



# RCSI ENGAGE

A STRATEGY TO SUPPORT HEALTH AND EDUCATION  
IN OUR LOCAL AND NATIONAL COMMUNITIES  
2019-2023



**RCSI**

Leading the world  
to better health



RCSI's Transition Year (TY) MiniMed programmes offer TY students the opportunity to experience what it is like to train and work as a doctor.

## Vision

The RCSI Engage vision is to enhance human health and education by building reciprocal partnerships between RCSI staff and students and our local and national communities.

# Introduction



Dr Beth Frates pictured with RCSI students in advance of her RCSI MyHealth public lecture on Paving the Path to Wellness.

As educators and researchers, it is our responsibility to use our expertise, knowledge and discoveries to foster improvements in health and education in our communities, our societies and around the world.

**Our RCSI Engage strategy will strengthen our local and national community partnerships to make a sustainable impact on education and health.**

RCSI's mission is to educate, nurture and discover for the benefit of human health. A deep professional responsibility to enhance human health through endeavour, innovation and collaboration in education, research and service informs all that we do. As educators and researchers, it is our responsibility to use our expertise, knowledge and discoveries to foster improvements in health and education in our communities, our societies and globally.

By virtue of our heritage, our location and our deep and broad-based expertise, we can make a unique contribution to education and health promotion at local and national level. Our broad commitment to community engagement is set out in the RCSI Strategic Plan, which pledges RCSI to work in partnership with our local and national communities to support and promote enhanced lifelong health and wellbeing and widen educational participation and tenacity.

RCSI Engage will ensure that the voice of our community partners is heard.



The **RCSI Engage** strategy identifies our high-level objectives and lays a strong foundation for the pursuit of specific goals, while recognising the institution-wide mission and endeavor of all at RCSI in support of healthcare.

Integral to the success of the strategy is ongoing comprehensive consultation that will inform and deepen our partnerships and will enable us to build a sustainable access and community engagement model. **RCSI Engage** will ensure that the voice of our community partners is heard and will drive the development of a reciprocal programme that will benefit our local community, the wider public nationally and will enrich our student and staff experience.

I greatly look forward to seeing this ambitious plan delivered over the coming years and I hope that our work will have a positive impact on the educational outcomes and health and wellbeing of many in our local and national communities.

**Professor Cathal Kelly**  
CEO, RCSI

# Background and context

RCSI is an independent not-for-profit health sciences institution. A deep professional responsibility to enhance human health has been at the core of the College's purpose since its foundation in 1784.

Our mission: "To educate, nurture and discover for the benefit of human health" is built on an institution-wide imperative to add social value and on the principle of broad societal engagement.

## Established programmes

At a local level, RCSI's community engagement and access programme, **REACH RCSI**, connects RCSI with our community. Through REACH, we facilitate a range of educational supports, promote and foster greater awareness of health issues.

The **RCSI MyHealth** programme is a suite of initiatives that provide a trusted and accessible source of information on health and wellbeing. The programme includes public lectures that cover health and wellbeing topics of broad interest to patients, their families and the wider public.

RCSI transition year (TY) programmes include **RCSI TY MiniMed**, which takes place annually and offers TY students the opportunity to experience what it is like to train and work as a doctor.

Engagement and widening participation in higher education for traditionally underrepresented groups and the promotion of health and wellbeing are key national priorities.

Through the commitment of RCSI staff and students, the College leads and contributes to multiple STEMM initiatives (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine) to inspire primary and post-primary students, locally and nationally.

## National and international alignment

Engagement and widening participation in higher education for traditionally underrepresented groups and the promotion of health and wellbeing are key national priorities. The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 recognises engagement as one of three core roles of higher education, together with teaching and learning and research. This National Strategy states that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) must become more firmly embedded in the social and economic contexts of the communities they live in and serve. Fostering an interest in STEMM careers is aligned with the national intention to make Ireland a European leader in STEMM education by 2026.



York Street community playground: a community partnership between local residents, REACH RCSI, Dublin City Council and Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

The development of this strategy has been informed by RCSI's participation, together with twelve Irish HEIs, in the year-long Irish pilot of the Carnegie Community Engagement Framework (2016) supported by the Talloires Network. The study was undertaken as part of a continued national process to find appropriate tools to build an evidence base for Irish HEIs contributions to community engagement.

RCSI is a signatory to the Campus Engage Charter for Civic and Community Engagement. This Charter underscores the commitment of Irish HEIs to Civic and Community Engagement.

## What is Community Engagement?

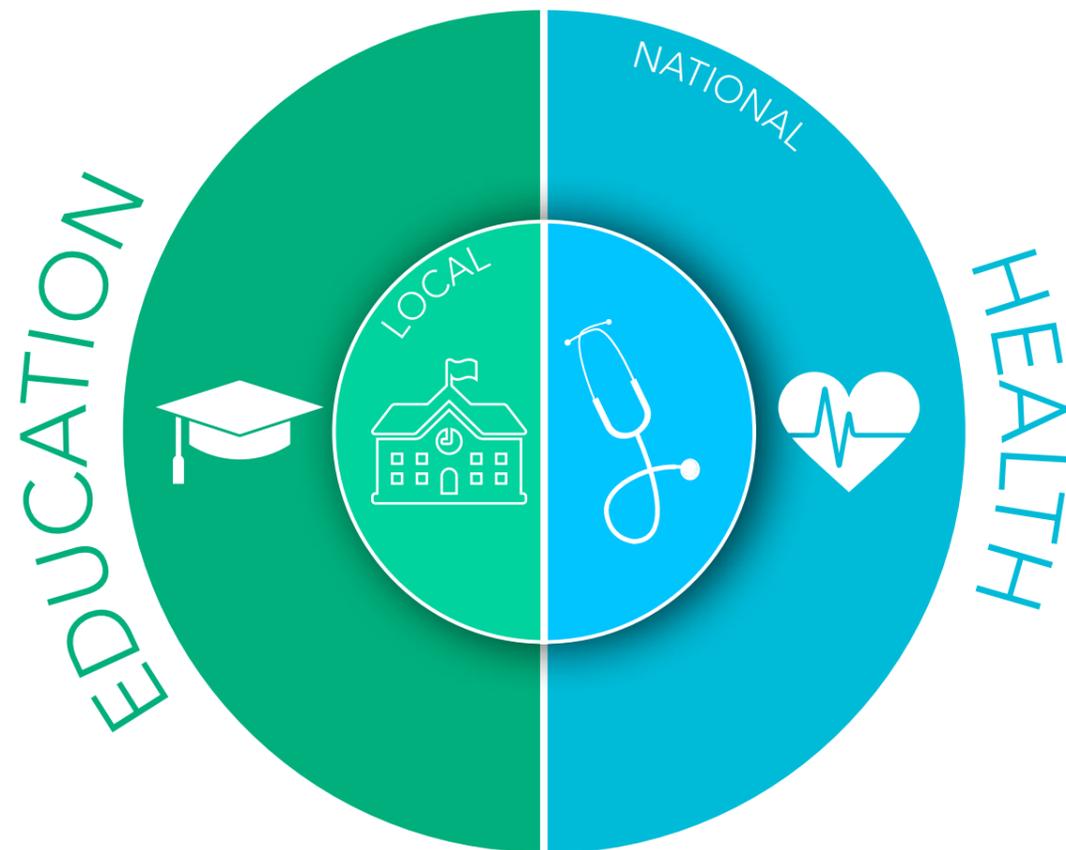
A mutually beneficial knowledge-based collaboration between the higher education institution, its staff and students, with the wider community, through community-campus partnerships including the activities of community based learning, community engaged research, volunteering, community/economic regeneration, capacity-building and access/widening participation.

Campus Engage definition

# Our Focus

We will develop and implement a progressive and collaborative programme in partnership with our local and national communities, which aims to:

1 Inspire and support learners at local and national level



2 Support and promote improved lifelong health and wellbeing



RCSI Engage will work with the RCSI Student Engagement and Partnership Committee in pursuit of our shared goals.

### A connected approach

As an institution, community engagement spans multiple national and international initiatives involving students and staff. As such, community engagement underpins and informs the breadth of RCSI activities. **RCSI Engage** will seek to bring greater focus and measurement to RCSI's current and future engagement priorities and activities in our local and national communities.

In recognition of the institution-wide nature and range of community engagement, **RCSI Engage** will work strategically with the RCSI Student Engagement and Partnership Committee in pursuit of our shared goals. We will continue to promote engaged research and a culture of partnership and impact through collaborative problem solving, co-creation and knowledge sharing to support real change for society.

Consultation with internal and external stakeholders and advisory groups focusing on health and wellbeing and education will be pivotal to informing the planning, prioritisation and implementation of our strategy.

## A focus on communities

### Building deeper relationships through our location and common interests

This strategy pledges RCSI to continue to prioritise our valued relationship with our local community, support our link schools located in closest proximity to our campus, and, in recognition of many RCSI initiatives which have a broader footprint, commits us to building deeper connections with communities in Greater Dublin and nationally.

RCSI engagement activities also extend to communities of shared interest and identity through, for example, initiatives focusing on health and wellbeing and communicating our research endeavours.

### Our unique community driving our commitment

A key enabler of RCSI's commitment to improving education outcomes locally and nationally stems from the location of our main campus within a unique community. Situated on St Stephen's Green and York Street in Dublin 2, RCSI is proud to be part of this community, which co-locates affluence and urban social exclusion. RCSI is mindful of educational challenges faced by many in our local community. 28% of school leavers from Dublin 8 and 26% from Dublin 2 progressed to higher education in 2014. This compares to 99% from Dublin 6, 82% from Dublin 6W and 84% from Dublin 4. \* (Source: HEA)

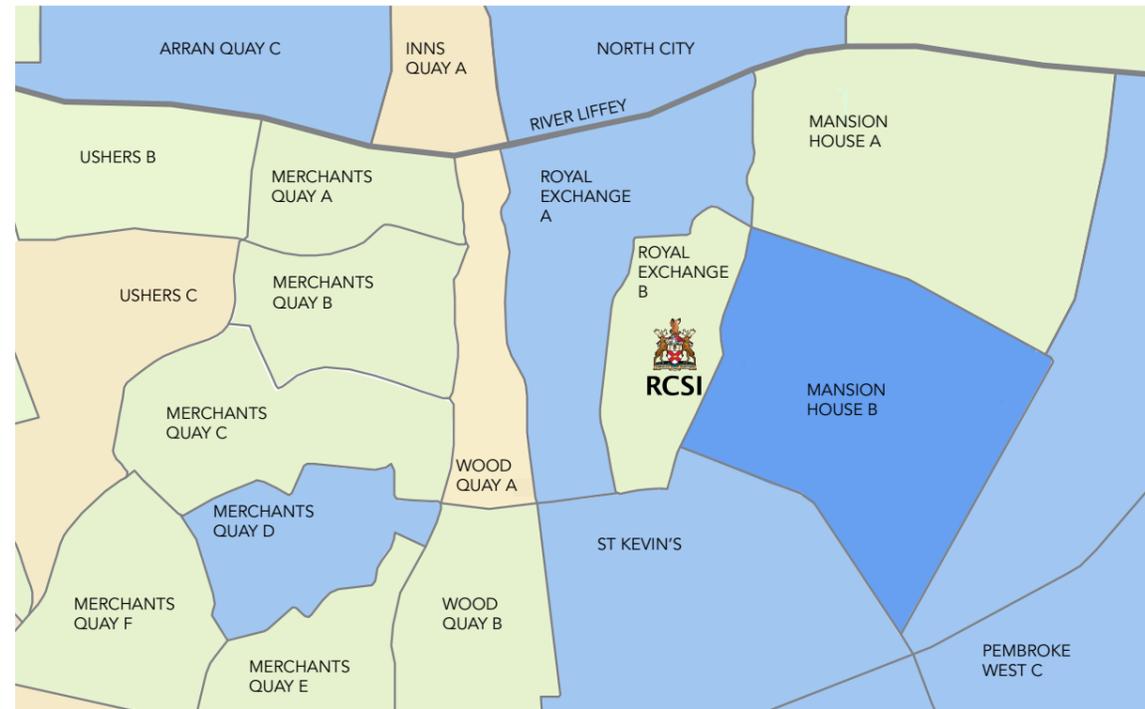
\*figures do not include student progression to further education or apprenticeships



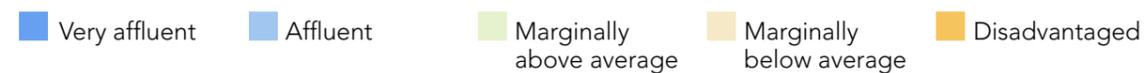
REACH RCSI "See it, Do it" Leaving Certificate Biology Practical Series.

### The Pobal HP Deprivation Index of south inner city Dublin.

RCSI is part of a community which co-locates affluence and social exclusion.



(HP Deprivation index by 2016 electoral division. Source: Pobal)



The Pobal HP Deprivation Index map measures the relative affluence or disadvantage of a particular geographical area in the Republic of Ireland and is compiled using census data.



### What is a community?

Communities can be defined as communities of place, identity and interest. One person can belong to several communities at once.

A **community of place** is defined as a group of people with a geographic location in common for example where they live, work or spend a significant portion of time.

A **community of identity** can be defined as a group of people who share a particular experience, interest or stake in an issue, or characteristics such as ethnic groups, young people and older people.

A **community of interest** can be defined as a gathering of people assembled around a topic of common interest. Its members take part in the community to exchange information, to obtain answers to personal questions or problems, to improve their understanding of a subject, to share common passions or to play.



The RCSI Lab Safari was developed to promote careers in STEMM.

# Education

We are committed to improving the educational tenacity and outcomes of learners locally and nationally. Through reciprocal partnerships, creating inspiring experiences and supports for students and teachers.

## Building on existing programmes

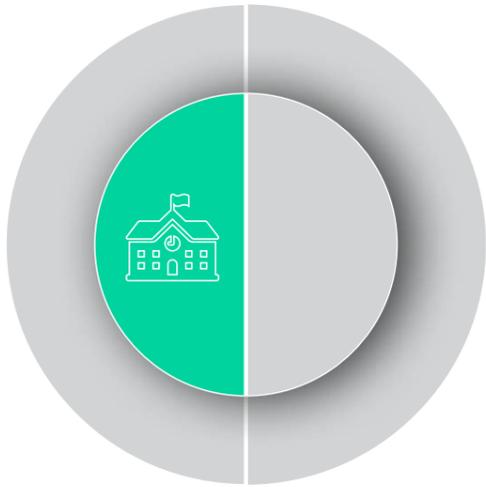
**REACH RCSI** has worked in partnership with our local community and DEIS\* schools to deliver an educational programme to enhance educational attainment and facilitate access to further and higher education.

RCSI participates in the Higher Education Admissions Route (HEAR) national admissions scheme for school leavers from a low socio-economic background and the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) which supports students applying with a disability.

RCSI has a significant programme of educational and STEMM initiatives with a broader footprint and we are committed to advancing this work to improve the educational outcomes of learners locally and nationally.

\*(Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) An Action Plan for Educational Inclusion





## Education Local

Working in partnership with key internal and external stakeholders, we will develop a programme that will complement the primary, post-primary curricula, inspiring learners and supporting teachers.



Cracking Crime with Science: hands-on science workshop for primary school children

### EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME

We will create an integrated continuum of educational support and achievement to raise aspirations and empower local students throughout their educational journey from primary level to Junior and Leaving Certificate.



REACH RCSI Junior Certificate Grinds - one to one tuition

### CAREER EXPLORATION AND MENTORING PROGRAMME

We will build a mentoring programme to support local students find their passions, set career goals, make informed choices and feel motivated to succeed.



REACH RCSI and Presentation Secondary School: Career Exploration Initiative

### SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING MATHEMATICS MEDICINE (STEMM) PROGRAMME

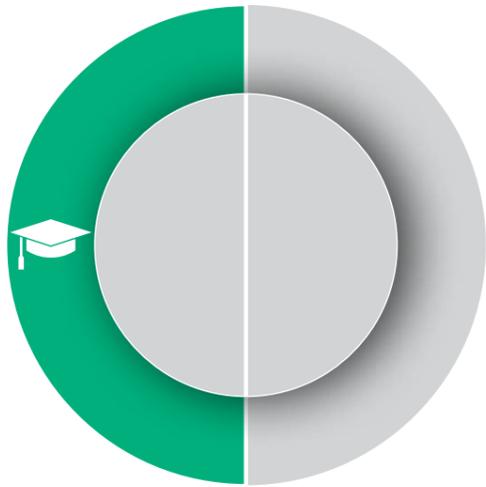
We will deliver a series of quality initiatives designed to develop scientific skills, foster awareness of RCSI research and generate enthusiasm for careers in STEMM.



REACH RCSI See It, Do It: Leaving Certificate Biology Practicals



REACH RCSI Leaving Certificate Grinds - one to one tuition



## Education National

RCSI is committed to building on the array of opportunities to support and inspire students interested in pursuing a career in healthcare by working collaboratively to raise aspirations and widen participation.

### RCSI RAISING ASPIRATION (Pre-Entry)

Programmes to inspire students to pursue careers in health sciences.

#### TRANSITION YEAR (TY) PROGRAMMES

- » TY MiniMed School
- » Physiotherapy "Transition to Health" Programme
- » Mini Scientist Programme



#### SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, EDUCATION, MATHEMATICS, MEDICINE (STEMM) PROGRAMMES

- » Primary level STEMM programmes
- » Post Primary level STEMM programmes
- » Teacher Professional Development Opportunities



#### COLLEGE EXPERIENCE INITIATIVES

- » Career Fairs
- » Student Experience Programme
- » Student Ambassador Programme
- » Open Days



Hazel Walshe, undergraduate pharmacy student and Kiran Pathak Pharmacy Scholarship recipient



### RCSI WIDENING PARTICIPATION (Entry Routes)

RCSI is committed to widening access and to the creation of a socially inclusive learning environment. Students with disabilities, of low socio-economic status and members of the Traveller Community continue to experience barriers to reaching their full educational potential.

#### HEAR AND DARE ENTRY ROUTES

RCSI participates in the Higher Education Admissions Route (HEAR) which supports students of low socio-economic status and the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) which supports students applying with a disability. RCSI offers 6% of CAO places on reduced points to both the HEAR and DARE Schemes.

#### RCSI ACCESS SCHOLARSHIPS

Access Scholarships provide reduced points entry, financial support and opportunities for students who might otherwise be unable to attend third level education due to low socioeconomic status:

- » Aim High Medicine Scholarship
- » Kiran Pathak Pharmacy Scholarship
- » Traveller Community Access Programme (TCAP) Medicine Pharmacy and Physiotherapy Scholarships

#### ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIPS

RCSI acknowledges academic excellence through the Consilio Manuque Medicine Scholarships.

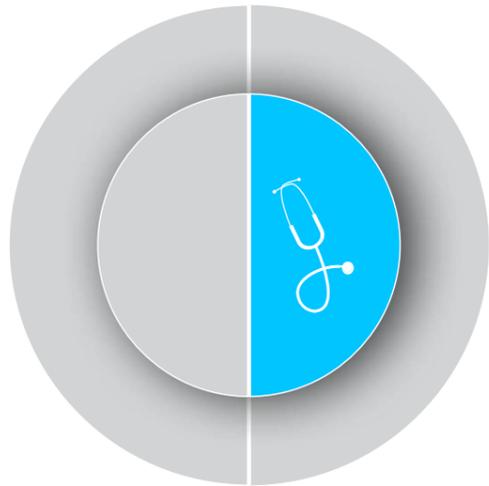
#### UNIVERSITY HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME

RCSI participates in Uversity which offers financial scholarships to EU mature students who are planning to undertake their first undergraduate degree.

# Health

## Harnessing our resources to promote improved lifelong health and wellbeing

Enhancing human health is core to RCSI's mission. Working in partnership with our local, national and patient communities, we will leverage our education, professional and research expertise as well as our physical location and infrastructure to support and promote improved lifelong health and wellbeing and complement the Healthy Ireland framework for improved health and wellbeing.



## Health Local

A Local Healthy Community Plan will be developed in consultation with key local community and internal partners to identify local health challenges, review current initiatives and adopt an inclusive, whole community approach to developing a framework to promote health and wellbeing.



A Local Healthy Community Plan will adopt an inclusive, whole community approach to developing a framework to promote health and wellbeing.

### SCHOOL HEALTH EDUCATION

We continue to work with our link schools to develop a reciprocal programme to improve overall health and wellbeing at primary and post-primary level.



RCSI paediatric students health education workshop with REACH RCSI link schools

### COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATION

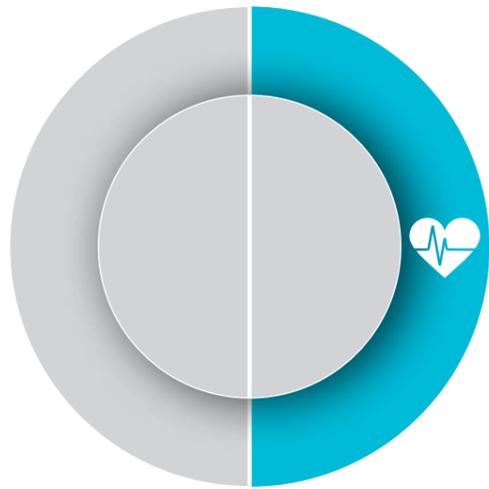
We will work collaboratively with community partners to improve health and wellbeing for all in our local community.



REACH RCSI Young Men's Health and Fitness Programme



RCSI Paediatric students Halloween health and safety education workshops with local youth groups YMCA and SAYS



## Health National

RCSI will provide trusted and accessible health and wellbeing information to our national community.

We will demonstrate RCSI's commitment to enhancing human health through expert-driven healthcare information.



Speakers at the RCSI MyHealth public lecture on sepsis who discussed recognising the signs and symptoms of sepsis

### RCSI MYHEALTH HUB

We will develop a digital health hub that will empower the public with information on a range of healthcare topics. The information will be presented in an accessible format.



### RCSI MYHEALTH LECTURE SERIES

We will continue to build on the RCSI MyHealth lecture series. The lectures are aimed at people who want to learn more about common illnesses and health related topics and are interested in improving their personal health and wellbeing.



RCSI MyHealth public lecture on concussion

### RCSI MYHEALTH EXPERT DIRECTORY

Through the creation of the RCSI MyHealth Expert Directory, we will provide expert-driven healthcare information and guidance, so that members of the public will have access to accurate health news in the media.



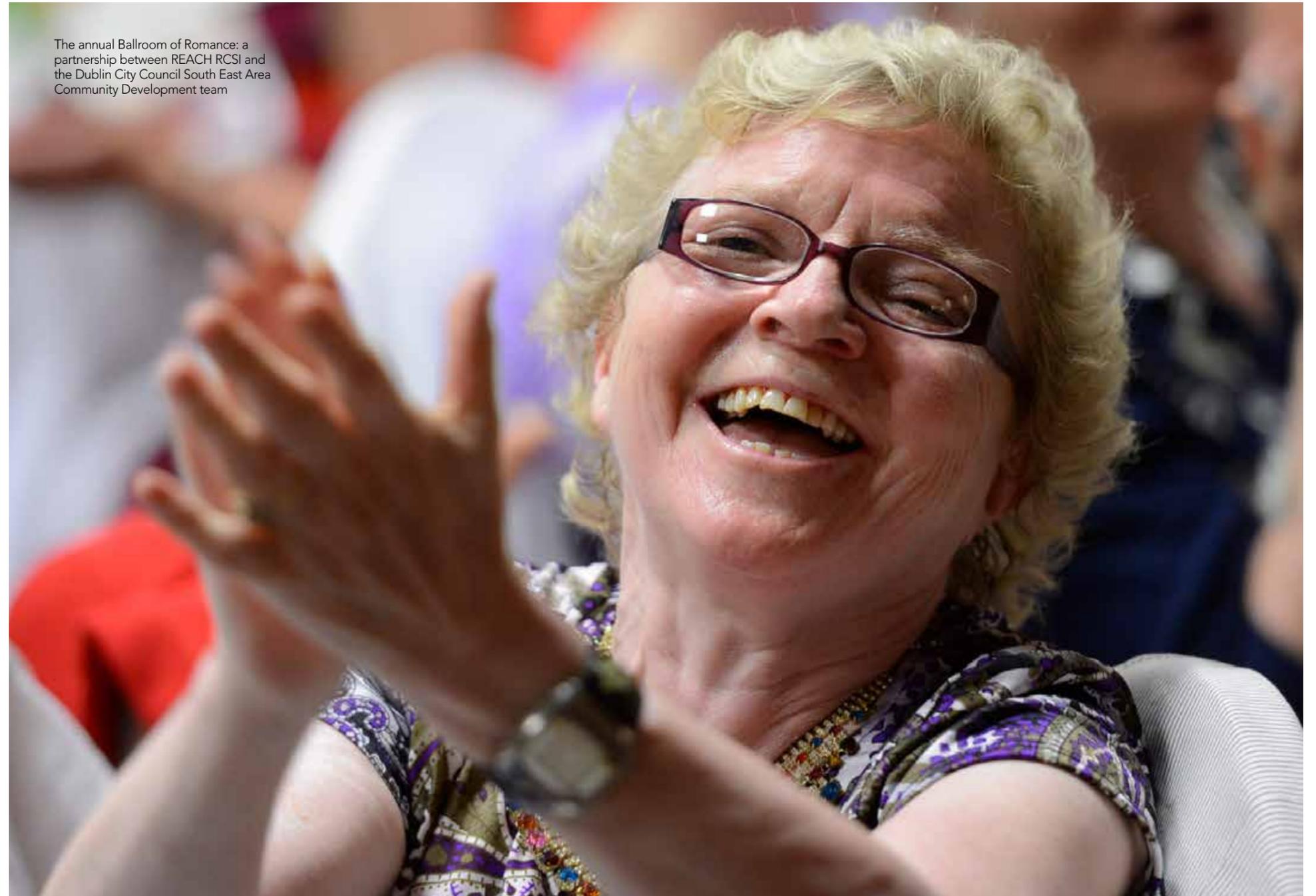
RCSI academics will provide a reliable source of health information in the media

RCSI will provide trusted and accessible health and wellbeing information.

# Evaluation and Impact

An evaluation framework and reporting tool will measure the impact of this strategy.

RCSI is committed to collecting data to support the effective measurement of the impact of this strategy. We will collaborate with internal and external partners, to develop an evaluation framework and a reporting tool.



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