

A Guide to Services for
**YOUNG PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES**



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Terminology and Acronyms

ABA	Applied Behaviour Analysis	MDT	Multi-Disciplinary Team
ABI	Acquired Brain Injury	MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging
AON	Assessment of Need	NBSS	National Behaviour Support Service
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	NCPD	National Council for People with Disabilities
CARS	Childhood Autism rating Scale	NCSE	National Council for Special Education
CCC	County Childcare Committee	NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
CD	Conduct Disorder	ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
CF	Cystic Fibrosis	OT	Occupational Therapist
CP	Cerebral Palsy	PECS	Picture Exchange Communication System
CT	Computed Tomography (CT scan)	PPN	Public Participation Networks
DCD	Developmental Coordination Disorder	PWDI	People with Disabilities in Ireland
DFI	Disability Federation of Ireland	ROC	Resource Outreach Centres
DLD	Developmental Language Disorder	SAMO	Senior Area Medical Officers
DS	Down Syndrome	SAT	School Aged Team
DSI	Down Syndrome Ireland	SBHI	Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education	SEN	Special Educational Needs
EIT	Early Intervention Team	SENO	Special Education Needs Officer
EPSEN	Education for Persons with Special Education needs	SERC	Special Education Review Committee
GP	General Practitioner Health Service Executive	SESS	Special Education Support Service
IDG	Inter-Departmental Group	SET	Special Education Teacher
IDP	Individual Development Plan	SLI	Specific Speech and Language Impairment
IEP	Individual Education Plan	SNA	Special Needs Assistant
MD	Muscular Dystrophy		
MDI	Muscular Dystrophy Ireland	MDI	Muscular Dystrophy Ireland

Foreword

Westmeath and Longford County Childcare Committees compiled this directory in collaboration with Longford Westmeath Children and Young Peoples Services Committee, to provide information and supports to parents, guardians and services who are caring for or educating a child or young person aged 0-24 years with special needs.

Sourcing information is a difficult task regarding all aspects of disability. The ultimate goal of this Directory of Services is to empower and signpost people to information and supports.

This is the fourth update of this Directory and is a collaboration in the truest of senses. Work has been completed on this project by Angela Locke-Reilly our researcher. Volunteer time has been given by many organisations to include their information, parents, early years' professionals as well as Special Educational Needs teachers have all be consulted as part of the process to ensure this document is fit for purpose.

This resource will be available free of charge on various websites, and a number of hard copies will be printed for use by parents and early years' services professionals.

The future hope for this document format is that it can be mainstreamed for each county, and that all information will be kept up to date and accurate for ease of access.

Hopefully the newly formed Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth will be a milestone in the development and implementation of disability policy in Ireland, access to information is a key policy aspect in this regard.

Thanks to all involved, we hope you use this document to empower and support you in accessing services for the children and young adults in your care.

Muriel Flynn

Manager

Westmeath County Childcare Committee CLG.

NOTE:

- Throughout the publication the terms *disability*, *special needs* and *additional needs* are used interchangeably.
- When we refer to parents throughout this publication it is to be understood in the broad sense and relates to a parent, guardian or carer.
- A child or young person may have a dual or multiple diagnosis of disabilities.
- We have taken every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information in this document, however, services and support contacts do change over time.

Professionals and Services

Supporting People with Disabilities

Contact information for your local professionals can be obtained at your Health Centre in Westmeath or Longford.

Assessment Officer - will provide help and support through the application and the process of the assessment of need.

Child and Adolescents Mental Health Service (CAMHS) - offers a range of specialist services including assessment and intervention for children and young people up to the age of 18 years with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties. Young people can be referred to the CAMHS services through the GP or primary care team member.

Clinical Psychologists - assess and treat a range of biological, psychological and social concerns experienced by an individual, including emotional, developmental and cognitive concerns.

Educational Psychologist - work with children and young people to assess and support their emotional, educational, behavioural and psychological development.

General Practitioners - GPs - provide primary care to individuals and families within the community. GPs offer free developmental examinations in the weeks after the birth of a child.

Mental Health Services - The HSE provides a range of specialist services and mental health service to adults. People can be referred to the Mental Health Services through the GP or other primary care team member.

Occupational Therapist - OT - offers advice and supports to develop levels of independence through activities such as coordination, sensory issues and home adaptation.

Paediatrician - assesses supports, shares information and responds to the developmental needs of the child within early childhood.

Psychologist - observes and offers support to families on diagnosis impact on overall behaviour, well-being and development of the young person with a disability.

Physiotherapist - Physiotherapy offers support in helping a person with a disability with their movement and mobility through help with walking, crawling and other movements.

Public Health Nurse - PHNs - assess need, screen and monitor the development of babies throughout the first few months while also offering advice and support to families.

Senior Area Medical Officers - SAMOs - visit schools to give vaccinations and also work with Public Health Nurses to check on a child's development from birth onwards, through a series of standard regular checks: Phone Longford (043) 3350157; Westmeath (044) 939 5006/1

Social Worker - provides practical and emotional support to families and provide information for accessing services. The Social Work Department comprises of Social Workers, Family Support Workers and Community Child Care Leaders.

Speech and Language Therapist - SLT's - assess, diagnose and support people with disorders of communication in meeting their full potential through developing communication skills.

The Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service - aims to improve the nutritional status of the population offering services to schools, elderly groups, low-income groups and offers advice on weight management, diabetes, and other various nutritional needs.

LONGFORD AND WESTMEATH CONTACT

Primary Care Unit, St. Loman's Hospital, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath • T: (044) 93 95518

CITIZENS INFORMATION CENTRES

provide information on public services and entitlements.

Longford CIC, Level 1, Longford Shopping Centre, Longford
T: (076) 107 5890 • W: www.longfordcic.ie • E: longford@citinfo.ie

Athlone CIC, Elliott House, St. Marys Square, Athlone
T: (076) 107 6610 • W: www.citizensinformation.ie • E: athlone@citinfo.ie

Mullingar CIC, Mount St, County Building Complex, Mullingar
T: (076) 107 6660 • W: www.citizensinformation.ie • E: mullingar@citinfo.ie

Professionals and Services in Irish Education

Within the Irish school system, a number of people may have involvement with the child or young person with special educational needs and plans.

The National Educational Psychologist Service Agency (NEPS) - provide a range of psychological services and assessments in primary and post primary schools to meet the needs of individual students.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) - provides education services to children with special educational needs arising from disabilities. This service is delivered through Special Educational Needs Officers.

Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO) - Educational Services and Care Supports are delivered through a network of Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENO's) who liaise with parents, schools and the HSE in providing the necessary resources and grants to support children with special educational needs.

Go to: www.ncse.ie

Contact information for Longford and Westmeath SENO:

LONGFORD

National Council for Special Education
C/o Government Buildings,
Convent Road, Roscommon,
Phone 090 6628791

WESTMEATH

National Council for Special Education
Friars Mill Road,
Mullingar, Co Westmeath
Phone 044 9390226

An Individual Education Plan - IEP is a written plan outlining the learning goals and needs for a student which are to be achieved over a period of time. Supports, teaching styles and best approach for achieving the student goals are outlined in this plan and can be used by all teaching staff.

Principal - provides supports and is involved in the formation of the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The Class Teacher - can work in partnership with parents and offer supports around concerns for the child or young person.

Learning Support Teacher* - provides extra help to children who have educational needs, but not necessarily a diagnosed condition, and who have not been allocated resource hours. They contribute to Individual Education Plan (IEP) for the specific needs of the child.

Special Education Resource Teacher* - provide additional help and tuition to students with a diagnosed condition and special educational needs as defined by the Department of Education and Skills.

Language Support Teacher* - works with children for whom English is not their first language, helps with English language skills and support students in adapting to the Irish school system.

*These teachers now all come under the term Special Education Teacher (SET).

Visiting Teachers - for children who are visually or hearing-impaired visit the school to offer specific support to the school on how best to accommodate the child within the classroom.

State Examinations Commission (SEC): is the body with responsibility for the running of all Certificate Examinations in the second level sector.

Special Needs Assistants (SNA's): assist in the care and support of students with additional needs. The role is that of a non-teaching nature.

Special Education Support Services provides a range of professional development initiatives and supports for staff working with students with special educational needs in primary, post-primary, special schools and special classes. Their website offers comprehensive information on special educational needs and supports available.



See www.sess.ie

For more information on these services go to: www.education.ie/en/Parents/

Childrens Disability Services

My child needs an assessment. What steps should I take?

All children are eligible to apply for an Assessment of Need (AON) under the Disability Act 2005. A child of 16 or 17 can apply for the AON themselves or it can be made by a parent, legal guardian, or advocate.

The AON intends to identify your child's needs regarding supports and services and is carried out by HSE professionals.

The application must be done in writing and submitted to your local HSE Assessment Officer. You can find the form online or call your Local Health Office or the HSE information line to get a copy.

Once you have sent in your form the HSE must send you a confirmation notice including a date of when the assessment starts. This notice must be sent to you within 14 days of them receiving your application.

The assessment must begin within 3 months and the HSE have 3 months to then finish it. If it takes longer than this you must be given the reason.

An important thing that you should know about the AON is that it can identify the existence, nature and extent of a disability, and recommend an amount of specified therapeutic interventions but it CANNOT guarantee supports or services. You also don't need the AON to access supports and services from the HSE.



LONGFORD LOCAL HEALTH OFFICES

Ballinalee (043) 3323212

Ballymahon (090) 6432384

Colehill (044) 9357522

Drumlish (043) 3324440

Edgeworthstown (043) 6671157

Granard (043) 6686068/(043) 6687110

Killashee (043) 3341341

Lanesboro GP Surgery (043) 3321832

Longford (043) 3350169

Aughnaclyffe (049) 4335195

Newtown Cashel (043) 3325445

WESTMEATH LOCAL HEALTH OFFICES

Athlone (090) 6424811

Ballymore (044) 9356274

Ballynacargy (044) 9373104

Castlepollard (044) 9661479

Kilbeggan (057) 9332444

Kinnegad (044) 9375289

Moate and Glasson (090) 6481165

Mullingar (044) 9340221

Application for assessment in Longford and Westmeath can be made to:

The Assessment Officer

The Phoenix Centre, Dublin Rd, Longford. Phone **043 3332419**

Children who qualify for an assessment of need under the Act have a right to:

Assessment of Need - AON

- Assessment of health and education needs arising from disability
- Assessment officer supports the AON

An Assessment Report

- A report of the outcome of the assessment of need
- Responsibility of Assessment Officer and Liaison Officer

Service Statement

- Based on the Assessment Report
- Outlines services provided to you
- Outlines timeframe services will be provided

What happens during and after the Assessment of Need?

In most cases your child will be assessed by a team but some children will have just one person. This is decided by the Assessment Officer. You should be involved in the process and will be asked questions.

An Assessment Report is then sent to your Liaison Officer if it says that your child has a disability and they will prepare a Service Statement. You will be given both of these documents.

Assessment Report: This will outline your child's disability and their needs regarding health and education supports.

Service Statement: This will include a list of recommended supports and services to address the needs outlined in the Assessment Report.

The AON is not intended to provide a diagnosis. It identifies needs due to disability only.



- Young people and families have the right to make a complaint if they are not happy with any part of the process or if it has not been completed within a timely fashion. (3 months of application for completion of assessment, with a further 1 month for the Service Statement). These complaints should be made via your Assessment Officer.
- An appeal may also be made if you disagree with the findings and guidelines in the Service Statement. Complaints about the Service Statement are made via the Liaison Officer who may work towards a resolution with you.
- If no satisfactory resolution can be made you may wish to make further complaint to the Disability Complaints Officer (DCO). The DCO is an independent and impartial body. Forms are accessible via the Assessment Officer or the Liaison Officer. The DCO can be directly contacted also on Tel: **(045) 880400** or by email at aon.complaints@hse.ie
- Longford and Westmeath Local Health Office can provide information of the services available.

Children's Disability Services in Westmeath and Longford First Point of Contact

If you have concerns about your child's development or feel that they may have a disability and require support you should bring your concerns to your GP or Public Health Nurse (PHN). Your child may benefit from the support of a Children's Disability Network Team or other service depending on their needs. There are different services available to children and young people up to 18 years:

CHILDRENS DISABILITY NETWORK TEAM (CDNT)

This is usually for children who have delays in development in some way but not complex needs. They may only need the support of a single service.

PRIMARY CARE

This is usually for children who have delays in development in some way but not complex needs. They may only need the support of a single service.

CAMHS

Supports children who have moderate to severe mental health support needs or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Public Health Nurse

Public Health Nurses work out of the Local Health Offices. You can find the list of Local Health Offices and Health Centres in Longford and Westmeath at

[Health Centres - HSE.ie](https://www2.hse.ie/health-centres/)

Primary Care Teams

Each local area has services available from Primary Care Teams and many children who have developmental delays can be supported here. These teams are made up of health and social care professionals working together with community supports where needed. You can find your local Primary Care Team by visiting www2.hse.ie/services/primary-care-centres/.



Parent Tip

Before you meet the CDNT or have any appointments write down any questions you have. Ask for copies of any reports. That goes both ways though. If you get any new reports from school or medical professionals make sure to share them with the CDNT. You are an important part of the team so don't forget that.

What is a Children's Disability Network Team?

A Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT) is a team made up of health and social care professionals who work together to support your child in whatever way works best for them.

All teams have:

- ✓ Occupational Therapist
- ✓ Psychologist
- ✓ Physiotherapist
- ✓ Social Worker
- ✓ Speech and Language Therapist

Some will also involve or include:

- Dietician
- Support Worker
- Nurse
- Behaviour Support
- Social Care Worker

Your child can be referred to the team by a parent, GP, PHN, Early Years or other care and health professionals using a [Children's Services Referral Form \(hse.ie\)](#). The referral is received by the Children's Disability Network Manager (CDNM). The team will review the information contained in the form provided which includes any concerns about development or the child's ability to function in a diversity of environments and activities. The team may decide that there is a support service that is better for your child such as CAMHS or Primary Care. If this is the case they will support you to get the referral to the right place. A CAMHS referral must go through your GP.



Longford Children's Disability Network Team

The Phoenix Centre,
Mount Carmel,
Dublin Road,
Longford, N39 KR23

Phone: 043 333 2477 Email: longford.cdnt@hse.ie

Who is the service for?

Children aged from birth to 18 years with complex needs due to a disability who live in County Longford.

Springfield Children's Disability Network Team

Springfield Centre,
St. Loman's Campus,
Mullingar,
Co. Westmeath, N91 NP30

Phone: 044 939 7358 044 939 7425 Email: springfield.CDNT@hse.ie

Who is the service for?

Children aged from birth to 18 years with complex needs due to a disability who live in the areas of Mullingar, Kilbeggan, Kinnegad, Delvin, North Westmeath.

Clonbrusk Children's Disability Network Team

Clonbrusk Resource Centre,
Coosan Road,
Athlone,
Co. Westmeath, N37 C1K2
Phone: 090 647 1118

Who is the service for?

Children aged from birth to 18 years with complex needs due to a disability who live in the areas of Athlone, Moate and Ferbane.



Parent Tip

Have a paper trail for everything. If you have a call with a therapist or doctor follow it up with an email including what the next step is and timeframe. Make all the noise in the world you need to when advocating for your child and don't apologise for it.



Is it all about therapies?

Along with traditional therapeutic support CDNTs may offer other forms of support which can include:

- Playgroups and camps.
- Eating, drinking and swallowing clinics.
- Webinars or talks on useful subjects like toileting, puberty, preparing for transitions.
- Lámh classes and Sing and Sign groups.
- ...and more. If you think that there is an activity that would be a good support to your family and others, then talk to your team.

My child is waiting for services or has infrequent services. What can I do to support them?

Waiting for services can be very frustrating and you may be wondering if there is something else you can do in the meantime.

There are several things you can try:

- Keep going with the plan you have been given (if services are infrequent) yourself and/or engage your child's school in this.
- Make a complaint via the HSEs Your Service Your Say system at www2.hse.ie/services/hse-complaints-and-feedback/your-service-your-say.html
- Seek out [private support services](#).
- Engage complementary or alternative supports.
- Attend workshops, webinars, groups offered within community supports or national support organisations.



Immunisations

In Ireland, all the recommended childhood immunisations listed in the table below are free of charge.

There are two schedules in operation that will run parallel for at least 1 year.

AGE	VACCINE	INJECTIONS	WHERE
2 months	6 in 1 + MenB + PCV + Rotavirus	3 + Oral vaccine	GP
4 months	6 in 1 + MenB + Rotavirus	2 + Oral vaccine	GP
6 months	6 in 1 + PCV + MenC	3	GP
12 months	MMR + MenB	2	GP
13 months	Hib/MenC + PCV	2	GP
Junior Infants	4 in 1 + MMR	2	School
1st Year	HPV9 + MenACWY + Tdap	3	School
Aged 2 to 17 years	Nasal Flu Vaccine	1 dose each flu season (for most people)	GP or Pharmacy
At risk individuals	Flu	1 dose each flu season (for most people)	GP/Pharmacy/ Peer Vaccinator/ Occupational Health
At risk	PPV	1 dose (for most People)	GP
Pregnant Women	Tdap	Each pregnancy (from 16-36 weeks)	GP
6+ months	COVID-19	See hse.ie/COVID19Vaccine	GP/Pharmacy/ Vaccination Centre

Immunisation and development checks are provided by your Primary Care Team, mainly your public health nurse and GP.

For more information on immunisation talk to your GP, Public Health Nurse, call the HSE info line on **1850 24 1850** or visit – www.immunisation.ie

Developmental Milestones and Checks

Developmental checks are carried out on babies and young children at different stages in their growth and development. They are to check if the baby is growing properly and is reaching their milestones (able to do all that a baby or child of that particular age should be able to do). Checks relate to different areas of development such as physical growth and development and speech and language development as well as sight and hearing.

Age	Physical Developmental Milestones	Language And Communication Developmental Milestones	Checks
0-3 Months	Hold their head up for short periods of time. Respond to your voice. Cry, Coo, Smile. Look at faces. Turn their heads towards light. Grows and gains weight.	Responds to his/her name.	The Heel Prick Test at birth. First developmental check with PHN6. Week health check with GP. Check for developmental dislocation of the hip at 6-8 weeks. Congenital heart disease 6- 8 weeks by GP.
3-6 Months	Kick vigorously. Keep their head up with little support. Put weight on their feet when held standing up. Sit with support. Roll from their front to their back. Grab small objects	Responds to familiar voices. Responds appropriately to friendly and angry tones. Vocalisation with intonation	Developmental Checks with Public Health Nurse at 3 months.
6-9 Months	Baby may understand significant events. Can respond to their name. More mobile – pushing themselves up and rolling. Sit without being held or supported. Attempt to crawl. Can hold toys between thumb and forefinger. Continues to grow and gain weight.	Understands simple instructions especially when accompanied by vocal and physical cues.	The Heel Prick Test at birth. First developmental check with PHN6. Week health check with GP. Check for developmental dislocation of the hip at 6-8 weeks. Congenital heart disease 6- 8 weeks by GP.

Age	Physical Developmental Milestones	Language And Communication Developmental Milestones	Checks
9-12 Months	<p>Pull themselves into a standing position.</p> <p>Attempt walking.</p> <p>Use index finger to poke small objects.</p> <p>Display emotion by holding body stiff when you pick them up.</p> <p>Walk using furniture for support.</p> <p>Begin to stop drooling and putting objects in their mouths.</p> <p>Continues to grow and gain weight.</p>	<p>Uses one or more words with meaning (may be broken words).</p> <p>Is aware of the value of speech.</p>	<p>Developmental Checks with Public Health Nurse at 9 months.</p>
12-18 Months	<p>Walk with arms out to balance.</p> <p>Carrying objects while walking.</p> <p>Crawl up and down stairs.</p> <p>Scribble using crayons.</p> <p>Throw objects to the floor to watch where they fall.</p> <p>Continues to grow and gain weight.</p>	<p>Can use up to 20 words.</p> <p>Is able to follow simple commands.</p> <p>Tends to repeat familiar words.</p>	
18-24 Months	<p>Become more stable on their feet.</p> <p>Drag objects along the floor.</p> <p>Walk upstairs with help.</p> <p>Climbing on furniture.</p> <p>Engage with parent and enjoys helps with household tasks.</p> <p>Continues to grow and gain weight.</p>	<p>Using more words.</p> <p>Following simple commands.</p> <p>Talking to themselves.</p> <p>Use books and holds pencils.</p>	<p>Developmental Checks with Public Health Nurse between 18 and 24 months</p>

Age	Physical Developmental Milestones	Language And Communication Developmental Milestones	Checks
2-3 Years	Can use the stairs. Can use a pencil in the preferred hand to use. Continues to grow and gain weight	Can speak clearly enough to be understood by others and carry a conversation.	
3-4 Years	Become steadier in the coordination of movement. Developing skills in coordinated play. Differentiating colours. Continues to grow and gain weight.	Engaging in conversations with others.	Development Check by Public Health Nurse between 3yrs and 3yrs 6 months.
4-5 Years	Become responsible for blowing their own nose and brushing their own teeth. Become more independent. Continues to develop and grow.	Begins to problem solve. Can be demanding. Aware and interest of others and their needs.	Provisions of services through school years include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening. • Immunisation. • Health Advice. • Growth and weight measurement.

Parents or carers can refer to the above timelines and look for delays. Remember that each child develops differently and may achieve a milestone at a different time to another child. If you feel there is a delay, discuss it with your child's GP or if you have any concerns about your child's development or growth, please discuss this with your PHN. It is also important to be aware that certain conditions impact developments in growth, motor skills and communication. Children with these conditions, like all children, develop at their own pace and are individuals. Not all children with the same condition will develop at the same pace or in the same way and should not be compared with each other. However adapted charts have been developed so that comparison with other typical peers is unnecessary.

Special growth charts exist for:

DOWN SYNDROME

PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME

TURNER SYNDROME

SICKLE CELL DISEASE

MARFAN SYNDROME

ACHONDROPLASIA

WILLIAM SYNDROME

CEREBRAL PALSY

NOONAN SYNDROME

WOLF HIRSCHHORN (0-48 MONTHS)



List of Disabilities

Westmeath and Longford County Childcare Committees are aware that there are a number of children and young people aged 0-24 with a disability. It is not possible to detail every disability in this directory, but every effort has been made to include information and contacts on as many as possible.

Listed below are various disabilities which can be divided into categories such as physical, learning, social and emotional, language and communication but some disabilities affect more than one area of development.

- **Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)**
- **Asthma**
- **Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder**
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder**
- **Cerebral Palsy**
- **Cystic Fibrosis**
- **Deaf or Loss of Hearing**
- **Developmental Language Disorder**
- **Diabetes**
- **Down Syndrome**
- **Dyscalculia**
- **Dysgraphia**
- **Dyslexia**
- **Dyspraxia**
- **Epilepsy**
- **Fragile X Syndrome**
- **Muscular Dystrophy**
- **Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder**
- **Prader-Willi Syndrome**
- **Specific Learning Disabilities**
- **Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus**
- **Visual Impairment**

Acquired Brain Injury

What is it?

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) is caused by any sudden damage to the brain or Traumatic Brain Injury - TBI) as a result of external force and not as a result of a trauma at birth.

Acquired brain injury:

- Will vary greatly depending on the extent of the injury which may range from mild to moderate to severe.
- Can include memory problems, poor concentration, communication difficulties, pain, headaches, tiredness, dizziness, visual and/or hearing problems, physical or cognitive disability, sensory processing issues and changes in behaviour.

Diagnosis

A doctor will examine an individual and diagnose based on tests that may include (but not be limited to) cognitive, neuropsychological, speech/language and imaging testing (such as MRI).

Note: It is always important to see a doctor if your child has received a blow to the head and is displaying any signs of confusion, trouble breathing, dizziness, vomiting, lack of consciousness or any other symptoms which are out of character for the child.

Support and Information

Service	HEADWAY: BRAIN INJURY SERVICES AND SUPPORT		
	Blackhall Green, off Blackhall Place, Dublin D07 RX67		
Purpose	Information and Support to people aged 18 and over		
Phone	1800 400478	Email	info@headway.ie
Website	Headway.ie	Facebook	Headway Ireland

Service	ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY IRELAND		
	National Office, Block A, Century Court, 100 Upper Georgia Street, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin, A96R2V3		
Purpose	Rehabilitation and Support		
Phone	01 2804164	Email	hello@abiireland.ie
Website	www.abiireland.ie	Facebook	@abiireland.ie

Asthma

What is it?

- An inflammatory disease characterised by recurring attacks of breathlessness and wheezing
- Caused by inflammation of the air passages in the lungs, during an attack it increases the sensitivity of nerve endings in the airways leading to swelling and narrowing of the air passages making breathing increasingly difficult.
- Occurs at all ages and varies in severity and frequency depending on the individual.

Symptoms

- Restlessness or difficulty in sleeping
- Increasing, but relatively painless tightness in the chest
- Shortness of breath
- A wheezing or whistling sound when breathing
- Coughing, sometimes accompanied by phlegm

Causes of Asthma

- Asthma can be caused by allergies to pollen, dust, animals, moulds or even some foods.
- These are known as 'triggers', and a variety of triggers can contribute to your asthma.
- Other causes can be allergens, viral infections, pollutants and drugs.
- It can sometimes be difficult to identify exactly what triggers asthma, as the effects can take up to 4-6 hours or longer before you notice them.

Treatment of Asthma

- The medications used will depend on the severity and frequency of asthma symptoms.
- 'Reliever' inhalers are frequently used in the treatment of asthma attacks as they relax the muscles surrounding the narrowed airways.
- 'Preventers' are used over a long period of time and help to control the swelling and inflammation in the airways, which helps reduce the risk of severe attacks.



Image retrieved from: www.asthma.ie

Support and Information:

It is essential at the onset to seek support with understanding asthma and associated medication. For all management of asthma contact your GP for specific advice.

The Asthma Society of Ireland aims to ensure that people with asthma have the information and ability to manage their asthma, so it does not affect their lives. A nurse from the Asthma Society can provide support to individuals to develop an asthma care plan which may be shared with education providers, caregivers etc so that everyone is aware of how they may best support the child. An Asthma Action Plan empowers people living with asthma to take control of their condition.

Service	ASTHMA SOCIETY OF IRELAND		
	42-43 Amiens Street, Dublin 1		
Purpose	Information, workshops, videos and literature and telephone helpline		
Phone	01 8178886	Email	nurse@asthma.ie , office@asthma.ie
Website	www.asthma.ie	Facebook	www.facebook.com/asthmasociety/
Advice Line	1800 44 54 64		



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

What is it?

- Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common childhood disorders that often continues through the teenage years and beyond.
- It is characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity impulsivity beyond the range of developmental norms, which may impact the child's

functioning in many environments from classroom to family to social situations.

- ADHD is three to four times more common in boys than girls, but it is suggested that this may be due to girls being more likely to mask characteristics possibly leading to
- ADHD being missed or misdiagnosed in girls. Girls and boys may present very differently with girls often either not being hyperactive or masking hyperactivity in social situations.

Three key features define attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

- Inattention
- Hyperactivity
- Impulsivity

The contribution of each to an individual's presentation of ADHD varies from person to person.

Characteristics

ADHD may present at any age, affecting 5% or one in 20 persons in Ireland. Persistent problems with the following:

- Difficulty with focus and paying attention
- Organisation challenges
- Hyperactivity
- Difficulty with restlessness
- Impulsiveness and emotional regulation challenges

Diagnosis/Support

- A diagnosis of ADHD is made by a psychologist. This is done through a combination of observations and gathering information from parents and teachers about the child's behaviour.
- Play therapy, occupational therapy, self-development programmes or medication may be valuable in the support of children with ADHD.
- There are many ways to support the child using environmental management techniques (changing the way things are in the home or school), educational supports, peer support and mindfulness.
- Medication is often in the form of stimulants which may support the child in regulating physical and emotional responses. A psychiatrist is required to prescribe these.

- Though it can be challenging to live with, it is important that a child with ADHD understand that there are also positive aspects of having an ADHD diagnosis. People with ADHD are often creative, 'the life of the party', spontaneous, ambitious, great motivators and have a strong sense of justice and fairness. Many go on to be entrepreneurs, social advocates, artists, or musicians.

Support and Information

Service	ADHD IRELAND		
	Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7		
Purpose	Support and Information		
Phone	01 8748349	Email	info@adhdireland.ie
Website	www.adhdireland.ie	Facebook	Facebook.com/adhdirelandonline



Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

What is it?

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association edition 5 (DSM5), Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is defined as a 'neuro developmental disability' which affects the development of the brain.

It mainly impacts on a person's

- Ability to communicate and form social relationships.
- Ability to make sense of the world around them.

Characteristics

The characteristics of ASD vary greatly from one child to another but usually can be seen in four main areas of development

- Language and communication
- Social Interaction
- Behaviour
- Sensory processing

Diagnosis

- Carried out by a clinical psychologist ideally as part of a multi-disciplinary team that may include speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, paediatrician etc.
- Made based on observations and using tests such as Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) or Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M_CHAT) and guided by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5th edition (DSM5). DSM5 has 3 levels on which it rates ASD.
- Though it may seem like you have to learn a whole new language of medical terms and acronyms these 'diagnostic tools' are simply tests, with lots of questions about how your child experiences the world. They are non-invasive, frequently carried out in a child friendly manner through play and will provide you with a clearer picture of how to support your child and what their needs may be.

Support

- Early intervention is very important so the earlier the child is diagnosed the earlier education and support can begin.
- Four educational options for children with ASD exist: mainstream school, mainstream school with specialised service (a unit), Specialised education or an autism specific special school (e.g., Saplings or Abacus).
- Many mainstream schools now have ASD units attached which cater for children either at pre-school, primary or post-primary level. Typically, these classes have six children with a teacher and two Special Needs Assistants (SNA's).
- Most use a combination of methods of teaching such as the TEACCH programme, the use of Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS), social stories and sometimes, the use of assistive technology (e.g., Ipads, tablets, interactive white boards).
- Children with ASD can avail of a range of supports that include Home Tuition (from aged 2 years 6 months up to 3 years and then further if and until an appropriate school placement is found), July provision (an extension of the school year), transport and financial supports.

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

ABA is an evidence based scientific approach used to promote positive behaviour and to help with social interactions in children and people with ASD. ABA aims to improve the quality of life for the child/person with ASD and their family in the areas of speech and communication skills, social interaction, play, activities of daily living and positive behaviour reinforcement.

Go to: www.aba-ireland.com

Saplings Schools have the support of a Board-Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) as an integral part of the Saplings school educational framework. Alternatively, you may wish to employ a private BCBA who can liaise with your child's school if they do not have their own.

Go to: www.saplingsmullingar.ie Phone **044 9384853**

A Note on Neurodiversity

This refers to the belief that neurological differences such as autism or ADHD are due to people having different neurotypes, either being neurotypical or neurodiverse. Those who are neurodiverse view and experience the world differently. This, it is believed by many self-advocates that we look to for insight, is neither good nor bad but merely different. It can have disadvantages but also advantages with autistic adults promoting self-belief, Autistic Pride, empowerment and self-efficacy (taking control of your own world). For more information about neurodiversity check out www.asiam.ie or www.konfidentkidz.ie

Support and Information

Service	MWB AUTISM SUPPORT
Purpose	A parent led support group for families of children diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder
Phone	Michael Briton: 087 9877342 N Gerety: 087 6301666
Email	mwbautismchair1@gmail.com , info@mwbautism.ie
Website	www.mwbautism.ie Facebook MWB Autism Support

Service	ADHD IRELAND
	Rock House, Main Street, Blackrock, Co Dublin, A94 V9P1
Purpose	Information, Support and Advocacy
Phone	01 4453203
	Email info@asiam.ie
Website	www.asiam.ie Facebook www.facebook.com/asiamireland

Service	IRISH SOCIETY FOR AUTISM
	Unity Building, 16/17 Lower O'Connell Street, Dublin 1
Purpose	Information, Support and Campaigning
Phone	01 874 4684
	Email admin@autism.ie
Website	www.autism.ie Facebook www.facebook.com/IrishSocietyforAutism

Service **THE ASPERGER SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND**
Coleraine House, Carmichael Centre, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7

Purpose Parents supporting parents

Phone 01 8780027/29 **Email** info@aspireireland.ie

Website www.aspireireland.ie

Facebook www.facebook.com/AspergerSyndromeAssoc

Service **AADI**
Mallow House, Shortcastle Street, Mallow, Co. Cork

Purpose Provides highly trained assistance dogs for children with ASD and their families

Phone 022 43851 or 087 7998179 **Email** info@aadi.ie

Website Autismassistancedogsireland.ie

Service **ÁIRC MIDLANDS**

Purpose Support organisation for children with any additional need (this may include disability, autism, long term illness etc) and their support circle. Offer a range of supports including emotional, educational financial and social.

Phone 085 1194041 **Email** aircmidlands@gmail.com

Website www.autism.ie **Facebook** www.facebook.com/aircmidlands

Special Education Support Services has valuable information on various programmes used in the Support of ASD. Go to: www.sess.ie/categories/autismautistic-spectrumdisorders/aspergers/autistic-spectrum-disorder-links

ASD Classes – Westmeath

ASD 1 Primary class: St Joseph’s NS, Corcloon, Miltownpass, Westmeath.
Phone: 044 92 22512 • **Email:** miltownpassns@gmail.com

ASD 1 Primary class: Presentation School (senior), Harbour St. Mullingar
Phone: 044 93 40933 • **Email:** admin_sr@presentationmullingar.ie

ASD 2 Early Intervention classes: St Mary’s Primary School, College St. Mullingar
Phone: 044 93 41517 • **Email:** admin@stmarysmullingar.ie

ASD 2 Primary Classes: Holy Family Primary School, Ardmore Road, Mullingar. **Phone:** 044 933 0168
Email: holyfamilymullingar@gmail.ie or secretary@holyfamilymullingar.ie

ASD 2 Primary Class, 3 Post Primary Classes including 1 class for children diagnosed with severe/profound disability: St. Mary’s School, Delvin, Co. Westmeath
Phone: 087 2305267 • **Email:** smssouthhill@gmail.com

ASD 2 Primary classes: St Joseph’s NS, Rathwire, Killucan, Mullingar
Phone: 044 93 74591 • **Email:** stjosephs@rathwirens.ie

ASD 1 Primary class: St. Etchen’s National School, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath
Phone: 044 93 75463 • **Email:** secretary@scoiletchen.com

ASD 1 Early Intervention and 4 Primary classes: Mullingar Educate Together, Rathgowan
Phone: 044 93 48005 • **Email:** mullingar.etns@gmail.com

ASD 3 Primary classes: Summerhill NS, St. Joseph's Drum Rd. Athlone.
Phone: 090 64 92037 • **Email:** Summerhillns2018@gmail.com

ASD 2 Post Primary classes: Mean Scoil an Chlochair, Kilbeggan
Phone: 057 93 32292 • **Email:** mercykilbeggan@eircom.net

ASD 2 Post Primary classes:
St Finian's College, Longford Road, Mullingar, Co Westmeath
Phone: 044 93 48672 • **Email:** info@stfinianscollege.ie

ASD 2 Post Primary classes:
Castlepollard Community College, Castlepollard, Co Westmeath.
Phone: 044 96 61163 • **Email:** admin.ccc@lwetb.ie

Autism Specific School

Saplings Mullingar: Educating for Life
(Providing a Unique Education for Children with Autism),
Lynn Road, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 V5TF
Phone: 044 9384853 • **Email:** mullingar@saplings.org
Website: www.saplingsmullingar.ie

Autism Specific Preschool

Juniper Tree Autism Services
21 Millcross Rd, Baellnamulla, Athlone, Co Roscommon.
Phone: 087 7539408 • **Facebook** [/junipertreeautismservices](https://www.facebook.com/junipertreeautismservices)
Individualised, child centred support using a multi-disciplinary approach

Child's Play ABA
Unit 6 Riverview, Kilbeggan, Ireland, N91 H5X9
Phone: 086 356 6799 • **Web:** www.childsplayaba.ie • **Email:** hello@childsplayaba.ie

ASD Classes – Longford

ASD 1 Pre-school and 3 Primary classes. Killoe NS, Clontumper, Ballinalee
Phone: 043 332 3352 • **Email:** sннаomhtreasa.ias@eircom.net

ASD 2 Junior, 2 Middle and 2 Senior Classes: St Mary's NS, Edgesworthstown
Phone: 043 667 1750 • **Email:** stmarysnsetown@gmail.com

ASD 3 Post Primary Classes: Ardscoil Phadraig, Granard, Co Longford
Phone: 043 668 6209 • **Email:** admin.apg@lwetb.ie

ASD 1 Early Intervention Class: St Matthews Mixed National School, Ballymahon
Phone: 090 64 32578 • **Email:** stmatthewsns@gmail.com

ASD 2 Post Primary Class: Mercy Secondary School, Ballymahon, Co. Longford.
Phone: 090 64 32267 • **Email:** info@mercyballymahon.ie

St. Christopher's Service, Leamore Park, Battery Road, Longford
Phone: 043 3341073 • **Email:** stchristophersss@gmail.com
Website: www.stchristophersspecialschool.com

An up-to-date list of all ASD and special classes is listed on the NCSE website each year and can be accessed at: www.ncse.ie/special-classes



Cerebral Palsy

What is it?

- It is a neurological condition which affects movement, muscle tone or posture and is the most common form of motor/movement disability of childhood.
- Caused by damage or failure of the brain to develop, usually before birth.
- In some cases, the damage is caused during childbirth or after birth. It is nonprogressive.

There are four types of Cerebral Palsy (C. P) all of which will have different symptoms.

- Spastic Cerebral Palsy
- Dyskinetic Cerebral Palsy
- Ataxic Cerebral Palsy
- Mixed Cerebral Palsy

Children may or may not have associated (co-morbid) conditions such as a general learning disability, intellectual disability, epilepsy, or blindness.

Causes

- Cerebral palsy is caused by an abnormality in brain development in the specific area that control movement, usually before a child is born.
- In many cases, the exact trigger of this abnormality is unknown.

Diagnosis

If there is a cause for concern that a child may have CP a full developmental history will be taken, and a neurological examination will be carried out. An MRI or CT scan will often be necessary, particularly if the cause of CP is unknown. When diagnosing the condition doctors will look for spastic movements, abnormal muscle movements, delayed development or coordination and balance.

Support and Information

Therapies, drugs and sometimes surgery will be used to enhance the quality of life for the child and most children will grow up to live independently or in supported living. Enable Ireland provides supports for people with physical disabilities. www.enableireland.ie email hello@enableireland.ie or tel: **01 8727155**.

National Council for Special Education – Working to deliver a better special education service. www.ncse.ie

Facebook support group (Cerebral Palsy Ireland Family Group): www.facebook.com/groups/415254395178936

Cystic Fibrosis

What is it?

- Cystic fibrosis (CF) is an inherited condition and is genetic.
- A defect in one particular chromosome causes cystic fibrosis (CF). This gene produces a protein that controls salt and water in and out of your body's cells. In people who have CF, the gene makes a protein that does not work well causing the body to produce a sticky mucus that clogs the lungs leading to infections and /or prevents the pancreas functioning properly which prevents the adequate breakdown and absorption of food.

Symptoms

- CF primarily affects the lungs but may also affect the digestive system, the reproductive system and the pancreas.
- Salty tasting skin
- Persistent cough
- Higher incidence of chest infections than typical
- Shortness of breath
- Failure to thrive, poor weight gain/growth despite eating well
- Frequent greasy/bulky bowel movements that may be difficult to pass

Diagnosis

- If the parents know they are carriers of the CF gene, they may be offered prenatal tests which can determine whether the foetus has CF or not.
- Parents are offered the heel prick test when baby is approx. 4 days old, this will determine if the child has CF.

Treatment

Treatments concentrate on prevention of infection, particularly in the lungs, and maintaining good nutrition. Physiotherapy is extremely important to keep the airways clear. Some children will be on a continuous dose of antibiotic medicine, or use inhalers or steroids as needed. For very advanced loss of lung function a lifesaving lung transplant may be an option, however, this is not a cure for Cystic Fibrosis.

Support and Information:

It is important to note that recent years have seen huge gains in the areas of treatment and support for those living with Cystic Fibrosis (CF) including drug therapies that target underlying causes, improved CF Centres and strong support networks for both parents and individuals who live with CF. Cystic Fibrosis Ireland (CFI) is a voluntary organisation that was set up by parents in 1963 to improve the treatment and facilities for people with Cystic Fibrosis in Ireland. The CFI also co-operates with medical professionals to give maximum assistance to parents and children/adults with Cystic Fibrosis.

Go to: www.cfireland.ie Phone: 01 496 2433

For Midland support contacts go to: www.cfireland.ie/local-branches

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CysticFibrosisIreland/

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

What is it?

- A hearing loss means a person cannot hear normally. One to two children per thousand are born with a hearing loss, while hearing loss is much more common in adults. A person may have partial loss of hearing or be completely deaf.
- Two main types of hearing loss: conductive hearing loss and sensorineural hearing loss; some children can have a mixture of the two.
- Sensorineural hearing loss is caused by problems in the inner ear (cochlea).
- Some forms of deafness are genetic.
- Head injuries and brain tumours can cause hearing loss.

Diagnosis

- It is possible to screen babies soon after birth. Nowadays young children may be fitted with hearing aids as early as 3 months of age.
- Parents should contact their GP or public health nurse if they have any concerns about their babies hearing.

Symptoms

- Undiagnosed hearing loss in babies and young children can result in developmental delays. The hearing loss may not be obvious to others, as the child may be hearing some sounds and responding to them. Where a child is not reaching its developmental milestones – especially in relation to pre-lingual and speech milestones, the child's hearing should be checked.
- An older child may display signs which could indicate a hearing problem, such as speaking very loudly, ignoring others, turning up the TV or sitting very close to it, being disruptive at school when involved in listening activities or being extremely quiet. In these situations, the child's hearing should be checked.

Support and Information

Support and information are available to families and children. The audiologist and visiting teacher should provide parents with information on these services.

- Hearing aids are used by most children with hearing loss, while those with more severe or profound hearing loss may use cochlear implants.
- Irish Sign language (ISL) is used by Deaf people in Ireland and is best learnt at as young an age as possible.
- Many children with hearing loss use lip reading to help with communication – so it is important to face them and speak clearly.

Service	VISITING TEACHER (VT) SERVICE SUPPORTS CHILDREN WITH LOSS OF HEARING IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS.		
Purpose	They provide direct teaching and support and advice for parents and mainstream teachers. They provide support in the home for parents and younger children.		
Westmeath	087 9675556	Email	marie.farrell@ncse.ie
Longford	087 9819359	Email	Amanda.duffy@ncse.ie
Website	www.ncse.ie		
Service	HSE AUDIOLOGY CENTRES: HEALTH CENTRE ATHLONE/MULLINGAR, PRIMARY CARE CENTRE, HARBOUR ROAD, MULLINGAR, CO. WESTMEATH (ADULT AND PAEDIATRIC)		
Phone	(044) 9353777	Email	midlandsc.audiology@hse.ie
Service	IRISH DEAF SOCIETY (IDS)		
	Deaf Village Ireland, Rathoath Road, Dublin 7		
Purpose	National Advocacy organisation that recognises Irish Sign Language as a means towards Deaf empowerment and equality.		
Phone	01 8601878	Email	info@irishdeafociety.ie
Website	www.irishdeafociety.ie	Facebook	www.facebook.com/IrishDeafSociety
Service	CHIME		
	35 North Frederick Street, Dublin 1, Ireland.		
Purpose	A national charity providing specialist services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing people and their families.		
Phone	01 8175700	Email	info@chime.ie
Website	www.chime.ie		
Service	DEAF SPORTS IRELAND		
	Deaf Village Ireland, Ratoath Road, Dublin 7, D07 V4KP		
Purpose	Promotes the social and community benefits of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people participating in sports.		
Website	www.deafsportsireland.com	Email	joeywatson@deafsportsireland.com
SMS	083 458800		
Service	THE IRISH DEAF YOUTH ASSOCIATION (IDYA), Deaf Village Ireland.		
Purpose	Caters for children aged 13-17 through organised activities run by Irish Deaf Teens.		
Phone	085 1984166	Email	info@irishdefyouth.com
Website	www.irishdeafyouth.com	Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/IDYAofficial/
Service	SIGN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION IRELAND (SLAI)		
Phone	086 0888202	Email	secretary@slaireland.com
Website	www.slaireland.com		
Service	SHARING THE JOURNEY - ISL APP FOR SMART PHONES AND TABLETS		
Email	sharingthejourney2011@gmail.com , chair@sharingthejourney.ie		
Website	www.sharingthejourney.ie	Phone	085 722 5659

Diabetes

What is it?

- Diabetes mellitus refers to a group of diseases which affect how your body uses glucose (sugar). Diabetes mellitus is caused by a lack of insulin.
- No matter what type of diabetes you have it means you have too much glucose in your blood.
- There are two main types of diabetes characterised as type 1 and type 2.
- Type 1 diabetes is more prevalent in children and younger adults and usually requires treatment with insulin injections.
- Type 2 diabetes usually develops in adulthood. It can sometimes be treated with exercise and diet but may require anti-diabetic medicine or insulin injections.

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of diabetes in children are:

- A noticeable increase in thirst and frequency to urinate
- Tiredness
- Weight loss but often with an increased appetite
- An odour to the breath
- Changes in vision

It must be noted that some of these symptoms may have other related causes besides diabetes so a doctor should be consulted.

Diagnosis

Diabetes is diagnosed by blood and urine tests. The patient will usually be asked to fast prior to the tests and if blood sugar levels remain high when fasting this may indicate diabetes.

Support, Information and Treatment

- Generally, blood sugar levels monitored throughout the day at regular intervals.
- Insulin needs to be administered by way of injection.
- The diabetes Federation of Ireland has produced a useful booklet on diabetes for children. It is available at: www.diabetes.ie or tel 018428118.
- The HSE have information on diabetes available on their website at: hse.ie/eng/health/hl/living/diabetes/

Support and Information

Service **DIABETES IRELAND, WESTMEATH BRANCH**
Phone 089 2268735 **Email** Stephenpurcell0@gmail.com

Service **COMMUNITY NUTRITION AND DIETETIC SERVICE**
HSE Dublin Mid-Leinster, Primary Care Unit,
St. Loman's Health Care Campus, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
Phone 044 93 95518 **Email** community.dietitians@hse.ie

Service **DIABETES IRELAND**
Purpose Provides support, education and motivation to everyone affected by diabetes.
Phone 01 8428118 **Email** info@diabetes.ie
Website www.diabetes.ie **Facebook** www.facebook.com/DiabetesIreland/



Down Syndrome

What is it?

- A person with Down Syndrome has an extra chromosome 21.
- It is a complex condition which affects each child or young person differently.

Diagnosis

- Usually diagnosed during pregnancy, as a result of pre-natal tests, or soon after birth by a Paediatric Clinician.

Support and Information

Supports may include play, physio, occupational or speech/language therapy. Children with Down syndrome are statistically more likely to be born with congenital heart defect than typical children and this sometimes requires corrective surgery. These surgeries are carried out in one of the national children's hospitals and have a high success rate. For more information and support regarding heart defects check out www.heartchildren.ie

Service	LONGFORD/WESTMEATH BRANCH OF DOWN SYNDROME
Phone	Branch Secretary: 086 2697337, Chairperson: 087 2587210
Email	lwbsi@gmail.com
Facebook	@longfordwestmeathdsi

Down Syndrome Information booklet

www.downsyndrome.ie/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/DSI_StudentPack_Home.pdf

Facebook support and information group

www.facebook.com/groups/577711845573217/

Service	DOWN SYNDROME IRELAND Unit 3, Park Way House, Western Parkway Business Park, Ballymount Drive, Dublin 12, D12HP70
Purpose	Support and Information
Phone	01 4266500 or 1890 374374
Email	info@downsyndrome.ie
Website	www.downsyndrome.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/downsyndromeireland

Dysgraphia

What is it?

- Dysgraphia is a condition that affects how a person writes regardless of reading ability.
- There are three types:
1. Dyslexic Dysgraphia 2. Motor Dysgraphia 3. Spatial Dysgraphia
- Children with dysgraphia can usually write but the writing will appear disorganised possibly with a mix of upper and lower-case letters, irregular sized letters and shapes.
- Children may have an unusual way to how they hold a pencil or sit and may experience discomfort when writing.
- Children may also have difficulty with skills such as tying shoes, opening and closing buttons and other tasks which require hand-eye co-ordination.
- The disorder is generally noticed when the child first starts writing. Letters may be inappropriately sized and letters poorly spaced. Many children will have a high IQ with no learning difficulties.

Symptoms

- Will take much longer to complete a written assignment.
- Will often become distressed when faced with the task of writing.
- The child will have difficulty writing between lines, use irregular size letters, may have spelling mistakes and some children will experience muscle cramping in the arm and shoulder.
- The level of difficulty will vary from child to child.

Diagnosis

A diagnosis is made by observing the child while writing. There will be a huge discrepancy between the child's writing ability and their ability to use a word processor.

Support and Information

Dysgraphia can be helped through the use of techniques to aid handwriting usually recommended by an OT, and/or by using another means of communication other than writing. Assistive technology and visuals can be of great support as can concepts such as mind mapping, adapted learning tasks and varied writing tools.

The Special Education Support Service (SESS) for support and information on Dysgraphia at: www.sess.ie/categories/specific-learning-disabilities/dysgraphia

Service	DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND
Purpose	Support and Information
Phone	01 8776001, Info: 086 0562349, Appointment queries: 086 0632786
Email	info@dyslexia.ie Website: www.dyslexia.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/Dyslexialreland/

Service	STATE EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION (SEC)
Purpose	Provides supports for pupils in second-level examinations
Phone	090 6442700 Email: sec_specialneeds@education.gov.ie
Website	www.examinations.ie

Dyslexia

What is it?

- A specific learning difficulty which presents challenges to people in the areas of reading, spelling and writing.
- Difficulties in organisation, sequencing and motor-skills may also present challenges.

Diagnosis

- Schools offer base-line assessments which give an indication of the child's development and learning. Standardised tests are often used for screening.
- A formal diagnosis is made by an educational psychologist through the school system or privately.

Support and Information

Support usually takes the form of extra tuition. In school, supports are in the form of class teacher support, support from a learning support teacher or the child may be granted resource hours.

The Dyslexia Association of Ireland provide comprehensive supports and advocacy for people with Dyslexia including educational psychology assessments, group/individual tuition, in-service training for teachers, parent courses, awareness training and more.

You can find them at www.dyslexia.ie or on their Facebook page - www.facebook.com/dyslexiaireland

Service	DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND
Purpose	Provides out-of-school supports for children with dyslexia either on a one-to-one basis or from a trained tutor
Phone	01 8776001 Info: 086 0562349 Appointment queries: 086 0632786
Email	info@dyslexie.ie Website www.dyslexia.ie

Dyscalculia

What is it?

- A specific learning difficulty which presents challenges to people in the area of mathematics.
- Difficulties in organisation, sequencing and understanding mathematical concepts may also present challenges.

Diagnosis

- Schools offer base-line assessments which give an indication of the child's development and learning. Standardised tests are often used for screening.
- A formal diagnosis is made by an Educational Psychologist through the school system or privately.

Support and Information

Support usually takes the form of extra tuition. In school, supports are in the form of class teacher support, support from a learning support teacher or the child may be granted resource hours.



Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)/Dyspraxia

What is it?

- DCD is a difficulty with fine and/or gross motor co-ordination.
- It is a brain-based condition that poses problems with balance and posture.
- It can affect the development of skills such as climbing and running.
- DCD persists into adulthood and may present differently over time responding to environmental and social factors.

Symptoms

- Difficulty with dressing, e.g., opening and closing buttons, zips and putting on or taking off shoes.
- Difficulties with skills such as hopping, jumping, kicking a ball.
- Lateness in reaching milestones such as crawling, walking, sitting, or speaking.
- Difficulties in tasks such as jigsaw making or activities involving the use of pencil or paintbrushes.
- School age children will present with similar problems, with difficulties completing tasks, copying from the blackboard and may often have difficulty with following instruction.

Diagnosis

- A child first needs to have an assessment of need; this can be done by contacting your local Assessment Officer.
- Usually, an OT will be involved in your child's treatment in providing specific programmes to assist in his/her difficulties.
- Speech and language services may also be provided depending on the needs of the child.
- When there is a diagnosis of Dyspraxia/DCD your child may be sanctioned resource hours in school or the assistance of an SNA if needed.

Support and Information

Service	DCD IRELAND
Purpose	Parent Support Group
Facebook	www.facebook.com/dcdireland.parentsupport
Email	dcdireland@gmail.com
Website	www.dcdireland.ie

Service	DYSPRAXIA/DCD IRELAND HELPLINE
Purpose	Support and Information
Phone	01 8747085
Email	info@dyspraxia.ie
Website	www.dyspraxia.ie

Developmental Language Disorder (Specific Speech and Language Impairment)

What is it?

Developmental Language Disorder (previously known as Specific Speech and Language Impairment) can affect both the spoken word (expressive language) and understanding (receptive language). This is a developmental language impairment and not related or caused by other developmental impairments such as hearing loss, cognitive or brain injury

Symptoms

- Difficulty with spoken language, may have very limited vocabulary for his or her age and a poor grasp of grammar.
- Varied profile of language difficulties which may include speech, grammar, vocabulary, conversational skills, and effecting understanding and expression (IASLT, 2017).
- Although understanding of language might be quite good, it may impact on social development and imaginative play.
- If the child has difficulty with receptive language, they are most likely to have difficulties in listening, following instructions and generally understanding direction.
- Some children may have difficulties in both spoken language and receptive language.

Diagnosis

Parents or the Public Health Nurse (PHN) may identify a problem at an early stage. School age children will normally be assessed by a Psychologist and Speech and Language Therapist if it is suspected that the child has a specific SLI. The Department of Education and Skills require this before they will grant extra supports to a child.

Support and Information

Support involves implementing a programme by the Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) which is usually supported by the parents and the school, if the child is school age. This programme will address the specific area the child has difficulties with. The

Department of Education and Skills require an assessment by a Psychologist and a Speech and Language Therapist before they will grant extra supports to a child.

Specific Speech and Language Unit, Presentation School, Harbour St., Mullingar.

Phone: 044 93 40933 • **Email:** adminsnr@presentationmullingar.ie

The National Council for Special education (NCSE) has a list of all speech and language classes in the country. Go to: www.ncse.ie

Epilepsy

What is it?

- Epilepsy is a neurological condition which affects the brain. Abnormal electrical activity in the brain causes the person with epilepsy to have recurring seizures.
- Epilepsy can also be triggered by other underlying disorders. If the underlying disorder is treated, sometimes the epilepsy may be stopped.

Symptoms

- Symptoms of epilepsy can vary a lot from person to person as it depends on the part of the brain affected.
- Seizures can affect the whole brain causing generalised seizures or affect specific parts of the brain causing partial seizures.
- Generalised seizures occur when a large part of the brain is affected, and the child/person loses consciousness.
- Partial seizures also vary depending on the type, duration and severity of the seizure.
- Some people may stay awake and aware but may experience unusual sensations relating to the senses. Others may experience a brief loss of consciousness and may twitch, blink, chew or smack their lips but these seizures usually last no more than two minutes.

Diagnosis

Initially a doctor will take a complete medical history relating to family history and details about the seizure. The patient will then be recommended for diagnostic tests such as an EEG which reads the brain's electrical activity, brain imaging, blood tests and developmental or neurological tests.

Support and Information

Epilepsy is most commonly treated by medication. The medication may help stop the seizures from occurring. However, a holistic approach including medication, mental health/stress management, positive sleep hygiene and self-efficacy/empowerment of the individual has been shown to be very effective.

Service	EPILEPSY IRELAND (formerly Brainwave)		
Purpose	Tullamore branch covering Offaly, Longford, Laois and Westmeath		
Phone	(057) 93 46790	Email	cmolloy@epilepsy.ie
Website	www.epilepsy.ie	Facebook	www.facebook.com/epilepsy.ie

Fragile X Syndrome

What is it?

- Fragile X syndrome is a condition that affects both boys and girls.
- It primarily causes learning difficulties and is the most common identifiable inherited cause of intellectual disability, according to the Fragile X Ireland website.

Symptoms

- Often babies are slow to smile, sit and walk and may have disturbed sleep patterns.
- Boys will be more likely to present with learning difficulties with up to a third of girls also presenting with learning difficulty.
- Language delay is often apparent at an early age and behavioural features may include short attention span, difficulty focusing, emotional regulation challenges and hyperactivity.

Support and Information

Fragile X syndrome is diagnosed by a blood test.

Special Education Support Service:

www.sess.ie/categories/assessed-syndromes/fragile-x

Service	IRISH FRAGILE X SOCIETY (IFXS) c/o Inclusion Ireland, Unit C2, The Steel Works, Foley Street, Dublin 1 or Maria Panza, Branganstown, Kilcock, Co Kildare
Purpose	Support and Information
Facebook	www.facebook.com/IrishFragileXSociety/
Phone	01 6519689 or Maria: 087 6573089
Email	info@fragilexireland.org
Website	www.fragilexireland.org

Muscular Dystrophy

What is it?

- Muscular Dystrophy (MD) is characterised by progressive weakening and wasting of the muscles of the body caused by a defect in one of the genes. This gene affects the muscles, and you can be a carrier but never develop MD.
- There are nine different types of MD. Duchenne MD is the most common.
- Duchenne MD is genetic, and it tends to run in families.

Symptoms

- Babies may not initially show any symptoms, but may be 'floppy' or have difficulty reaching gross motor milestones such as sit to stand. MD usually begins to appear in children before the age of six.
- The first signs of MD usually affect movements, such as falling often, difficulty in running and jumping, walking on the toes, stiffness, or pain in the muscles.
- As the condition progresses walking and movement becomes more difficult.

Diagnosis

Since the condition is inherited, families are often aware of the genetic link. However, for some there will be no genetic link and the condition occurs spontaneously. The condition is usually formally diagnosed by a blood test in addition to a biopsy, which may only be carried out at specialised hospital departments so as to acquire a high-quality sample for reliable diagnosis. In some cases, diagnosis can happen via amniocentesis at around 10 weeks gestation.

Support

- Medications and therapy can help manage the condition to make the child's quality of life as good as possible.
- Physiotherapy helps considerably.
- Occupational therapy is also very important and enables the child in self-care skills such as washing, dressing and self-feeding.
- Hydrotherapy (water therapy) is often recommended as limb movement is much easier in water and it is a very low impact activity on the muscles.
- Speech therapy and mobility aids are important for the child to be out and about and communicate and socialise as much as possible.
- Assistive technology and mobility aids such as electric wheelchairs and adapted seating are of great importance and can be accessed via an occupational therapist.

Support and Information

Service	MDI OFFICE Mullingar Employment Action Group, The Enterprise Centre, Bishopsgate St, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
Purpose	Support and Information
Website	www.mdi.ie
Email	sinead@mdi.ie
Phone	086 3899285

Service	MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY SOCIETY OF IRELAND LTD., 75 Lucan Road, Chapelizod, Dublin, D20DR77
Purpose	Provide information and support to people with neuromuscular conditions and their families through a range of support services
Phone	01 6236414
Email	reception@mdi.ie / info@mdi.ie
Website	www.mdi.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/



Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder

What is it?

- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is characterised by repeated defiance by the child to authority figures, usually in school, which has a negative impact on the child's ability to function within the school system and socially with their peers.
- Conduct disorder (CD) is more challenging and more socially disruptive than oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) although sometimes one is mistaken for the other.

Symptoms

- A person with CD often displays more physical aggression and threatening behaviour than a person with ODD and often appear to lack empathy for others.
- It is rare to present with ODD alone and additional (co-morbid) conditions often occur such as ADHD.
- Children with CD may often carry out disruptive or damaging activities such as breaking things or lighting fires.

Support and Information

Children and young people with ODD are usually taught self-regulation and coping strategies. Many children with CD often have very complex problems and usually involve a team of agencies and professionals working together on a comprehensive plan.

The Special Education Support Service provide information and support for parents and schools: www.sess.ie/categories/emotional-disturbance-and/or-behavioural-problems/conduct-disorder

Prader-Willi Syndrome

What is it?

Prader-Willi syndrome is a complex genetic condition that affects many parts of the body. PWS is a rare syndrome caused by an abnormality of chromosome 15.

PWS is a multiphase syndrome:

- In infancy, this condition is characterized by weak muscle tone (hypotonia), feeding difficulties, poor growth, and delayed development.
- Beginning in childhood, affected individuals develop an insatiable appetite, which if not managed can lead to chronic overeating (hyperphagia) and obesity.
- The development of an insatiable appetite/drive to eat, accompanied by intense or relentless food-seeking usually begins from 8 years of age onwards

Symptoms

- An unregulated appetite and easy weight gain – morbid obesity, excessive weight and associated health problems
- People with Prader-Willi syndrome typically have mild to moderate intellectual impairment and learning disabilities.
- Behavioural problems are common, including temperamental outbursts, stubbornness, difficulty controlling emotions and compulsive behaviour such as picking at the skin.
- Sleep abnormalities
- Lack of sexual development
- PWS is a spectrum disorder and symptoms vary in severity and occurrence among individuals

Supports

- Multi-disciplinary team approach to a care plan
- Healthy Eating Habits
- Environmental Management (usually including locked food access) and psychological food security.
- Behaviour Management Strategies

Support and Information

Special Education Support Service:

www.sess.ie/categories/assessed-syndromes/prader-willi-syndrome

Service	PRADER-WILLI SYNDROME ASSOCIATION IRELAND (PSAI) Carmichael Centre, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7.
Website	www.pwsai.ie
Phone	087 2522832 or 087 3851387
Facebook	www.facebook.com/Prader-Willi-Syndrome
Email	info@pwsai.ie

Rare Disease and Rare Chromosome Conditions

What is it?

- If a disease is to be known as rare/orphan, it must affect under 1 in every 2000 people. 80% of the 6000 known rare diseases originate in the genes and it is estimated that there are more than 30 million individuals living with rare diseases in Europe. Rare diseases include Prader-Willi, syndrome, Wolf-Hirschhorn syndrome and Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (EDS) but there are many that go undiagnosed due to insufficient diagnostic testing techniques. These are known as SWANs or Syndromes Without a Name.

Symptoms

- Chromosome disorders occur when the whole copy of one or more genes has been compromised and are also known as chromosome aberrations. These can be numeric or structural.
- Often accompanied by co-morbid conditions such as autism, intellectual disability or epilepsy.
- In 2013 the National Clinical Programme for Rare Diseases was set up between the HSE and the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. The aim was to improve and develop access, quality and value in services, care and diagnostics. They published their Model of Care for Rare Diseases in 2018.

Supports

- An international network of people with rare diseases has been developed by EURORDIS- Rare Diseases Europe and Care4Rare Canada called RareConnect, a patient led community platform.
- Rare Disease Ireland (formally GRDO) is an NGO that acts as a national alliance for voluntary groups that represent the opinions, needs and aspirations of the Rare community. Find out more at www.rdi.ie
- RARE Ireland is a support organisation supporting approximately 600 families of children with rare conditions that include but aren't limited to chromosome abnormalities, neurological conditions, SWANs and childhood cancers. They have a strong community network and provide supports including days out, family friendly events and an active social media that serves as an information hub and online support system.

Service	RARE IRELAND FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK
Website	www.rdi.ie
Phone	089 422 0228
Email	advocacy@rdi.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/rareireland

Sensory Processing Disorder

What is it?

Sensory processing disorder is a condition that causes difficulties receiving and responding to information from the senses including vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. Sensory processing disorder can be a stand-alone diagnosis but is also a common characteristic of many disabilities including Autism Spectrum Disorders, Dyslexia, and MS.

You can find an information regarding SPD characteristics and strategies for managing it here:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/lho/corknorthlee/therapy/paediatric-occupational-therapy/sensory-processing.pdf>

and here:

<https://www.inha.ie/sensory-processing-disorder/>

If you have any concerns that your child may have a sensory processing disorder speak with your GP or Public Health Nurse about your concerns.



Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus

What is it?

- Spina Bifida causes incomplete development of the spinal cord in the womb.
- The spine is made up of bones called vertebrae which protect the spinal cord, sometimes one or more of these bones do not completely form and split and protrude out onto the back in a bulge.
- There are 3 types:
 - Spina bifida occulta
 - Spina bifida meningocele
 - Myelomeningocele

It is a Latin term which literally means a split in the spine.

Symptoms

There are three main types of spina bifida and the symptoms will depend on the type and form of spina bifida and to the extent which the spinal cord has been exposed. The three most common forms of spina bifida are Spina Bifida Occulta, Meningocele and Myelomeningocele.

Effects of spina bifida can vary from mild to severe. These can include hydrocephalus (water on the brain), varying degrees of paralysis, and loss of sensation in the lower limbs, pressure sores and bladder and bowel incontinence.

Diagnosis

Spina bifida is usually diagnosed before birth. Mild cases may not be picked up until after birth.

Support and Information

Support varies depending on the type and severity of the condition and is provided through a medical practitioner and early intervention team. Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Ireland (SBHI) provide comprehensive support for individuals living with Spina Bifida, Parents and professionals with services including education, respite, catheterisation training, peer support programmes and more.

Service	LONGFORD / WESTMEATH SBHI SUPPORT WORKER		
Phone	085 7119062	Email	sjacobsen@sbhi.ie

Service	SPINA BIFIDA HYDROCEPHALUS IRELAND (SBHI)		
	National resource Centre, Old Nangor Road, Clondakin, Dublin. D22 W5C1		
Phone	01 457 2329	Email	info@sbhi.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/SBHIreland		

Visual Impairment

What is it?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines visual function at four different levels:

- Normal vision
- Moderate visual impairment
- Severe visual impairment
- Blindness

Symptoms

- Symptoms will vary with age.
- School age children may have difficulty with copying work from white/black board or show difficulties with activities which require good vision.
- Older children may have unusual eye movements, have cloudy or bloodshot eyes, or appear clumsy with poor hand eye co-ordination.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis depends on the type and cause of the visual impairment. All babies' eyes are examined after birth and at developmental checks.

Support and Information

- Support will depend on the cause and symptoms of the impairment.
- It may vary from surgery to medication.
- Efforts may be on supporting the child to work with their blindness or impairment.
- Visually impaired children will be entitled to low vision aids and the services of a teacher for the visually impaired when they are in school.
- The National Council for the Blind (NCBI) have a shop from which aids can be purchased, including a 'talking book service' and a 'braille book service'

Service	NCBI Clonbrusk Resource Centre, Coosan Road, Athlone, Co Westmeath.
Purpose	Support and Information
Website	Ncbi.ie
Phone	090 6473575
Email	info@ncbi.ie

Service	NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND OF IRELAND (NCBI) Whitworth Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9
Website	www.ncbi.ie
Phone	1850 334353
Email	info@ncbi.ie

Service **CHILDVISION: NATIONAL EDUCATION CENTRE FOR BLIND CHILDREN**
Grace Park Rd., Dublin 9

Phone 01 8373635

Email info@childvision.ie

Facebook www.facebook.com/ChildVisionVI

Website www.childvision.ie

Service **NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION (NCSE)**

Purpose Information for Parents/Guardians of Children and Young People who are Blind/Visually Impaired

Phone 046 9486400

Email info@ncse.ie

Website www.ncse.ie

Service **VISITING TEACHER (VT) SERVICE SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS**

Purpose They provide direct teaching and support advice for parents and mainstream teachers. They provide support in the home for parents and younger children

Phone Geraldine Carr: 085 8701308

Email Geraldine.carr@ncse.ie

Website www.ncse.ie

Service **FIGHTING BLINDNESS**
3rd Floor, 7 Ely Place, Dublin 2, D02 TW98

Website www.fightingblindness.ie

Phone 01 6789004

Email info@fightingblindness.ie

Facebook www.facebook.com/Fighting.Blindness.Ireland/

Service **IRISH GUIDE DOGS**
National Headquarters and Training Centre, Model Farm Road, Cork

Email info@guidedogs.ie

Phone 1850 506 300

Website www.irishguidedogs.ie

Facebook www.facebook.com/irishguidedogs/

Service **FEACH**
PO Box 11581, Dublin 18

Purpose A support group for parents of blind and visually impaired children

Website www.feach.ie

Email feachmail@gmail.com

Facebook www.facebook.com/FeachVIP/

Mental Health

What is it?

Mental health difficulties can affect how we think, feel and act; it can affect moods and behavior.

- A mental health problem occurs when someone's thoughts or feelings are troubling them, to the extent of affecting their day to day activities or relationships.
- They may not necessarily have a mental illness, but may need help to get them through a difficult time.

A mental illness is a more serious or long-lasting problem, which can be diagnosed by a doctor or mental health professional. It may require medical treatment as well as support. There are many different types, just as there are different forms of physical ill health.

Some things you can do to improve Mental Health

- Be active
- Sleep well
- Connect with family and friends
- Healthy eating
- Avoid alcohol, drugs and other substances

Supports

For some people it may be difficult to talk about mental health, but it can help to talk about how you are feeling. People you can talk to might include friends, family, counsellor or GP. Most national helplines will provide a listening service, give information and advice, provide emotional support and point you in the direction of other services.

Longford and Westmeath Services

St. Loman's Hospital Mullingar (044) 9340191

Community Mental Health Centre Mullingar (044) 9353840

Day Centre Grace Road Athlone (090) 649 2969

Community Mental Health Centre Ré Nua (090) 648 3190

Community Mental Health Centre Longford (043) 3346992

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Services (044) 9394219

Young Adult Mental Health Service (YAMHS),
Primary Medical Centre, Mullingar.
Provides services for 16-18 yr olds (044) 933 7402

Psychiatry for Later Life (044) 9325667/8

Suicide Resource Office (057) 9327909 or 086 8157320 Eddie Ward: 086 3801152

NATIONAL SERVICES

THE SAMARITANS: EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

116123 - Freephone • Email: jo@samaritans.ie • www.samaritans.org

SPUNOUT.IE: YOUTH INFORMATION WEBSITE

01 6753554 • www.spunout.ie • hello@spunout.ie

Teenline Ireland Helpline: Teen emotional support

1800 833 634 Freephone 24 hour or Free Text: Teen to 50015 www.teenireland.ie

PIETA HOUSE: SUICIDE AND SELF HARM

01 623 5606 Dublin • 09064 24111 Athlone
www.pieta.ie • info@pieta.ie

CHILDLINE: CHILD EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

1800 666666 – Free phone • www.childline.ie

GROW: MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AND RECOVERY

1890 474 474 • www.grow.ie

IACP: COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

01 230 3536 • www.iacp.ie

AWARE: DEPRESSION, BI-POLAR, ANXIETY

1800 80 48 48 - Free Phone • www.aware.ie

SHINE: MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

01 5413715 • www.shine.ie

REACHOUT.COM - ONLINE YOUTH AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

01 764 5666 • general@reachout.com

BODYWHYS – EATING DISORDERS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

01 2107906 Helpline • 01 2834963 Office • www.bodywhys.ie • info@bodywhys.ie

IRISH ADVOCACY NETWORK: PEER ADVOCACY IN MENTAL HEALTH

01 872 8684 • www.irishadvocacynetwork.com • admin@irishadvocacynetwork.com

MENTAL HEALTH IRELAND: MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

01 284 1166 • www.mentalhealthireland.ie • info@mentalhealthireland.ie

Child's Play ABA

Unit 6 Riverview, Kilbeggan, Ireland, N91 H5X9
086 356 6799 • www.childsplayaba.ie • hello@childsplayaba.ie

Communication Tools

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

PECS is a communication system which promotes communication through the exchange of pictures. It provides a means of communication for children who are pre-verbal. Using this system, children from a young age, are taught to exchange a picture of a desired item with another person who in return will give the child the item requested. PECS can be used by a child with ASD to communicate a request, a feeling (e.g., happy or sad), or anything that can be symbolised on a picture. It can be used at home, in the classroom or both. PECS follows a clear program of six individual phases.

Children learn to use their own PECS folder/ communication folder with pictures which are relevant to their own life and people who are close to them and can communicate using this folder.

Visual schedules are used to give a child predictability and independence. Again, they can be used at home, in the classroom or both and it helps a child to know what is coming next. They are prepared to suit the individual needs of the child with regard to age and stage of development.

TEACCH

The TEACCH programme for children with ASD first originated in the USA and has become widely recognised in Ireland as a successful teaching approach. It is an approach that uses structure and routine within the classroom to support children and teenagers with ASD. It helps to provide predictability through the support of visual information. TEACCH is usually used alongside other approaches.

Lámh (Sign Communication System)

Lámh is a sign language system used by children and adults with communication needs and a disability in Ireland. It is an alternative method of communication which can be used with very young children right across the age span. Lámh is used after an assessment is carried out to determine where or not it is a suitable form of communication to use with a child.

For further information on Lámh contact

Lámh Development Office, Innovation Centre, Carlow I.T., Kilkenny Rd, Carlow

Phone 059 9139657

Website www.lamh.org

Email info@lamh.org

Facebook www.facebook.com/lamhsign

YouTube www.youtube.com/user/Lamhsignsystem

Social Stories

Social stories are used by parents and professionals as a method to share social information with young children, teenagers and adults with ASD and also with other social-communication difficulties. Social stories support a meaningful exchange of information which the child/person with ASD or communication difficulties can understand. They are specifically developed to promote appropriate social behaviours in the form of a story.

Passports

Passports are a useful tool for handovers when dealing with professionals or just for recording historical information for yourself. You can have health passports, communication passports, education passports etc but it may be helpful to have one that combines elements of all of these. Westmeath/Longford County Childcare Committees developed a transition passport that suits this function and is very useful when moving between classes, schools or services.



Respectful Communication and Inclusion

Speak Directly to the person

Always communicate directly with the person and not through their personal assistant or companion.

Offer to shake hands (unless hygiene restrictions do not allow e.g., due to covid-19)

However, some people may not wish to do this so do not be offended if this happens, just move on to the conversation. When meeting a person with a disability respect them as you would any person.

Identify yourself when speaking to a person who is blind

Always let a person who is blind know that you are there or if you are leaving the space that they are in so that they feel more comfortable.

Offer your assistance if appropriate but always wait for a response

Do not presume that somebody wants or needs assistance. Then listen to the person's response and/or ask for suggestions or instructions.

Treat adults as adults

Do not talk to an adult as though they were a child. Refrain from patronising or condescending language and never make decisions for a person or talk over them. Also do not be over familiar or invade a person's personal space unless they have invited you to.

Do not hang or lean on a person's wheelchair

Wheelchair users often see their wheelchair as a part of them and just as you would not wish a stranger to lean on your limbs or body, they do not appreciate their chair being leaned on or moved unless they have asked for it to be so.

Listen attentively

If a person takes longer to complete a sentence be patient and wait for them to finish. Do not try to finish the sentence for them or assume you know what they are going to say. Ask for them to repeat it if necessary and never pretend that you understood if you did not. Short questions that require a yes or no answer might sometimes be helpful but remember, they may love to talk! They may not want to only have short yes/no conversations so take your time and listen.

Speak to people at eye level

When speaking to a person who is using a wheelchair then do it at eye level. Sit in a chair or bend down a little to properly include them in the conversation. Also, make room for their wheelchair in the space you are in so that their inclusion is respected and valued.

Not Everyone Uses Eye Contact!

Some conditions mean that a person might not feel comfortable making eye contact, that they cannot or simply would rather not. Respect this and never force it. Some people communicate differently and that's ok!

Tap a person who is deaf on her/his shoulder

To get the attention of someone who is deaf, tap the person on the shoulder or wave a hand or nod in her/his direction in a polite manner (you are not hailing a bus!). Once you have the person's attention speak how you normally would without covering your mouth or changing tone or volume. Be aware also that those who are culturally deaf consider sign to be their first language. Do not assume that they read lips or that they would even want to.

Congratulate New Parents

The birth of a child is a happy occasion, and all children deserve their life to be celebrated. If a child has been born with a disability, they may need more support to experience the world, but their presence is as valid and valued as every other child. Welcome them. Congratulate their parents and family. Offer support after a few days if appropriate but for now, smile, there is a new life to celebrate.

Language Etiquette

When referring to a person's condition some people prefer people first language, however in some instances the condition is mentioned first. For example, some people prefer to be called autistic instead of being called a person with autism as they celebrate their autism as an integral part of who they are. Others feel that they are not defined by their autism and wish to be referred to as a person with autism (hence the term person first language). Be immediately willing to adapt to this and respect the individual's identity.

People not Patients

People with disabilities are not sick. Their condition, be it physical, intellectual, sensory etc, is a part of them. In some circumstances an illness may be causing or exacerbating their disability but never assume a person is sick just because of their disability. In fact, many people will be hurt or offended to be referred to as such. Also do not refer to a condition as a negative e.g., saying "Joe suffers from Down syndrome". Joe does not suffer from Down syndrome; he HAS Down syndrome.

Respect the Individual

Every person is an individual with their own personal traits and characteristics. Never define a person by stereotypical versions of their diagnosis. All people with the same condition are NOT the same person.



The only true disability is the inability to accept and respect differences

TANYA MASSE

Everyone likes a party

When arranging a gathering ensure that its inclusive and accessible. This doesn't just mean the building access. It can mean sensory (lighting or loud music, for example), dietary (allergies, preferences) and more. Be sure to ask what would make a child's experience better and if their parent, carer, or companion might also need support. Having a chat with staff at a venue can sometimes help too. But, as always, if in doubt just ask! Never EVER leave a child out especially from gatherings such as birthday parties that they will hear about from other children in the playground.

Education for the Person with Additional Needs

Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education refers to the education of a child before the age of six. This includes pre-school classes and infant classes in primary schools.

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme provides two free years of childhood care and education. Children are eligible for the ECCE scheme when they are 2 years and 8 months of age and continue until they transfer to primary school (provided they are not older than 5 years and 6 months).

The state supports early interventions for children with special educational needs through the following services:

These can include:

- Early intervention classes attached to mainstream and special schools
- Early intervention settings attached to HSE funded service providers
- Private pre-school settings supported by HSE grants
- Private pre-school settings supported by the ECCE scheme
- Home tuition.

The Access Inclusion Model – AIM

The Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) is a model of supports designed to ensure that children with disabilities can access the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Its goal is to empower pre-school providers to deliver an inclusive pre-school experience, ensuring that every eligible child can meaningfully participate in the ECCE Programme and reap the benefits of quality early years care and education.

This model, rather than focusing on a diagnosis to access supports, focuses on the developmental level of each child and their functional ability and the specific strengths and needs of each individual child.

AIM is modelled on seven levels of support ranging from universal supports to targeted supports which respond to the needs of the child and the service provider.

Level 1-3 will provide for a range of universal supports promoting and supporting an inclusive culture within the pre-school setting. This is achieved by providing early years providers and practitioners with educational and capacity building initiatives.

- **Level 1** - will provide for Inclusion Policy
- **Level 2** - will provide for Inclusion Coordinator Training
- **Level 3** - will provide for training to pre-school in disability and inclusion

Levels 4-7 will provide specific supports for the child and the service:

- **Level 4** - will provide expert advice and supports
- **Level 5** - will provide for specialised equipment, appliances or grants to support access and facilitate a child's participation in pre-school.
- **Level 6** - will provide for specialised therapy services which are deemed critical to allow the child to participate in an ECCE programme. The ECCE service in partnership with the parents should complete the online Access and Inclusion Profile on the AIM website which will be reviewed by the Early Years Specialist Service and if deemed necessary they will contact the HSE.

- **Level 7** - will provide for extra support in the classroom to enable the reduction of staff. Where the child's needs cannot be met without additional supports, an application can be made for additional supports for the service.
- Applications for AIM remain open throughout the year. Contact your pre-school provider to book your child's ECCE place and for AIM details. In the case of children with more complex disabilities, parents and pre-school providers are encouraged to apply early.

For more information go to: www.aim.gov.ie

Westmeath County Childcare Committee CLG 044 9335454

Longford County Childcare Committee CLG 043 3342505

Special needs pre-schools in Westmeath

Lir Pre-School, Tir Croghan, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath - 087 2135290

This pre-school is run by The Muiriosa Foundation with funding assistance from the HSE. The school caters for children with a wide variety of additional needs.

Clonros Pre-School, 4 Coosan Point Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath – 090 6475825

This pre-school has a high staff ratio and specialised teaching providing each child with an individual programme which focusing on such areas as language, social and emotional development.

Child's Play ABA

Our mission at Child's Play ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis) is to make meaningful, effective and evidence-based education easily accessible, understandable and affordable to all children in our community, no matter their presentation.

Unit 6 Riverview, Kilbeggan, Ireland, N91 H5X9

086 356 6799 • www.childsplayaba.ie • hello@childsplayaba.ie

NOTE: There is currently no special needs pre-school in Longford

Home Tuition Scheme

- The home tuition scheme provides for early educational intervention for children with a diagnosis of ASD between 3 and 4 years and where a placement in an early intervention setting is not available.
- Funding is available for children aged between 2.5 years and 3 years with a diagnosis of ASD.
- Funding is not provided for home tuition over the age of 4 years where a school placement is available.
- Parents must recruit their own tutor who is qualified in the relevant sector and is registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland.

For more information go to: www.education.ie

School Age Education

The Department of Education and Skills has responsibility for the provision of school age education. Children are obliged to attend formal schooling from the age of 6 years. Children are educated in either:

- Mainstream class with supports
- Special classes attached to mainstream schools
- Special Schools
- In some cases, at home with a home tutor.

Mainstream Classes

- Many children with disabilities, additional needs or special needs are educated in mainstream classes in mainstream schools.
- Additional help is available from learning support and resource teachers.
- Care needs of children are met by Special Needs Assistants (SNA's).

More information about these supports is also available on the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) website go to: www.ncse.ie

Special Classes in Mainstream Schools

Some children attend special classes in mainstream schools such as speech and language or ASD classes.

ASD units cater for pre-school children, primary and post-primary ages.
For full listing see: www.ncse.ie/special-classes

In 2017 a new model of special educational support allocation was introduced. Schools are now allocated resourced based on the educational profile of the school using indicators such as number of children with complex needs and the social context of the school. Supports including SNAs, resource hours and Special Education Teachers (SET) are then deployed within the school at the discretion of the school itself. These resources are allocated to students with significant support needs in of social, emotional, and behavioural competence, physical and sensory competence and academic competence.

Special Schools

In Ireland there are over 140 special schools catering for particular types of disability and special needs. Such schools cater specifically for children with:

- Mild to moderate General Learning Disability (GLD)
- Visually impaired
- Deaf or those with hearing loss.
- ASD
- Emotional and behavioural disturbance (EBD).

It is advised that parents should approach a special school with the professional assessment of need report for application to a special school.

For a full list of special schools go to: www.ncse.ie/special-classes

School **ST. CHRISTOPHER'S SERVICES**
Leamore Park, Battery Road, Longford

Phone (043) 334 1073 **Email** reception@stchristophers.ie

Website Currently under construction

School **ST. HILDA'S SPECIAL SCHOOL**
Grace Park Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

Phone 090 6475825 EXT 1 or 090 6474076

Email info@sthildas-specialschool.ie

Website www.sthildas-specialschool.ie

School **ST. BRIGID'S SPECIAL SCHOOL**
Harbour St., Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

Phone 044 9342354 **Email** stbrigids.principal@gmail.com

Website www.stbrigidsschoolmullingar.com

School **ST. MARY'S SCHOOL**
Delvin, Co. Westmeath

Phone 087 2305267 **Email** smssouthill@gmail.com

Website www.smsdelvin.scoilnet.ie

Special arrangements for particular disabilities

Some students may be entitled to get an exemption from certain educational requirements. For more information go to: www.ncse.ie

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has published an information booklet for parents. For more information go to: www.ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ChildrenWithSpecialEdNeeds1.pdf

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN Act) 2004 outlines how children are to be educated in an inclusive setting unless this would not be in the best interests of the child. For more information go to: www.sess.ie/sites/default/files/EPSEN_Act_2004.pdf

Exemptions for examination components:

A range of supports are available for students sitting state examinations. Where a student has difficulty with the written part of the exam as a result of a specific learning disability then a range of supports are available such as the provision of a reader or scribe where deemed necessary.

Parents are advised to speak with School Management who in conjunction with staff, particularly Learning Support Teachers decide on eligibility for putting forward students for subject exemptions.

NEPS is the body responsible for conducting assessments in schools and deciding if a student meets the Department of Education and Skills criteria for exemptions

Go to: www.education.ie

Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Examinations RACE

This is where students with various disabilities get extra supports depending on their disability. This system is also a school-based decision initially and there may be a need for a NEPS or other professional assessment to support an application.

Parents should go directly to the schools where their children are enrolled in order to find out what supports, or exemptions are being planned for their child and can also find guidelines on the website www.examinations.ie

Home Tuition Scheme

The home tuition scheme provides a compensatory educational service for students who are unable to attend school for reasons such as chronic illness or for children with SEN in need of an educational placement.

If granted, the home tutor must be recruited by the parents and qualified in the relevant sector and registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland. A site has been set up to assist in finding tutors for the July Provision Scheme, however, it has now evolved to cover all types of tuition and after school tutor requirements.

You can find it here www.julyprovision.com

For further information on criteria and eligibility go to: www.education.ie

July Provision Programme

The July Provision Programme provides funding for an extension of the school year for children with a severe or profound learning disability or children with ASD.

This may be provided through a school or home-based programme which provides funding for 40 hours home-based provision (10 hours per week for 4 weeks in July).

Parents must recruit their own tutor who is qualified in the sector and is registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland. A useful website with a register of tutors and an interactive forum can be found at www.julyprovision.com and its affiliated Facebook page can be found at www.facebook.com/julyprovision

All relevant information is available to download on the Department's website at: www.education.ie

Equipment Grants

Grants are available for furniture, equipment, and other supports to both primary and postprimary schools to fund the purchase of equipment for educational purposes for pupils with additional needs only. The scheme applies to pupils with any disabilities and must be applied for by the school. The level of grant aid is €6500 per special class and an additional €7500 for equipment approved by the Dept of Education and Skills for sensory rooms. Go to: www.education.ie

National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS)

Referral to the NBSS can be made via the school (not the parent or guardian) if the behaviour of a child suggests that need extra support. This is delivered at three levels depending on the support needs of the child (social, academic, emotional) which are:

- **Level 1:** School-wide for all students
- **Level 2:** Targeted intervention
- **Level 3:** Intensive individualised support

Youthreach

Youthreach is a training and work experience programme provided by the Department of Education and Skills, for early school leavers aged 15 – 20 and generally lasts for between 1 and 2 years (with some flexibility). The programme offers young people the opportunity to identify options within adult life, providing them with opportunities to gain certification in an area of interest (QQI accredited or Junior Certificate). Youthreach is an alternative option for early school leavers to acquire an education and skills for future work or further education. Youthreach can be a great support for those who may have struggled in traditional second level academic settings or those with learning difficulties and promotes positive mental health and wellbeing.

Go to: www.longfordwestmeath.etb.ie

Third Level Education

AHEAD - The Association for Higher Education Access and Disability.

AHEAD is an independent non-profit organisation working to promote inclusive full access to and participation in third level education and employment for students with disabilities in Ireland. AHEAD provides information to students and graduates with disabilities, teachers, guidance counsellors and parents on disability issues in education. The website provides information about the application process and highlights important things to think about as a student with a disability seeking to get a college place.

AHEAD also provides information for graduates who have completed third level and are seeking employment and have developed a mentored work placement scheme called Willing Able Mentoring or WAM. For additional information and stories from adults or professionals in third level education check out the AHEAD Journal on their website.

You can also access the Better Options College fair on their website which is perfect for young people with disabilities looking for post leaving cert options or those returning to education.

Service	AHEAD East Hall, UCD Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Phone	01 7164396 or WAM (post graduate mentored work placement) 01 7168844
Website	www.ahead.ie
Email	ahead@ahead.ie

Funds for Students with Disabilities in further or higher education

www.studentfinance.ie is a source of information on financial support for further and higher education. The service provides funding to further and higher education colleges for the provision of services and supports to full-time students with disabilities.

Go to: www.studentfinance.ie/mp7235/student-assistance-fund/index.html

Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is an alternative admissions scheme offered by some colleges to third level education for students whose disabilities have had a significant impact on their second level education. DARE offers reduced points places and is known as a supplementary entry option, however, to date only 18 colleges offer DARE access routes.

Go to: www.accesscollege.ie/dare/



Transport Supports

School Transport

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) provide school transport services for young people with special educational needs.

You can apply to your child's school for special transport arrangements. There are criteria to be met in order to qualify for transport arrangements. The school will then apply to the DES for school transport with consent from parents and with the support of the SENO'S.

School Transport Scheme

Where the transport cannot be provided, you may be eligible for a Special Transport Scheme to help with the cost of making private transport arrangements. The application form can be found at <https://schooltransport.buseireann.ie/Account/Register>

Escort Provision

If a child's care and safety needs require an escort, applications can be made by the SENO to the Department of Education and Skills to employ an escort to accompany the child.

To apply for the Special Transport Scheme contact:

Service	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS School Transport Section, Portlaoise Rd, Tullamore, Co. Offaly		
Phone	057 9325466/7		
Website	www.education.ie	Email	School-transport@education.gov.ie

JAM Card

The JAM card, also now available as an app, has been developed as a simple, effective and discreet way to allow people to know that a person may need 'Just A Minute' due to a range of different communication barriers. These can be physical, intellectual, sensorial etc. You can find the JAM card on their website or pick up a free plastic JAM card in train and bus stations. Their website is www.jamcard.org or they can be contacted at Tel: 028 9043 6400

The Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland-DDAI

Works in partnership with people with disabilities through promoting independence and equal opportunity by offering supports, services information and advocacy for drivers and mobility requirements.

Go to: www.ddai.ie

Irish Wheelchair Association - IWA

The IWA provide a range of transport and mobility supports and services to people with limited mobility, go to: www.iwa.ie/services/motoring

Both the DDAI and the IWA offer information and supports on the following Schemes:

- **The Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Scheme:** Provide a range of tax reliefs for disabled drivers and disabled passengers. Disabled drivers can qualify for a significant reduction on VRT (Vehicle Registration Tax) and VAT (Value Added Tax) on the purchase of a vehicle adapted for their particular disability
- **Disabled Persons Parking Permit or European Parking Card:** This Scheme provides free parking for disabled drivers and passengers in Ireland. To apply for this, you must write to the Disabled Drivers Association or the Irish Wheelchair Association.
- **Free Travel Pass:** People with a disability may qualify for a free travel pass allowing to travel free of charge on public transportation. In some situations, a person may be entitled to accompany you, free of charge with a Free Travel Companion Pass.

Drivers may be entitled to other schemes including:

- Fuel Grant Scheme
- Toll Roads Exemption
- Motor Tax Scheme

For more information on these schemes and more on transport supports go to:

www.ddai.ie www.iwa.ie/services/motoring www.citizensinformation.ie

ATHLONE REGIONAL CENTRE

Clonbrusk Resource Centre Coosan Road,
Athlone, Co Westmeath

Phone: 09064 71118

Email: athlone@iwa.ie

MULLINGAR SPRINGFIELD CENTRE

Delvin Road, Mullingar, Co Westmeath

Phone: 044 9347511

Email: mullingar@iwa.ie

KENAGH ENTERPRISE CENTRE

Kenagh, Co Longford

Phone: 043 3322992

Email: kenagh@iwa.ie

Local Link - Longford Westmeath Community Transport LTD

Provide safe and secure public transport services in local and rural Ireland. Local Link accept Free Travel Pass.

Service LOCAL LINK

Áras an Chontae, Mount Street, Mullingar, Co Westmeath

Website: www.locallinklwr.ie

Phone: 044 9340801

Email: wr@locallink.ie

Donal Murtagh Mobility Ltd

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and
Conversion Specialists

Phone: 090 6481050 / 087 8400403 /
087 3994500

Website: www.dmmobility.ie

Wheelchair Cars Ireland - Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

Glasson Village, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

Phone: 090 6439438 / 087 4662895

Website: www.wci.ie

Email: sales@wci.ie

The Decision Support Service



In 2015 the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act was passed so that people would have better support to make choices about their own lives.



Sometimes people need support to make these choices. Everyone needs different types of support in different ways. To help with this the Act said that a new service should be created. This is called the Decision Support Service.



The Decision Support Service has roles which include keeping a register of all support arrangements and making sure that they are being carried out in the best way for the person.



They will register complaints and are responsible for looking into these.



They also provide services such as training and raising awareness. This is so that more people know about the right to make choices and how people can be supported to do this.



You can get support if you are 18 years old or over in several ways. If you need support now you can apply for:

- Decision Making Assistance Agreement
- Co-Decision Making Agreement
- Decision Making Representation Order



If you think you might need support in the future, you can apply for:

- Enduring Power of Attorney
- Advance Healthcare Directive



For more information go to the Decision Support Service website at www.decisionsupportservice.ie

Housing Supports

Local Authority Housing in Longford and Westmeath are the main providers of social housing for people who cannot afford to buy their own homes. Local authority housing is allocated according to eligibility and need. Rents are based on the household's ability to pay. Specific criteria need to be met by applicants to qualify for Local Authority Housing.

Social housing support can provide Council Housing to those eligible if you are applying for support based on a disability you are required to provide:

- A consultant's certificate specifying the nature of the disability and noting whether the condition is degenerative.
- Occupational therapist's report which may highlight any specific accommodation requirements.

WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

County Buildings, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath 044 93 32119

WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL

Civic Offices, Athlone, Co. Westmeath 090 64 42185

LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Great Water Street, Longford 043 3343409
housing@longfordcoco.ie

Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) can receive nominations from the County Council to provide social housing for people who cannot afford to buy their own homes.

Housing associations provide affordable rented housing for people who cannot afford to pay private sector rents or buy their own homes. Go to www.housing.gov.ie

For further information contact:

Service	IRISH COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL HOUSING 50 Merrion Square East, Dublin 2		
Phone	(01) 661 8334		
Website	www.icsh.ie	Email	info@icsh.ie

NOTE: A person may only be in receipt of supports with one housing body.

Rental Accommodation Scheme RAS If you are getting Rent Supplement for a long period generally more than 18 months and you are in need of long-term housing, you may be eligible for the (RAS). The scheme is run by local authorities who arrange short and long-term leases with private landlords for certain properties. The local authority makes the final decision regarding who is eligible under the scheme.

The Mobility Aids Grant Scheme provides grants for works designed to address mobility problems in the home such as stair lifts, access ramps and grab rails. The grant is primarily for older people but people with disability can also access the scheme. It is administered by the local authority.

A Housing Adaptation Grant is available where changes need to be made to a home to make it suitable for a person with a physical, sensory or intellectual disability or mental health difficulty to live in.

Applying for Social Housing Support Easy-to-Read

- You can apply for social housing support once you are 18 years old or over and would struggle to pay for a home by yourself.
- You get this support from your local authority or an Approved Housing Body. Your local authority is your local County or City Council.
- An Approved Housing Body is a group that provides housing and sometimes the supports that you might need to live independently. Sometimes your disability services provider might be an Approved Housing Body.
- There are different types of support that you can get which include:
 - Renting a home from your local authority.
 - Renting a home from a landlord privately and getting money to help you from schemes like the Housing Assistance Payment Scheme (HAP) and the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS).
- There is a handy **Easy-to-Read guide called Housing Options** that you can read by The Housing Agency. It tells you about all the supports you might be able to get including grants other schemes.



Day Services, Residential and Respite Services

A number of organisations provide these various services in Longford and Westmeath. They are provided and managed by private, voluntary (charitable) and public organisations.

- Day centres or day care centres provide a range of services. They include social and rehabilitative services, recreational services, sports and leisure facilities and a combination of medical and rehabilitative services.
- Residential services provide accommodation for people with a disability who are unable to live in their family home. In most cases a financial contribution will be made by an adult with a disability.
- Respite care service provides alternative family or private care to allow the individual with a disability, carer or parents to have a short break, holiday or rest. It can vary in length, from a few hours to a number of days/nights. There are schemes called share a break or home sharing where the person with additional needs goes to stay with another family who can provide for their needs.
- Independent living supports, promotes and enables equal opportunity and choice for people with disabilities. Independent living advocates for full participation in society and achieves this by working in partnership with people with disabilities by supporting and developing skills. It is generally funded through the HSE and administered through various service providers.
- Outreach work identifies and highlights services within the community, to people with disabilities that may support that person.

Listed below are the various organisations that provide these services

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S SERVICES

Leamore Park, Battery Road, Longford, Co. Longford

Phone: (043) 33 41769

Email: reception@stchristophers.ie

Website: www.stchristophers.ie

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stchristopherslongford

Provide: Day service and Respite

PHOENIX CENTRE

Mount Carmel Hospital, Dublin Road, Longford

Phone: 043 3332477 / 043 3332497

Provide: Day service for adults with physical disabilities aged 18-65 years

IRISH WHEELCHAIR ASSOCIATION

Longford and Westmeath

Phone: 043 332 2992 / 090 647 1118 **Email:** kenagh@iwa.ie / athlone@iwa.ie

Website: www.iwa.ie

Provide: Day service and respite

REHAB CARE

Longford and Westmeath

Phone: 043 3344043 / 090 649 1452

Email: sally.budd@rehabcare.ie - Longford, veronica.cullinan@rehabcare.ie - Athlone

Website: www.rehabcare.ie

Provide: Residential and Outreach

GALRO

Mill House, Killashee St., Longford

Phone: 043 3349991

Email: info@galroireland.ie

Website: www.galroireland.ie

Provide: Residential and Independent living support in both counties

NUA HEALTHCARE

Longford and Westmeath

Phone: 045 856 592

Email: info@nuahealthcare.ie

Website: www.nuahealthcare.ie

Provide: Day service, residential and independent living support. Support available for both children and adults with any form of disability. Homecare supports also provided for.

PRAXIS CARE

Longford and Westmeath

Phone: 041 687 1904

Email: info@praxiscare.ie

Website: www.praxiscare.ie

Provide: Day service, residential, independent living supports and outreach. Supporting children and adults with a range of disabilities.

ST. HILDA'S SERVICES

Grace Park Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

Phone: 090 6475825

Email: info@sthildas.ie

Website: www.sthildas.ie

Provide: Day service, residential and respite

LOUGH SHEEVER CENTER

Mullingar Hospital, Co. Westmeath

Phone: 044 9384372

Provide: Day service and residential

CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Longford and Westmeath

Phone: 043 3331702 - Longford, 044 9375610 - Westmeath

Email: wmeathcil@iolfree.ie or info@longfordcil.ie

Provide: Independent living support for adults aged 18+

MUIRIOSIA FOUNDATION

2 Valley Bungalows, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

Phone: 044 9340980

Email: info@scjms.ie

Website: www.muiriosa.ie

Provide: Residential and respite in both counties

For those requiring long term care in a nursing home the Nursing Homes Support Scheme, also known as Fair Deal, provides financial support - go to: www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/nhss/

Employment Supports and Services

The Supported Employment Scheme

This is a service provided by the Department of Social protection to help and advice jobseekers with a disability. The services offered by the Supported Employment Scheme include needs assessments, employment plans, career planning, job sourcing, support and mentoring.

EmployAbility Midlands

EmployAbility Midlands is an employment support service for people with a disability or a health concern. EmployAbility acts as a facilitator between Job Seekers and Employers in gaining employment.

Employment grants and supports are available to support the person in the workplace. EmployAbility can support the job seeker in accessing these grants which include:

- Workplace Equipment Adaption Grant – Provides Funding towards the cost of modifications or equipment that may contribute to support a person with a disability in employment.
- Job Interview interpreter Grant – for the person who requires an interpreter to attend a job interview.
- Personal Reader Grant – for visually impaired job seekers requiring support with job related reading.
- Employee Retention Grant – can support employers in retaining the employee who has a disability that effects the ability to carry out the job

To apply for services offered by EmployAbility you can contact your local Intreo Office in the Department of Social Protection

Longford Government Buildings, Ballinalee Road, Longford • 043 33 40000

Athlone Government Offices, Grace Park Rd, Athlone, Co. Westmeath • 090 64 49600

Mullingar Blackhall Street, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath • 076 62 85100

Or contact EmployAbility

Longford 086 3872855 • longford@employabilitymidlands.com

Athlone 086 3842496 • athlone@employabilitymidlands.com

Mullingar 086 8338027 • mullingar@employabilitymidlands.com

National Learning Network

The National Learning Network (NLN) offers people with disabilities a variety of adaptable training courses and support services to suit their needs. The courses provide people with the skills and recognized certified training in preparation to enter the workforce.

Go to: www.nln.ie

For information on services in your area please contact the following:

Longford 6 Grafton Court, Longford, Co. Longford • 043 3342255

Athlone Belhavel Training Services,
Golden Island, Athlone, Co. Westmeath • 090 6479293

Mullingar 1st Floor,
Fairgreen House, Green Bridge, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath • 044 9345117

Irish Association of Supported Employment (IASE)

The Irish Association of Supported Employment is an organisation set up to promote a system called Supported Employment.

Supported Employment supports people with disabilities to find and maintain suitable and fairly paid employment.

It also supports employers in sourcing the best person to suit their organization.

Go to www.iase.ie

Service	LONGFORD EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT AND INFORMATION CENTRE	
	11a, 2 Mastertech Business Park, Athlone Road, Co. Longford	
Phone	043 3347515	Email idicentreservices@gmail.com

The National Council for the Blind of Ireland

The National Council for the Blind of Ireland provide a rehabilitation programme called the Foundation Course for People with Vision Impairments, this course helps trainees to access further education, training or employment. Go to: www.ncbi.ie

Useful Links To Have In Your Toolkit

Policy and Legislation

- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2002
<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/act/30/enacted/en/html>
- The Disability Act 2005
- Transforming Lives 2016
- Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021
- Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018
- United Nations Convention on the Rights a Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child (UNCRC).
www.nda.ie
- Committee on the Future of Healthcare; The Sláintecare Report 2017
[Click here to view document](#)



Benefits and Allowances

Financial Supports

The Department of Social Protection as well as other organisations including the HSE and Revenue Commissioners, provide certain allowances and entitlements for people with particular special needs including those who are carers for people with special needs. Rates of allowances are subject to change so check with the local Citizens Information office or your Local Social Welfare Office.

Some of the more common allowances include the following:

Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA):

This is a monthly payment to the care giver of a child aged under 16 with a severe disability, who requires ongoing care and attention in excess of that of a typical child of the same age.

The Department of Social Protection assess applications for this allowance.

To Qualify:

- The child must have a severe disability that is likely to last for at least 1 year requiring continuous care
- Be aged under 16 (after 16 the child can apply for a means tested Disability Allowance)
- Live at home with the person claiming the allowance for 5 or more days a week
- Meet the medical criteria

In addition, the person claiming the allowance for the child must:

- Provide for the care of the child
- Reside in the State

The Department's Medical Assessor looks at all the following before giving an opinion on whether your child meets the medical criteria:

- The history of the case
- All medical reports received (your GP fills out a medical report and you should include reports from any relevant specialists)
- Your description of the care and attention required by your child. (The form allows you to state what extra care your child needs under a number of headings.)

Children who are being cared for on a full-time basis in residential homes or other institutions are not eligible for the allowance. However, children in residential care who go home may receive a half-rate payment if they are at home for 2 days or more per week. If the child is getting medical or other treatment in hospital payment may continue for up to 13 weeks.

To apply, fill in a Domiciliary Care Allowance form. You can also get an application form by texting FORM DCA followed by your name and address to 51909 (standard text rates apply) or from your Intreo Centre or social welfare local office or local Citizens Information Service.

NOTE: All Counties send application form to this address:

DOMICILIARY CARE ALLOWANCE

Social Welfare Services Office Department of Social Protection College Road, Sligo

Phone (071) 915 7100

Lo-Call 1890 500 000

Website www.welfare.ie

If you wish to talk to someone face-to-face about your entitlements, you can visit your local Citizens Information Centre, local social welfare office or Intreo Centre.

Carer's Allowance:

Carer's allowance is a payment to people, who reside in Ireland and are looking after a person who is in need of support due to age, disability or illness.

To qualify for a Carer's Allowance you must

- Live with or provide full time care and attention to the person in need of care
- Be a residing in the state
- Be over 18
- Not in employment or education over 15 hours per week

The person being cared for must be:

- Over 16 and dependent on full time care
- Or under 16 and carer must have previously qualified for Domiciliary Care Allowance

Carer's Benefit

Carer's Benefit is a payment made to people who have been paying PRSI (Pay Related Social Insurance), in Ireland, who leave the workforce to care for a person or persons in need of fulltime care. This benefit is payable for a total period of 104 weeks (2 years) for each person being cared for.

Carer's Support Grant

The Carer's Support Grant (formally Respite Care Grant) is an annual payment made to carers who have successfully applied, by the Department of Social Protection. Carer's can use the grant in whatever way they wish. There is an initial application process and thereafter. In June of each year the Department of Social Protection pays the grant automatically to carers getting Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit, Domiciliary Care Allowance or Prescribed Relative's Allowance from the Department. Only one Carer's Support Grant can be paid for each person getting care. The current total of a full rate Carer Support Grant is €1700.

For more information and to get a Carer's Support Grant application form, contact your local social welfare local office or Citizens Information Centre.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

Carers Support Grant Section PO Box 10085 Dublin 2

Phone (01) 673 2222

Website www.welfare.ie

Disability Allowance

Disability Allowance is a means-tested weekly payment for people with a disability aged between 16 and 65, whose income falls below certain limits.

To Qualify:

- The claimant must have an injury, disease or physical and mental disability that has continued or may be expected to continue for at least one year and restricts the ability to work
- Be aged between 16 and 65
- Satisfy a means test
- Be a resident in Ireland

For further details on eligibility and more information on the application process for these grants contact your local Social Protection Office Intreo Centre:

LONGFORD

Intreo Centre Longford, Government Buildings, Ballinlee Road, N39 E4EO (043) 3340000

MULLINGAR

Blackhall Street, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, N91FY07 (076) 6285100

ATHLONE

Government Offices, Grace Park Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, N37 K7N2 (090) 6449600

For more information go to www.citizensinformation.ie

Medical Card

A medical card may be issued by the HSE to the parents of a child or children with special needs or to the child themselves if they are over 16. Medical cards are means tested and the named holder of the card entitles the person to a suite of health services free of charge.

This includes:

- GP services
- Prescription medication (not all)
- Public hospital services
- Dental services

If you do not qualify for a medical card, you may be eligible for a GP Visit Card

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR LOCAL HEALTH OFFICE

Phone Lo-call 1890 252 919

Email clientregistration@hse.ie

You can apply on line for a medical card at www.medicalcard.ie

GP Visit Cards

If an applicant does not qualify for a Medical Card, an application for a GP visit Card may be successful. A GP visit card allows individuals and families to visit their family doctor for free.

GP Visit Cards - Children Under Eight

The under 8s GP visit card covers:

- Free GP Visits
- Assessments at age 2 and 5
- Out-of-Hours Urgent GP Care
- Care for children with asthma

Medication costs and hospital charges are not covered.

To apply for a GP Visit Card for children under six, access a form from the link www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/schemes/mc/gpvc/under6applicationform.pdf

and send to:

GP Visit Card – Under 6s, Po Box 12629, Dublin 11

Lo-call 1890 252 919 • www.hse.ie

Incapacitated Child Tax Credit

You can claim an Incapacitated Child Tax Credit if you are the parent or guardian of a child who is permanently incapacitated, either physically or mentally and

- Became so before reaching 21 years of age or
- Becomes permanently incapacitated after reaching the age of 21, but while still in fulltime education or while training for a trade or profession for a minimum of 2 years.

Go to: www.citizensinformation.ie

There are a number of additional benefits, allowances and schemes in relation to people with disabilities, these include but not limited to:

- Revenue Allowances and VAT refunds
- Medical and Surgical Appliances
- Blind Pension
- Household Benefits Package
- Fuel Allowance
- Homemakers Scheme

Further Information including the application process for these can be found at your local Citizens Information Centre.

Cross Border Directive - CBD

The HSE operates the Cross-Border Healthcare Directive (CBD), for people entitled to public patient healthcare in Ireland who are seeking to avail of that healthcare in another EU/EEA* member state. The CBD can provide for the cost of publicly funded healthcare in Ireland to be availed of in an EU/EEA* member state and the costs to be reimbursed subject to application terms. Patients must familiarise themselves with the administration requirements of the HSE prior to availing of cross border healthcare in order to confirm entitlement or for reimbursement of treatment costs. The HSE has established a National Contact Point (NCP) office for the administration of the CBD in Ireland and the contact details for the NCP are:

NATIONAL CONTACT POINT

Cross-Border Healthcare Directive, St. Canice's Hospital, Dublin Road, Kilkenny

Phone 056 778 4546

Email crossborderdirective@hse.ie

Additional Supports and Services

The following services and supports may have been mentioned throughout the directory; however, they provide a range of other services as outlined below.

ÁIRC Midlands – Supporting children and young adults with additional needs

Operating in Westmeath, Longford, Offaly and Roscommon Áirc Midlands supports children and their whole support circle which may include family, friends, professionals, babysitters etc. They take additional need to include disability, long term illness and autism. Supports include inclusive and accessible family events and activities, workshops, information days, training events for support staff, disability awareness training, liaising and collaboration with other organisations and statutory bodies, emergency respite and equipment grants.

Service	ÁIRC MIDLANDS	
Purpose	Support organisation for children with any disability and their family and friends. Offer a range of supports including emotional, educational financial and social.	
Phone	085 1194041	Email aircmidlands@gmail.com
Facebook	www.facebook.com/aircmidlands	

Mullingar Arch Club

Mullingar Arch Club is a social club that caters for teenagers and adults with additional needs. They are 100% volunteer led and driven. Their committee consists of 5 committee members and a volunteer base of 21 people. Also managed by a member team of 5 people with additional needs, they are fully inclusive and have members with autism, Down syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, Intellectual Disability, ADHD, and hyperactivity disorder. Approximately 25% of their members also have physical disabilities, including sight and hearing loss. They are affiliated to the National Federation of Arch Clubs founded in 1975

Service	MULLINGAR ARCH CLUB Mullingar, County Westmeath
Phone:	Clár 087 750 2313 or Katie 087 219 8329
Facebook:	https://www.facebook.com/mullingararchclub/

Irish Wheelchair Association IWA

The IWA provides a suite of services to people with disabilities and mobility difficulties within the home and in the community. These services include:

- Enhanced Homecare Services
- Youth services and activities
- Resource and outreach
- Fundraising
- Motoring
- Assisted living

SWAN Ireland

A support network for children living with a 'syndrome without a name' and their families, in Ireland. They are a specifically dedicated support group for children and people with no known diagnosis, and their families, living in Ireland. There are nearly 70 members nationwide in a private Facebook group.

SWAN is a term used to describe when a person is believed to have a genetic condition where genetic testing was unable to identify a genetic cause. Children might be described as having global development delay. There are three main reasons why a child's genetic condition remains undiagnosed:

- A condition that has never been seen before.
- An unusual presentation of a known condition.
- Genetic changes are of unknown significance
- (SWAN UK, 2017, What does SWAN or being undiagnosed mean?)

Email: syndromeswithoutanameireland@gmail.com

Instagram @swanireland

Twitter @Irelandswan

Infinity Friends

Infinity friends is a social club based in Athlone for autistic children and young people age 3+. With weekly meet ups for activities and free play time it's an outlet for parents as well as the children who can come and chat and be themselves in a safe and supportive environment. For more information or to enquire about joining up contact Claire Earley at Tel: (085) 106 7276

Infinity Friends

Claire Earley

Phone 085 106 7276

Website www.infinityfriends.ie

RARE Ireland

Rare Ireland is a parent run charity supporting families living with rare conditions in Ireland. Set up in 2017 by 2 mothers who's daughters were both diagnosed with rare conditions. This support network was formed after both families witnessed the lack of support and information available to them at the time of their daughter's diagnosis. Rare Ireland offers a diverse range of supports including emotional, financial, and educational, and advocates at all levels including by engaging with researchers to ensure that people with expertise by experience are heard and represented.

Website www.rareireland.ie

Tel 089 422 0228

Email rareireland@gmail.com

Muiriosa Foundation

The Muiriosa Foundation provides a range of services and supports to people with an intellectual disability including their families. Some services include residential services, respite, day services, education, and multidisciplinary supports. These services are available across six midland counties including Laois, Offaly, Westmeath, Meath, Longford, Kildare, Tipperary, Kilkenny and Wicklow. Our headquarters are at Moore Abbey, Monasterevin, Co. Kildare.

Service	MUIRIOSIA FOUNDATION
	Moore Abbey, Monasterevin, Co. Kildare
Phone	045 525327
	Email info@scjms.ie

Guardian Ad Litem and Rehabilitation Office GALRO

GALRO advocate for and promote the best interests of children involved in court proceedings. This process considers the wishes and feelings of a child and presents them to the courts. GALRO offer independent needs assessment and supports access to services for people with a disability. GALRO specialises in supporting those with Intellectual Disability, autism and children with communication or emotional regulation challenges. They provide services including respite, residential care, community-based mentoring and home support.

Service	GALRO
	Mill House, Killashee Street, Longford, Co. Longford
Phone	043 3349991
	Website www.galroireland.ie

St. Christopher's Services

St. Christopher's provide a comprehensive range of services to people with intellectual disabilities from childhood to adulthood based on individual needs. Services are provided in consultation with individuals, family members, staff members and services. These services include:

- Classes for children with ASD and profound disabilities
- St Christopher's Special School
- Adult day services providing training
- Supported Employment
- Residential and respite services

There is a suite of other services provided by St Christopher's

Service	ST CHRISTOPHER'S SERVICES	
	Leamore Park, Battery Road, Longford	
Website	Currently under construction	
Email	reception@stchristophers.ie	Phone 043 3341769 / 043 3345698

Rehab Care

Rehab Care provide a range of individual needs-led services and supports to people with varying disabilities aged 18-65. Services include:

- Resource centres providing support and activities through one to one or group activities
- Respite services and home help
- Supported accommodation and independent living

For Longford and Westmeath services

Phone 042 9337417 **Website** www.rehabcare.ie

Praxis Care

Praxis Care provide accommodation and support services for children and adults with learning disabilities including acquired brain injury. Services are based on Individual needs and promote independence.

Website www.praxisprovides.com
Phone 041 6871904 **Email** info@praxiscare.ie

Nua Healthcare

Nua Healthcare provide care to people with disabilities based on the individual need. Independence is promoted through life skills development.

Services include:

- Residential Services supporting a range of disabilities
- Person centred day services
- Community Outreach
- Home Care Services
- Assessments and Diagnostic services

Website www.nuahealthcare.ie
Phone 045 856592 **Email** info@nuahealthcare.ie

Independent People with Disabilities

Set up in 2012 it represents and advocates on behalf of people with disabilities in Westmeath, Longford and Roscommon.

Service	INDEPENDENT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	
	96 Seán Costello Street, Athlone, Co. Westmeath	
Email:	independentpwd@gmail.com	Phone: 090 6470044 / 086 8586135

Good2Talk

Counselling and Psychotherapy Support Services

Service	GOOD2TALK	
	1 College Street, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath	
Website:	www.good2talk.ie	Email: info@good2talk.ie
Phone:	044 9332531 / 087 6088291	

National Disability Authority

The National Disability Authority (NDA) provides information and advice to the Government on policy and practice relevant to the lives of people with a disability. They are an independent statutory body also tasked with assisting the Minister for Justice and Equality in the co-ordination of disability policy. Their website contains extensive information on topics such as rights, entitlements, supports, living aids and research and many publications on a wide range of issues.

Website:	www.nda.ie	
Phone:	01 6080 400	Email: accessofficer@nda.ie

Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency DESSA

DESSA works with community development organisations to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities and their families at community level through their engagement in local community, providing advocacy and training where it is most effective. Go to: www.dessa.ie

Barnardos

Barnardos is an organisation who works directly with vulnerable children and families, including those with additional needs, providing services and support around Ireland.

Go to: www.barnardos.ie

To make a referral to a Barnardos centre, simply contact the nearest Barnardos centre. You can contact by phone, email, post or by calling into the centre.

Service:	BARNARDOS REGIONAL OFFICE	
	7 Ashdale, Athlone, Co Westmeath	
Phone:	090 6476422	Email: info@athlone.barnardos.ie

Service:	BARNARDOS CENTRE	
	1 Belville Apartments, The Longford Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath	
Phone:	044 93 352 82	Email: info@mullingar.barnardos.ie

Jack and Jill Foundation:

The Jack and Jill Children's Foundation provides direct funding, to families of children up to the age of 5, with a range of neurodevelopmental issues including brain injury, severe Cerebral Palsy and genetic diagnosis. They also provide end of life care to children under 5 regardless of diagnosis. The Jack and Jill Foundation endeavour to support families so that they may continue to care for their child at home. Once a referral is received you are contacted by the regional Specialist Children's Liaison Nurse (SCLN) who supports the family in developing their care supports and advocates where needed.

FOR INFORMATION ON LONGFORD AND WESTMEATH SUPPORTS

contact the regional SCLN (Cathy) on 087 6004118

Website: www.jackandjill.ie

Email: cathy@jackandjill.ie

County Childcare Committees CCCs

The CCCs are the local agents operating on behalf of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The CCC's are often the first port of call for both parents and childcare providers when trying to access information and supports on early years care and education and the national childcare programmes. The CCC's have played a pivotal role in the implementation on the Access and Inclusion Model locally, supporting both childcare providers and parents to access supports.

County Childcare Committees provide:

- Information and Supports on Access and Inclusion Model AIM
- Support for access to the national childcare programmes for all children including specific supports for children with additional needs
- Information, signposting and guidance to local service providers and parents on early education and disability supports including how to access and apply for AIM supports.
- Provision of training including Continuous Professional Development to service providers on AIM/ Equality and Diversity
- Signposting of all complex disability queries from parents and service providers.

LONGFORD COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE

Richmond Street, Longford Town, N39 YY75

Phone: 043 3342505

WESTMEATH COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEE

Old Mullingar Area Office, Mount Street, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, N91 E430

Phone: 044 9335454

NALA - National Adult Literacy Agency

The National Adult Literacy Agency is an independent charity committed to making sure people with literacy and numeracy difficulties can fully take part in society and have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs. They currently have a comprehensive range of online supports. Go to: www.nala.ie or Tel: **1800 20 20 65**

Adult Learning Service

Adult Learning Services provide free adult literacy support and tuition to adults needing support with reading, writing, maths or spelling. This service is needs led and provided either on a one to one or a group basis. Basic education courses are offered including Family Learning programs which are certified.

Go to: www.longfordwestmeathetb.ie

Inclusion Ireland

Inclusion Ireland is a national rights-based advocacy organisation who promotes the rights, independence, dignity and equality of people with an intellectual disability and their families. The Vision of Inclusion Ireland is that of people with an intellectual disability living and participating in the community with equal rights as citizens, to live the life of their choice to their fullest potential. Their website publications all include easy read versions in plain English and their research, workshops and conferences are informed and led by people with disabilities such as their recent 19 Stories of Social Inclusion.

Go to: www.inclusionireland.ie or Tel: **01 855 9891**

Disability Federation of Ireland

The Disability Federation of Ireland supports organisations who Enable People with Disabilities and acts as an advocate for the Voluntary Disability Sector.

Go to: www.disability-federation.ie

Athlone Access Awareness

Made up of volunteers from a variety of backgrounds and lived experience including those who have experienced access barriers due to disability, whether they be physical, sensorial or attitudinal. Working to their motto together we can disable inequality they work with voluntary and statutory groups at all levels to improve access, egress and inclusion of all people with disabilities guided by the Irish Wheelchair Association Best Practice Guidelines.

For more info call **086 306 4785**

Parent Tip

“Link with parents of children with similar needs as a support contact.

Have a chat over a cup of tea. Sometimes having a chat about the positives and how other children are getting on helps because we tend to automatically Google and read all about all the negatives”

Parent Tip

“There is no time limit on learning, no such thing as too late. Children progress when they are ready. You don't have to spend every penny on private therapy and fancy equipment. Spend time doing what your child loves and build some learning in through a natural day. Your job is to be a mammy not a therapist”



Parent Tip

“In picking a school have an open mind. Mainstream school doesn't have to be the goal or measurement of success. Look at all options and take into consideration the placement recommendations for your child but also trust your gut. Do your research. There are full reports on the DoE website about each school”

Parent Tip

“Let the receptionist know straight away when you go in to about your child's needs and don't be afraid to ask if there is a quiet space where you can wait. I find a visual schedule helpful so we work through the checklist for checking ears, throat, eyes, listen to the chest and take temperature, and we tick them off together”



Parent Tip

“If you feel unheard at appointments or you’re struggling to understand, speak up. Don’t leave the appointment until you feel heard and until you understand more”



Parent Tip

“Have a paper trail for everything. If you have a call with a therapist or doctor follow it up with an email including what the next step is and timeframe. Make all the noise in the world you need to when advocating for your child and don’t apologise for it”



Parent Tip

“I became overwhelmed by visits and paperwork. My friend told me to have a ‘not today’ drawer when any reports etc came. Put them in the drawer and don’t take them out again unless you need them. The negativity in those reports can be very upsetting. Focus on what your child can do, not what medical professionals say they can’t”



Parent Tip

“When going to an IEP meeting write your list of questions beforehand. Take notes and get copies of any paperwork you can”
“Have some goals in mind for your child in order of priority for your family and for them. They may differ from the schools. Make sure you get a full say..”



Parent Tip

“It is ok to take a break from paperwork...tweak it to what suits best for your family and your child’s needs. If you feel pressured you can say no and revisit things when in a better place”



Parent Tip

“Breathe! Every day is a learning day. Remember, you are not alone”

“It’s a journey... an emotional educational journey for me”

“You know your child better than anyone else, go with your gut and remember you are a good parent.”

Parent Tip

“Not all of the so called experts actually get it. They get quality sleep, rest etc, you don’t. Sometimes they give you a list of things that you need to do when you can just about manage to read the list, never mind do anything on it. Take everything one at a time. If you feel overwhelmed, step back, take a break from it.”

Parent Tip

Before you meet the CDNT or have any appointments write down any questions you have. Ask for copies of any reports. That goes both ways though. If you get any new reports from school or medical professionals make sure to share them with the CDNT. You are an important part of the team so don’t forget that.



WCD'S ATHLONE & MULLINGAR AFTER SCHOOL CHILDCARE

Our Afterschool Childcare Services have evolved from our Homework Clubs and offer afterschool childcare supports in schools and local community facilities.

We operate 6 different centres, 5 in Athlone and 1 in Mullingar.

Our Afterschool Services are funded through the National Childcare Investment Programme, under the Affordable Childcare Scheme from the Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs. The Services are also funded and supported by the Dept. of Employment Affairs & Social Protection, and by Westmeath County Childcare Committee.

Our After-School services, operates from the start of the school year until July, and includes full day camps at Halloween, Easter and in July, when the schools are closed. After School services are available, 4 hours a day from Monday-Friday during the school year, and includes homework supports, art and cultural activities, sports, fun and games.

We have permanent staff in each of our premises, plus staff employed on work experience programmes such as Community Employment and TUS. Our staff are highly qualified up to QQI Level 8 and have years' experience in working with Children and Young people and are Garda vetted.

Manager, Fiona McHugh

For further information on our Childcare Services please contact.

Tel: 04493 48571 or 087 7729172

Website: <https://www.westcd.ie/index.php/service-projects/childcare-services>



This document has been written in collaboration with all stakeholders, including people with disabilities. It should not be taken as a singular source of support but should empower the reader to seek out individualised supports for themselves and those in their care. We hope to help you put together the questions that you need to ask and give enough information so that you feel confident enough to ask them. It is a living document and as such is subject to addition, alteration or amendment as legislation, attitudes, knowledge and culture may evolve.

At the time of going to print every effort was made to ensure that all information within was current and correct. However if you have suggestions for additions, alterations or amendments please do not hesitate to contact us at Westmeath County Childcare Committee.



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



Westmeath County Childcare Committee,
Old Mullingar Area Office
Mount St. Mullingar Co. Westmeath N91 E430

Phone: 044 93 35454 | **Email:** info@westmeathchildcare.ie
Website: www.westmeathchildcare.ie