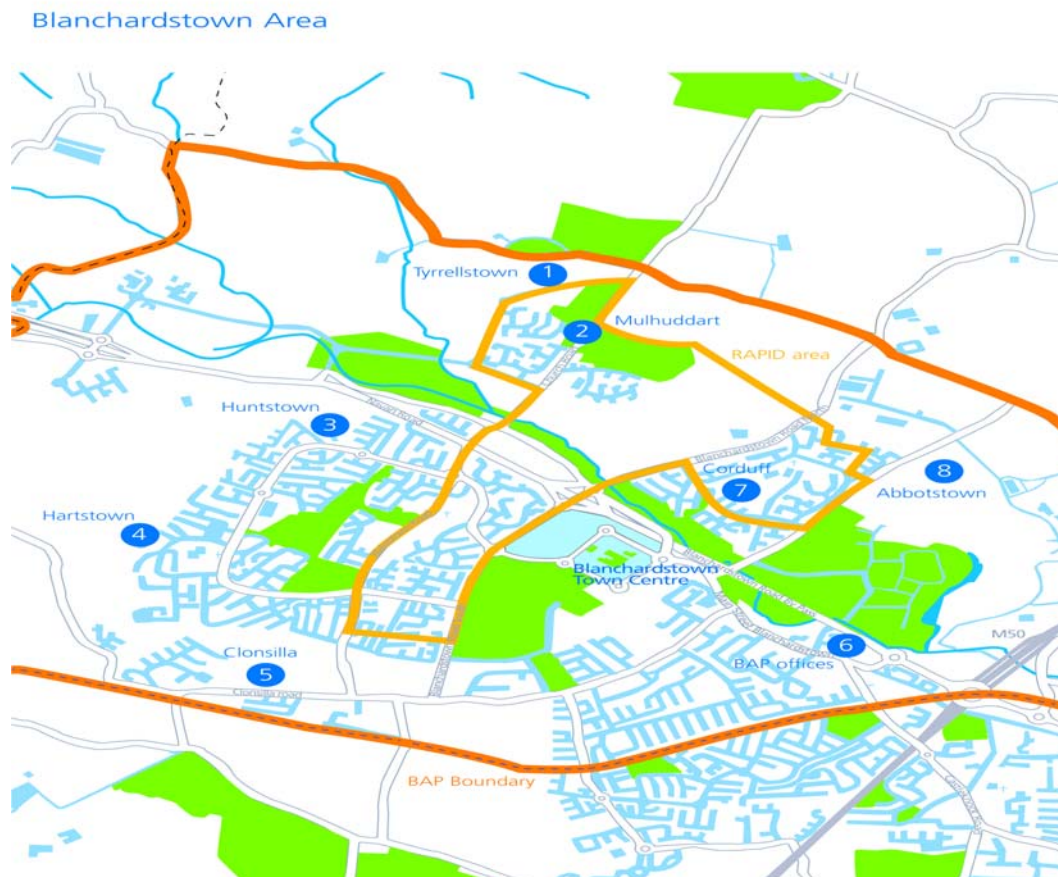


A Social Economic & Demographic Profile of Blanchardstown



blanchardstown
area partnership

action for positive change



Conor Ryan
Research and Evaluation Officer
Blanchardstown Area Partnership
September 2004

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Section One	
List of district electoral divisions, parishes and estates in Blanchardstown	3
Population growth	4
Spread of the population	5
Areas of relative affluence and deprivation	6
Age profile	7
Pre-school (0-3years)	7
Over 65's	8
Dependency ratios	9
Labour market characteristics	10
Employment change	11
New working poor	12
Section Two	
Gender issues	12
Educational attainment	13-15
Section Three -Base line data on disadvantaged groups	
Travellers	16-18
People With Disabilities	18
Non-Nationals	19-20
Lone Parents	21-22
Substance Mis-users	22-23
The Homeless	23-24
Section Four	
Productive sector issues	25-26
SWOT analysis	27-28
List of bar charts and tables	
Bar chart 1 National, regional and local population changes 1996-2002	
Table 1 Population of individual DED's	
Table 2 Number of additional households built in each BAP ward from 1996-2002	
Bar chart 2 Population change of BAP's 8 DED's 1996-2002	
Table 3 Areas of relative affluence and deprivation 1991-2002	
Table 4 'Youth at risk'	
Table 5 Pre-School '0-3 years olds'	
Table 6 Population aged over 65	
Table 7 Age Dependencies	
Table 8 Unemployment rates for each of BAP's DED's	
Table 9 Live register data	
Table 10 At work in Blanchardstown	
Table 11 At Risk of Poverty Rates	
Table 12 Educational attainments at different levels across Blanchardstown in 2002	
Table 13 Percentage completing 3 rd level education	
Table 14 Locations of Travellers in Blanchardstown	
Bar chart 3 Most Important Training Needs of Blanchardstown's Travellers	
Table 15 Numbers of People With Disabilities in Blanchardstown	
Table 16 Number of Asylum Seekers and Refugees Claiming SWA	
Table 17 Numbers of Lone Parents In Blanchardstown	
Table 18 Stated Residencies of Drug-Misusers	
Table 19 Locations of Homeless People in Blanchardstown	

Introduction

This is the Social, Economic and Demographic profile of the Blanchardstown area. It was largely drawn together based upon the April 2002 National Census plus the most recent 2004 Gamma baseline data report for Blanchardstown. In certain cases data was also sourced directly from local community group/initiatives and statutory agencies that are interacting with disadvantaged individuals throughout Blanchardstown. Very often this data is more timely and informative than that available via the National Census carried out every five years. Where appropriate short descriptions of how particular community groups and initiatives are helping to counteract social exclusion in Blanchardstown are contained within.

For further information on this profile, contact Conor Ryan (Research and Evaluation Officer in Blanchardstown Area Partnership. (Tel No: 8209550)

Section One

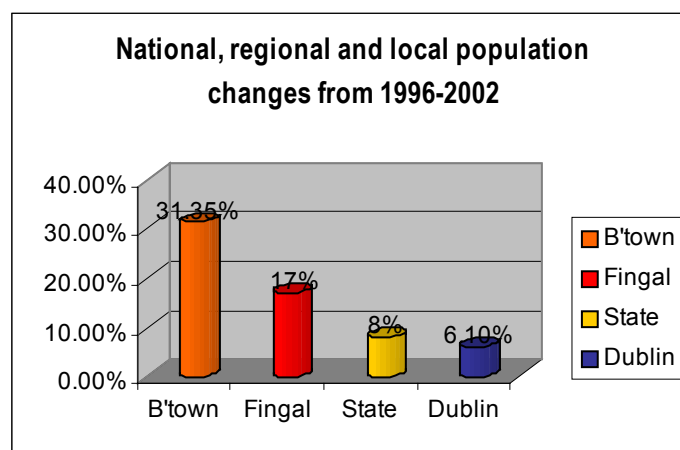
The following list shows the parishes or large estates that are included in each respective District Electoral Division

DED	Parish or Estate	
Abbotstown	James Connolly Memorial Hospital Millstead Herbert Road River Road Woodpark Talbot Downs/Court Cappagh Hospital Dunsink Lane National Aquatic Centre	
Blakestown	Castlefield Woods/Park/Court Hartstown Huntstown Little Pace Clonsilla Village Portersgate Lohunda Park St. Joseph's Hospital Annely	Swallowbrook Pinebrook Hansfield Hazelbury Green Rusheeneey Huntersrun Rosedale Westhaven Charnwood Deerhaven Windermere Bramblefield Ongar Park Linnetfields Delhurst
Coolmine	Whitechapel/ Mountview Estate Whitestown/ Sheep more Estate Fortlawn Estate Blakestown Way Lohunda Downs Blanchardstown Town Centre Springlawn Broadway Road Orchard Grove	Summerfield Westland Village Aspen Wood Limelawn Park
Corduff	Corduff/ Sheephill/Edgewood/ Brookhaven/ Ashling Heights.	
Delwood	Delwood Estate Glenville Estate The Courtyard Brompton Estate Kirkpatrick/ Rockfield Estate	St Mochtas Coolmine Close Coolmine Green
Mulhuddart	Dromheath Estate Warrenstown Castlecurragh Park Blanchardstown Heath Institute of Technology Mulhuddart Wood	
Roselawn	St Brigid's Park Rushmore Roselawn Road Church Avenue	
Tyrellstown	Wellview Estate Parslickstown Estate	

1. Population growth

The population of Blanchardstown is rising perennially (by about 2,000 people) and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. This is primarily due to the large local land bank available for housing to be constructed on. **In April 2002, the population of Blanchardstown stood at 50,607 persons compared to 38,612 back in 1996.** The population therefore has risen **31.35%** over the past *six years*. This reflects enormous growth levels and is well above the corresponding growth figures recorded for Dublin of 6.1%, the State 8% and finally the overall Fingal region of 17% respectively.

Bar Chart 1



At current growth rates the population of Blanchardstown Area Partnership's catchment area is expected to reach in excess of 58,000 by the next Census in 2006. To place it in another context **Blanchardstown's population now exceeds counties Carlow, Leitrim, and Longford individually and will also bypass Sligo, Cavan and Monaghan's shortly.**

Table 1
Population of individual DED's ¹

DED	Pop in April 2002
Abbotstown	2537
Blakestown	24404
Coolmine	9202
Corduff	4346
Delwood	4589
Mulhuddart	1833
Roselawn	2043
Tyrrelstown	1653
BLANCHARDSTOWN	50607

Source C.S.O. 2002

Blanchardstown accounts now for 25.76% of the total population of County Fingal, a figure that is likely to increase given Final County Council plans for housing developments in the short to medium term. According to ² Fingal County Councils 2001 housing strategy 16,415 new housing units will be developed in the Greater Blanchardstown Area up to the end of 2011. This represents a population increase of circa 46,000 accommodated in the ten-year period.

¹ Blanchardstown is composed of 8 District Electoral Divisions (DED's) outlined in Table 1 above. The DED's do not often correspond with the community identifies in common currency e.g. one local authority estate, which is commonly referred to as Blakestown locally, is actually in the Coolmine DED not Blakestown DED.

²The Social-Economic and Competitive Profile of the Greater Blanchardstown Area, DIT Bolton Street, October 2003

Table 2
Number of additional households built in each BAP ward from 1996 to 2002

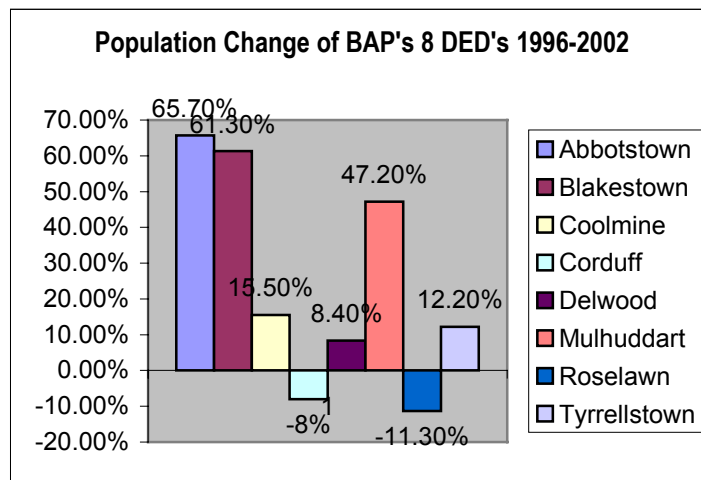
DED	Increase / Decrease
Abbotstown	+373
Blakestown	+3433
Coolmine	+664
Corduff	-41
Delwood	+297
Mulhuddart	+264
Roselawn	+1
Tyrrelstown	+58
BLANCHARDSTOWN	+5148

Source C.S.O. 2002

1.1 Spread of the population

The population growth recorded in Blanchardstown was not uniformly distributed across each of its neighbourhoods. The largest population increases occurred in Abbotstown 65.7% and Blakestown 61.3% as a result of families with young children moving into newly constructed houses estates. In contrast Corduff and Roselawn’s populations actually fell by 8% and 11.3%. The reduction in Roselawn’s population reflects a maturing of the older sections of this area plus parent’s children may have moved out of the area as they have reached house-buying age. In contrast the housing stock in Corduff actually fell, which would account for some of its population decrease.

Bar Chart 2



1.2 Areas of Relative Affluence and Deprivation N3 North/South Divide

There are several DED's within Blanchardstown Area Partnership's boundaries, which still show substantial evidence of continuing social and economic disadvantage. These DED's also fall into the local RAPID area³. Haase and Pratschke have developed a new index that provides a single measurement of the overall deprivation of an area. Based on census data the index takes into consideration the underlying dimensions of deprivation i.e. social class, demographic and labour market deprivation.

Table 3 outlines the relative affluence and deprivation between 1991 and 2002 for the eight electoral wards of Blanchardstown and also places them into a regional and national context. Between 1991 and 2002 there was an improvement in the overall affluence of Blanchardstown as there was a positive change of 20.9 in its score (-1.3 in 1991 to 19.6 in 2002). Tyrrelstown experienced a deprivation score within the classification of "Very Disadvantaged" while Corduff was classified as "Disadvantaged". Blakestown, Delwood and Roselawn are classified as "Affluent". Abbotstown, Coolmine and Mulhuddart are now categorised as "Marginally below Average".

Table 3
Affluence and Deprivation 1991-2002

DED	Absolute Affluence/Deprivation Scores			Change in Deprivation Score 1991-2002
	2002	1996	1991	
Abbotstown	10.9	9.5	2	8.9
Blakestown	26.5	15	7.2	19.3
Coolmine	10.8	-6.2	-15.3	26.1
Corduff	2.8	-7.6	-16.3	19.1
Delwood	31.3	27.2	22.9	8.4
Mulhuddart	10.2	-17.6	-31.9	42.1
Roselawn	30.3	24.1	17.3	13
Tyrrelstown	-10.4	-18.2	-27.3	16.9
BLANCHARDSTOWN	19.6	7.2	-1.3	20.9
Fingal	26	18.6	11.8	14.2
Dublin	21	12.2	4.7	16.3
State	17.4	9.1	1.9	15.4

Source: GAMMA 2004

Therefore in terms of the change in relative deprivation between 1991 and 2002 Mulhuddart strongly improved, Coolmine improved, Tyrrelstown, Blakestown and Corduff marginally improved, Roselawn marginally disimproved, Abbotstown and Delwood disimproved.

³ RAPID area is all of the Corduff DED, Wellview and Parslickstown Estates in Tyrrelstown, Dromheath Estate in Mulhuddart and finally Whitestown/Sheepmoor /Fortlawn/Whitechapel estates in Coolmine DED

1.3 Age Profile

The composition of Blanchardstown's population *changed subtly* between 1996 and 2002. If you examine the highlighted rows in table 4 below it is evident that the 'youth population' 0-14 years decreased uniformly across seven of the eight wards. Only Abbotstown avoided this trend. Despite this **Blanchardstown still has a much younger profile in the 0-14 range 23.87%** than the rest of **Dublin 19.17%** and the **State 21.12%**. More strikingly however is the fact that apart from Blakestown, which has experienced an influx of young families, the disadvantaged wards in Blanchardstown also experience the highest percentages of youth at risk present e.g. **Tyrrelstown 42.22%, Mulhuddart 27.38%**. The young age profile will skew the demands for youth/sport clubs, crèches and additional capacity in local schools for the foreseeable future in these given areas.

Table 4
'Youth at Risk'

	Pop Aged 0-14 1996	Pop Aged 0-14 2002
Abbot'n	18.9%	22%
Blakestown	33.6%	25.13%
Coolmine	33.5%	24.29%
Corduff	32.1%	24.92%
Delwood	21.6%	13.29%
Mulhuddart	49.7%	27.38%
Roselawn	21.5%	12.78%
Tyrrelstown	51.3%	42.22%
BLANCHARDSTOWN	32%	23.87%
FINGAL	22%	22.7%
DUBLIN	27.3%	19.17%
STATE	23.7%	21.12%

Source C.S.O. 2002

1.4 Pre-School (0-3 years)

The pre-school going population of 0-3 year old children in Blanchardstown increased appreciably by precisely 1000 or from 6.88% to 8.34% of the total population. Individually Blakestown recorded the largest net increase of children in this age cohort, whereas Coolmine and Mulhuddart also experienced further increases of children in this age category. It was also possible to sub-divide this age category down further 0-1 year and 2-3 year olds. What this reveals is that Blakestown, Abbotstown, Coolmine and Mulhuddart all recorded increases in both 0-1/ 2-3 year olds. In Corduff and Tyrrelstown the numbers of very young children aged less than one year fell but they also experienced slight increases in children aged between 2-3 years old.

Table 5
'0-3 year olds'

	Pop Aged 0-3 1996	Pop Aged 0-3 2002	Increase/ Decrease Pop
Abbot'n	96	189	93
Blakestown	1305	2096	791
Coolmine	523	622	99
Corduff	291	281	-10
Delwood	115	129	14
Mulhuddart	96	169	73
Roselawn	71	37	-34
Tyrrelstown	173	147	-26
BLANCHARDSTOWN	2670	3670	+ 1000

This data is vital for the likes of the Fingal County Childcare Committee in helping them determine where and what type of services are required in order to meet parents childcare needs. What also should be taken into consideration are the high pockets of unemployment and large percentages of single parents in the disadvantaged wards. These factors are important if individual Equal Opportunity Childcare Programme *objectives* are to be met

- To provide affordable childcare to local people who fall under designated target groups
- To provide affordable childcare to local people who wish to attend training, education course or take up employment

1.5 Over 65's

The young character of Blanchardstown is equally reflected in the relatively small proportion of people over 65. **Only 3.3% of the Partnerships population are in this age cohort, considerably lower than the Fingal average of 5.94%.** Nevertheless the numbers of adults *aged 65+* increased in all the Blanchardstown's wards and naturally certain areas have higher numbers of elderly people than others. For instance the higher senior citizen figure for Abbotstown is due to Cappagh and James Connolly Memorial Hospitals. In the absence of the hospitals the overall percentage of older citizens in Blanchardstown would be even lower.

One of the common findings to emerge from the RAPID ⁴ needs analysis reports was the concern raised by residents about the lack of services and outlets for the elderly population in general. This factor should not be overlooked by agencies in planning delivery of services.

**Table 6
Population aged over 65**

	Pop Aged 65 Plus 1996 %	Pop Aged 65+ in 1996	Pop Aged 65+ in 2002	Pop Aged 65 Plus 2002 %
Abbot'n	23.9%	366	378	14.9%
Blakestown	2.1%	320	447	1.83%
Coolmine	2.2%	174	252	2.7%
Corduff	2.1%	97	115	2.6%
Delwood	3.8%	161	228	4.9%
Mulhuddart	0.7%	9	11	0.6%
Roselawn	8.3%	191	217	10.62%
Tyrrelstown	1.9%	28	35	2.11%
BLANCHARDSTOWN	3.5%	1346	1683	3.3%
FINGAL	5.6%			5.94%

Source C.S.O. 2002

1.6 Dependency Ratios 1996 V's 2002

The combination of a reduction in the 0-14 population on the previous census in 1996 and the modest percentage of elderly people in Blanchardstown meant that the age dependency ⁵ converged closer to the Fingal and Dublin averages. The age dependency ratios fell in all wards it but still remains far higher in the disadvantaged DED of Tyrrelstown 44.33% and Abbotstown 36.9%. A reduction in the age dependent population means that the 'potential working

⁴ RAPID Needs Analysis surveys were undertaken in the Corduff, Mountview, Blakestown and Mulhuddart wards back in late 2001 and 2002

⁵ The dependency ratio refers to the proportion of dependents (under 15 and over 65) to the working age population (aged 15 to 65).

population' 16-64 increases. This is backed up by census data, which proves that the 'actual working population' of Blanchardstown increased significantly.

Table 7
Age Dependencies

Ward	Age Dependent 1996 %	Age Dependent 2002 %
Abbotstown	42.8%	36.9%
Blakestown	35.8%	26.96%
Coolmine	35.7%	26.99%
Corduff	34.2%	27.52%
Delwood	25.4%	18.19%
Mulhuddart	50.4%	27.98%
Roselawn	29.8%	23.4%
Tyrrelstown	53.25%	44.33%
BLANCHARDSTOWN	35.5%	29.03%
Fingal	32.9%	28.64%
State	35.1%	32.3%
Dublin	32.9%	29.3%

Source C.S.O. 2002

1.7 Labour Market Characteristics

Unemployment fell in Blanchardstown ⁶ from 17.8% back in 1996 to 9.8% by April 2002, Despite the large drop in it still remains higher the national figure of 8.84%, Dublin 5.3% and the Fingal average of 6.85%. **When the unemployment percentages are averaged they disguise the double-digit unemployment rates in many areas.** The individual unemployment rates are still particularly high in Tyrellestown 23.1%, Mulhuddart 17.5%, Corduff 16%, and Coolmine 15.3%. They are in fact more akin to the national unemployment levels experienced nationally *before the 'Celtic Tiger' boom years.* Tyrellestown is now listed as one of the country's unemployment 'black spots' as its unemployment rate exceeds 20%. Even in Abbotstown, which on the basis of the Haase and Pratschke index is now categorised as "Marginally below Average" in affluence/deprivation terms had an unemployment level of 17.5%, which is unacceptably high. Most of the Travellers living in Blanchardstown reside in Abbotstown (please refer to Traveller section for further details). Travellers experience higher level of unemployment than the settled community and so this may partially explain the high percentage of unemployment recorded in this ward.

Table 8

Unemployment rates for each of BAP's DED's according to the 2002 Census

	Total	Total Labour Force	In Labour Force			Student	On Home Duties	Retired	Unable to Work due to Permanent Sickness or Disability	Other	Unemployment % 2002	Unemployment % 1996
			At Work	Looking for 1 st Regular Job	Unemployed having lost or given up job							
Abbot'n	1978	1191	983	22	186	138	218	233	174	24	17.5%	18%
Blakestown	18271	13527	12663	109	755	1704	1819	387	655	179	6.4%	10%
Coolmine *	6966	4682	3966	85	631	862	853	258	252	59	15.3%	32%
Corduff *	3263	2145	1802	40	303	402	432	122	140	22	16%	28%
Delwood	3979	2562	2417	31	114	690	382	224	93	28	5.7%	6%
Mulhuddart *	1331	956	789	39	128	150	165	11	28	21	17.5%	40%
Roselawn	1782	1028	982	11	35	290	221	173	54	16	4.5%	8%
Tyrellestown *	955	515	396	81	38	122	216	32	57	13	23.1%	45%
Blanchardstown	38525	26606	23998	418	2190	4358	4306	1440	1453	362	9.8%	17.8%
Fingal											6.85%	11.3%
State											8.84%	14.8%

Source C.S.O. 2002

⁶ The unemployment percentages presented at a local DED level are calculated using the Principal Economic Status (PES) of individuals and are extracted from the 2002 Census Volume. National official statistics in Ireland now rely upon the International Labour Office (ILO) criteria for measuring unemployment. This method is not applied at a local level

The census unemployment data presented in Table 9 may no longer be considered totally accurate. This conclusion can be drawn because since April 2002 the live register figures in Blanchardstown began to rise once more. **The latest live register data from August 2004⁷** shows that it **increased by 31.84% in a little over two years and a quarter years**. Over the same time interval, **Blanchardstown has recorded the single highest percentage increase in people signing on the live register throughout Dublin with the one exception of the Rathfarnham exchange**. Major job losses announced by several large corporate multinational has been partially responsible for this. Unfortunately Blanchardstown is still over-reliant on larger employers to provide jobs. So even though Blanchardstown's population is now probably on a par with several counties in the BMW region with 3,498 persons signing on the live register locally it is considerably higher than Cavan's total of 2,322 people, Sligo of 2,316 and even Monaghan's at 2,637.

Table 9 Live register data

	Males >25 yrs	Males <25 yrs	Total	Females >25 yrs	Females <25 yrs	Total	Male + Female Total		% Increase
Blanchardstown-March 2002	352	1171	1523	209	878	1087	2653		
Blanchardstown-August 2004	412	1430	1842	373	1283	1656	3498	+845	31.84%

Source C.S.O. August 2004

1.8 Employment Change

On a more positive note the **total population at work** in Blanchardstown actually increased by **10,568 people or by 78.67%**. To take Corduff as an illustration, even though its population fell by 8% in the past six years its working population still expanded by 24.25%, which is too be welcomed. This was replicated across all the other seven wards as can be gauged from table 9 below. The **labour market participation rate in Blanchardstown increased to 69.1%** from 62.2% in 1996. It is now far in excess of the national average of 58.3% or the Fingal figure of 64.8%. When disaggregated on a gender basis it reveals that the labour market **participation rate of women increased sharply from 47.7% to 59% in 2002**. The corresponding figure for males increased only slightly to 79.5%.

Table 10 At Work In Blanchardstown

	At Work in 1996	At Work in 2002	Increase in Working Population	Labour Force Participation Rate
Abbot'n	494	983	+489	60.2%
Blakestown	6,167	12,663	+6,496	73.87%
Coolmine	2,210	3,966	+1,756	67.21%
Corduff	1,448	1,802	+354	65.7%
Delwood	1,786	2,417	+631	64.4%
Mulhuddart	206	789	+583	71.82%
Roselawn	903	982	+79	57.68%
Tyrrelstown	216	396	+183	53.93%
BLANCHARDSTOWN	13,430	23,998	+10,568	69.1%
State				58.3%

Source C.S.O. 2002

⁷ The live register is not designed to measure unemployment. It includes part time workers, seasonal and casual entitled to unemployment assistance or benefit.

1.9 New Working Poor

Although as we have seen the numbers of people in paid employment increased appreciably throughout Blanchardstown it still needs to be placed into context. The overall percentage of people at risk of poverty⁸ (below 60% of the median income by age, household type or by labour force status) has reportedly increased during recent years. If you examine Table 11 you will see that **in 2001 8.1% of employees were at risk of poverty compared to just 2.6% back in 1998**. The same trend can be observed for the elderly, children and two adults with four plus children. Some progress has been made in reducing the likelihood of lone parents and the unemployed experiencing poverty.

Therefore even though more people than ever are in employment across all of the Blanchardstown **many are feasibly at greater risk of experiencing poverty than their counterparts five years ago**. This would appear to suggest that a significant minority of people in Blanchardstown today find themselves socially excluded and in low paid jobs. These have been dubbed the **'new working poor'**.

Table 11 'At Risk of Poverty Rates'

	1998 (%)	2000 (%)	2001 (%)
Overall	19.8	20.9	21.9
Men	15.9	17.3	19.4
Women	21.2	22.3	23.2
Children	22.6	23.7	23.4
Elderly	32.9	38.4	44.1
Adults 18-64	15.9	16.4	17.1
Employee	2.6	6.5	8.1
Unemployed	58.8	57.1	44.7
Single adult	50.1	47.7	49.8
2 adults with 4+ children	29.8	39.2	40.7
Lone parents	44.9	46.5	42.9

Source: ESRI

⁸ Source: Economic & Social Research Institute-Monitoring Poverty Trends in Ireland June 2001

Section Two

2. Gender Issues

When disaggregated on a gender basis the live register data highlights a worrying trend. In the last year alone there was a larger surge in women signing on compared to that of men. Various explanations for this have been put forward for these increases. These include the large number of economic migrant workers were brought into the Dublin 15 area by multinationals over the past couple of years to fill new posts created. When the economy contracted many found themselves unemployed sometimes after only being in the country for a short period. Because these people have no stamps built up they for the most part are placed on unemployment assistance. **There are still however a far higher percentage of men than women who are long term unemployed i.e. over 3 years.** Paradoxically more women than men benefit from labour market programmes such as the Full Time Jobs Initiative or Community Employment Schemes, which are designed to re-integrate long term unemployed people back into the workforce.

Other observations worth noting are that the ratio of people on unemployment assistance and benefit is out of sync in Dublin 15 compared to other regions of the State. This is particularly the case so for males. The CE and FTJI labour market schemes traditionally attract far higher numbers of women than men, which only compounds this problem.

Other anecdotal evidence suggests that a number of male Irish construction workers were made redundant and replaced by less costly foreign workers in the first quarter of 2003. Whether recent government policy changes in the area of work permits have impacted in favour of Irish workers is open to speculation. The largest increase for males signing on has been in the age ranges of 20--34, which could be a result of the above occurrences.

The increase in women signing on has been more evenly spread across age groupings but greatest in the 25-34 and 35-44 cohort's. The unemployment rates for women in Blanchardstown were 9% whereas in the rest of Fingal it stood at 6.6%. From a female perspective it should be remembered that Blanchardstown has *a far larger percentage of lone parents than other regions*. They are entitled to sign on while maintaining their other entitlements. In and around the holiday periods e.g. Easter many women sign on who may have been working locally in schools and offices holding operative type jobs. However this in itself doesn't explain away the increase. The Town Centre is a source of part time local employment for many women.

2.1 Educational Attainment

The wide variations in educational attainment at all levels across Blanchardstown are once again evident in Table 12 overleaf. Tyrrelstown closely followed by Corduff are most severely disadvantaged in terms of education. In the BAP area 15.7% of the population whose education had ceased comprised people aged 15 years and over with no formal or primary education. This figure was higher than the Final average of 13.6% but lower than the Dublin figure of 18.7%. At 39.7% Tyrrelstown experienced the highest percentage of its population as having no formal or primary education (as a percentage of population whose education had ceased). This should be of enormous concern to educational providers in Blanchardstown because it is in fact worse than the reported percentage figure for the 1996 census of 34.1%. Thankfully this trend was not replicated elsewhere. In fact there was a marked decline across many of the other wards with the exception of Abbotstown however where it narrowly decreased from 29.4% to 25.6%. One explanation for this is that there is a large population of Travellers in this ward who traditionally cease education after sixth class.

Anecdotal evidence would suggest that early school leaving continues to be a problem in Blanchardstown especially from areas of socio-economic disadvantage. It is well established that

there is a strong correlation between educational attainment and earning capacity. “Thus the level of educational disadvantage in the area may be regarded as a proxy for social and /or economic deprivation”⁹ In order to tackle the problem of early school leaving local agencies and schools have developed and implemented a number of initiatives to tackle educational disadvantage and prevent early school leaving. These interventions occur at different stages in the educational cycle. A range of agencies such as BAP, Youth Services and the Department of Education and Science (DES) are involved in co-ordinating them. Included amongst these are

- Oasis Programme
- WEB (Working to Enhance Blanchardstown- GARDA Special Project)
- Two schools completion projects funded by DES
- Blakestown and Mountview Neighbourhood Youth Project
- Blakestown and Mountview Youth Initiative

Table 12
Educational attainment at different levels across Blanchardstown in 2002

	Pop No Formal or Primary Education Only %	Age Education Ceased < or = 15 %	Population 3 rd Level Education %
Abbot'n	25.6%	29.3%	30%
Blakestown	11.3%	15.2%	32.2%
Coolmine	19.7%	23.5%	23.1%
Corduff	26.1%	30.9%	11.8%
Delwood	11.5%	11.3%	41.3%
Mulhuddart	16.5%	24.4%	27.1% *
Roselawn	13.9%	15.8%	33.7%
Tyrrelstown	39.7%	48.1%	6.2%
BLANCHARDSTOWN	15.7%	19.4%	29%
Fingal	13.6%	15.5%	33.1%
Dublin	18.7%	19.2%	33.5%
State	22.2%	21.9%	26%

Source: GAMMA 2004

There has been a positive trend with increasing numbers of both men and women completing college over the past six years (16.1% to 29%). The Social Sciences/Business Law were the most popular subjects studied followed by Medicine/Dentistry and Nursing. **The percentage of people across Blanchardstown attending 3rd level is still ahead of the State average but less than Dublin's as a whole.** Mulhuddart ward experienced a huge increase in the percentage of people residing there that completed 3rd level education (3.3% to 27.1%). The reason for this is probably because many of the new couples that purchased property recently in the area, are well educated. Tyrrelstown and Corduff remained the most disadvantaged DED's in terms of educational participation at third level. From the late 90's onwards BAP financed a 3rd level bursaries programme¹⁰ targeted specifically at young adults from disadvantaged areas. The aim was “to give assistance to adults who are disadvantaged and wish to pursue a third level education. Assistance may be in the form of grants, vouchers for books; travel “. This programme has now effectively been mainstreamed as is known as the Millennium Fund. In tandem with this initiative BAP has funded other access to third level actions including Easter Revision classes, one week Robotics courses and after school clubs. The Institute of Technology Blanchardstown has also developed foundation courses to cater for demand for mature students from disadvantaged areas that may not originally have completed second level education.

⁹ GAMMA report 2004

¹⁰ An evaluation of the 3rd level bursaries programme by Conor Ryan

Table 13
'Percentage completing 3rd level education!'

	1996	2002
Abbot'n	26.8%	30%
Blakestown	15.9%	32.2%
Coolmine	10.4%	23.1%
Corduff	7.5%	11.8%
Delwood	30.2%	41.3%
Mulhuddart	3.3%	27.1%
Roselawn	28.3%	33.7%
Tyrrelstown	2.8%	6.2%
BLANCHARDSTOWN	16.1%	29%
FINGAL	25.4%	33.1%
DUBLIN	25.4%	33.5%
STATE	19.7%	26%

Source: GAMMA 2004

Section Three

3. Base line data on socially disadvantaged groups

BAP has established an accurate profile of many of its target groups living in the area. This was partially achieved via the interpretation of 2002 census data plus queries set up on the Partnership's SCOPE system. Data contributions also from local community groups and statutory agencies e.g. ROOFS; NAHA enabled a fuller and more accurate portrayal of BAP's target groups to be reflected herein.

3.1 Travellers

According to the census data there were 650 Travellers living in Blanchardstown. This represents 1.28% of its overall population. What stands out from Table 14 below is the significant concentration of Travellers specifically in the Abbotstown ward.

Table 14
Location of Travellers in Blanchardstown

Abbot'n	502
Tyrrelstown	42
Mulhuddart	40
Corduff	1
Delwood	1
Coolmine	52
Blakestown	12
BLANCHARDSTOWN	650

Source: Census 2002

Travellers as a group are extremely disadvantaged.

Travellers experience significantly lower life expectancy than the average population and also higher levels of ill health e.g. only 3.27% of Travellers were over 65 years of age at the time of the 2002 census, compared to a corresponding figure of 11.13% for the whole population. They are alienated from general society and are discriminated against in areas such as employment. The unemployment rate amongst Travellers was 39.2% nationally. It is particularly high for males between the ages of 15-24 years approaching 50%.

Bar Chart 3

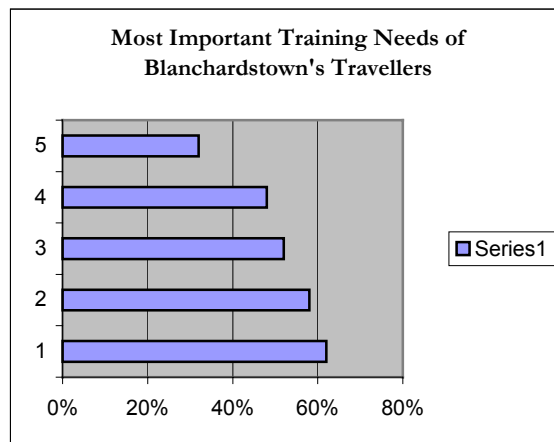


Fig 1: 5= Assertiveness Training, 4= Specific Skills, 3= Personal Development, 2=Community Development, 1= Literacy

Accommodation is also still a major issue. There are three official permanent sites in the area. Most live on two temporary halting sites in Cappagh at St Mary's and St Christopher's. 368 Travellers lived on unauthorised halting sites.

A **quantitative survey**¹¹ conducted around the same time as the 2002 census shows in fact a higher proportion of Travellers in Blanchardstown. It implied that there were approximately 196 Traveller families in Blanchardstown, which translates to about **990 individual Travellers resident in the area**. At the last count, 77% of all Traveller families in the Fingal region live in the greater Blanchardstown area. Whichever data set is correct it's apparent that Travellers are a significant ethnic minority and that Blanchardstown has a higher proportion of Travellers than the national average of 0.6%.

Location and number of Travellers living within the BAP Area

Location	Parish	Families	Total Population	Children < 18	Adults
Permanent Halting Sites					
St Brigid's Park,	Porterstown	8	34	17	17
Total permanent halting sites		8	34	17	17
Temporary Halting Sites					
Cappagh Field-St Mary's	Blanch'	37	195	78	117
Cruiserath, Mulhuddart –Corduff/Mulhuddart	19	85	85	41	44
Cappagh, St. Christopher's-	Blanch'	16	93	35	58
Total Halting Sites		80	407	171	236
Group Housing					
Morgan Place, Castleknock	C'knock/Blanch'	7	35	14	21
Parlickstown Grdns.	Mulhuddart	6	42	13	29
Total Group Housing		13	77	27	50
Unauthorised Halting Sites					
Old Navan Road	Mulhuddart	10	72	29	43
Dunsink Lane	Blanch'	43	219	104	115
The Graveyard,	MulhuddartCorduff	10	39	18	21
Opposite Graveyard	Corduff	3	12	4	8
Ballycoolin Road	Corduff	1	5	2	3
Old Navan Road	Mulhuddart	2	11	5	6
Morgan's Place	Castleknock	3	10	4	6
Total Unauthorised Sites		72	368	166	202
Standard Housing ** Council Houses		23	104	45	59
Total Standard Housing **		23	104	45	59
Total		196	990	426	564

Source "The Education and Accommodation Needs of Travellers in the Archdiocese of Dublin" A report by John A.Weaver CROSSCARE The Catholic Social Service Agency

**** Total Standard Housing figure is inclusive of all Fingal**

¹¹ "The Education and Housing Needs of Travellers in the Archdiocese of Dublin" A report by John A.Weaver CROSSCARE The Catholic Social Service Agency

The **Blanchardstown Travellers Support Group** ¹² is a joint initiative between members of the Traveller and settled communities that aims to promote the welfare and human rights of Travellers and to combat social exclusion experienced by Travellers. This is being achieved by building the confidence and skills of Travellers through training courses, enterprise and employment opportunities and by promoting greater gender equality and awareness among Travellers living in the Blanchardstown area. In time this will develop the capacity of Travellers thus ensuring their participation in policies developed at local, regional and national level.

3.2 People with disabilities

3,119 individuals or 6.16% of the population in Blanchardstown has a disability. Due its younger age profile the prevalence of people with a disability in Blanchardstown is lower than the national average of 8.3%. The figure for the number of people with disabilities in Blanchardstown is skewed due to the presence of Cappagh and James Connolly Memorial hospitals in the Abbotstown DED. 1,453 people were unable to work either because they had a permanent illness or were disabled.

There were a total of 1,488 persons that undertook the roll of a carer to help family members and/or friends with a long-term illness, health or disability. The majority of these carers undertook unpaid help of between one and fourteen hours per week. In proportionate terms, women accounted for 61.8% of all the 1,488 carers in Blanchardstown.

Unfortunately due to a local staff recruitment embargo, the roll out of long awaited NAHA disability database in Area 6 is considerably behind progress vis a vis other health board areas. This database when fully operational will reveal *physical and sensory disability data* for individuals up as far as 65 years of age. In the absence of this data we are reliant on CSO figures as set out below.

Table 15
Number of People With Disabilities in Blanchardstown

DED/AGE	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Total	
Tyrrelstown	29	13	36	29	10	117	7.07%
Roselawn	9	6	17	47	57	136	6.65%
Mulhuddart	20	22	30	20	3	95	5.18%
Delwood	7	13	56	96	55	227	4.94%
Corduff	21	44	68	138	48	319	7.34%
Coolmine	51	89	154	201	62	557	6.05%
Blakestown	117	114	460	435	179	1305	5.35%
Abb'tn	9	10	50	64	230	363	14.30%
BLANCHARDSTWON	263	311	871	1030	644	3119	6.16%

Source: CSO 2002

¹² The Traveller Support Group is one of five CDP's in Blanchardstown

3.3 Foreign Nationals

According to the census data there were 5,509 foreign-nationals ¹³ living in Blanchardstown. These figures represent individuals from the other 24 nation states that constitute the new enlarged European Union plus people from the rest of the world! Out of this total figure for instance there are 976 British people alone living in Blanchardstown. It is impossible however to disaggregate census data and say precisely what the numbers of *asylum seeker and refugees* in the area is. This is due to the manner in which one's nationality is captured on the census form. i.e. Irish, British and Other.

The NAHA administers a database, which captures data relating to the numbers of **asylum seekers and refugees in receipt of supplementary welfare allowance for Area 6**. They are therefore best placed to provide the most reliable and meaningful data on this most sensitive issue. The **latest data released in June 2004** reveals that there were **1590 claimants**. Of this total approximately 842 are asylum seekers and 748 refugees. Three quarters of all claimants were aged between twenty-five and forty years of age. There were 736 families with child dependents with a total of 1416 child dependents.

Table 16
Number of Asylum Seekers and Refugees Claiming SWA

Asylum Seekers	842
Refugees	748
No of claimants	1590

Source: Northern Area Health Board June 2004

There are a couple of reasons why Blanchardstown has a far larger share of asylum seekers and refugees than other areas of Ireland and Dublin. One is these is the relative availability of rented housing in a middle-price range. Indeed the largest single claim type according to the NAHA was for rent relief alone. A second reason for the larger proportion of asylum seekers and refugees living in Dublin 15 is owing to government policy during the early 1990's. Back then Ireland under a United Nations Charter accepted Bosnian refugees at the height of the Balkin's war most of whom were placed in Blanchardstown. The Bosnian population ¹⁴ living in Ireland back in 1999 totalled 1089 individuals. "Dublin 15 has been referred to affectionately by Bosnians themselves as "Little Bosnia" (O'Regan, 1998) as "Nearly 80% of the Bosnians who remain in Ireland live in the Blanchardstown area".

Asylum seekers and refugees encounter many barriers at present. Research completed in **June 2002** ¹⁵ found that

- Over half of individuals who took part in the afore mentioned research experienced discrimination and or racist abuse
- Over half had language or literacy difficulties
- Over half felt socially excluded
- Three quarters said they did not have adequate information on services and facilities in Dublin15

Meeting the needs of asylum seekers has become a major issue in the country over the past number of years. The Partnership developed a strategy to take into account the expressed needs

¹³ A non-national represents someone who is not Irish

¹⁴ "From Bosnia to Ireland's Private Rented Sector-A study of Bosnian housing needs in Ireland Clann Housing Association

¹⁵ "Population profile, Needs analysis and Skills Audit " A report by Margaret Butler 2002-Commissioned by BAP with support of Blanchardstown Asylum Seekers and Refugee Network-BARN

of asylum seekers and refugees based upon the research. This strategy concentrated upon seven main areas namely

- Language difficulties
- Intercultural awareness
- Links with city based Refugee support groups
- Health initiative
- Enterprise, education and employment
- Transnational learning
- Public relations e.g. Metro Eireann

BAP's has also continued to support **BARN** (Blanchardstown Asylum Seekers/Refugee Network) in the planning and co-ordination of its activities in response to the social, cultural, training and information needs of asylum seekers and refugees in Blanchardstown. In April 2003, Mr Niall Crowley from the Equality Authority launched "New to Blanchardstown" a pocket sized expand out leaflet of local services in Dublin 15. The leaflet was produced by BARN and BAP in response to a previous years research project with asylum seekers and refugees that highlighted the lack of information individuals new to the area faced in general. The leaflet contains contact numbers on essential services, community groups, facilities and National contacts for vital services such as housing. The leaflet was translated into three languages is colour coded for ease of use and contains a map of Blanchardstown with number key codes for ease of use.

Other events in Blanchardstown, which BAP would have supported BARN with were the likes of

- Three Life Skills Courses for Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- International Food mornings in three venues in Blanchardstown
- Awareness Raising training for staff as part of Anti-Racism Week in March 2003
- English language classes at beginners, intermediate and advanced levels in several venues

3.4 Lone Parents

Lone Parents now head 14.2% of all households in Blanchardstown an increase on the corresponding figure of 9.9% back in 1996. The overall Blanchardstown figure exceeds the national average of 11.9% and Dublin's of 12.7%. Overall **Tyrrelstown 44.4% and Corduff 26.6%** have very large concentrations of lone parents. Tyrrelstown in particular experienced a rapid increase in concentrations of lone parents located there. In contrast Mulhuddart was the only DED that experienced a decrease in the percentage of lone parents due to an influx of two parent-married couples.

Table 17
Lone Parents In Blanchardstown

	Lone Parents All Children (% Of all House Holds) 1996	Lone Parents All Children (% Of all House Holds) 2002
Abbot'n	10%	10.4%
Blakestown	4.6%	9.5%
Coolmine	15.7%	20.5%
Corduff	17.6%	26.6%
Delwood	7.1%	10.3%
Mulhuddart	25.2%	18.9%
Roselawn	8.5%	11.3%
Tyrrelstown	19.2%	44.4%
BLANCHARDSTOWN	9.9%	14.2%
FINGAL	8.2%	11%
DUBLIN	10.8%	12.7%
STATE	10.1%	11.9%

Source: GAMMA 2004

Lone parent are not a homogeneous group but include many different types of family involving unmarried, separated or widowed parents (male and female) bringing up children alone. Unfortunately in many of the DED's where there are large concentrations of single parents the local service provision is poor, which only further isolates lone parents residing there. The lack of affordable childcare is only having the effect of marginalizing single parents even further. Because many single parents cannot access affordable childcare the result is that they find it difficult to access employment related training, personal development programmes or employment. The inability to access crèche and other childcare facilities results in the children of single parent families missing out on quality pre-primary education affecting their educational attainment at a later stage and making the goal of equality unrealisable. Some progress however has been made lately to improve matters around childcare provision in Blanchardstown. €1,250,000 was recently down under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme. As a result 85 full-time day care places came on stream primarily via community creches many of which are accessed by single parents.

Research suggest the following ¹⁶

- On average lone parents households have a higher than average risk of poverty, and single mothers have the lowest incomes (Millar, 1992; Nolan and Callan, 1994)
- A tendency for early school leaving and a concentration of low educational qualifications exists among young single mother (National Economic and Social Forum, 1997)
- Lone-parent families tend to be clustered in the public housing sector (McCashin 1997)

¹⁶ Parenting Alone In Blanchardstown

In November 1997 a Greater Blanchardstown Lone Parent Steering Group was established. A full time Lone Parent Development Worker was employed co-funded by BAP and FAS. In the last couple of years this worker supported and guided the establishment of three Lone Parent Support Groups in the Blakestown, Mountview and Mulhuddart wards. These groups provide an ideal outlet for social interaction, education, information and access to other services for single parents. This worker has also instigated the formation of a Young Widows and Widowers Groups. Towards the end of two thousand and three over three hundred individuals benefited via the likes of parenting and cookery courses. In early 2004 the Lone Parent Management Committee became a Limited Company.

3.5 Substance Mis-users

As with any area of the country it is impossible to ascertain precise figures surrounding the misuse of drugs in Blanchardstown. This is because people who are admitted to emergency wards who may have overdosed are not counted; health board statistics only count those who have been referred for treatment plus people often that may receive psychiatric help for depression (an after effect of drug misuse) are also not included in the statistics. However what who do have are comprehensive statistics from the **Local Drugs Task Force** that sheds some light on the problem of 'hard drugs' in the community. **184 people¹⁷ in Blanchardstown presented themselves as users of 'hard' drugs to treatment services by the end of August 2003.** Drug misuse among the youth population has risen in Ireland. The detection and recorded use of hard drugs has been concentrated in socially excluded communities-such as those with a high youth population in Blanchardstown.

In terms of the most common traits amongst misusers in Blanchardstown;

- The vast majority *were male*, (70.5% male vis a vis 29.5% female).
- 80% were from the most disadvantaged wards
- 58.7% were unemployed
- 83.1% left school before the age of seventeen.
- 84.3% were below the age of thirty
- Heroin at 88% was primarily the most frequently used drug.
- 56.1% used drugs before they were fifteen years of age.
- Of all the eight BAP wards over 50.5% gave Coolmine as their principal address.

Table 18
Stated Residencies of Drug-Misusers

Ward	Cases	Percentage
Abbot'n	8	4.3%
Blakestown	25	13.6%
Coolmine	93	50.5%
Corduff	33	17.9%
Delwood	3	1.6%
Mulhuddart	14	7.6%
Roselawn	2	1.1%
Tyrrelstown	6	3.3%
BLANCHARDSTOWN	184	100%

The Greater Blanchardstown Response to Drugs a network consisting of community, voluntary and statutory organisations has been campaigning since 1992 on issues connected to drug misuse and preventative educational issues. It also acts as a forum for community representatives from the local drugs task force to discuss issues relating to their own work on the Task Force.

¹⁷ Source: Local Drugs Task Force October 2003

The Blanchardstown Local Drugs Task Force covers the areas below.

- Hartstown/Huntstown
- Blakestown/Mountview
- Mulhuddart/Corduff

The Tolka River Project a Community Employment scheme for people who were previously engaged in drug misuse was officially launched on the 26th June 2003. It aims “to create a holistic learning environment where participants in recovery from addiction will progress to develop their full potential. Drawing on the strengths of the community we endeavour to open up new opportunities for participants”.

3.6 The Homeless

Reliable data on homelessness in Dublin is difficult to find. **53 people from the Dublin 15 area presented them up to the end of August 2003 to the Homeless Persons Unit**¹⁸ based in inner city Dublin. 51 of these were specifically from the Partnership area. Based upon the HPU data one can conclude that the problem is much more prevalent amongst males and especially younger men than women as 47 were male and 6 female. e.g. just 13 were aged over 35 years. These figures however underestimate the total numbers of homeless from Blanchardstown, since they are based only on those seeking help or services. Included amongst the trigger factors for homelessness are family relationship breakdown and leaving care. Other welfare factors include drugs and difficulties at school.

Table 19
Location of homeless people in Blanchardstown

Ward	Cases	Gender
Abbot'n	1	Single male
Blakestown	17/1	Single male /Single woman
Coolmine	12/1/2	Single male /Woman and child/Single woman
Corduff	4	Single male
Delwood	5	Single male
Mulhuddart	3/1	Single male / Man and woman
Roselawn		
Tyrrelstown	3	Single male/ Woman and child
BLANCHARDSTOWN	51	

Source: Homeless Persons Unit August 2003

A local community response to the problem of homelessness has emerged in recent years called **ROOFS**. This group carried out a qualitative and quantitative research¹⁹ into the causes of homelessness. Following on from this a strategy²⁰ for tackling homelessness in Blanchardstown was published in 2003. It is an ambitious strategy, which if fully implemented should impact upon homelessness in the area. ROOFS are currently lobbying organisations to provide funding towards to Project Manager who will help speed up the implementation of the strategy.

¹⁸ Source: Homeless Persons Unit August 2003

¹⁹ 'Think Twice' Homelessness in Blanchardstown Perris Social Research

²⁰ A strategy for tackling homelessness in Blanchardstown by Simon Brooke

ROOFS have also recently surveyed organisations in Blanchardstown to arrive at its own estimations for the numbers of homeless people in Blanchardstown. According to this survey up to sixty-six people are reportedly homeless. Forty five were single adults, there were three couples and fifteen children. Substance abuse was the single biggest development issue impacting upon the homeless in Blanchardstown. Many were previously homeless and the average length of time people found themselves homeless was fifteen months.

Section Four

4.1 Productive sector issues

Social and cultural

Generally there is still a shortage of cultural and social facilities in Blanchardstown. However in recent years there have been some welcome additions to the area that have helped complement existing facilities.

Draocht is a centre for the arts and was opened in 2001. A broad range of activities is currently run from the venue such as dance, visual arts, and multi media arts activities. New and established artists often exhibit their pieces of work at the Civic Centre.

The National Aquatic Centre and Sports Campus Ireland was used as part of the Special Olympics over the summer of 2003. It is a major new sports and leisure asset for Blanchardstown.

Golf courses. There are several impressive golf courses within easy reach of Blanchardstown including Luttrellstown Castle, Hollystown, Westmanstown and finally Elmgreen, which was also used as part of the Special Olympics

UCI Blanchardstown now operates a nine-screen cinema, which operates from the Blanchardstown Centre

Fortunately there are some areas of natural beauty in the environs of Blanchardstown such as Liffey Valley or the *Strawberry Beds* as it is more commonly known. This acts as a green belt between Lucan and Blanchardstown and is used for water sports such as canoeing and fishing. The *Royal Canal* which for many years remained under utilised will re-open linking barge and boat traffic between the river Shannon and Dublin.

Phoenix Park is the largest city park in Europe. A number of sports are played in the park including hurling, Gaelic football and even polo. Many facilities operate from within the park such as Dublin Zoo (the most visited tourist attraction in Ireland) the Furry Glen, the Ashtown Castle visitor Centre. It also contains the residency of our President Aras an Uachtaráin. Just recently Farmleigh House, which served as a premises to host foreign dignitaries during Ireland's presidency of the European Union was opened to members of the public for several weekends to host special gala events.

James Connolly Memorial Hospital serves an extended catchment area including parts of counties Kildare and Meath. It recently underwent a large redevelopment costing in the region of €100 million. Unfortunately the new section of the hospital remains unopened due to government financial restrictions.

Institute of Technology Blanchardstown caters for several thousand students. The institute awards primary Degrees, post-graduate, Diploma, Certificate. It has a high take up of students for Blanchardstown itself. It has placed priority on attracting students from districts/DED's of Blanchardstown that are traditionally characterised by lower participation rates at third level.

Hotels, restaurants and pubs. A number of new restaurants and pubs have begun to spring up in Blanchardstown during the past number of years. Many of these have opened close to the Blanchardstown Centre or within the vicinity of the village. However it is still the case that very few additional venues have opened north of the N3 in Parslickstown, Corduff, Abbotstown or Mulhuddart. There are also still no hotels in Blanchardstown itself although there are now three located in Castleknock or adjacent to it.

Transportation infrastructure

Blanchardstown is currently served by several modes of transport including Dublin Bus services and a rail line. It is also within close distance to Dublin Airport via the M50. Although there have been some recent improvements to the overall infrastructure it is still underdeveloped. As a result people will continue to experience delays travelling not only in Blanchardstown itself but also to and from the City Centre and further a field. Part of the problem is that higher living standards bring increased private car ownership, which only results in higher traffic volumes. In response the National Roads Authority has proposals to widen the M50 to six lanes and also to upgrade the N3 between Clonee and Kells to motorway standard. 37.9% of the population use a car to get to school, work or college and a further 11.5% travel as passengers of a car.

The catchment population of the rail line is also limited as it only touches upon the very southerly suburbs of Blanchardstown such as Clonsilla and Coolmine. The closest station is over two miles away from many of the new industrial estates, the ITB and a mile from the Blanchardstown Town Centre. The existing line between Maynooth and Dublin will be further upgraded to increase existing capacity. This should increase capacity and so improve matters for commuters using the 'arrow service'. Currently 3.7% of people travel by train to get to work school or college.

Bus route services have been extended and a QBC linking the City Centre using lanes on the Navan Road have been provided. Overall however there is still however a lack of frequent bus services on certain routes such as the 38 and 70 where major residential housing estates have been built. Bus services within Blanchardstown are not frequent enough nor buses linking industrial parks. Only 16.6% of the population use a bus to get to school, work or college.

Housing Stock and Characteristics

Blanchardstown was able to absorb a rapid increase in its population over the last decade primarily because of the increasing supply of household formation. The number of households in Blanchardstown was recorded in Census 2002 at 15,385. In the Blanchardstown Partnership Company, 3.2 per cent of households were purchased from the Local Authority while 9.1 per cent were rented from the Local Authority. 1.1 per cent were occupied 'Free of Rent'. These figures are comparable with the State.

4.2 SWOT analysis

Strengths

Over the last number of years there has been a steady increase in the numbers of community /voluntary groups and networks working to improve the lives of the many disadvantaged individuals in society who often do not have a voice. These groups supported by BAP are to the forefront in rolling out innovative community initiatives to help counteract social exclusion e.g. BOND/ROOFS.

The Blanchardstown Community Forum, Forum 15 that was founded in 1998 provides a voice for community and voluntary groups in the Dublin 15 area. The Forum works to:

- Exchange ideas and information
- Provide support and training opportunities to local organisations and their members
- Consult the community about development in the area
- Facilitate community representation on a variety of local and regional structures.

Institute of Technology Blanchardstown caters for several thousand students and has a high take up of students from Blanchardstown itself. It has placed priority on attracting students from districts/DED's of Blanchardstown that are traditionally characterised by lower participation rates at third level. Many of these graduates will have opportunities to source employment via the employers in the new Industrial Estates in the future.

The new amenities built in the last number of years have been a great addition to the area. This has meant that people now don't have to travel long distances for example to go to the cinema or the gym, eat out or go for a swim.

Blanchardstown currently has a very young work force with a high disposable income. This helps sustain local employment in the many retail outlets in Blanchardstown.

Blanchardstown Centre is responsible for employing several thousand people from throughout the area. As the centre expands and attracts more shoppers on an annual basis the numbers of people employed locally looks sure to increase.

James Connolly Hospital, which opened 50 years ago, is being redeveloped. When completed this will enable the hospital meet the health needs of people from Blanchardstown in a more holistic manner. The hospital is also a major employer in the Blanchardstown area with over 1,000 staff.

Weaknesses

Despite recent improvements to public transport it is still wholly insufficient by other European capital city standards. As car ownership figures soar traffic congestion continues to disimprove. Noise pollution is a direct result of higher car volumes.

There is still an over dependence on large foreign multinationals industry to provide local employment. When as has happened in the past large employers depart the live register shoots up dramatically.

There is also a skills mismatch between the supply and the demand for labour locally in Blanchardstown. The higher unemployment levels in Blanchardstown are proof of this.

Opportunities

With the influx of peoples from dozens of nations around the world there is an opportunity to increase the cultural diversity of Blanchardstown.

With its younger age profile there is an opportunity to attract young adults or ‘new blood’ to community development activities and help build upon the social capital established within communities in the last number of years.

There is a great opportunity for the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown to further its reputation as a centre of excellence and continue to produce graduates of an excellent calibre.

The existence of a Partnership Company and five-Community Development Programmes in Blanchardstown working together on matters of joint interest has the potential to bring about more socially inclusive communities.

Threats

Particular areas in Blanchardstown have experienced an influx of couples with young children in latter years. This may overburden the local primary school sector with increased enrolment but no additional resources from central government to meet this additional demand.

The persistent high costs of childcare for young families may act as a barrier towards increasing participation of women in the workforce.

The increasing percentage of people who are in employment but still ‘at risk of poverty’ may lead to further social exclusion.

In the absence of anti-racism training and educational initiatives, there is always a risk of prejudices and Xenophobia surfacing.