

# Crumlin

through the eyes of children  
and young people



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**Karen Smith**  
**September 2026**

” This project was inspired by the many children and young people I have gotten to know over the 23 years I have been living in Crumlin. I am very grateful to all of them.



# Executive Summary

**This report is based on a UCD research project funded by Research Ireland called 'A Just and Inclusive Transition for Children' which addressed the relationship of children and young people with their local environment in the Dublin suburb of Crumlin. It was carried out in partnership with TASC and is intended to complement TASC's 'People's Transition' project carried out in various communities in Ireland, including Crumlin.**

With ethical approval obtained from University College Dublin, the research project was carried out between June 2025 and June 2026. 15 children and young people contributed to the project, all of them living in Crumlin. The ideas, experiences and images reflected in this report come from 'walking interviews' and workshops carried out with eleven children and young people aged 8-13 and four young people aged 16-18 who participated as 'peer researchers'. Photographs taken during walks and drawings made during workshops were an important part of the study in addition to conversations.

**The findings from the study involve five main themes:**

## **'Things to do and places to go':**

Children and young people talked about the range of services and activities in Crumlin including arts activities, sports clubs and youth services. An important issue raised by the children and young people was being able to do things in their free time which don't cost money. It was important to have places to go to just spend time with friends, but also to have places where people of all ages can spend time together. The parks in Crumlin are hugely important places for children and young people, but there is a need for cheap or free indoor places that they can use.



## **'Getting around':**

During the research project we talked about the different ways children and young people get around and most preferred active forms of travel like walking and cycling, although buses were also important, especially to the older age groups. Safety when getting around the area was an important issue we talked about and how this is connected to children's independence. Some participants said there was a need for more pedestrian crossings in Crumlin. Some also commented on cars being driven "too fast" in some parts of Crumlin. We also talked about travelling by bus and there was some discussion about buses arriving late, presumably due to heavy traffic at certain times.



### 'Connections to nature':

Children and young people demonstrated strong interest in wildlife and talked about the various wild animals they had encountered in the area. The importance of trees and plant life was recognised by children and young people who were appreciative of the trees and plants added to the area and would like to see more in all parts of Crumlin.



### 'Local colour':

Photographs taken by participants during this project reflect the colour and vibrant heritage of the local area. Murals, painted traffic boxes and flower planters were described as adding “colour” to the area. Public art and heritage information was discussed as adding character and reflecting the history and sense of community in Crumlin. Adding more flowers as well as more public art that is relevant to children and young people were mentioned as things that could improve Crumlin even more.

*Traffic box Crumlin village (from walking interview August 11 2025)*



### 'Complicated problems':

Throughout our walks and conversations we also talked about not so good things about the area. This included issues such as traffic and abandoned and derelict buildings. Rubbish and litter was raised as a particularly significant issue by children and young people and it was clear it affects children and young people's day-to-day lives, including how they move around the area and how they feel about and experience living in Crumlin.



What we found during this research project reflects some of the earlier insights of 'The People's Transition Crumlin' (2024), including the importance of urban green spaces for the wellbeing of local communities as well as the need for community social spaces and the importance of opportunities for consultation and participation in local decision-making. The report also provides insight into how environmental issues such as traffic and waste impact children and young people.

We hope this report can be a starting point for future conversations and activities with children and young people in Crumlin as well as a source of ideas for future research projects or consultations in other local areas.

# Introduction

**This report comes out of a research project carried out with children and young people in the Dublin suburb of Crumlin. The project is about the relationship of children and young people with their local environment, including the 'built' environment, the 'natural' environment and the 'social' environment.**

In other words we wanted to explore the views of children and young people about the different aspects of their local area from buildings, roads and other physical features, to wildlife, plant life, and green spaces as well as connections to people through different kinds of activities in the area. The basic idea behind the project is that children and young people experience their local areas in a different way to adults (see e.g. Evans, 2008) and that their views are important and should inform decision making.

## About Crumlin

The suburb of Crumlin is in the south-west of Dublin city (Dublin 12) and is part of the electoral district of Dublin South-Central. Crumlin became an important agricultural village in the 12th century and in the early 20th century it was still a mostly rural area (French, 2000; TASC, 2024). In the 1930s the Iveagh Trust developed a housing scheme in Crumlin (Dublin City Council, 2025) and thousands of homes were built in the area by Dublin Corporation to address inner-city overcrowding (Craft, 1971; The Heritage Council, 2023). Over the following decades the once rural area was transformed into the busy suburb it is today (Dublin City Council, 2013). According to the 2022 Census, 21,761 people were living across the Crumlin area (TASC, 2024). Children and young people are a significant portion of the Crumlin population. In 2022 41% were aged 25-49 and 16% were over 65, while 19% of people living in Crumlin were children and young people aged 19 and under (TASC, 2024).

The lead researcher (Karen) had been thinking about doing a project like this for a long time, but it came into being after the 'People's Transition' project was carried out in Crumlin. Our research project which was called 'A Just and Inclusive Transition for Children' aims to complement TASC's work. The People's Transition is based on the principle that climate action in Ireland should also bring about positive social change and that members of local communities should be involved in decision making (McCabe, 2020).

## People's Transition Crumlin

The People's Transition is TASC's model for supporting communities to become involved with local policy and decision-making. This can help make sure that actions to address environmental issues and the climate crisis also have positive social impacts for local communities (McCabe, 2020).

'The People's Transition Crumlin' (TASC, 2024) was carried out between October 2023 and November 2024 in three phases:

**The 'community mapping' phase** gathered information on the local population using data from Census 2022 and the Pobal HP Deprivation Index 2022. This phase also gathered information on the organisations which serve the community and on the local economic, social and environmental policies which impact the community.

**The 'community engagement' phase** used workshops, focus groups (including a focus group with young people in a local secondary school), interviews and a survey to get local views. Community connection was something identified as a positive thing about Crumlin and people said they wanted more opportunities for connection and shared community spaces. People also wanted more opportunities to participate in decision-making in the area. The concerns people talked about included anti-social behaviour, the cost of living and energy bills, as well as "excessive car use" in the area and barriers to public transport, walking and cycling (p 36-37). People appreciated the large number of green spaces and parks, but the relatively low level of tree cover was noted. Climate and biodiversity were big concerns for many people who gave their views in this phase. Specific concerns noted by the young people included a need for more activities other than sports in the area. Young people also talked about challenges faced in public spaces - there were reports of young people being intimidated or harassed including experiences of racism. It was also felt that groups of young people together in public spaces were often treated with suspicion. A need for spaces for informal socialising for young people was identified.

**The community action phase** focused on solutions for the needs and issues found in the earlier phases. During an action planning workshop the following solutions were co-created with local community members:

1. A community forum so that representatives of the community and local development and environmental groups can work together and participate in decision-making
2. A community space/centre which is owned by the local community.
3. A community-led greening strategy to improve biodiversity and green spaces in the area while taking into account community needs.

Our research project gathered the views of children and young people about their local area in Crumlin using creative methods including ‘walking interviews’, photography and art-based activities (See Appendix 1 for more details). The project was carried out between January 2025 and June 2026. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from University College Dublin in May 2025. In total fifteen children and young people contributed to the project, all of them living in Crumlin. Eleven children and young people aged between 8 and 13 participated in the project and four young people aged 16-18 participated as ‘peer researchers’. The four peer researchers helped to plan and prepare the project in addition to sharing their opinions and ideas while taking part in research activities.

### **The study was carried out in three different stages:**

#### **Stage 1 (August 2025)**

Stage 1 involved working with peer researchers to plan the project and try out some of the methods. Four young people aged 16-18 took part in this stage. These young people conducted trial ‘walking interviews’ in Crumlin, taking photographs and interviewing each other. They also took part in a follow-up focus-group discussion which was useful both for getting their views on the local area and their ideas about the research project. All conversations during walks and the follow-up focus group were recorded.

#### **Stage 2 (September 2025 - November 2025)**

Stage 2 involved working with participants in the 8-13 age group. This stage involved walks during which they took photographs and engaged in conversations with adult researchers. Different groups (3 in total) took different routes and walked around different parts of Crumlin, although every group went to at least one of the local parks (Eamonn Ceannt (Sundrive) Park; Stannaway Park and Pearse Park). In follow-up workshops participants categorised the photographs into themes and took part in drawing activities and discussions. Eight participants took part in this stage of the study. All conversations during walks and the follow-up workshops were recorded.

#### **Stage 3 (May 2026)**

Stage 3 involved a workshop with participants (8-13) with two main tasks. First, we talked with participants about what we had found out during the project so far. This was an opportunity for them to comment and add further information using drawing activities as well as discussion. Participants moved in small groups between ‘stations’. Each station dealt with a different theme which had come up in the research to date – photos linked to each theme were set out with different discussion prompts and art activities. In the second part of the workshop we talked about how to share the report from the project with the wider community. Seven participants aged between 8 and 13 took part in this stage of the study. Four had already taken part in Stage 2, and the other three took part for the first time at Stage 3. All conversations during the workshop were recorded.

The information gathered during the three stages of the study included (1) photographs taken during walks (2) recorded conversations during walks and follow-up workshops and (3) drawings made during workshops. All this information was analysed by the researchers to identify the themes that we are sharing in the main section of the report. We used a method called Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) to do this and we used a computer programme called nVivo (v.14) to help us.

It is important to be aware that this research project was a small study which was not intended to represent the views of all children and young people in Crumlin. Instead we wanted to work closely with a small number of people under 18 who could share their experience of the area. Walking around the area together, taking photographs and having conversations during walks and activities gave the adult researchers the chance to experience the area with children and young people and to hear their views.

Some of those who took part in the study had things to say about the value and importance of children and young person's views. One participant talked about how the importance of young people being heard was something she had learned about and experienced in a local youth service (CLAY Youth Project). Another spoke about how children's ideas and perspectives were just as valuable as adults but could sometimes be dismissed:

*Children have like more creative ideas and then nobody reacts, you know, because they're like "that isn't mature enough".*



*Photos categorised as 'Nature' from workshop November 23 2025'*

”

**Article 12  
of the United Nations  
Convention on the Rights of the  
Child (1989) recognises the right  
of children and young people  
under 18 to express their views  
on issues which affect them  
and to be listened to and heard.**

We believe that the viewpoints and ideas that were shared during this project by children and young people through the photographs, artwork and comments which are presented in this report provide valuable information about Crumlin. We also think the report could be a good starting point for future conversations and activities in the Crumlin area with children and young people. We hope that it will be used in this way and that it will also be useful as a source of ideas for research projects or consultations carried out with children and young people in other areas.

# Findings from the research

The methods used in this study were designed so that the adult researchers could get a view of Crumlin from the perspective of children and young people. While we did identify things that could be better, nearly everyone who took part was very positive about the area. There was also a feeling that Crumlin had improved a lot in recent years and there was appreciation expressed for the work that goes into maintaining and improving the area.

The main things that came up during the research project are discussed here in **five** different sections:



Things to do  
and places  
to go



Getting  
around



Connections  
to 'nature



Local  
colour



Complicated  
problems



## Things to do and places to go



When talking about things to do for children and young people in Crumlin we mainly discussed activities outside of school. Children and young people were involved in various organised activities including team sports, swimming, martial arts, music, drama and dance – most of which are available in Crumlin. They talked about going to music lessons in St. Agnes' Community Centre for Music and the Arts (CCMA), playing sports with local clubs, attending the theatre group in Brú youth club and using the swimming pool in Crumlin regularly. Some took part in activities like swimming, music, dance and drama in other nearby areas.

Some participants commented that Crumlin had many sports clubs – football, hurling and boxing were mentioned – but perhaps there was not as much focus on activities other than sports. There was also some discussion about disability inclusion and sport. One young person spoke about Crumlin Champs, an “inclusive training session” offered by Crumlin GAA, but noted that this was for children only up to 12 years.



*Equipment to borrow in Eamonn Ceannt Park (from walking interview September 13 2025)*

Something that came through very strongly was the huge importance of parks in the lives of children and young people. A number of children and young people viewed the parks as the best thing about Crumlin, and they are clearly a hub for many different activities. For instance Eamonn Ceannt (Sundrive) Park and Pearse Park provide homes for local sports clubs. There are also facilities to play sports such as tennis and basketball and the ‘active cities’ app which allows people to borrow sports equipment in Eamonn Ceannt (Sundrive) Park for free was mentioned positively.

Young people appreciated the exercise equipment available in the parks – a free alternative to the gym:

*I guess there's a lot of exercise machines and training areas in parks which is really important if you don't wanna go to a gym or you don't have enough money to go to a gym.*

”

Parks are a very important place for outdoor play, especially as some participants aged 8-13 reported lack of spaces to play in their neighbourhood. Some lived close enough to a park that they could go independently with friends. Others lived near small public green spaces, but these generally lacked facilities for play. Some participants said the roads they lived on were dangerous due to traffic so that they could not play outside on their own street:

*... there's too much cars. ... And there's always at least once a day a huge traffic jam.*

”

*Sometimes there's like reckless drivers so it wouldn't be safe.*

”

During our walks we passed by or visited all the playgrounds in the local parks and participants in the 8-13 age group seemed happy overall with the playground facilities. While some playgrounds were seen as more suitable for very young children, the “wooden” playground in Eamonn Ceannt (Sundrive) Park which includes a zipline and a music projector was mentioned very positively.



*Drawing of playground in Eamon Ceannt park from workshop May 23 2026*

*Photos organised under category of playground from workshop November 23 2025*



Participants in the 8-13 age group also talked about climbing trees as one of their favourite things to do in the park, although some felt that there weren't enough trees suitable for climbing. One commented that the lower branches of trees were removed to prevent climbing:

*I think, like, children like climbing trees, but the trees in here, they chop off the bottom branches, so children can't climb the trees. Maybe there should just be like a big tree with like a bunch of climbable branches you know.*

”

Parks were also talked about as very important places for children and young people to meet up with friends. There were not many places other than parks where children and young people could just hang out for any length of time:

*... you'd go to a shop, loiter outside the shop for a while and then go somewhere else. I think the parks or probably cafés are the ones where you just stay there the whole time and the rest is just kind of walking around the area.*

”

While walking around or just hanging out in the parks was a very popular activity to do with friends, one young person commented that it could get boring after a while. Another young person referred to events that were held in the park sometimes and thought that having more regular events would be a good thing:

*Sometimes there's events on in the park. Like there's food stalls or there's something like a cycling thing happening in Sundrive Park mainly. And you can just meet up with your friends, or you can just go down just for the day and spend your time.*

”

Children and young people generally felt that parks were safe places to be, but nearly everyone felt that the parks did not feel as safe after dark. Lack of lighting was a reason for this:

*... there's no lights in Sundrive Park. And I think they did that on purpose because they don't want like teenagers hanging out in the park when it's dark out. Because especially for a group of young girls it is frightening to go into a park when it's jet black into it, because you don't know what's happening around you.*

”

Having places to go that are “warm and dry” when it's cold or raining was seen as very important by the children and young people. Some mentioned that they liked going to local cafés, but having places to go that were cheap or free was raised as very important:

*The main thing I think would be to go for like a youth area somewhere like a hall, but like a free place. Because you know if it's a café you have to spend money just to be in there. You can't do that every day.*

”

Libraries were mentioned as a place to hang out and to be with friends and not just to borrow books. There isn't currently a library in Crumlin, and children and young people talked about using the libraries in Walkinstown and Dolphin's Barn. The Crumlin shopping centre site was mentioned as a place where there could be a library for Crumlin.

Some children and young people talked about shopping centres as a place to go and a local shopping centre (Ashleaf) was mentioned as somewhere that young people (11+) sometimes went to independently with friends. Some of these participants also talked about travelling outside of Crumlin to shopping centres in Rathmines, Dundrum and the city centre – shopping centres seemed to be seen as safe places to be without having to spend a lot of money:

*Maybe when we don't want to go to a park we usually would take the Luas to Jervis and just go shopping. Like we don't have to have much money. We would just walk around. It might seem a bit unsafe but when you're there it's not scary. And you can just look at things in shops and go shopping.*

”

Youthwork services are another important space (typically from age 11 onwards). There are two youthwork services operating in the area – Brú Youth Service and CLAY Youth Project. Three of the children and young people used these services and they seemed to get a lot from the time they spent there. One commented that a lot of people in Crumlin didn't know about the services or else didn't understand what they did:

*... there are youth services in Crumlin but not many people would join them because they're not really advertised. You kind of just have to find out about them through the people that are in them which is difficult.*

”

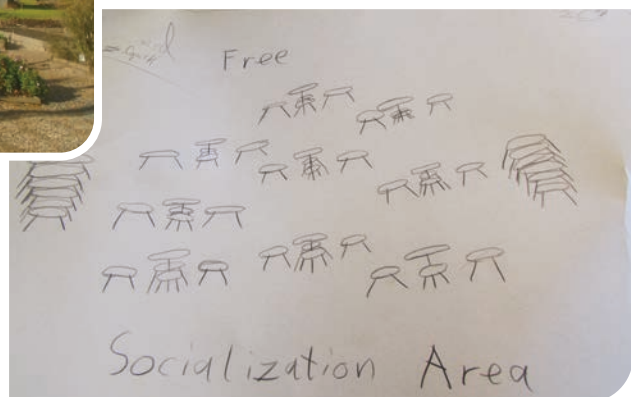
*Because some people are like 'oh why would I join a youth service like there's no point, they don't do anything that I'm interested in'. But it's just to get you off the street just to stop walking around. Give you something to do on a random Thursday night.*

Having places where people of all ages could hang out or engage in activities together was also seen as important. The community garden in Pearse Park was an example of a multigenerational space where some of the children spent time with their families. Having other places to go to spend time together without having to spend money was suggested as a way in which Crumlin could be improved.



**Community garden, Pearse Park**  
(from walking interview  
October 31 2025)

**Drawing of a free place to go for people of all ages** (from workshop October 18 2026)



## Getting around (balancing independence and safety)



Children and young people travel around Crumlin and beyond every day – going to school and to different activities, as well as going to parks, local shops and services and meeting up with friends in different places. The adult researchers were interested in learning how children and young people travelled to school and other places and at what age children began getting around without adults. In general those who live close to their schools said they usually walked to school or scooted (using non-electric scooters), while others cycled, took the bus or got a lift in a parent's car. The closer children and young people live to schools, the younger they begin travelling to school on their own or with siblings or friends. Some of those aged 10 – 13 also mentioned walking or cycling to other activities in the local area such as music lessons or theatre group and some talked about going to the park or other places with friends or older siblings.



*Drawing of favourite forms of getting around (from workshop May 23 2026)*

As we talked about when children could go places without adults the most important thing mentioned was safety. Getting around could feel unsafe because of people – older young people or adults who were threatening or intimidating in some way. There was also the issue of what would happen if someone fell or got injured – because of this younger participants thought it was safer to go around with friends rather than alone. Other safety issues mentioned were e-scooters and electric bikes and some people talked about incidents such as a friend being run over by an e-scooter. Finally, one of the most important safety issues we talked about had to do with cars and traffic.

Because we went on lots of walks with children and young people as part of the research project we were able to experience some of the issues they discussed. One of the main things we talked about was crossing the road and whether there are enough pedestrian crossings in Crumlin. Some participants thought that the busiest roads probably had enough crossings:

*I feel like on the main roads where there's the most amount of traffic there usually is a set of traffic lights or two. And around the schools there's always a lollipop lady. ... It would definitely be more helpful on some roads to have traffic lights, but I kind of feel like it's not a big issue because where they're most needed they are there.*

”

*... there is a lot of cars but there's also a lot of traffic lights.*

”

Other participants felt that there was a need for more crossings in particular places – for instance one young person felt that there should be more on Sundrive Road, a long and quite busy road. Another participant thought it was important to have more than one set of traffic lights near schools as children are coming from different directions:

*... I think they should have more traffic lights near schools. Because at my school there's like one traffic light you know or like ... a pair or a set or whatever. ... and some people don't go that way.*

”

Others commented that it can take a long time for the lights to change at pedestrian crossings:

*...some of them are really like they're really really fast which is good, but also really really slow.*

”

*... sometimes it takes forever ... [to cross the road] ...  
When I'm coming back from school.*

”

Indeed on one of our walks we were stuck at a very busy junction for a long time. We all got so bored waiting that we decided to go a different way. Another important issue raised by participants was reckless driving in Crumlin with some saying that cars don't always stop at pedestrian lights or go “too fast”. One young person commented that while the road she lived on was not very busy with traffic it still felt dangerous:

*It's not busy. It's just every time a car goes by it's usually quite fast.*

”

The amount of traffic and speed of cars in the area obviously creates issues for cyclists. While most of the children and young people who took part in the project sometimes used a bicycle or had in the past, some only cycled in the park, and some did not cycle at all. One young person felt that it was too dangerous to cycle in Crumlin:

*There's not really any cycle tracks in Crumlin. It is dangerous with all the cars on the road.*

”

Another young person noted that having somewhere to lock your bike at the end of your journey was also an important consideration:

*And it's also where you're going if there's a bike rack and things like that.*

”

While the older young people seemed to walk or use the bus as their main mode of transport, some younger participants cycled to school and to other places. There were times when some had not felt safe on the road:

*... once I was cycling on the road and this car, like the mirror was kind of like right there a few centimetres away.*

”

One participant mentioned a ‘cycle-bus’ which had been set up in their school and happened on Fridays. It was said that not many people took part – a few families cycled together as part of the ‘bus’ each Friday.



*Photo of bus stop taken on walking interview August 11 2025*

*Photo of street sign from walking interview August 11 2025*



We also talked a bit about the bus services in Crumlin. Young people (16- 18) said that buses were really important for people their age. They felt that they could get a bus to most places they wanted to go and that the cost of the service with the Leap card was affordable. There were a few comments about how often the buses ran on certain routes. Some new bus routes have been introduced recently, and these were seen as more frequent and reliable than other routes serving Crumlin. There was also the problem of buses sometimes running late:

*They're very hit and miss sometimes. Cos some buses come every half an hour, but some come every 10/15 minutes. But it could say ah it's coming in 5 minutes. Then 5 minutes passes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes and you're standing there for nearly 40 minutes waiting on a bus that was meant to come at like 5 o'clock and you're standing there at half 5. I think they're very infrequent and it's difficult because you could have somewhere to be. But there's not really anything you can really do about that.*

”

The younger age groups also talked about using buses and some of the issues they had including buses running late or not turning up. Traffic can be heavy in parts of Crumlin during peak times and one participant talked about how the bus she uses to get to school is nearly always delayed, especially in the morning. This meant that she was “always late for school” and had to apologise to the teacher:

*The teacher used to make us when we were late, we'd just have to say, 'sorry I'm late'. Even though it wasn't my fault.*

”



Photo of Crumlin village from walking interview August 11 2025

## Connection to nature



Something that came through strongly was the importance of the natural world to children and young people. By far the biggest category of photographs taken by children and young people on our walks was 'trees' and there were also drawings of trees in the follow-up workshops.



*Photos categorised under 'trees' in workshop November 23 2025*

When we talked about trees, almost everyone thought that having more trees in the area would be good. Children and young people said that trees improve the appearance of the area, but they also saw trees as important in other ways. As mentioned above, trees were seen as important for play. A number of participants in the 8-13 age group talked about climbing trees as something they really enjoyed doing. These participants were also conscious of the important role of trees in supporting life:

*They give you oxygen.*

”

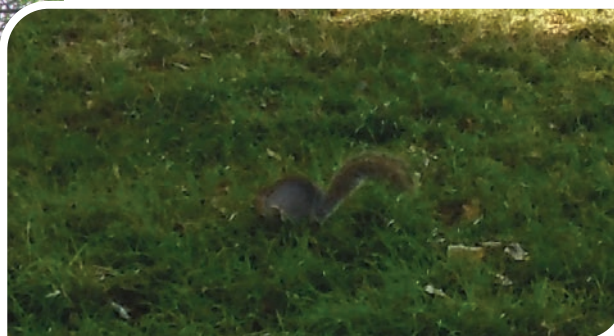
*They're basically one of the only reasons the planet is alive.*

”



*Photo of squirrel from walking interview October 31 2025*

*Photo of tree from walking interview September 13 2026*



Trees were also recognised as habitats – “homes for the different species of wildlife”. One young person discussed how planting more native trees in the area could help support wildlife, after another participant expressed a wish to see more squirrels in the area:

*I'd like to see squirrels every day on my way to school.*

”

*More native trees would probably help the squirrels, well at least native squirrels to Ireland.*

”

On one of our walks we spotted squirrels in Pearse Park, and we managed to get a photo.

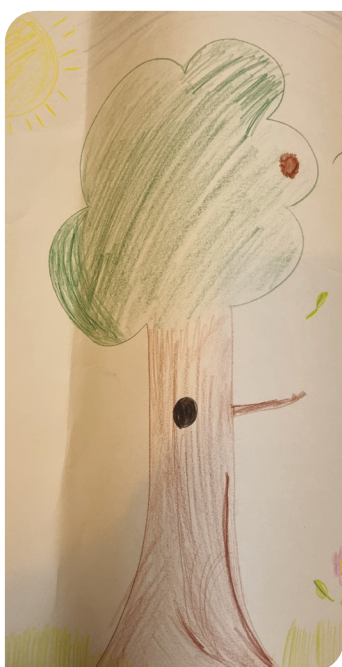
Children and young people also took photographs of various kinds of birds including crows, magpies, gulls and pigeons, which we saw in parks and other places. During our conversations children and young people mentioned other kinds of wildlife they had seen around the area such as foxes, bats, hedgehogs and a heron.

While Crumlin is quite a built-up urban area it has a relatively large number of green spaces and this was something that children and young people appreciated. In addition to the main parks there are many smaller public green spaces in the locality. Some young people commented that some of them lacked trees or other plant life:

*I think there could be more added within the green spaces, but I think there is enough you know green space.*

”

**Drawings of a tree from workshop May 23 2026**



There was also a feeling that there could be more ‘wild’ spaces in Crumlin:

*I think there should also be more like rural areas you know. ... there should also be a bit of nature.*

”

*I think a forest would be cool, but I don't think we're gonna get that any time soon.*

”

Some of the children and young people made reference to efforts being made locally by Dublin City Council and the environmental group Bloomin' Crumlin to add more trees and other plant life such as wildflowers to the parks and green spaces in the area. Some young people commented that for them this was the best thing about Crumlin and spoke about the “hard work” that goes into maintaining these spaces and adding new flowers and trees. These efforts were seen as being good both for people and for wildlife. Children and young people were very much in favour of this work being continued and expanded.

## Colour and character



Many of the photographs that children and young people took on our walks were of colourful features of the local environment, including painted murals and artwork across the area, the book box in Crumlin village and the flowers in planters recently added around Crumlin village and other parts of the area. There was a strong sense, especially in talking with the 16-18 year olds, that the appearance and atmosphere of the area had been improved a lot by these additions:

*They've put a lot more effort into adding things to the area rather than just like leaving it the way it is.* ”

*I think it's just had a lot more added to it. A lot of colour. ... It just seems that people care more. That's just overall what I've seen.* ”



*Photo of borrow a book box  
Crumlin village from walking  
interview October 31 2025*

While many of the additions were described as “small things” which people might not even notice, together they were seen as making a big difference and improving people’s feelings about the area and their day-to-day experience:

*They just make it more positive. Like generally you're gonna be more positive when the area is nice looking and it's somewhere you wanna be.* ”

A young person commented that the flower planters in Crumlin village brought colour and life at times of the year when people needed a lift:

*I think it's nice because it adds a bit of colour into the area. Because during the winter and especially during the autumn when everything starts to die off Crumlin village can be very dull. You're just walking and you're like ah this looks absolutely miserable.*

”

*But I think with them planting beds ...all the shops planted outside them it just gives you kind of hope. You're like oh my God it's lovely out here.*

During walks in phase two of the study participants took lots of beautiful photos of flowers around the area. They also thought that having different types of flowers around Crumlin made the area look nicer and some thought that there should be more planted:

*I think they should add more flowers you know. ... Or like more seasonal flowers you know because then they just die and they're not very colourful.*

”



*Photo of flower planter in Crumlin village from walking interview August 11 2025*

*Photos categorised under 'flowers' at workshop October 18 2025*



Colourful public art pieces featured prominently in the photographs taken during the project. These include the paintings on local traffic boxes (commissioned by Dublin City Council through Dublin Canvas project and Dublin City Council's local area office). Participants mentioned that they liked seeing this artwork and that they were nice additions to the local environment. One participant said that these painted traffic boxes are the best thing about Crumlin, and several said there should be more in the area.

There were also photographs taken of signs with information about local history and artwork celebrating famous or important people who had lived in the area. These were seen as making a difference to the area by improving its appearance, but also providing a sense of narrative and history:



*Photo of traffic box from walking interview September 13 2025*

*It definitely adds more character. You can see the signs around the nods to people. It just makes it seem like a nicer place to live. I don't know. It's just nice to look at.*

”

*It adds a story to the area.*

”

The mural of the Crumlin-born musician Phil Lynott was given as an example of a feature which added colour to the area while providing information.



*Photo of Phil Lynott mural from walking interview August 11 2025*

*I think the murals are a great way to (A), brighten up the area, but (B), like have an informational touch. The place just across from Sundrive Park ... they done the Phil Lynott mural which is just a really good way to on a blank wall just to put something colourful and representative of someone who lived very close to that area.*

”



*Photo of traffic box from walking interview October 12 2025*

One young person commented that she would like to see public artwork that was more directly relevant to people her age:

*A lot of people in the murals are always like older people in more of my parent's generation. So if I see it I would be like oh yeah my dad listened to that or something. But I don't really find any joy. The murals are nice though and I like seeing them. It's just that I wish there was more people from our generation on them.*

”

The Crumlin-born singer-songwriter/DJ Jazzy was mentioned by this participant as an example of someone who young people in the area would be interested in. One of the other participants also spoke about Jazzy when talking about the Future Historians' project (led by Dublin City Council and Crumlin and Walkinstown Historical Society). Through this project local secondary school students research topics of local interest for posters which are exhibited locally and later displayed outside a local primary school:

*And one of them that stood out to me was Jazzy because she used to go to Rosary and she went to the primary school that they posted that poster outside of. So I think that one is very significant to Crumlin.*

”

The posters displayed from the Future Historians' project (in 2024) were described as containing information “very relevant” to young people about their area such as the history of the Brú Youth Service as well the Crumlin Shopping Centre. This project seems to be of great value both to the young people who take part and others in the local community who benefit by gaining more knowledge about the area they live in.

## Complicated problems



Children and young people were generally very positive about their local area, but we also talked about not so good things about the area. A number of issues came up as things that could be improved about the local area in Crumlin because of how they affected local people and the local environment. This includes traffic, abandoned and derelict buildings and most significantly, the issue of litter and waste management.

The issue of traffic was already discussed in the section on 'getting around' where it was noted that traffic poses challenges for road safety and affects how children and young people move around the area and where they can play or socialise. We will just add briefly here that traffic was mentioned as a source of noise pollution by one of the young people, who talked about the noise of cars at night as being a problem in the area.

As we walked through the area we passed some abandoned and derelict buildings in Crumlin village and other parts of Crumlin. Some of the young people mentioned derelict houses near their own homes. Participants were conscious that these buildings could be used to benefit the people in the area. Among the suggestions for how derelict buildings in Crumlin village could be used was by transforming them into playgrounds, shopping centres, clothes shops, restaurants or homes.

There was also awareness that abandoned buildings could be a focus for vandalism and that neglected, run-down spaces affect the appearance and atmosphere of Crumlin. One young person talked about derelict houses near where she lived which had been vandalised:

*Like not directly on my road, but definitely a 5 minute walk from my house there's like... they were either vandalised or burnt down. They're just boarded up and left there to rot.*

”

When we talked about things that children and young people thought were a problem in the area, rubbish and litter was probably the biggest issue. Most said that this was the thing that annoyed them the most about Crumlin. Walking around the area during the project, we saw lots of different types of litter, many of the photographs that were taken were of litter and we talked a good bit about litter and rubbish in our conversations during the walks and follow-up workshops. The types of litter children and young people spoke about or saw on our walks included vapes, cigarette butts, lighters, cans and glass bottles, plastic bags and wrappers, stickers, helium gas canisters, balloons, clothing, shopping trolleys and food waste:

*There's vapes everywhere ... packs of cigarettes. And glass bottles. And wrappers.*

”

*They throw the weirdest things on this green. ... See there's a bunch of broken glass bottles there. There was a ... shoe. One shoe.*

”

*There's people throwing their messes into other people's gardens which I don't like. A few weeks ago we found a pair of trousers.*

”



*Photos categorised as rubbish from workshop October 18 2025*



Some of the young people commented that, besides its impact on people in the area, litter and rubbish negatively impacts wildlife in the area as well. Leaving binbags exposed and feeding food waste to animals could cause them to be injured or killed:

*... [people] throw bread on the road and all the seagulls come down and land on the road. And I've seen a couple get hit by cars because the bread is in the middle of the road. Because I don't think you're gonna stop people from throwing their waste out because it gets eaten by stuff. But I guess if it was more contained into a safer location or something.*

”

*... a lot of the binbags and stuff like that that are left around the bins like the animals do get into them and it's dangerous for them. And you find some of them that they've passed away on the side of the road and it's just heartbreaking. And it's terrible for kids to see that as well.*

”



*Photo of bin and refuse sacks  
from walking interview  
August 11 2025*

Children and young people spoke about “dog poop” as a particularly annoying issue in the local area and it was something we saw on our walks. We also saw lots of signs warning people about fines if they do not pick up after their dog. It was mentioned that this issue seemed to be improving, but overall the participants thought that the amount of “dog poop” on streets and parks in the area remained a big problem:

*There is this one alley near Pearse Park, and it is literally filled with dog poop. Literally everywhere you walk there will be a giant pile of dog poop.*

”



*Photo of sign from walking interview  
September 13 2025*

*Photo categorised under dog poop  
at workshop October 18 2025*



Some participants expressed frustration at the ways people did not pick up after their dogs or left full bags on the street:

*Why do people not pick up dog poo? It's gross!*

”

*... dog poops in bags. You put them in the bags, and you then you don't have the energy to bring them to the bin! Just put them in the bin!*

”

Children spoke about how dog poop “stinks” and is “disgusting” and shared how it affects their ability to walk, cycle and scooter freely as they move around their local area:

*The dog poop just makes it more dangerous to walk and also to cycle which I love doing.*

”

*I think I've stepped on two. Sometimes my parents make me look forward when I want to look that way.*

”

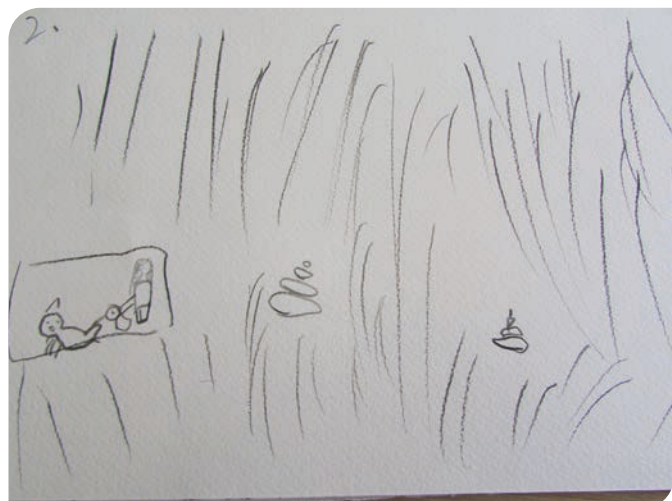
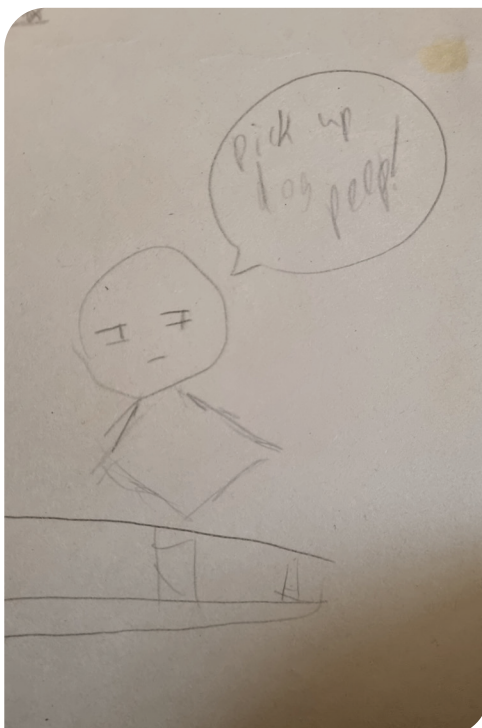
As we talked about the problem of rubbish in the area the children and young people had a lot to say about what they recognised was a complicated issue without an easy solution. Talking about the reasons for littering some said that a lack of public bins might be a reason. There were suggestions for more bins in the area and more special bins for dog poo:

*Especially in some of the areas where there is no bins you're just gonna end up with litter on the ground because there's nowhere to put the rubbish. So I think a lot of places need more bins.*

”

*They should put bins for poo.*

”



*Drawing about stepping on dog poop from workshop from workshop May 23 2026*

*Drawing about picking up dog poop from workshop May 23 2026*



Photo of sign from walking interview August 11 2025

Some children and young people noted that even in areas with enough bins there was still rubbish on the ground:

*I think in some areas there's plenty of bins, but the rubbish is just on the ground anyway. Some people just don't use the bins even if they're close. I don't really know how to try and stop that.*

”

When talking about the signs around the area which warn people about fines for littering or not picking up after dogs, some of the children and young people mentioned that it is difficult to enforce littering regulations:

*I don't even know how would they catch people.*

”

*Sometimes you see signs that say you'll get fined for littering. But it's so hard to catch someone. Unless they put someone standing in the park but people standing all around the park all day they're not gonna catch anyone. So there's no real punishment maybe.*

”



Photo of overflowing bin from walking interview September 13 2025

In addition to people not having access to public bins, or just not using them, another issue that was talked about was the problem of public bins being too full and rubbish overflowing:

*... bins are useful but they're just so easy to overfill and when they overfill a lot of people still dump their stuff in anyway so it kind of blows out and stuff.*

”

There were some important points made about the use of public bins for household rubbish. This was seen as linked to the high cost of refuse services which families on lower incomes might struggle to afford:

*Just the cost of bins now is just extortionate.*

”

*Especially if you have a bin close to your house, people, if the bin is really expensive, they'll take out a black bin [bag] and they'll just throw it. Like they'll just bring it around to the bin.*

”

Children and young people also talked about measures to reduce or recycle waste. There was some discussion about the Deposit Return Scheme which was implemented in 2024. Through this scheme a deposit is automatically charged for purchases of drinks in returnable bottles and cans and is refunded when the containers are returned manually to shops or via a Reverse Vending Machine (RVM). One participant mentioned that there should be more RVMs available in public spaces, while another commented that the machines are often broken or too full to use. Another said that this scheme has been helpful for reducing some litter but has led to new issues:

*... the return thing has helped, but it has also not helped. Because the return thing has helped because like people have now been like returning more bottles. But then other people just search through bins and throw a bunch of rubbish on the floor to look for them.*

”

One young person was keen to see more radical and far-reaching solutions to the problem of waste, in particular plastic waste. From her point of view the answer was to eliminate plastic. She saw this as do-able but thought that economic concerns were given more importance than environmental and health impacts:

*I wish they could just get rid of plastic. We have our power to do that but plastic's cheap and it makes us money, so I guess we don't do it.*

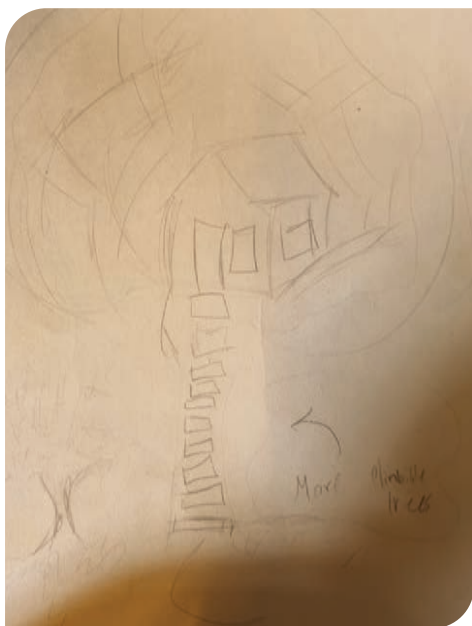
”

# Conclusion

**This report is the result of the research project 'A Just and Inclusive Transition for Children'. It was designed to complement the TASC's 'People's Transition' project in Crumlin, which was set up to ensure that efforts to transition to a climate-friendly economy and society involve the local community and centre their needs.**

The report is based on the belief that children and young people should be part of the conversations and decisions that shape their local environments, daily lives, and future opportunities. It is important to stress that children and young people are not responsible for finding solutions for the social and ecological issues which affect them, but their experiences and views should inform efforts to address social, environmental and climate challenges. Our research project aimed to understand the views of children and young people on the 'built', 'natural' and 'social' aspects of their local environment in Crumlin, including what they like about the area and what could be improved.

We talked about things to do in Crumlin, and the children and young people spoke about various organised activities in and around Crumlin, including sports clubs, organisations like CCMA and the youthwork services Brú Youth Service and CLAY Youth Project. They also talked about enjoying unstructured activities and just hanging out or playing with their friends. Something that came through very strongly was the huge importance of parks and green spaces in Crumlin to children and young people. Parks were discussed as sites for sports facilities, exercise machines, playgrounds and trees for climbing as well as public events. They are also important places for meeting up with friends. When it is dark or cold and rainy, parks were not always seen as safe or comfortable for socialising. Having cheap or free indoor spaces for children and young people living in Crumlin was seen as very important. This links to one of the main proposed solutions – a community centre for Crumlin – made in 'The People's Transition Crumlin' TASC, 2024 report, which also highlighted the need for increased social facilities for young people.



*Drawing calling 'more climbable trees' from workshop October 18 2025*

The ways that children and young people travel around and beyond Crumlin in their day-to-day lives was also something that this research project explored. Children and young people talked about walking, cycling and scooting as favoured forms of transport and about the importance of buses in getting around. Some spoke of a need for more pedestrian crossings in certain areas as well as more traffic lights located near schools. The length of time it takes for some traffic lights to change can be frustrating when walking to school or around the local area. Additionally, the volume of traffic, speed of cars and reckless drivers (issues also raised in the People's Transition Crumlin report (TASC, 2024)) can sometimes make the area feel unsafe and pose dangers for those who cycle on the roads. Buses, while an

important and affordable way to travel for the young people, were described as often delayed, presumably due to traffic congestion. The air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions caused by on-road vehicles has adverse health and environmental impacts (Mahesh et al., 2024). The experiences outlined in this report show that road traffic also impacts children and young people's everyday movement, social activities and safety, supporting arguments for more intensive measures to reduce car usage.

Crumlin has several green spaces, and the children and young people demonstrated a strong connection to the natural world and suggested that there could be more trees, plant life and 'wild' spaces across the area. The efforts to plant trees and flowers throughout the area are recognised by the children and young people, who understand this as being positive for both people and wildlife. From our conversations in this project, it is clear that children and young people appreciate the work being done to maintain and enhance green spaces and would like to see this work expanded. This is important as tree coverage is beneficial for air quality, biodiversity and human health (Sicard et al, 2025) and Crumlin has been found to have lower tree coverage than other more affluent parts of Dublin (Brennan et al., 2017). The views of children and young people on this issue link to one of the other main recommendations of 'The People's Transition Crumlin' report – 'enhancing biodiversity and green spaces across Crumlin' (TASC, 2024) and speak to the importance of Crumlin's biodiversity action plan developed in 2023 (Tubridy, 2023).

”

Crumlin has several green spaces, and the children and young people demonstrated a strong connection to the natural world. Trees are particularly important to them not just because they improve the appearance of the area, but also because they are used for play and serve as homes for wildlife.

The children and young people's appreciation for the work and care that goes into the local area was also reflected when we spoke about things which give colour and character to Crumlin. The painted murals and public artwork as well as things like flower planters added around the area were discussed as being good for the overall appearance and atmosphere. Public art and heritage information was also seen as being educational and providing a sense of shared narrative and history. Overall the children and young people really liked the planters, artwork and heritage information added to the area, and would like to see more, including public art that is relevant to younger generations.

**” In addition to issues with car traffic discussed above, litter and waste were especially frustrating for children and young people, affecting not only the appearance and cleanliness of the area but also their ability to move freely and safely through it.**

We also discussed things about the area that were challenging or needed to be improved. In addition to issues with car traffic discussed above, litter and waste were especially frustrating for children and young people, affecting not only the appearance and cleanliness of the area but also their ability to move freely and safely through it. The children and young people were aware that these issues not only affect people living in Crumlin but also may harm local wildlife.

It was recognised that litter is a complex problem to address, and the children and young people reflected thoughtfully on the challenges of managing rubbish and enforcing littering regulations, as well as the financial burden which dealing with waste places on households. These insights point to the importance of efforts to shift the responsibility to reduce and manage waste to manufacturers and retailers rather than consumers. The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) model is applied to several forms of waste in Ireland, including packaging, batteries and single-use plastic waste (Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, 2021). Under EPR, producers have a financial responsibility for collecting and managing waste from their products in ways that protect the environment (Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, 2021). EPR obligations currently still largely focus on the 'end of life' of products and while a positive step, there is a need for stronger obligations on manufacturers to meaningfully consider sustainability through each stage of product life starting from the design stage (see e.g. Brown et al, 2023).

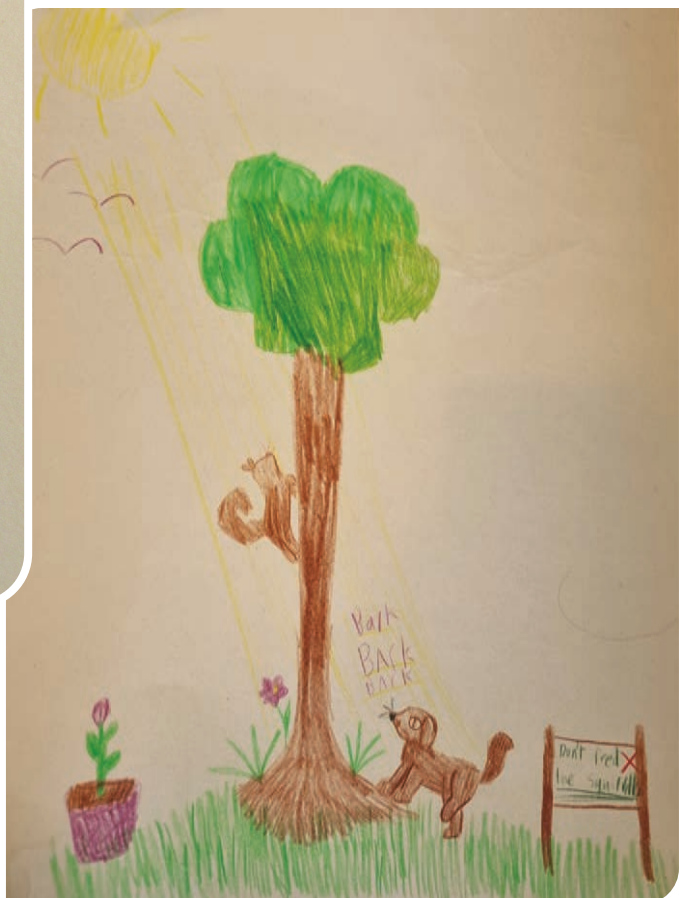
The amount of municipal waste (solid household, commercial and street cleansing waste) that Ireland generates is among the highest in the EU (CSO, 2025). Eurostat (2025) data indicate that Ireland produces the most packaging waste per person in the EU. A 2024 study by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA, 2024) found that plastic was a significant category of waste in public litter bins and community clean-up events in Ireland, and that 22% of waste in public litter bins and 23% of waste in community clean-up events could have been recycled. Waste causes greenhouse gas emissions, environmental pollution, water contamination and harm to public health and biodiversity so how waste is produced and managed is of crucial importance in ensuring a liveable planet for the future (UNEP, 2024).

In closing, we want to emphasise again the many positive things about Crumlin which were raised throughout this report. The appreciation expressed by the young people for the effort and care that goes into maintaining the green spaces, planting flowers and trees around the area and enhancing public spaces highlights the important work being carried out by Dublin City Council and local community groups such as Bloomin' Crumlin. The findings also point to the invaluable work of the different clubs and organisations providing services and activities for children and young people in the area.

Finally we want to emphasise the value of the views and perspectives of children and young people which we think shines through the report. This links to the recommendation of the People's Transition (TASC, 2024) report for a Community Forum for Crumlin and underlines the importance of including representatives of children and young people.



*Drawings of trees from workshop  
November 23 2025*



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# Appendix 1

## Further information on the research study aims, design and methods

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of children and young people of the local environment in which they live and their views on what could be improved to benefit children and young people living there now and in the future. It was carried out in one of the local areas (Crumlin in Dublin city) in which TASC's People's Transition project was implemented and the underlying motivation was that the views and experiences of children and young people should inform action on social and environmental challenges as Ireland transitions to a 'climate neutral' economy.

The study adds to a growing body of research which examines issues related to how children and young people experience their local environments using walking interview methods (see e.g. Allport et al (2023), Scheller et al (2024), and in the Irish context Horgan et al (2023)). These methods, sometimes called 'walk and talk', 'tours', 'walkaround' or 'go-along' interviews among other terms, are generally used in combination with photography (Hammerstan, 2025). Usually participants are then involved in follow-up sessions in which they discuss the photographs and perhaps categorise them into themes. Similarly our approach involved walking, talking and photography along with follow-up workshops – we didn't follow a particular step-by-step approach, but we found useful guidance in reflections from other researchers such as Horgan et al (2023).

Our study involved walks in which participants were given digital cameras and asked to take photographs of anything they found interesting during the walk. Participants were requested not to take any photographs of people. The routes were not predetermined and were worked out with participants during the walks – each walk involved a visit to a local park and in some cases we walked by participants' homes, schools or places where they did activities. During the walks we talked about the places we visited and had general conversation about living in Crumlin such as the activities available in the area for children and young people, the places children and young people like to go and who they go with, good / bad things about the area, how they get around the area, friends in the area and other topics which came up as we walked. After the walks the cameras were returned and photographs were printed out. These were then discussed in follow-up workshops. Participants categorised the photographs and we discussed these and had further conversations while carrying out drawing activities. The researchers were interested in discussing participants' views on the local area, various aspects of their experiences living there and what could be improved to make life better now and in the future. A final workshop was held in May 2026 after all the information gathered had been analysed – photographs and drawing activities were used to discuss themes which had been identified in the analysis. Data from this workshop was analysed and also informs the report. Also in this final workshop, similar to Horgan et al (2023), we asked participants for ideas for sharing what we found in the study with the wider community.

Note: Sources cited here are listed in Further resources for consulting/researching with children about their local areas

# Appendix 2



## About the UCD research team

**Dr. Karen Smith** works in the School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin where she teaches and researches in the areas of Equality Studies and Social Justice. Her research interests centre on issues of childhood and inequality and she has carried out research on various aspects of Irish child policy and on policy and provision for children and families of international protection background. Her published theoretical and empirical work addresses themes such as the government of childhood; adultism; inequalities and childhood; children and young people's participation. She has a particular interest in advancing work on the theme of a just - and inclusive - transition for children.

**Dr. Theresa Schilling** is a researcher and educator at the School of Social Policy, Social Work, and Social Justice, University College Dublin. She holds a PhD in Social Justice from UCD, and her research interests include queer relationalities, masculinities, gender, and feminist and narrative-based research. She has published on queer and participatory research methodologies, intergenerational LGBTQIA+ relationships, and trans representation in media. She is a 2025 Women in Research Ireland Research Champion Award recipient, Research Coordinator of the UCD Observatory of Masculinities, and Managing Editor of *SEXTANT*.

**Naomhán Mhaonaigh** is a graduate of University College Dublin with a BSc. Social Science with a joint major in Sociology and Social justice as well as a Masters degree in Equality Studies. Their research areas of interest are children's rights, children's participation rights, equality in education in Ireland, disability and education, sociology of the environment and wider issues of social inequality.

**Kéva Carrigy** is a current PhD candidate in the School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice. Her PhD project addresses urban planning and access to play in the city of Dublin. Her focus is primarily on understanding how the urban environment provides or hinders access to leisure and play in the city and how this in turns impacts the lives of teenagers. She holds a Master's degree in Education, Children and Youth, a Bachelor's degree in Social Policy and Sociology, and a diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education.





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