello, How Are You? 2022







Finola Colgan at the
Joe Dolan Statue in
Mullingar – Hello,
How Are You? 2023



^

Members of the Irish Wheelchair Basketball team, Hello, How Are You? 2022



Volunteers at Ceannt train station, Galway - Hello, How Are You? 2023



Garda Aine Watkins and volunteers from Thrive Balbriggan at an information stand in the Millfield Shopping Centre in Balbriggan, Co. Dublin -Hello, How Are You? 2023





Hello, How Are You?
outside broadcast
in the Fairgreen
Shopping Centre,
Carlow in 2022,
organised by Carlow
Mental Health
Association

Social Farming Ireland/Longford celebrating Hello, How Are You? 2022



5. Acknowledgements

None of this would have been achievable without the incredible support of colleagues and partners from various organisations who participated in the coproduction of the campaign, ran events on or around the day, and helped grow the visibility of the campaign. Our special thanks to every single person who stopped and gave time to have a meaningful conversation by saying **Hello**, **How Are You?**

Participating National Partners 2022 & 2023











- National and Subgroup Coproduction members
- Event organisers
- Volunteers
- Staff of Mental Health Ireland: Mental Health Promotion, Training and Education,
 Communications, Fundraising, Policy & Evaluation, Head Office, Development
 Officers and representatives from the Board of Management
- Website: Plexus
- Graphic Design: Wise Eyes Creative
- Report Author: Dr Ronda Barron, Head of National Policy and Evaluation, Mental Health Ireland

How to get involved or find out more

Website: www.hellohowareyou.info

Email: support@hellohowareyou.info

Tel: Mental Health Ireland: 01 284 1166

6. Appendix 1

List of organisations and groups involved in the national coproduction process of Hello, How Are You? across 2022 and 2023.

Staff from all Mental Health Ireland's departments, including:

- Communications
- Development Officers
- Fundraising
- Head Office
- Mental Health Promotion
- Policy & Evaluation
- Representatives from the Board of Management
- Training and Education
- Belong To
- Cairde
- Cavan Direct Provision Centre
- Community Gardai
- Family Resource Center National Forum
- Jigsaw
- Kildare Mental Health Association
- Mental Health Engagement and Recovery
- Raytown Men's Shed
- Regional Suicide Resource Office
- Roscommon Mental Health Association
- Sligo Atlantic Technical University
- Sligo Recovery College
- Social Prescribing
- Sports Ireland
- Thive Balbriggan
- Tipp FM
- Volunteers
- Wexford Mental Health Association
- Wexford Traveller Project