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LEGISLATION - FOI

On 14 October 2014, the [Freedom of Information Act 2014](#) came into effect and repealed the 1997 and 2003 Acts. The new Act introduced a number of changes to the Freedom of Information (FOI) scheme and widened the range of bodies to which the FOI legislation applies to all public bodies, unless specifically exempt. The old legislation continues to apply to any FOI request made before the new legislation came into effect. It also applies to any subsequent review or appeal.

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 provides that every person has the following legal rights:

- the right to access official records held by public bodies prescribed under the Act (FOI bodies);
- the right to have personal information held on them corrected or updated where such information is incomplete, incorrect or misleading; and
- the right to be given reasons for decisions taken by FOI bodies that affect them.

Any person may make an FOI Request under the Act, and the public body in question must normally respond within 4 weeks after acknowledging the request. In the case of large and/or complex requests this timeframe may be extended by a further 4 weeks.

Following retrieval and examination of the requested records the Decision Maker may grant full access to the information requested, or may refuse access to some or all of the information requested based on specific grounds detailed within the Act.

Under the Act, the person who has requested the information has the right to appeal an FOI body's decision - firstly to a more senior staff member within the FOI body than the staff member who made the original decision (referred to as an Internal Reviewer), and then to the Office of the Information Commissioner if the decision is still not satisfactory. The Information Commissioner's decision in this instance is binding.

Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act 2014, was signed by the President on Tuesday, 14th October, 2014, and became effective on that day, subject to certain commencement dates for the specific provisions set out in section 1 of the Act. The new Act can be found by clicking on the following here

The Act sets out three new legal rights

- A legal right for each person to access information held by public bodies
- A legal right to have official information relating to him/herself amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading
- A legal right to be given reasons for decisions affecting them

It gives each individual legal rights to access both personal and non-personal (corporate) records, to have personal records amended or deleted where the information is incorrect or misleading and the right to seek reasons for decisions that affect him/her.

These rights extend to your own personal records and in specific circumstances, to those of your children and deceased relatives. There are exemptions provided for in the Acts, this means that

there are specific circumstances when the requested information will not be released, e.g. to protect confidentiality. If any of these exemptions are used to withhold information, the reasons will be clearly explained to you.

When to use the Freedom of Information Acts:

It is recommended that applications for sensitive health records should be made under the FOI Acts (e.g. psychiatric records, and in circumstances where the records requested relate to a child or deceased person). You must apply in writing and simply refer to the Freedom of Information Acts. There is no fee when you request access to personal information.

Entitlements under the FOI Acts:

- Receipt of your request must be acknowledged within 10 working days
- A response will, in normal circumstances, be issued within 20 working days of receipt of the request
- All decisions must be clearly explained, setting out the sections of the Act used in reaching these decisions
- Details of your entitlements to Internal Review and appeal will be included in the decision letter

Why was the Freedom of Information Act Introduced?

The Freedom of Information Act was introduced to:

- Increase openness
- Improve accountability
- Increase public appreciation of issues involved in policy decisions
- Give stronger public ownership and acceptance of decisions made
- Permit people access to their records and allow them to amend records if incorrect

How does it Work?

A person does not have to give a reason as to why they want to see any records. The Government Department or Body must give an explanation if a request is being refused or partially refused. A decision on an application must normally be made within 4 weeks. The public can request the following records held by Government Departments or certain public bodies:

- any records relating to a person personally, whenever created;
- all other records created after 21 April, 1998;

Note: A "record" can be a paper document, information held on computer, printouts, maps, plans, microfilm, audio-visual material, etc.

What records can be accessed under FOI?

- All records created after the Act commenced
- All personal records of clients, whenever created
- All records of staff created after 21st October 1995
- Earlier records if needed to understand later records which are accessed

Under the Act, a person may make a request for access to records. This request must be in writing stating that the request is made under the Act and containing sufficient particulars in relation to the information concerned to enable the record to be identified.

The request will be considered in accordance with the Act having regard to the exemptions provided for which include:

- Personal information (other than information relating to the person making the request)
- Information supplied to Western Care Association in confidence
- Law enforcement and public safety
- Commercially sensitive information
- Deliberations of public bodies
- Functions and negotiations of public bodies

While Western Care Association will seek to protect the privacy of individuals and information supplied in confidence, in certain circumstances it may be in the public interest to release such information.

Making a Request under the Freedom of Information Act

How do I make an FOI Request?

You must make a request in writing. You can use the following FOI Form if you would like to make a request to Records under the Act.

- Address the request to the Freedom of Information Officer, Western Care Association, John Moore Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
- State that the request is being made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.
- Give sufficient particulars to enable the record to be identified. If relating to a Service user/or member of staff, please give full name, date of birth, current and previous addresses, etc.
- If access to records of third party is sought, written consent from the third party is required.

State the manner of access sought:

- A copy of the record
- A transcript of the information concerned
- A computer disc or other electronic device containing the information
- A reasonable opportunity to inspect the record
- In a case where the record is of sound or visual image, a reasonable opportunity to hear or view the record
- The information in such other form or manner as may be determined or
- The information in a combination of any two or more of the foregoing

A requester does not have to give reasons for requesting access to records and no person has the right to demand such reasons. Western Care Association will accept requests by letter, fax, e-mail, or by using Western Care Association's FOI application form.

[Click here](#) to download Form - **Request for Access to Records under the Freedom of Information Act, 2014**

[Click here](#) to download Form - **Request for Service User or Family to access Main File**

[Click here](#) to view the **Protocol for Service Users and Families – Routine Access to their Records**

Routine Access & Routine and Administrative Access

Under routine access and administrative access all appropriate information will be made available to the requester having regard to privacy, confidentiality and the public interest. As a matter of policy, the health service supports your right to see what information is held about you within its service. Generally, access to your own health record should be provided administratively (subject to exceptions).

Personal Information

You must apply in writing and provide sufficient information to assist in locating your files. You may also be asked for proof of identity, for example providing a copy of your current passport or driver's license. This is in order to protect your confidentiality. There will usually be no charge for copies of personal records. However, the organisation has the right to charge, if the quantity of records is very large for photocopying.

Non-Personal Information

All organisations offer a wide range of non-personal information to the public, about their services, via A.G.M, web sites or leaflets/publications. In many instances, further information relating to the work of the agency, i.e. non-personal information, may be released on request. However, if the non-personal information requested is not readily available, it will be necessary to apply under the Freedom of Information Act.

Exceptions

Where access to a record or information cannot be provided to you directly under administrative access, you will be informed of this and advised of the option of making an application under the FOI Act. Likewise, certain information may be of such a sensitive nature that requests for access can only be dealt with under the FOI legislation. Examples of this type of sensitive information would include, information given in confidence, a deceased person's health record, documents relating to suspected child abuse, documents revealing the involvement and deliberations of an investigation into alleged sexual abuse, documents relating to testing for HIV/ Aids etc.

Other Mechanisms for Access to Records

Information and Records are the property of the organisation of which they are held, and are kept under strict security and apart from the circumstances above, may only be removed from Western Care Association under the following conditions:-

- Search Warrant

- Court Orders
- Police Investigations
- Request and/or Investigation by the Information Commissioner or Ombudsman
- By an Officer authorised in writing by the Minister

Freedom of Information: Frequently Asked Questions

What is Freedom of Information?

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 was signed by the President on Tuesday, 14th October 2014, and became effective on that day, subject to certain commencement dates for the specific provisions set out in section 1 of the Act. The new Act can be found by clicking [here](#).

- The right to access official records held by the Public Bodies listed in the Act
- The right to have personal information amended where such information is incomplete, incorrect or misleading; and
- The right to be given reasons for decisions taken by public bodies that affect them.

These rights mean that from 21st October 1998, members of the public may seek access to personal information held on them, no matter when the information was created, subject to its certain exemptions designed to protect the public interest and the right to privacy

How does it work?

The Act requires public bodies to respond to requests from the public within two weeks for information they hold. Public bodies must give their decision on a request within 20 working days of receiving it. Staff of Public Bodies must also assist members of the public seeking access to information.

Can I get access to any information that I seek?

Access to any official information held by Western Care Association can be sought under the Act. In certain defined circumstances it will sometimes be necessary to exempt from release certain types of information. These exemptions are set out in the Act. Some key exemptions which may be used relate to:

- Personal information (other than information relating to the person making the request).
- Information supplied to Western Care Association in confidence.
- Law enforcement and Public Safety
- Commercially sensitive information
- Deliberations of Public Bodies
- Functions and Negotiations of Public Bodies.

While Western Care Association will seek to protect the privacy of individuals and information supplied in confidence, in certain circumstances it may be in the public interest to release such information.

Can other people gain access to my personal records?

No, only you can gain access to your personal records, unless you give your authorisation for someone else to access them on your behalf.

After my death who can access my personal records?

A deceased person's records may be accessed by Next of Kin, Legal Personal Representatives and other persons identified in the Regulations. Refer to the Guidance Notes drawn up and published by the Minister for Finance pursuant to S.I. 387 of 2009.

How do I make a request under the Act?

- a) You must make a request in writing. You can use the following FOI Form if you would like to make a request to Records under the Act.
- b) Address the request to the Freedom of Information Officer, Western Care Association, John Moore Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
- c) State that the request is being made under the Freedom of Information Act.
- d) Give sufficient particulars to enable the record to be identified. If relating to a Service user / or member of staff, please give full name, date of birth, current and previous addresses, etc.
- e) If access to records of third party is sought, written consent from the third party is required.

Is there a charge for accessing information under the F.O.I. Act?

Personal information will normally be given free of charge.

What can I do if I am unhappy with a decision on my request, e.g. where access has been refused, deferred or only partially granted?

- You may appeal the decision to an Internal Reviewer in Western Care Association.
- You may appeal to the Information Commissioner against the decision of the Internal Reviewer.
- You may appeal to the High Court on a point of law only.

How do I request an Internal Review?

If you are unhappy with the decision made on your F.O.I request you may appeal to the Internal Reviewer named in the Decision Letter within 4 weeks of the initial decision.

This review is independent of the initial Decision Maker's decision. You will receive an acknowledgement from the Internal Reviewer of receipt of the review within 5 working days and a completed decision within 15 working days.

How do I request an External Review?

If you are unhappy with the Internal Reviewer's decision you may appeal directly to the Information Commissioner where an independent review of the matter will be carried out. You must apply for an external review within six months of the internal review decision being made. The Information Commissioner will then examine firstly, how the application was handled by Western Care

Association and secondly, the records involved in the request. The Information Commissioner has to make a decision on the appeal within 4 months.

The Commissioner can be contacted at:

Office of Information Commissioner
18 Lower Leeson Street,
Dublin 2.
Tel: 01 639 5689
Fax: 01 661 0570
Email: foi@ombudsman.irlgov.ie

Is it always necessary to make a FOI request to get information from public bodies?

No - You may be able to obtain the information you require by other means such as:

- By discussion with the relevant staff in Western Care Association.
- By information leaflets, annual reports, etc. which Western Care Association publishes.
- By administrative access, i.e. by writing to the appropriate Service Manager stating the information/record requested.

Disclosure Log for Non-Personal Requests

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 requires FOI bodies such as Western Care Association to publish a disclosure log, which contains details of **non-personal requests** received under FOI since January 2015 and the decisions made by the body in response to these requests.

| Date of Request | Category | Description of Records Sought | Decision Made | Date of Release |
|-----------------|---------------------|---|---------------|-----------------|
| 25/05/2017 | Non-personal | The number of protection and safeguarding returns per HSE funded organisations from 1 st January 2013 to 31 st December 2015 inclusive. | Granted | 26/05/2017 |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Please note for privacy reasons, identifying information such as the name of the requestor will not be included in the disclosure log.

Contact Details for Further Assistance

If you need assistance in relation to making an FOI Request under the Freedom of Information Act or the Data Protection Act please contact;

Freedom of Information Officer
Western Care Association
John Moore Road
Castlebar
Co. Mayo

Telephone: 094-9025133

Email: foiofficer@westerncare.com

DATA PROTECTION STATEMENT

The primary principle of our Records management practice is that the person/family has access to their information in the first instance by right.

Western Care Association supports the right of an individual and the family of a minor to see what information is held about him or her within the organisation as defined in the Data Protection Act. As a matter of policy and good practice and in line with legislation, all information about a person or family should be shared with them in the first instance unless there is a clear reason not to do so. If it emerges that sensitive information or exempted information is contained in the files, the person/family will be advised and supported to apply through the Freedom of Information routine.

The Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003 provide similar rights of access as the FOI Acts, the main difference being that the DP Acts do not apply to records of deceased persons. As with the FOI Acts, these rights extend to your own personal records and in specific circumstances, to those of your children. There are exemptions provided for in the Acts, this means that there are specific circumstances when the requested information will not be released. If any of these exemptions are used to withhold information, the reasons will be clearly explained to you.

Data Protection is the safeguarding of the privacy rights of individuals in relation to the processing of personal data. You supply information about your family member or yourself to Western Care Association in order to avail of services or satisfy obligations. For the purpose of Data Protection, such organisations or individuals who control the contents and use of personal data are known as Data Controllers.

Western Care Association, as a Data Controller must adhere to the eight rules of Data protection. The eight rules, which apply whether the information is held on computer or in a manual form are:

- Obtain and process information fairly
- Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purposes
- Use and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes
- Keep it safe and secure
- Keep it accurate, complete and up-to-date
- Ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Retain it for no longer than is necessary for the purpose or purposes
- Give a copy of his/her personal data to that individual on request

You must apply in writing and simply refer to the Data Protection Act.

When to use the Data Protection Acts:

You may use either the Freedom of Information Acts or the Data Protection Acts to access personal information held by public bodies. However, the Data Protection Acts apply only to your own personal information (or in certain circumstances that of your child). Also, the Data Protection Acts apply to all holders of personal information, not just public bodies.

Entitlements under the DP Acts:

- A decision will, in normal circumstances, be issued within 40 days of receipt of your request
- Details of your entitlement to complain to the Data Protection Commissioner will be included in the decision letter

Making a Request to Access Information under the Data Protection Act

To make an access request under the Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003, please submit your request in writing to the Data Protection Officer, ensuring that you describe the records you seek in the greatest detail possible to enable us to identify the relevant records.

Data Protection Acts

- [Data Protection Act 1988:](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2003:](#)

Your Rights under Data Protection

Right of Access

- You have the right to be given a copy, of any information kept on file about you, simply by making a written request. You can make an access request to any organisation or any individual who has personal information about you either on their computer files or manual files.

Right of rectification or erasure

- If you find that information kept about you by someone else is inaccurate, you have a right to have that information corrected or rectified. In some circumstances, you may also have the information erased altogether - for example, if the body keeping the information has no good reason to hold it (i.e. it is irrelevant or excessive for the purpose), or if the information has not been obtained fairly. You can exercise your right of rectification or erasure simply by writing to the body keeping your data.

Right to have your name removed from a direct marketing list

- If an organisation holds your information for the purposes of direct marketing (such as direct mailing, or telephone marketing), you have the right to have your details removed from that database. This right is useful if you are receiving unwanted "junk mail" or annoying telephone calls from salespeople. You can exercise this right simply by writing to the organisation concerned. The organisation must write back to you within 40 days confirming that they have dealt with your request

Right to complain to the Data Protection Commissioner

- What happens if someone ignores your access request, or refuses to correct information about you which is inaccurate? If you are having difficulty in exercising your rights, or if you feel that any person or organisation is not complying with their responsibilities, then you can complain to the Data Protection Commissioner, who will investigate the matter for you. The Commissioner has legal powers to ensure that your rights are upheld.

Right to seek compensation through the Courts

- If you suffer damage through the mishandling of information about you on computer, then you may be entitled to claim compensation through the Courts. Section 7 of the Data Protection Act, 1988, makes it clear that organisations who hold your personal data owe you a duty of care. You should note that any such compensation claims are a matter for the Courts - the Data Protection Commissioner has no function in this matter.

Personal Data Security Breach Management Policy

[Click here](#) to view Personal Data Security Breach Management Policy for Western Care Association

Frequently Asked Questions on Data Protection

Question 1: What are the eight Principles of the Data Protection Act

Anyone processing personal data must comply with the eight enforceable principles of good practice. They say that you must:-

- Obtain and process personal information fairly
- Keep it only for one or more specified, explicit and lawful purpose
- Use and disclose it only in ways compatible with these purposes
- Keep the data safe and secure
- Keep it accurate, complete and up to date
- Ensure that all processing is adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Retain it for no longer than is necessary for the specific purpose
- Provide a copy of his /her personal data to an individual, on request.

Question 2: What does that Act mean by personal information/data?

Personal data means data relating to a living individual who is, or can be, identified either from the data or from the data in conjunction with other information that is in, or is likely to come into, the possession of the Data Controller.

Question 3: How are the Acts enforced?

The Acts (1988 & 2003) establishes the office of the Data Protection Commissioner. The Commissioner's role is to ensure that those who keep personal information on computer comply

with the provisions of the Act. The Commissioner has a wide range of enforcement powers to assist him/her in ensuring that the principles of data protection are being observed. These powers include the serving of legal notices compelling a data controller to provide information needed to assist his enquiries, or compelling a data controller to implement a provision of the Act. The commissioner also investigates complaints made by the public and has wide powers in this area also. He/she can authorise for officers to enter premises and inspect personal information kept on computer.

Question 4: Who is the current Commissioner?

Helen Dixon is the current Commissioner.

LoCall 1890 25 22 31

Phone 00353 57 868 4800

Fax 00353 57 868 4757

Email: info@dataprotection.ie

Website: www.dataprotection.ie

Data Protection: Useful Links

[Data Protection Commissioner](#)

Data Protection Commissioner General Information Booklets

- [A Guide for Data Controllers](#)
- [A Guide to Your Rights](#)

Contact Details for Further Assistance

If you need assistance in relation to making an FOI Request under the Freedom of Information Act or the Data Protection Act please contact;

Data Protection Officer

Western Care Association

John Moore Road

Castlebar

Co. Mayo

Telephone: 094-9025133

Email: foiofficer@westerncare.com

Information Leaflet on Records Management

Click on this link to view [Information Leaflet on Records Management](#)

Information Regarding Eligibility to Western Care Services

ACCESS AND ADMISSION TO SERVICES

In Western Care Association there are two categories of referrals to the Organisation:

- (a) Referrals made by an outside agency to Western Care Association for the first time which are known as External Referrals
- (b) Referrals for services for an individual already on Western Care Association files which are known as Internal Referrals.

EXTERNAL REFERRALS

Requests for Services and Supports are made in writing using the External Referral Form to the Executive Director of Western Care Association, John Moore Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo. These requests can be made by the person, family members, medical personnel, HSE staff or other agencies. The ability of Western Care Association to provide a service will be determined by the resources available.

These applications must be accompanied by all the relevant paperwork including a recent or valid psychological report which details the level of intellectual ability and adaptive functioning for the person, or a report confirming a diagnosis on the Autism Spectrum.

A Referrals Committee meeting will be held to consider the referral and decide if any additional reports /information are required to proceed with the referral

Referrals will be acknowledged following the Referrals Committee Meeting outlining the outcome of the meeting.

If the referral is appropriate, the referral information along with the Guide to the NIDD & the appropriate Consent Letter to the NIDD will be forwarded to the appropriate Regional Service Manager, the Database administrator and communicated to the referrer.

The fact that a referral is accepted as appropriate to Western Care Association will not automatically mean that the person will be able to access some or all of the services that he/she needs. The acceptance of the referral means Western Care Association will work with the person and their family to develop a plan based on their priorities. They will be set up with a Main File, Electronic Main File and recorded on the National Intellectual Disability database if consent is received. Services can only be provided from within the resources available or if additional resources are provided specifically to meet that person's needs.

If the referral is not appropriate, the referrer will be notified, with an explanation for why this was the decision. Where possible, Western Care Association will guide the person around the most appropriate direction for them to go in.

When a Referral is accepted?

Should the person be accepted as an appropriate referral, the relevant Regional Services Manager, in conjunction with appropriate staff will arrange to meet the individual /family and carry out an

initial assessment of the person's needs, choices and wishes to design an individual plan that clarifies the person's support needs.

INTERNAL REFERRALS

This refers to referrals for specific services for an individual already on Western Care Association files. There are varying types of internal referrals. These have been identified as follows:

- Referral to Community Services – Social Work, BSS, etc.
- Referral to Residential Respite Services
- Referral from Children's Services to Adult Services
- Referral from Children's Services to Autism Services

Admission to services may be delayed until places and/or resources become available. Until such time individuals are put on a waiting list and listed in order of priority and date of request.

For further information in relation to access to our services contact the Executive Director.

How to Make a Referral to Western Care Association

Children: Prior to a child being referred to Western Care Association, a diagnosis of learning disability and/or autism has to be made through assessment by a health professional, e.g. a psychologist. This assessment can be carried out by Organisations such as the HSE, NEP's or private psychologists. A referral can then be made by the health professional to Western Care Association (with the consent of the family). Referrals can also be made directly by the family, provided a diagnosis has been determined.

A Western Care Association Referral Form "[External Referral Form](#)" will be forwarded by us to the health professional/family in order that contact details, other additional information and formal consent for the referral can be obtained. Following this, the relevant Western Care Association staff will contact the family to make an appointment to discuss priorities and make arrangements for supports to be put in place to address these priorities.

NB: As of May 2009, families with children with complex needs aged 0-6 (Other than children with a diagnosis of Autism) receive services through Mayo Early Intervention Services. This is a collaborative service model supported by Western Care Association, Enable Ireland and the HSE Primary, Community and Continuing Care (PCCC). In order to make a referral to this service you should phone the Mayo Early Intervention Services on the following number: 094 9060234.

Families with children with a diagnosis of autism should follow the standard Western Care Association referral process.

Adults: When an adult with a learning disability and/or autism wishes to be referred to our services, this can be done either by the person themselves and their family or through a health professional.

A Western Care Association Referral Form "[External Referral Form](#)" will be forwarded by us to the health professional/family in order that contact details, other additional information and formal consent for the referral can be obtained. Following this, the relevant Western Care Association staff will contact the person/family to make an appointment to discuss the person's priorities.

Click on this link "[External Referral Form](#)" to download Referral Form to Western Care Association.

To get further details on making a referral, please contact: 094 9025133

Annual Report

Click on the link below to view this 2016 Annual Report for Western Care Association

[2016 Annual Report](#)

Staff Numbers

Western Care Association employs approximately 750 staff. This includes full time, part time and relief staff.

Positions within Western Care Association

Q. How Can I apply for a Position in Western Care?

Open positions are advertised in the local press and on the Association's website. You can also apply speculatively by sending your CV and cover letter. The cover letter should indicate the area you want to work in. You can send your CV to HR@westerncare.com or by posting it to the HR Department, Western Care Association, John Moore Rd, Castlebar, Co.Mayo.

Q. Does Western Care employ relief staff ?

Western Care employs a number of staff on its relief panel. These individuals provide holiday / illness cover in the various services throughout the Organisation. The Association recruits for the panel on a regular basis. To be considered for interview you should submit your CV and a covering letter to the HR department. Your application will then be acknowledged and will be kept on file for 6 months, should the Association recruit within this time frame and you have relevant experience you may be shortlisted and invited for interview.

Q. What are the benefits of Working in Western Care?

The careers section of the website will give you a summary of the benefits available to staff at Western Care. All new employees receive a handbook that contains details of all the benefits and Policies and Procedures in place in the Organisation.

If you have any additional questions you would like to ask, please feel free to contact the HR department at 094 9025133 or by e-mail HR@westerncare.com

CAREERS AT WESTERN CARE ASSOCIATION

Job Opportunities in the following areas;

- Services
- Administration
- Disciplines

Services:

Social Care Assistant: Social Care Assistants provide practical help with daily activities to people with a learning disability. As a Social Care Assistant, you could work with Service Users in a variety of settings, such as their homes, in day centres or the wider community.

Social Care Assistants work across all services and roster times can include day, evening, night duty and weekend, together with Sleep In – depending on the position being filled.

Your work would vary depending on the type of setting, examples include:

- Supporting and enabling service users to achieve their full potential and to maximize community inclusion and participation.
- Undertaking the role of named staff by co-ordinating in a responsive and flexible manner individual plans to meet the needs of service users in line with their priorities and preferences.
- Maintaining and developing individual plans as required. Ensuring the Line Manager is appraised of progress and engaged when necessary to seek solutions.
- Working to seek solutions to issues by negotiation and engagement with relevant stakeholders.
- Contributing to and participating in the local service planning process and the creative development and ongoing changing needs of the service.
- Providing personal care and support to service users where required.
- Ensuring a safe place of work, incorporating Western Care Association's Dignity at Work Policy and Health & Safety requirement.
- Using positive approaches to support people who may have challenging behaviour in line with Organisational practice.
- Participating in all aspects relating to the day to day operation of the service, including leisure activities, driving transport, escort duties, general cleaning and upkeep of the service.
- Assisting in monitoring good budgetary practice /awareness.
- Maintaining the required records and reports consistent with organisational requirements and Freedom of Information.

What qualifications and experience do I need?

You do not need any academic qualifications to start work as a Social Care Assistant. It would however be beneficial if you have experience in a caring role or working with people who have a learning disability.

Social Care Worker: Social Care Workers, support Service Users in a variety of settings, from their own homes to day centres and the wider community. As a Social Care Worker you will enable service users realise their goals and achieve their identified priorities. You will also provide support and act as an advocate for participation and inclusion in the community on behalf of the Service User.

Social Care Workers assume responsibility for the service in the absence of their Line Manager, or while on duty as required.

Social Care Workers work across all services and roster times can include day, evening, night duty and weekend, together with Sleep In – depending on the position being filled.

The Social Care Worker operates within the framework of a person centred approach and to actively engage in and promote co-operation and partnership with other services, both internally and externally and in particular with families.

The work of a Social Care Worker vary according to the Service Users, but could include;-

- Learning from, listening to, supporting and enabling service users achieve their full potential and maximize community inclusion and participation.
- Undertaking the role of named staff by co-ordinating a responsive and flexible manner to individual plans in meeting the needs of service users in line with their priorities and preferences.
- Maintaining and developing individual plans as required. Ensuring the Line Manager is appraised of progress and engaged when necessary to seek solutions.
- Working to seek solutions to issues by negotiation and engagement with relevant stakeholders.
- Supporting and managing staff within the service as required.
- Actively engaging in the creative development and ongoing changing needs of the service to meet the needs of service users.
- Providing cover for the Line Manager as required, including managing personnel and service issues which arise.
- Supporting and assisting the Line Manager in managing the delivery of multiple individual plans, including tracking of individual plans and analysis of information in order to develop plans for the service and current service delivery.
- Providing personal care and support to service users as required
- Ensuring a safe place of work, incorporating Western Care Association's Dignity at Work Policy and Health and Safety requirements and Abuse Guidelines.
- Promoting safety in all environments, in line with the Association's practices.
- Using positive approaches to support people who may have challenging behaviour in line with Organisational practice.
- Participating in aspects of the running of the service including leisure activities, driving transport, escort duties, general cleaning and upkeep of the service.
- Assisting in monitoring good budgetary practice /awareness.
- Maintaining the required records, reports, consistent with organisational requirements and Freedom of Information.

What qualifications and experience do I need?

You will need to have a recognised qualification in Social Care or related area. It is desirable that you also have some experience of working with people who have learning disabilities.

Social Care Leader: Social Care Leaders provide leadership and support to service users, staff & families. They support the welfare of Service Users in a variety of settings, from their own homes, to day centres to the wider community.

They lead out person centred services in a range of settings appropriate to individual needs. It is also the role of the Social Care Leader to ensure accountability and best value in service planning and delivery.

The roster of Social Care Leader varies, depending on the service being managed, i.e. Day Hours, Off Roster in Residential Services, On Roster in Residential Services or a combination of both. Roster times can include day, evening, night duty and weekend, together with Sleep In – depending on the position being filled.

The work of Social Care Leaders vary according to the Service Users, but could include:

- Leading, managing and co-ordinating the service. Working in partnership with stakeholders to ensure delivery of flexible and responsive individual plans based on personal outcomes measures.
- Responsibility for managing and driving the implementation of Individual Plans (IP's) and facilitating problem solving and negotiating solutions to deliver Person Centred services.
- Managing, developing and supporting staff, individually, and as a team, including induction, probation, supervisory support and training in line with the Association's practices.
- Leading and developing the staff team in supporting the delivering of person centred services, problem solving and seeking solutions to outcomes and barriers raised in the delivery of person centred plans.
- Managing the budget allocation in a manner that is responsive to service users and ensures best value.
- Managing the required information to support evidence based decision making, e.g. IP Tracking, SAMS, Incident Injury Reporting, Budget and staffing information as per the Association's requirements. Engage with Freedom of Information requirements as necessary.
- Leading and facilitating local service planning based on priorities of service users and in conjunction with the wider organisational strategic planning and development process.
- Undertaking the role of named staff by co-ordinating in a responsive and flexible manner, individual plans to meet the needs of service users in line with their priorities and preferences. Maintaining individual plans as required.
- Planning, developing and managing innovative and creative services in response to service users' priorities, incorporating inclusion and participation in the local community.
- Ensuring a safe place of work, incorporating Western Care Association's Dignity at Work Policy. To undertake ongoing Risk Assessments as required and ensure that Hazard Analysis are kept up to date in line with Parent Safety Statement.
- Promoting safety in all environments for service users and staff, in line with the Association's practices.
- Ensuring that staff are aware of and adhere to the Association's Policies and Procedures.
- Developing and maintaining effective communication systems both formal and informal with services users, staff, families and stakeholders.
- Participating in and contributing to area teams, and other Groups as required.
- Providing personal care and support to service users as required.
- Participating in all aspects relating to the day to day operation of the service, including leisure activities, driving transport, escort duties, general cleaning and upkeep of the service.

What qualifications and experience do I need?

You will need to have a recognised qualification in Social Care or related area. In addition to your qualification you will need 3 - 5 years' experience of working with people who have learning disabilities, with at least 2 years of this time at Social Care Worker level.

Administration & Clerical Positions

We employ a wide range of staff in the clerical / administration area, including secretarial support for departments such as Psychology, Speech & Language & Psychology.

There are also clerical officers working in the HR, Finance and Payroll departments. The work involved is varied and depends on the area the individual is recruited into

Transport

Bus Driver: The role of a Bus Driver involves transporting Service Users safely to and from different destinations, primarily from their homes to the centres they are attending, but this could also include the transportation of Service Users to social occasions / activities.

Road safety is an important part of the job

Maintenance

Maintenance Craft worker: Maintenance craft workers maintain the Associations properties. They are involved in the refurbishment and general upkeep of the properties, and also work with line managers in scheduling and planning maintenance programmes.

Disciplines

Social Work : Social Work is a confidential family-focused and person-centered service, available to children and adults with a learning disability and their families. The Social Work Department has its professional social workers based throughout Co. Mayo to offer a localised and easily accessible service. The social worker supports children, adults and families, concentrating on the challenges that arise for a person with a learning disability and /or autism and their families.

The needs of individuals and families are assessed in a supportive professional approach, addressing the concerns of the individuals with learning disabilities and their families at any given time. The service is delivered through the provision of a home-based approach or within Western Care Association offices.

The focus of the Social Work Department is to support and enable people to address difficulties as they arise. This can be facilitated through the use of 1:1 counselling, family counselling, group counselling, group supports, networking, and other appropriate interventions as required.

The role of the Social Worker is to respond to the emerging needs of the individual and their family (where appropriate) in a planned co-ordinated approach, focusing on the particular areas of self-esteem, self-confidence, independence, individual rights and entitlements.

The Social Work Department operates as part of a community-based multi-disciplinary team put in place to support and respond to the needs of individuals with a learning disability and their families.

The Social Work Department also provide the following services

Family Supports

Through discussions with the individual and their family, particular supports maybe required. The Social Worker may be positioned to put in place supports to address these requirements for a defined period of time.

Home-sharing

Home Sharers provide a service in their community, to our service users, having been recruited, screened and trained to undertake the role of providing a break in their own home for a child / adult who has a learning disability usually for short periods of time. Home sharing provides opportunities

for the child or adult to develop new relationships, participate more in their communities and experience an increased sense of inclusion in their community and environment.

Community Facilitation Service

The community facilitation service is an integral part of the Social Work Department at Western Care Association. The service which is exclusive to the Castlebar area came into operation in 2001. It was identified that a number of people with intellectual disabilities were living and working independently in the community. Some people found themselves in venerable situation where they required support but had nowhere to turn. As a result of this need the Community Facilitation Service was developed.

The Community Facilitation Service has worked closely with Mayo County Council and Castlebar Town Council in obtaining secure, affordable quality accommodation for people. This has culminated in the development of the first integrated housing project in County Mayo which has been very successful. Working in partnership with these two bodies affords the community facilitation service the opportunity to put forward the housing needs of people availing of the service particularly if a person requires wheelchair accessible accommodation.

The Drop In

The Drop-in as the name suggests, is a place for people to 'drop-in' and have a chat with the Community Facilitators. People can share their good news and also seek support with anything that may be worrying them. A wide variety of concerns are addressed, basically anything that the person identifies as a worry or an area to work on for themselves.

There are a number of activities organised by service users with the support of staff where necessary. Some of the activities are based at the Drop-in but people are encouraged to use their community wherever possible.

Activities can range from art, relaxation, music, cookery, bowling, concerts, drama and all these can be seen at a glance on the social events calendar. The service users are responsible for the social events calendar which is prepared quarterly in advance. They decide the activity, the date and organise any bookings that are necessary. This helps build people's self-esteem and also offers the opportunity to acquire new skills around planning and organisation. Shopping trips, weekends away, city breaks and sun holidays are all part of the drop in activities with people.

Psychology

The Psychology Department in Western Care Association endeavours to provide a range of high quality psychological assessment and intervention services to children and adults with learning disabilities. The Department uses research and innovative approaches based on sound psychological principles. Services are provided in partnership with families, advocates, fellow staff members and a range of community groups and other agencies. Psychologists work as members of multi-disciplinary teams and these teams work across the age span from Early Intervention through to adult services. Inputs are provided directly to service users; on some occasions indirectly through parents, teachers and other staff members. Direct working will usually involve psychological assessment for various issues and counselling/therapy interventions.

Supports are also provided through group work with parents, service users or staff as needed or requested

Speech & Language Therapy

Speech and Language Therapy is involved with the assessment, diagnosis and remediation of communication difficulties and disorders.

The aim of the Speech and Language Therapist is to support and develop the child's communication skills. Research indicates that these skills are better developed in their natural setting with those that the child has regular contact with, namely families, teachers, friends and community and to this end therapy supports not only the child but the people who make up the child's world.

Physiotherapy

Physiotherapy is a way of enabling a child to develop his or her physical independence or to help an older child or adult regain independence following illness or injury. Physiotherapists have specialised knowledge and experience in the field of physical development and the acquisition of physical skills. Western Care Association employs a chartered Physiotherapist who treats numerous conditions. She works in partnership with families and with other professionals to develop suitable treatment programmes for those in her care.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapy is the use of purposeful occupation to promote and restore health and wellbeing. Purposeful occupations include the activities, tasks and roles that are meaningful to the person, and the Occupational Therapist uses these to enable the individual to attain their maximum level of function and independence in all aspects of daily living. Occupational Therapy incorporates the following:

- the use of occupations as a therapeutic approach
- education and training approaches
- specific treatment approaches
- environmental modification
- adaptation and the use of adaptive equipment.

How to Make a Complaint

Please click on the link below to review our Complaints Procedure

[Procedure for the Resolution of Concerns & Complaints to Western Care Association](#)

Contact Details:

Complaints Officer, Western Care Association, John Moore Road,
Castlebar, Co. Mayo

Tel: 094 90 25133 **Email:** complaints@westerncare.com

Western Care Internal Reviewer, Head of Evaluation & Training,
John Moore Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo

Tel: 094 9025133 **Email:** complaints@westerncare.com

Western Care Website: www.westerncare.com

Director of Advocacy, "Request for Review", National Advocacy Unit HSE, Quality and Patient Safety Directorate, Oak House, Limetree Avenue, Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare.
Tel: 1890 424 555 **Email:** yoursay@hse.ie

Office of the Ombudsman, 18 Lr. Leeson Street, Dublin 2
Lo-call: 1890 223030 **Email:** ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie

Ombudsman for Children Office, Millennium House, 52-56 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1
Free Phone: 1800 20 20 40 **Email:** oco@oco.ie

Confidential Recipient for Vulnerable Persons

Ms. Leigh Gath, Confidential Recipient will operate independently of the HSE to address any complaints or concerns that are raised with her office in relation to any HSE or HSE funded facility.

Ms. Gath can be contacted as follows: -

By post to: Confidential Recipient for Vulnerable Persons. Training Services Centre, Dooradoyle, Limerick

By telephone: Lo Call 1890 100 014 or mobile (087) 6657269

By e-mail: leigh.gath@hse.ie

DAY CENTRE AND OFFICE CLOSURES 2017

DAY CENTRE CLOSURES:

EASTER

Friday 14th April to Friday, 21st April inclusive
i.e. centres close on the evening of Thursday, 13th April and reopen on Monday, 24th April.
(This consists of Good Friday, one Public Holiday and four Leave days)

SUMMER

Monday, 7th August to Friday, 25th August inclusive
i.e. centres close on the evening of Friday, 4th August and reopen on Monday, 28th August.

(This consists of one Public Holiday and 14 Leave days)

HALLOWEEN

Monday, 30th October to Friday 3rd November inclusive
i.e. centres close on the evening of Friday, 27th October and reopen on Monday, 6th November.

(this consists of one Public Holiday and four leave days)

CHRISTMAS

Friday, 22nd December 2017 to Monday 1st January 2018 inclusive
i.e. centres close on the evening of Thursday, 21st December and reopen on Tuesday, 2nd January 2018

(This consists of three Public Holidays and four Leave days)

OFFICE CLOSURES

- **CHRISTMAS**

Saturday, 23rd December 2017 to Monday 1st January 2018 inclusive.

Office will close on the evening of Friday, 22nd December and reopen on Tuesday, 2nd January 2018

(this consists of three Public Holidays and three leave days)

Useful links

- [Government's Freedom of Information Website](#)
- [Office of the Information Commissioner](#)
- [Freedom of Information Act 2014](#)

Federation of Voluntary Bodies

www.fedvol.ie

Disability Info

www.disabilityinfo.ie

Inclusion Ireland

www.inclusionireland.ie

Irish Association of Supported Employment

www.iase.ie
