

General Information/Updates:



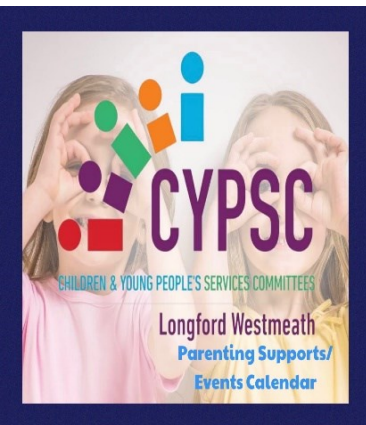
A Message from Santa Claus: With Christmas fast approaching, Santa Claus has a special message to all children in Longford, Westmeath, Laois and Offaly and indeed to all children, young people and families across Ireland.

Santa is very much looking forward to visiting you all this Christmas, don't forget early to bed on Christmas Eve and be kind to everyone during this festive season. Please do check out the following Christmas colouring and activity resources over the holiday period for all the family to enjoy. Family Fun.ie – FREE Downloadable [Colouring Pages](#)

Paper Hearts - 40 Free [Activity Ideas](#)

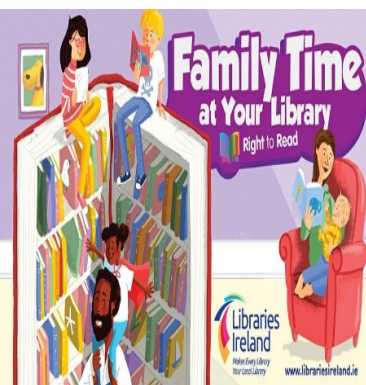
Twinkl .ie - [Christmas Resource Pack](#)

Finally, Santa would like to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year.



LW CYPSC Parenting Supports/ Events Calendar: The [Parenting Support/ Events calendar for Longford and Westmeath for December 2024](#) is available now online. Huge thank you to Edel Kelly for her assistance in developing this calendar of events, containing extensive information regarding parenting supports and events across Longford and Westmeath during the month of December.

If you have a parenting support/ programme/ event taking place in **January or February 2025** please forward details of same to grainne.reid@tusla.ie for inclusion in our parenting support event calendars. If there are further events happening in Longford Westmeath **during the month of December**, please **also submit these** and events calendar will be updated accordingly. Please **submit your information as early as possible to ensure inclusion ahead of your event date.**



Family Time at your Library: The [Family Time at your Library initiative](#) brings family events and activities to all libraries during the month of December to support the involvement of the whole family in children's reading. Events aim to support a family-focused approach to reading with children as part of the national Right to Read programme and to increase awareness of the benefits of reading and promote reading as a fun, recreational activity for children. Contact your local library service for details of family events and activities this December.

You can also check out your local library webpages at the following links

[Longford](#), [Westmeath](#), [Laois](#), [Offaly](#)



Give your child a safer online experience this Christmas: As Christmas approaches, many parents will be considering smart devices (phones, tablets, gaming consoles, wearables or smart toys) as gifts for their children. With so many options available, it can be difficult to determine which gadgets are safe and suitable for children.

To support parents and guardians in making safer, more informed decisions when buying these devices, CyberSafeKids has launched a Christmas Gadget Gift Guide.

The *CyberSafeKids Christmas Gadget Gift Guide* is available to download for free [here](#).



Setting up Parental Controls on Devices with WEBWISE: With Christmas fast approaching, and with the possibility of new devices being gifted to children and young people. It is important that parents are aware of how to set up parental controls on their child's device.

Parental controls can help reduce the risk of your child encountering inappropriate content when they are online. When enabling parental controls, use age-appropriate settings to filter, monitor and block your child's activities. Webwise recommend using parental controls especially for younger children on all available devices, computers, and tablets in the home.

To learn how to set up parental controls [CLICK HERE.](#)



16 Days of Action Domestic Abuse Campaign: The 16 Days of Action Campaign is an important opportunity to raise awareness and call for change at an international, national and local level to end violence and domestic abuse. The campaign runs each year from 25th November (UN Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to 10th December (International Human Rights Day). These 16 days provide a dedicated period for advocacy and action.

Earlier this year the [Longford Westmeath Domestic Abuse Resource Pack](#) was launched and is available to download. This resource, offers advice, information, intervention, support and advocacy for women, men, children, perpetrators and victims of Domestic Abuse. This resource is a toolkit for professionals in Longford and Westmeath who support people experiencing any form of domestic abuse.

New Adolescent Counselling Service from Athlone Midland Rape Crisis Centre:

Athlone (Midland) Rape Crisis Centre has recently opened a dedicated Adolescent Counselling service for young people, from 12 to 18 years of age, who have been affected by sexual violence recently or in the past. Their main Centre is in Athlone and they have Outreaches in Longford, Mullingar, and Roscommon town, as well as two recently opened Outreaches in Monksland and Boyle.

Athlone (Midland) Rape Crisis Centre support the families of those effected also. They are a free service offering face-to-face, online and telephone counselling service.



Safeireland Creating safety for women and children – New Learning Hub: Safe Ireland are delighted to introduce their new Safe Ireland Learning Hub, a comprehensive eLearning platform designed to equip individuals and organisations with the knowledge and tools needed to recognise and respond to domestic, sex, gender and sexuality based violence (DSGSBV). Safe Ireland has a clear ambition: to end domestic violence and make Ireland the safest country in the world for women and children.

To access the new hub please [CLICK HERE](#)



Longford Women's Link Domestic Abuse Service 16 Days of Activism ("Domestic Abuse Doesn't Discriminate") Campaign:

Longford Women's Link are providing a Domestic Abuse Information Stand at various locations throughout County Longford during the 16 Days of Activism campaign. The remaining dates for December are listed below:
Lus na Greine Family Resource Centre 2nd December 12pm - 1:30pm

Bridgeways FRC, Ballymahon 4th December 12pm - 1:30pm

For further details contact: LWL Domestic Violence Service, Longford Women's Link, Willow House, Ardnacassa Ave., Longford Tel: 043 3341511





Women's Community Project Mullingar 16 Days of Activism Campaign: The Women's Community Project Mullingar are hosting a number of events during the 16 Days campaign including a daily walk, **'Steps for Strength'** which takes place in Mullingar each day during the campaign. If you would like to walk a mile every day at your own pace, the walk commences at the main door of WCP Mullingar each weekday until Tues 10th Dec at **1pm**. If you can't make the walks but would still like to take part, you can walk a mile at any time yourself and you can also take a selfie and post it on Instagram #16DaysofAction.



Esker House 16 Days of Activism to end Violence Against Women: From November 25th to December 10th the Community Engagement Officer for Esker House Domestic Abuse Support Service will be hosting a series of events and activities within the town of Athlone aimed at raising awareness and promoting community engagement. A drop-in clinic for 2 hours will take place in Clonbrusk Primary Care Centre, Athlone on the 3rd December from 10am to 12noon in Consultation Room 1. Two representatives from Esker House will be available to meet with anyone for help/support/advice during the clinic.

Freephone Esker House Crisis Helpline 1800662288 www.eskerhouse.ie

Online Survey/ Consultations for completion/circulation:



One Family National Parents Survey: One Family are currently carrying out a national parents survey the aim of which is to highlight priority issues for single parents living all over Ireland and ensure that the experiences of one-parent families are considered in policy- and decision-making at Government and statutory levels.

The survey form can be completed by anyone living in Ireland who is parenting alone, sharing parenting after legal separation or divorce, or people who are lone parents after been widowed. This short survey should take less than 5 minutes and is completely anonymous.

To participate in the survey please [CLICK HERE](#)



Informal Kinship Care DCEDIY Consultation with Young People: The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth want to hear from young people aged 18-24 with experience of informal kinship care or private family arrangements.

Informal kinship care is when a child or young person lives with a relative or close family friend without formal involvement from Tusla.

Private family arrangements, often set up with help from Tusla, are more regulated and may include financial support.

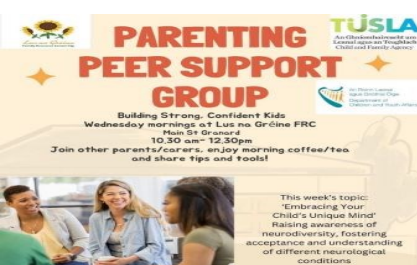
The consultations will take place in early 2025 and will be facilitated by Hub na nÓg. To find out more [CLICK HERE](#)

Webinars/ Training/ Events:



HSE Midlands Suicide Behaviour Awareness & Training Programmes: The HSE Suicide Prevention Training Schedule for the midlands area is now available. Several trainings are available to assist with up-skilling staff and volunteers in the statutory, community and voluntary sector. All of the training programmes are for **over 18s only** and there is no charge to the participant. The Schedule is outlined on the booking website, through which registrations to attend any of the training programmes can be made.

For the full list of programmes available [CLICK HERE](#)



Parenting Peer Support Group, Granard: A Parenting Peer Support group for parents of neuro diverse children will meet weekly in Lus na Greine, FRC each Wednesday morning 10:30am – 12:30pm.

All parents are welcome. This project is a collaborative initiative between Tusla and Lus na Greine Family Resource Centre. For further information or to register please contact Ber on 086 869 6385



NPC Podcast – NOW AVAILABLE ON AMAZON, APPLE, AND SPOTIFY:

In this episode of the National Parenting Councils podcast series, Shane Martin, Chartered Psychologist and keynote speaker at the NPC Education Conference 2024 – Building Futures Together discusses the topic of 'Supporting your Child's Mental Health and Wellbeing'. Shane shares practical advice for parents on:

- Helping your child build resilience
- Recognising signs of stress early
- Managing emotions effectively
- Working with schools to support mental health

To listen to the podcast [CLICK HERE](#)



Sláintecare Let's Talk Weaning Parent Workshops: Longford Westmeath CYPSC in collaboration with Sláintecare Healthy Communities Community Food and Nutrition Workers, and Community Families continue the roll out of 'Let's Talk Weaning' Workshops, with the next workshop taking place in The Family Centre, Longford on Thursday 12th December at 12pm.

To register, please contact Sínead at sineadcostello@edilongford.ie or phone 087 4312 713.

In addition to workshops in both Longford and Westmeath, a [Weaning Resource](#) was also collated, which contains a list of websites, videos, workshop information and lots more for parents entering the weaning phase, all in one place! Further workshops to follow.



Pre-Registration Training for childminders: If you would like to register as a childminder you will need to complete the registration process which includes participating in a FREE pre-registration training with your local County Childcare Committee. This FREE training is available through your local city/county childcare committee.

Upcoming dates for the Westmeath training are as follows:

- Monday 13th January 2025 Becoming a Childminder ON-LINE - 6.30pm - 8.30pm
- Monday 20th January 2025 Running a Childminding Service ON-LINE - 6.30pm - 8.30pm
- Thursday 23rd January 2025 The Childminding Service Handbook In Person @ Westmeath CCC Office from 10am to 12.00pm

To book the Westmeath training above please email childminding@westmeathchildcare.ie or phone 087 43 37700

For upcoming dates around the midlands, please find a list of contacts for Longford, Laois & Offaly County Childcare committees below:

Longford email clare@longfordchildcare.ie or phone 043 33 42505

Laois email info@laoischildcare.ie or phone 057 866 1029

Offaly email info@offalychildcare.com or phone 057 913 5878



Offaly and Laois Parenting Support Programme: Offaly Libraries together with Laois Libraries are delighted to co-deliver a free series of talks and workshops for parents. Supported by Laois Offaly Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC), the Parenting Support Programme invites experts to discuss a broad range of parenting topics currently impacting our children.

Details of remaining events during December can be found [HERE](#) in their digital booklet as well as details of accessing your local libraries in Offaly and Laois.

Information Bulletin – December 2024

You are already their hero
Let us be your support...

STEPPING STONES

Lone Parent Group

This is a two-year supported programme for women who are parenting alone and includes accredited training in the area of employment and career development. Essential group and 1:1 supports are also provided. Childcare and transport provided.

Duration 1 morning per week over 2 years
Start Date January 2025
Location Longford Women's Link

For further details or to register an interest please contact:
Kathleen Dowd,
Director of Programmes
Email: kathleen@lwl.ie
Mobile: 086 418 3435
Office: 043 334 1511



Stepping Stones Training for Lone Parents: Longford Women's Link are delighted to announce their upcoming Stepping Stones Lone Parents programme which commences in January 2025.

This is a two-year part-time supported programme for mothers who are parenting alone and includes accredited training in the area of employment and career development. Childcare and transport are provided. The programme duration is one morning per week over a 2 year period.

For further details or to register an interest [CLICK HERE](#) or contact: Kathleen Dowd

Email: kathleen@lwl.ie Mobile: 0864183435 Office: 0433341511



Edgeworthstown Parent & Baby/Toddler Group

All welcome
10:30 - 12:00pm
The Green, Edgeworthstown
'Every Week on Tuesday'

CONTACT: BRID 087 412 2922

Edgeworthstown Parent and Toddler Group: The Edgeworthstown Parent and Toddler group meet from 10:30am – 12pm at The Green, Edgeworthstown every Tuesday morning.

This is a FREE group, and all are welcome! If you have any questions or would like to register with the group, please contact Brid on 087 412 2922

The Edgeworthstown P&T group is a LW CYPSC collaborative project with lead agencies Longford Community Parents, Longford County Childcare Committee, and Westmeath Community Development.



Longford County Childcare Committee are holding Stay and Play sessions in The Temperance Hall (N39 R9X8) 3:30pm-4:30pm on: Monday 4th of November Monday 2nd of December

We will be exploring different musical instruments and musical arts and crafts with Laura from Music Generation.

For more information please contact Eimear Mooney on 087 149 9816 / 043 334 2505 or eimear.mooney@longfordchildcare.ie

Getting here: [Map showing Temperance Hall, Dublin Road, St. Joseph's National School, and Cultural Centre]

Please note: Parent/guardians must remain with their children at all times.

Longford Stay and Play Sessions: Longford County Childcare Committee in collaboration with Music Generation are holding Stay & Play Sessions in the Temperance Hall, Longford N39R9X8 from 3.30pm to 4.30pm on December 4th

Different musical instruments will be explored as well as musical arts and crafts with Laura from Music Generation.

For more information, please contact Eimear Mooney on 087 149 9816 / 043 334 2505 or eimearmooney@longfordchildcare.ie

Please note: Parents / Guardians must remain with their children at all times.

This is the final LW/LO CYPSC Information Update for 2024, the CYPSC Coordinators, would like to wish all of our readers a very

Happy Christmas and a bright New Year ahead for all.

