



# **Service Users in the Ballymun Area**

## **Research Report**

Research conducted September – October 2014



ISBN: 978-1-873769-75-1

Introduction .....	3
Background .....	4
Author .....	4
Co-author .....	4
Acknowledgements.....	5
1. Objective and aims.....	6
2. Research methods .....	6
3. Thematic area of the most satisfying services in the Ballymun area .....	7
Reasons for satisfaction with the service .....	7
Details on level of satisfaction .....	8
4. Service outreach .....	9
5. Follow up.....	9
Follow up method.....	9
Best method of contact .....	10
6. Thematic area of the most dissatisfying services in the Ballymun area .....	11
Reasons for dissatisfaction with the service.....	11
Details on level of dissatisfaction.....	12
7. Improving the service .....	13
8. Service outreach .....	14
9. Service need.....	14
10. What service is needed.....	14
11. Group discussion.....	15
12. Conclusion.....	16

## Introduction

The following research report was conducted in the autumn 2014 by Innovate Ballymun, a project housed within Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership and Dublin City University. Three years on, when this report is published, the picture on the ground has changed significantly. A number of Ballymun based community and voluntary organisations have closed their doors, including Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership.

Nevertheless, this research report provides a comprehensive “on the ground” picture of services available to local people in the area of Ballymun in 2014 and the systems the organisations used to support local people into leading better lives.

(May 2017)

## Background

Ballymun, in North Dublin, is coming to the end of an intensive physical regeneration which was started in the nineties and has been led by Ballymun Regeneration Limited (BRL), subsidiary of the Local Authority, Dublin City Council. In 2013 the Ballymun landscape changed, the regeneration programme came to an end and short-term supports were retained to develop physical, economic and social aspects of the area via Dublin City Council.

The tasks of social regeneration are still pressing for an area with acute indices of social deprivation. Ballymun needs to protect what has been developed in terms of social, economic and environment outcomes for local individuals and families. In addition, Ballymun needs to continue to improve service provisions for individuals and families, offering real progression in terms of social and economic development. In the spirit of social innovation - new ideas to meet unmet social needs in the public good - a coalition of the Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership, Dublin City University and Dublin City Council has come together to drive a new phase of sustainable social regeneration, under the name Innovate Ballymun.

Innovate Ballymun is here to empower service users to better access the service provisions available to them. In addition, we will work with service providers to help develop a more collaborative approach to dealing with clients' issues and concerns. With this ethos in mind, the Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership determined the need for further research on the needs of the service users in order to understand in detail whether the service provisions in the Ballymun area meet (or not) the needs of the service users, as part of a sustained social regeneration process.

## Author

Laura Martins de Carvalho, Research Officer with Innovate Ballymun

## Co-author

Annabelle Conway, Social Innovation Manager (formerly Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership, Innovate Ballymun project)

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, the Innovate Ballymun Team would like to thank all the service users in Ballymun who kindly took the time to answer this survey. Without their participation this research would not have been completed. In addition, we would also like to thank the Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership, Dublin City University and Dublin City Council for their support and DCU in the Community for facilitating this research.



## 1. Objective and aims

The objective of this research is to verify the level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the service users with the services available in Ballymun. We want to understand the positives and negatives of the services available in the area from the perspective of the service users. This information will help us better understand how the community responds to the services available to them.

## 2. Research methods

In order to decide on the most appropriate method for this research project, a consultation was carried out with the acting managers and staff members of the Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership due to their knowledge and ongoing work with the community. Their contribution provided invaluable insights into the service users' needs in the Ballymun area and helped us decide on which approach would yield the best results.

A quantitative questionnaire was designed to gather data. The questionnaire was divided in two sections: the first section focused on the services that people are most happy with and the second, on the services people find unsatisfactory. By talking to the local community, this survey also attempts to identify the gaps between the service users' needs and the services being provided.

We used the on-street consultation method to talk to the local community. This method enabled us to engage with a large number of people in a short time-frame. It is also a low cost, and flexible approach, and encourages the local community to voice their needs. This process gave us the opportunity to talk to a wide range of people, from the homeless to those living in newly built houses, and from local community leaders to people who have experienced substance abuse problems.

We applied this survey over the course of one week in September 2014, 4 hours a day, in public locations in Ballymun. The locations were: bus stops, parks, shopfronts, the Shopping Centre, the Axis centre, the Civic Office, the Post Office, and the Ballymun Market. These on-street consultations yielded 80 responses. We raffled a voucher worth 100 euro with an additional 20 euro worth of free gifts from *SuperValu* as an encouragement for public participation. In addition, we requested the assistance of the managers in the Ballymun Whitehall Area Partnership and in the Ballymun Men's Centre. They asked the participants of various training courses taking place in the Partnership and in the Men's Centre to fill out the survey. In total, 17 responses were obtained. We also posted an advertisement in the Ballymun Whitehall Area Bulletin displaying an online link to the survey via *SurveyMonkey*. The online survey yielded 4 responses.

The closing date for completion of the survey was 15<sup>th</sup> September and on the following day we announced the raffle competition winner. In total, we obtained 101 responses and the results and analysis of the survey are displayed in sections 3 to 12 of this report.

### 3. Thematic area of the most satisfying services in the Ballymun area

*Question - Please think of a service you are MOST SATISFIED with in the Ballymun area and answer the following question: What general area does this service cover?*

As demonstrated in table 1, the most frequently mentioned thematic areas are 'Education & Training' and 'Other'. When we asked the respondents to specify which service they are happy with, the results showed 'Ballymun Men's Centre' (6), 'all of the above' (3) and 'none' (1). Other items specified are: the supermarket; transport; council; post office and civic centre.

Table 1

Thematic areas	Responses in %	Number of respondents
Education & training	16.83%	17
Others	14.85%	15
Sports & leisure	12.87%	13
Community participation & volunteering	10.89%	11
Healthcare & well-being	7.92%	8
Arts & culture	7.92%	8
Elderly	5.94%	6
Childcare & family support	7.92%	5
Youth	4.95%	5
Addiction	3.96%	4
Employment	2.97%	3
Environment	2.97%	3
Community safety	1.98%	2
Welfare	0.99%	1
Total of respondents		101

### Reasons for satisfaction with the service

*Question - What made you satisfied with the service?*

As demonstrated in table 2, 'location' and 'customer service' are the main reasons the respondents feel satisfied with their service of choice. There is a direct correlation between the level of satisfaction and the closeness of the service to the respondent's residence. The location of the service is considered a great community asset, particularly to parents or people minding small children.

Table 2

Answer choices	Responses in %	Number of respondents
Location	49%	49
Customer service (the staff was approachable and helpful)	49%	49
I trust the organisation	46%	46
The service benefits me	42%	42
Opening hours	22%	22
The service is efficient and speedy	18%	18
Other	10%	10

### Details on level of satisfaction

*Question - Please tell us more about why you are satisfied with the service.*

This was an open question and the reasons displayed on the table below reflect what emerged in the results:

Table 3

Reasons	Number of times mentioned
Friendly, trustworthy staff / good atmosphere	27
Learn new things / progress in education	24
It is good for the community	15
Health benefits	9
You meet new people and locals get involved	8
Location	8
It meets a need	7
Variety of activities / choices	7

Some of the respondents' reasons for satisfaction with the services are outlined below:

'Local based service, people are welcoming and non-judgmental. Very knowledgeable about their services and always greet you with a smile plus a chat.'

'Staff genuinely polite, you get the assistance.'

'It has helped me progress in my education and gave me great support in studying and doing exams.'

'Get the community together, it's a good idea.'



## 4. Service outreach

*Question - How did you find out about this service?*

As demonstrated in table 4, the most popular method of providing information about the services in Ballymun is word of mouth. The results show that the community searches for information about the services in a very informal way. It also indicates that the organisations rely only on their clients to advertise their services.

Table 4

Answer choices	Responses in %	Number of respondents
Word of mouth	81.25%	65
Newspaper / magazines / newsletters	17.50%	14
Poster	12.50%	10
Online search / Facebook / Twitter	6.25%	5
E-mail	3.75%	3
TV	1.25%	1
Radio	0%	0

## 5. Follow up

*Question - Were you contacted by the organisation for a follow-up when you finished using their service?*

Nearly 59% of the respondents were contacted for a follow up, which reveals that the majority of the services considered satisfactory have a method in place to follow up with their clients.

Table 5

Answer choice	Response in %	Number of respondents
Yes	58.95%	56
No	41.05%	39

### Follow up method

*Question - If you answered 'Yes', which method did the organisation use to contact you?*

As demonstrated in the table below, the most popular methods used to follow up with clients are the telephone and posted letter.

Table 6

Answer choices	Responses in %	Number of respondents
Phone	75.86%	44
Posted letter	24.14%	14
E-mail	12.07%	7
Face-to-face follow up	10.34%	6
Survey	8.62%	5
Other	1.72%	1

### Best method of contact

*Question - What is the best method the organisation could use to contact you?*

Nearly 80% of the respondents mentioned the telephone as the best method organisations could use to contact them. The second most popular method is the e-mail.

Table 7

Answer choices	Responses in %	Number of respondents
Phone	71.58%	68
E-mail	24.21%	23
Posted letter	18.95%	18
Face-to-face follow up	6.32%	6
Survey	1.05%	1
Other	1.05%	1

## 6. Thematic area of the most dissatisfying services in the Ballymun area

*Question - Please think of a service you are MOST DISSATISFIED with, in the Ballymun area, and answer the following question: What general area does this service cover?*

As demonstrated in table 8, the most frequently mentioned thematic areas are 'Employment' and 'Other'. Under 'Other', when asked to specify which service they are unhappy with, the respondents answered 'Shopping Centre' (2) and 'DCC' (2). Other items specified are: Post office; Gardaí; transport; supermarket and housing.

Table 8

Answer choices	Responses in %	Number of respondents
Employment	19.23%	15
Other (Shopping Centre, DCC, Post office, Gardaí, transport, supermarket and housing)	15.38%	12
Community safety	12.82%	10
Youth	11.54%	9
Addiction	11.54%	9
Welfare	6.41%	5
Arts & culture	3.85%	3
Education & training	3.85%	3
Community participation & volunteering	3.85%	3
Healthcare & well-being	3.85%	3
Sports & leisure	3.85%	3
Environment	2.56%	2
Elderly	1.28%	1
Childcare & family support	0%	0
Total of respondents		78

### Reasons for dissatisfaction with the service

*Question - What made you dissatisfied with the service?*

As demonstrated in table 9, 'the service did not benefit me' and 'the service is inefficient and slow' are the main reasons the respondents feel unhappy with their service of choice. When asked to specify why the people are unhappy with the service, the majority commented on the lack of jobs (9) and lack of an adequate shopping centre (10).

Table 9

Answer choices	Responses in %	Number of respondents
The service did not benefit me	37.84%	28
The service is inefficient and slow	31.08%	23
Other	22.97%	17
I do not trust the organisation	9.46%	7
Opening hours	6.76%	5
Location	5.41%	4
Customer service (the staff was unapproachable and unhelpful)	5.41%	4
Total		74

### Details on level of dissatisfaction

*Question - Please tell us more about why you are dissatisfied with the service.*

This was an open question and the reasons displayed on the table below reflect what emerged in the results:

Table 10

Reasons	Number of times mentioned
Unfriendly, impolite staff / bad atmosphere	9
Service cannot help me	9
Lack of jobs	9
Drugs / addiction	8
Lack of services and/or facilities for the youth	8
Bad people hanging around / gangs	6
No security	1

Some of the respondents' reasons for dissatisfaction with the services are outlined below:

- 'They treat you like a machine.'
- 'They're not welcoming there, the attitude...'
- 'Not much help out in Ballymun.'
- 'Not getting any job, recruitment and funds.'

'Addiction is a very big problem; lots of people need it (addiction services) but don't get it. The youth today is so bad that 13 years old are drinking and using drugs. (Ballymun has) places that are not safe to walk through.'

## 7. Improving the service

*Question - How could this service be improved?*

As it can be seen from the table below, 'employment' (11), 'more community involvement' (8) and 'more services' (8) are the top 3 suggestions for service improvement.

Table 11

Suggestions for service improvement	Number of times mentioned
More work / jobs / employment	11
More community involvement	8
More services	8
More police / security	7
Drug eradication	5
More friendly staff	4
Do not know	4
More shops	3

Some of the suggestions for service improvement are outlined below:

'More jobs created.'

'If Dublin City Council encouraged and developed amongst the community, a sense of ownership in their community, volunteers would also need encouraging through accreditation and rewards for the Trojan work they do on behalf of their community.'

'More available walk-in centres for the youth to socialize, provide the community with outings and hobbies (volunteering in community) to cut the numbers of children hanging around.'

## 8. Service outreach

*Question - How did you find out about this service?*

The main method of acquiring information about the services available in Ballymun is word of mouth. The fact that word of mouth is the most popular method used by the community to obtain information about a service shows that a good or bad customer service will determine how the community communicates their experience with the service to their family and friends.

Table 12

Answer choices	Responses in %	Number of respondents
Word of mouth	78.85%	41
Newspaper / magazines / newsletters	15.38%	8
Poster	11.54%	6
Online search / Facebook / Twitter	7.69%	4
E-mail	1.92%	1
TV	1.92%	1
Radio	1.92%	1

## 9. Service need

*Question - Is there any service that you need, but is not available in the Ballymun area?*

Nearly 55% of the respondents need a service that is not available in the area.

Table 13

Answer choice	Response in %	Number of respondents
Yes	54.44%	49
No	45.56%	41
Total of respondents		90

## 10. What service is needed

*Question - If you answered 'Yes', please tell us what other service(s) you would like to see in the Ballymun area.*

During the on-street consultations it became evident that the greatest needs of the community are a new shopping centre and more shops in the area (see table 14).

Table 14

Services needed	Number of times mentioned
Shopping centre / shops	19
Other (it does not follow a common pattern)	11
Jobs / employment	6
Services for the youth / children	6
Rehab / detox clinic	4
Counseling services	3

Some of the services needed in the area are outlined below:

'I would like to see a shopping centre facility to serve the greater Ballymun ward. I would also like to see all community groups and organisations becoming as one group (as a voice for the community). There is greater strength in unity and members.'

'Shopping Centre, more shops, groceries.'

'Jobs.'

'More service for kids to go around, clubs for smaller kids.'

'Detox clinic drugs out of Ballymun.'

## 11. Group discussion

*Question - Would you like to participate in a group conversation about what other service(s) you would like to see in the Ballymun area?*

When we asked the community the question posed above, 38 out of 101 said yes. Although the number is low, it indicates that a small portion of the community is genuinely interested in participating in a group discussion to voice their needs.

Table 15

Answer choice	Response in %	Number of respondents
No	61.62%	61
Yes	38.38%	38
Total		99

## 12. Conclusion

This research explored the level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the service users with the service provision available in the Ballymun area. The analysis of the results enabled us to understand what makes a service satisfying and dissatisfying from the perspective of the service user.

The service that emerged as the most satisfying was education and training. The results showed a majority of respondents rating 'location' and 'good customer service', and in particular 'friendly, trustworthy staff / good atmosphere' as the most important factors in determining whether a service is satisfactory or not.

The service that emerged as the least satisfying was employment. The majority of respondents mentioning 'the service did not benefit me', and in particular 'impolite, unfriendly staff / bad atmosphere' and the lack of jobs, as the main reasons for their dissatisfaction with the services available in the area.

When the respondents were asked about which service they would like to see in the community, the most mentioned were 'a new shopping centre', 'more shops', and 'more jobs'. These findings confirm the pressing needs for more employment opportunities and more shop facilities in the area.

All the respondents (101 people) were able to mention a service they were happy with, whereas 78 respondents mentioned a service they disliked. This difference in uptake for each question shows that the respondents were generally more happy than unhappy with the service provision in the Ballymun area.