



**WESTERN CARE  
ASSOCIATION**

Supporting people to live their lives

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

*'together within distance'  
Gary Durcan, St Hubert's Day Centre,  
Castlebar.*





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**Western Care Association Board of Directors 2019**

**Back Row:** Paddy Geraghty, Anthony McCormack (outgoing Chairperson), Kieran McGloin,

**Front Row:** Helen McHugh, Frances Burke (current Chairperson), Marie Munnelly

**Unavoidably Absent:** Michael Leyden, Ed Rose, Iarla Duffy, Michael Prendergast, Marilyn McNicholas, Denise Swanick, Ann Loftus, Philip McKiernan, Annette Dillon and Pat O'Brien.



**Mary O’Connell, RIP**

In remembrance of our dear friend and colleague, Mary O’Connell. Mary worked for Western Care Association for 38 years and in that time was Recording Secretary to the Board of Directors and was also responsible for coordinating the publication of the Annual Report. She is greatly missed by all her friends at Western Care.



Welcome to the 2019 Western Care Annual report. My name is Frances Burke and I am the new Chairperson to the Board of Directors following in Anthony McCormack's footsteps.

I hope you are all managing to navigate safely through the times we are currently facing with Covid 19, we know it is not easy.

I am mother to Aoife, who has been a client of Western Care since 1998. As a family we have been supported by many professionals and carers within the organisation and have witnessed first-hand the transition in services over the years. One thing that strikes me is the constant values that Western Care staff hold. They strive to do the best they can with diminishing resources and treat all our family members with care and compassion.



What a year the organisation has had, with several changes to our Management Team. The first was the resignation of our long-standing CEO Bernard. He manned the ship for ten years and was a gentleman to work with. We thank him for his

dedication and wish him the very best in his future endeavors.

As one door shuts another opens, and so it is my pleasure to welcome our newly appointed Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Tia Crowley.



On behalf of the Board and the organisation, I wish to offer Tia our full support and look forward to working with her in her leadership role in Western Care.

Adding to our senior management team, we welcome Clare O'Dowd who has been in post for a few months and is now the driving force behind service operations.



This position plays a vital role in optimising service need with resources, we thank Clare for meeting these challenges and wish her the very best in her role.

The Board of Directors has also transitioned over the last year, in members retiring and new members joining.

I wish to thank all current Board members and retired members for their work and commitment throughout the year. One member in particular needs a mention, Mr. Anthony McCormack, outgoing chair and veteran Board member. Anthony's energy and commitment in supporting the Board, the Management Team and the wider Organisation of Western Care has shown true dedication and passion for the community we serve. He is never one to sit for long and so I look forward to working with Anthony again in the future.

To our newest Board members, welcome to the association. We all look forward to sharing the joys and challenges of our tasks ahead. 2019 has been about regrouping and gaining knowledge to ensure we have the governance skills to provide the best care for the families we serve.

Facing us in January 2020 was a 1% cut in funding. With already underfunded services, we feel the frustration of clients and families and have fought hard to highlight the detrimental effect of this cut. In the current climate we now face with no current government and crisis funding being used for COVID 19, the future may look grey. As a Board, we want to be more visible and share your vision in shaping better services for all.

We are grateful to all the volunteers who have fundraised and supported the association over the years, we need you now more than ever.

Finally, to the staff who run the many services in Western Care, we thank you for your compassion and dedication and wish you continued success. The Board regret the passing of Mary O'Connell last December, condolences to her family, friends and colleagues, such a lady.

**Frances Burke, Chairperson**



## Personal Statement

This is my first C.E.O. report since being appointed as Chief Executive Officer of Western Care Association following the departure of the previous C.E.O. Bernard O'Regan in October 2019.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution Bernard made to Western Care, to thank him for his dedication to the organisation and for the difference he made to the lives of those we support during his long career both in his role of C.E.O. and in previous roles.

It will be a challenge to fill Bernard's shoes but one that I am honoured to accept.

I am from Westport originally and live there with my husband and two children. I am a Chartered Accountant by profession and have worked with Western Care for nearly twenty years.

I have been a supporter of Western Care since I was a teenager, having volunteered through the local branch back in the 1980's. So, while I am new to the role of C.E.O. I am not new to the organisation and have a good understanding of the people we support, the services we deliver as well as the challenges we have encountered through the years.

I look forward to providing leadership and direction to this great organisation to help us face challenges head on and to maximise opportunities to develop sustainable services into the future.

## Review of 2019

2019 was a year of consolidation on one hand and also a year that brought significant change to the organisation.

A programme of significant cost containment measures commenced in 2018, these measures continued to be implemented in 2019 and the full year effect of the savings achieved was evident in an improvement in the financial position of the organisation in 2019.

Additional funding was secured from the H.S.E. in 2019 to implement a number of additional services to meet emergency needs and to support school leavers, however, it is important to note that this funding is ring fenced for the purposes outlined in the business cases/business plans submitted to the H.S.E.

The rate of growth in service provision, driven primarily by the establishment of individualised services for five Service Users who transferred from Aras Attracta, slowed in 2019 as the last of

these Service Users transferred to their new home successfully.

The movement of Service Users to individualised services also slowed and the organisation's capacity to fund, govern and manage additional individualised services will be reviewed in 2020.

The conversion of an existing group home into three self contained apartments was completed in December 2019 and three Service Users moved into their new homes for Christmas. This project was a great example of what can be achieved as services managers, maintenance staff, support staff and families worked tirelessly to make this project a success.

We will review the operation of this cluster model of service closely as it may provide a blueprint for futures service provision for those who are unable to live in a group setting.

The essential role of Director of Operations was filled by Clare O'Dowd towards the end of 2019. I would like to welcome Clare to Western Care. Clare settled into the role immediately and it is evident that Clare will make a valuable contribution to the organisation in the future.

## Board of Directors

I would like to acknowledge the work of the Board of Directors who give their time and experience generously, each member of the Board has worked tirelessly to support the Executive Management Team.

I would like to thank Frances Burke, Chairperson of the Board of Directors, for her help and dedication to the role. She has been a great support to me personally and has offered me and other members of the Board direction and guidance any time of the day or night.

I would also like to thank the outgoing Chairperson Anthony Mc Cormack who dedicated nine years to the Board of Western Care.

We had some retirements off the Board in 2019. I would like to thank Annette Dillon, Pat O'Brien and Philip Mc Kiernan for their work on the Board and thank Philip for remaining on as Chair of the Quality and Safety subcommittee.

In 2019 there were a number of new appointments to the Board. Iarla Duffy, Denise Swanick, Marilyn McNicholas, Michael Prendergast and Ann Loftus joined the Board bringing new ideas and complementary skills to enhance the Board.

These are challenging times for voluntary members of board's of charities, as regulation intensifies and more and more time is taken up on governance and compliance matters.



I hope in time we can get to a position where there is a recognition that the function of charitable organisations and their Board is to deliver services and supports to vulnerable people and that while good governance is essential, the burden of compliance is lessened.

### **Staff**

The Director of HR will provide a more detailed update on staffing in the HR report.

Firstly, I would like to thank our staff. It is widely acknowledged that Western Care staff go over and above in terms of supporting our Service Users and their families. I know this is true as I have seen many examples of this throughout the year.

Western Care has great staff and I acknowledge their kindness, dedication and determination to do their best for our Service Users.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge the support of Service Users and thank their parents and extended families for their co-operation and help throughout the year.

I would like to thank the Executive Management Team, Clare O'Dowd, Kevin Mc Hugh and Pauline Brennan who have travelled this new road with me. 2019 was a challenging year for them as they negotiated changes in structures and in the composition of the team along with a new C.E.O. I believe we have a very strong team who will provide the leadership required to maximise benefits for all in good times as well as navigating choppy waters in difficult times.

I would also like to acknowledge management at all levels across the Association and thank them for their commitment and resilience as we navigate through these challenging times.

I would like to acknowledge the support of the H.S.E. The H.S.E. provides Western Care with 95% of its funding and it is essential that we maintain a close and mutually respectful relationship. We are lucky that we have received immense support from the H.S.E. locally and I would like to personally acknowledge the Chief Officer Tony Canavan, Head of Disability Services, Elaine Prendergast, the Disability Manager John Fitzmaurice and local Disability Managers Suzanne Keenan and Breda Garvey Cecchetti, the Head of Finance Liam Fogarty and his team Dermot Dawson and Laura Rochford.

We are indebted to our supporters, State Agencies, volunteers, local business and communities and the people of Mayo who support us in so many ways.

I would like to remember staff, both serving and retired and Service Users who died this year. May they rest in peace.

### **The future**

I look forward to a future where disability services are adequately funded and Western Care is confident that it has sufficient resources to deliver the services and support people with disabilities deserve, in the manner in which they choose to access them.

This is not how it is currently. I am writing this report in April 2020 a year in which Western Care received notice of a proposed cut in funding of 1% in 2020 which equates to over €380,000 reduction in budget. We have had to plan to reduce services to remain within budget, as years of cuts in funding or the implementation of efficiency cuts, limit our capacity to implement further cost containment measures.

We have been told by the H.S.E. that there is no funding for emergencies, changing needs, capital expenditure or transport in 2020.

As I write this we are in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic. This will impact our Service Users, our staff and our funding in 2020. The full extent of the impact of Covid 19 on our services is unknown however at this point in time our priority is working together with all stakeholders to keep Service Users and staff safe.

While the outlook for 2020 is challenging, I know that we are resilient and that Western Care staff and management will respond and will adapt and will innovate. We will try to deliver more for less. We will advocate on behalf of our Service Users and their families for the services they deserve.

We will get through these tough times.

We require the support and encouragement of the people of Mayo and with your support we will deliver the best supports we can to make a difference to people with disabilities in Mayo.

**Tia Crowley, Chief Executive Officer**



## Personal Statement

I am very pleased and privileged to have the opportunity to make a contribution to the 2019 Annual Report.

In 2007, I returned home to Gurteen in Co. Sligo after spending many years working in services in Dublin. I am married to David and have two children, Daniel and Megan. My initial career path led me to the field of nursing, which was followed by social care practice. I have held various career roles working directly in, and managing services for children and adults with Intellectual Disabilities in both the community and education sector.

Western Care Association is a service which I have always admired for its innovation and resilience, and was extremely honoured to have been afforded the opportunity to take up the Director of Operations position in November 2019.

## 2019 Review

Although not present for the majority of the achievements that became reality in 2019, I have heard many accounts of collaborative creativity, visualisation, imagination and prioritisation that have led to enhanced life changing experiences for people we support and look forward with enthusiasm to what opportunities 2020 will bring.

## Initial Impressions

Everyday, I witness first hand the core values of all associated with the organisation. The absolute desire, commitment and competence of staff to create an in-depth understanding of each adult and child who avails of services, support and empower them based on their unique abilities, desires, dreams and aspirations, and create opportunities so that each develops skills to live full and meaningful lives of their choosing and as an equal and valued member of society. In addition I was delighted to have had the opportunity to attend the Mayo Association Annual Gala in February where Western Care was the chosen beneficial charity.

## Challenges

It goes without saying, in the midst of all the great work and achievements, we will continue to face challenges in 2020. The HSE directive of a 1% efficiency saving will have an impact

on how we provide services and as an Executive Team, we are reviewing how we can sustain effective and responsive service provision. This is specifically challenging due to changing needs, an aging population, increase in demand for children's autism services and requests for additional supports.

Western Care will continue to advocate for all the adults and children we support to maintain equitable access to day services, respite, housing, allied health professionals and community supports. In 2019 we commenced new service development and redesign and replaced some vehicles in our transport fleet having received Clár funding. In 2020 we will continue to work with our funders in securing additional funding for both emerging need and capital infrastructure and work collaboratively with our community partners and alliances.

Staff will always be at the core of our work, and like all providers a challenge across the sector is being able to attract, recruit and retain staff. The inequality in pay rates between Western Care and the HSE and other providers presents a significant challenge. This incoming year there will be a focus on attracting and retaining staff based on our values and to position us to become the employer of choice. We are focusing hard on retaining staff and working on better ways to communicate with staff, to ensure all feel well informed about what is going on within the services.

We need to maintain our strong service reputation in an ever challenging regulatory environment which continues to absorb significant time and resources.

Our strategic commitment and vision underpinned by our core values and ethos must allow sufficient flexibility and response to changing circumstances. We now more than ever need to challenge our norm and create renewed, sustainable and credible pathways during and post COVID 19.

## 2020 Vision

I am aware that 2020 will bring us opportunities and challenges as each year always will, but I am equally confident that we will continue to,

- Support and empower each adult and child to meet their realisation and potential, create and promote opportunities for self realisation and strive



for continuous improvement in consultation with each person and their families.

- Tailor services to the needs of the adults and children we serve and with outcomes that are individually driven and quality focused.
- Focus our energy and commitment to achieving our vision, mission and implement a strategy of continued development and response to the ladies, gentlemen, children and families we support.
- Recognise the importance of the balance between formal regulations, a focus on the sharing of good practice, effective monitoring and learning within our regulatory system and national models.

### Acknowledgments

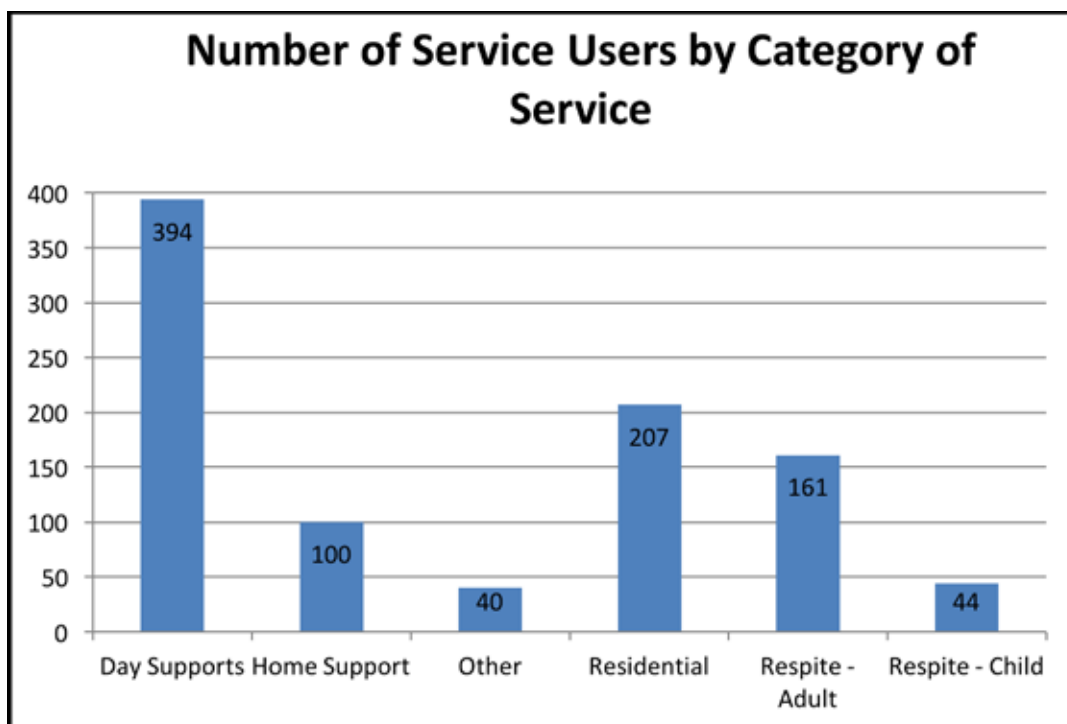
I wish to take this opportunity to thank the ladies, gentlemen and children who use the services, their families and significant others in their lives. To the staff for their skills, enthusiasm, innovation and commitment, my colleagues in Executive and Senior Management and members of the Board of Directors, for a very warm Western Care welcome.

I wish to extend my thanks to our local HSE Team for their support and the numerous community partners, volunteers and the people of Co. Mayo for their endless support to Western Care.

### Ending Quote

*“No disability or dictionary out there is capable of clearly defining who we are as a person. It’s only when we step out of that labelled box, that our abilities begin to be fully recognized, giving us a better definition of who we truly are as individuals”*

Robert M. Hensel.





## DAY SERVICES

There are 282 individuals in receipt of day supports across the county, approximately 160 staff supported by 14 front line managers, and there are 21 day service locations in the county.\*

There have been a number of developments in day support provision that we would like to highlight for your attention.

### School Leavers/New Referrals

This year there were 18 school leavers and new referrals that chose to avail of their day supports from Western Care Association. Supports are provided to these individuals from the Castlebar, Ballina, and Westport areas.

### Personal Facilitation

The majority of school leavers and new referrals that chose WCA in 2019 have been provided with their day supports through a personal facilitation service.

#### What is personal facilitation?

This is a way of delivering supports to the person in a way that focuses entirely on each person's preferences, strengths and interests.

- Each person receives a dedicated staffing resource from the allocated funding and the level of support is matched to the level of funding provided by the HSE
- They or their family member (or both) can be involved in the recruitment process to help ensure a good match.
- It represents a move away from a focus on the location from where a service is provided to a focus on what each individual wants to achieve from their service.
- Areas of focus can include, but is not limited to skills building, making friends, being involved in leisure groups, increasing independence, further training, further education or employment readiness.

Over the last two years, a number of people have used Personal Facilitation to achieve their goals rather than the traditional route of day services. A number of individuals have been involved in the recruitment of their Personal Facilitator, including interviewing.

All individuals have been supported to explore their local community and have identified areas where they would like to be more involved, which has resulted in:

- voluntary work
- taking part in community groups, such as drama
- work experiences, and
- engaging in local educational and training opportunities.

Individuals have been supported to develop skills and enhance their confidence, as well as focus on their physical and emotional wellbeing.

One individual's priority was to set up a business. This encompassed idea development, networking, sourcing and engaging with suppliers, and organising a launch which was very successful.

A number of day service managers have had the opportunity to lead out this new model of service delivery for a small number of individuals, and have found this to be very beneficial for each individual, increasing meaningful aspects of life for each individual involved.

### New Directions

The implementation of the New Directions standards for day services has continued apace as the self assessment of the standards under each theme is undertaken.

The manager has to assess the delivery of each standard in each of their services, in addition they must gather the views of staff and service users on the performance of each standard. From there, an action plan is developed for each service and provides updates as work is completed.

This is a significant piece of work for all managers, but it is valuable work as it enables a focus on continuous quality improvement, and all, without exception, have welcomed the opportunity for a much needed focus on day services.

### Social Reform Fund - Focus on change!

In April 2018, we applied for funding to the Social Reform Fund, as part of a CHO2 application with a focus on New Directions. The project is for a period of two years.

(\*This data does not include Individualised or 24/7 services providing day supports)





The application was successful and we utilised the funding to recruit a Social Reform Fund Facilitator. This role has focussed on eight individuals who attend day service in Castlebar, to identify how we may improve on positive opportunities to enhance each person's life in a way that is meaningful to them. Individuals were identified who may benefit from such a focus and we chose to focus on four individuals in year one and four in year two.

The following is an overview, provided by The Social Reform Fund Facilitator, of how our first year has been and what it has taught us:

“The role of the Social Reform Facilitator is to first listen really intently to what each individual is saying, then together with the person start that conversation around whatever that change topic is with family, staff and management. The first challenge is to begin to build a relationship in order to dream big or bigger, to trust and have confidence to say what you really want, to keep or change and more so start to believe your worth.

This is a summary of the work with three remarkable individuals that I have been getting to know, all brought together by one common thread, they all attend the VTC day service in Castlebar and each either by their actions or situations have embraced the opportunity for positive change.

Let me introduce you to Martin, Jacinta and Gráinne: three inspirational individuals leading the way for so many. These people have not just taken a chance, they have run ahead and are showing and reassuring us and others that there is much to talk about and much to change for the better!

Meet **Martin**, Martin is a sociable and down to earth guy, who really wants to find his feet in the world of employment, but very few work opportunities had been coming his way. On meeting Martin there was no doubt that he was very eager, on our first introduction he skipped the formalities and said ‘Hello, can you get me a job?’

We looked at Martin’s strengths and interests and what a ‘good fit’ work wise might look like. Chatting to people, a man’s man, and local politics was our starting point and over the next and many conversations and between listing what opportunities were out there, along with researching different work places around

Castlebar, the idea of approaching a local barber for work experience came about.



Martin at work in the barbers

Martin was supported to approach a local barber and he secured a work experience placement that day and taught us the power of taking a chance.

Martin is seeking paid employment and is currently open to job offers!

Meet **Jacinta**, a lady who likes nothing more than to meet and greet people, someone who will offer her assistance in any way she can, with a pleasant smile.

Jacinta, time and time again, talked about enjoying visiting colleagues at head office, she would in fact choose to spend time there and although Jacinta had a pretty full week involving a part time job, attending GMIT for various courses, and various social roles, she would find time to spend at HQ.



Jacinta at her welcome desk in head office



Yet outside of being a welcomed guest, Jacinta was interested in developing a more purposeful presence, which led to the development of a proposal put together in partnership with Jacinta, her support staff, the day service manager, and HR to develop a courtesy desk at the main reception. There Jacinta would staff a welcome desk for the general public/visitors and would welcome and escort candidates for interview. The notion was to put the people we support at the very face of our organisation, starting with Jacinta. Jacinta and the courtesy desk are now a well established feature at our reception area.

Jacinta has also finished up attending the larger day service and is now one of a small number of people enjoying the use of a community hub.

Jacinta is now leading the way for new opportunities in the area of courtesy and customer service.

Meet **Gráinne**, Gráinne is an intelligent lady who knows what she wants.

Gráinne was the first individual I met in this social reform role and in a lot of ways Gráinne became the mentor for the entire project.

In order to get to know Gráinne we spent a lot of time together, and in collaboration with Gráinne's family, her day service manager and staff, residential manager and staff we carried out a process of discovery called 'A Day in the Life', which was to become a collaboration between both services over a number of weeks.



Gráinne signing for her own house

Gráinne clearly showed us that the current day service arrangement wasn't suiting her and we looked at what a day or two away from the day service would look like, starting off with targeted support during the day to focus on what Gráinne enjoyed.

The transformation was immediate once Gráinne left the day service building to go to what ever she had planned, she would just be so content.

Following from that, in collaboration with the Head of Day Service and Head of Residential an agreement was reached to see Gráinne reduce her week at the day service to two days, with the other three days providing support from Gráinne's own home and community with a strong focus on skills building. Again Gráinne embraced the change and talked about all she was doing and indeed how good life was.

For Gráinne, the Social Reform Fund initiative came at an opportune time as her residential house was in the process of closing. Using this platform, we collectively were able to open up the conversation around what living options could be explored for Gráinne outside of the traditional residential setting. With Gráinne, her family and all others who support her, we began to draw out and discuss what that might look like, including renting her own home.



Gráinne in her new home



Gráinne continues to have the support of her family and staff team while she settles into her new way of life.

Gráinne dared to dream bigger and it really suits her; she has shown us all what can be achieved when staff from all aspects of people's life work together".

### **An Update on Count Me In**

In last year's Annual Report, we informed of a new initiative 'Count Me In', which is an autism informed service for school leavers and young adults. A year on, the initiative has gone from strength to strength under the expert stewardship of the Leader of Count Me In.

The service commenced in September 2018 and has steadily grown since then. The initiative began with six participants and one staff in the first year. In 2019, our second year in operation, Count Me In has fifteen participants and three staff, two fulltime posts and one part-time post.

The aim of Count Me In is to support each participant to identify their goals and to facilitate achievement of these goals. The values, interests, priorities and preferences of each participant are central to their future planning.

This is achieved by using the principles of co-production when working with participants:

- **Recognising people's assets.**
- **Building on people's capabilities.**
- **Developing two-way reciprocal relationships.**
- **Encouraging peer support.**
- **Blurring boundaries between delivering and receiving services.**
- **Facilitating rather than delivering**

Participants and staff share ideas, skills and abilities to design, plan and deliver on their goals and dreams.

There has been many and varied journeys since Count Me In has begun, no two people have shared the same journey. Each person has identified what is meaningful and important to them and from there, opportunities begin to emerge to meet their hopes and expectations.

Count Me In is led by the participants, who determine the pace and influence the direction of their future goals.

Here is a flavour of experiences of participants to date:

- **Exploration of Further Education:** Options are considered by connecting people to a range of learning institutions. Individuals have studied in GMT's Life Long Learning programme and have achieved Level 6 NFQ qualification, others have sampled lectures to see what a course or college life is like. ETB courses across the county have been undertaken and many people will be achieving a QQI Level 5 certificate in the coming months.
- **Confidence building in the area of life skills:** For example, focus on cookery, money management, use of public transport, learning to shop independently are available to each person, with many choosing to build on existing skills in these areas.
- **Employment:** For some participants employment is their focus and they have participated in Foundation 4 Life, Youth Life Skills and Job Activation programme, where CV, interview & job searching skills are offered with a focus on career guidance and a progression plan. Other participants have linked in with Employability with the view to getting a work placement and onward employment. Completion of training in Facilitation Skills course has led to opportunities being created in co-presenting of training and public speaking where a participant is exploring becoming a sole trader.
- **Hobbies and interests** have been explored, with people participating in kayaking, German language classes, Spanish language classes and cookery.

**Exploration is a fundamental aspect of Count Me In, and is at the heart of its success to date. Participants are supported to consider and explore their own preferences in a supportive manner, at their own pace.**

**Signposting to and support to access mainstream resources is also at the core of Count Me In.**



Count Me In is underpinned by New Directions standards and we endeavour to meet the core values of person-centeredness, community inclusion, active citizenship and high-quality service provision.

Count Me In is funded by the HSE and works in partnership with GMT.

### **Community Sensory Garden - Crossmolina.**

The Head of Centre in Cluainin has undertaken a mammoth project to develop a space owned by Western Care into a beautiful and functional space for use by the entire Crossmolina community. This has entailed enormous local fund raising efforts, and liaison with many community organisations and groups.

The Garden is located behind Cluainin Day Service and is open 7 days per week for the public to visit and enjoy.

This project started 6 years ago, when we decided that we would design and develop a garden which would allow for the integration of the wider community with our service users. Our vision was that the community could use the garden at weekends and become involved in the weeding, planting and maintenance. We wanted the garden to become an integral part of Crossmolina Community.

We also wanted to make the garden unique and by its nature the sensory garden needed to stimulate the five senses, sight, sound, smell taste and touch.

We achieved this with some main features, namely a large cave with an overhead waterfall that steadily flows into a man made stream that meanders down the garden into a pond with a fountain, providing the tranquil and peaceful sound of running water.



The garden is joint work between the community and Cluainin. People involved included Tom Timlin, RSS, Lorraine Healy Mayo North East, who planned and developed the garden, workers from RSS, Crossmolina Men's Shed, Ballina Men's shed, local carpenters, businesses, volunteers and gardening experts from Enniscoe House Crossmolina and Archers Ballina.

Next a colourful pathway with winding colourful curbs, bordered by a multitude of beautiful flowers, to link the features of the garden such as the wood carved owl and fairy garden provide a feast for the eyes.

The feel of the sandpit, the sensory room, stone water and plants provide a variety of textures to explore.



The garden was mainly funded through fund raising monies. We had several events over the last 6 years, which included our annual Tour of Loch Conn Cycle which was greatly supported by the wider community. We also had some private donations by some very generous people.

The garden is for the people of Crossmolina. There are so many options and ways this garden can be used which will enhance the community. The garden is perfect for Humanist weddings, wedding photos, Communion Photos Santa Wonderland and Halloween, to name just a few. This Christmas the local community had a Candlelight event which was a huge success. They have planned to make it an annual event and to expand on the idea. This is exactly what we want for the garden.



There is still some outstanding work to be completed and we hope to have this work done by end of 2020.

In the meantime we are fortunate enough to have a beautiful garden to enjoy and it is fantastic to see a dream come true.

The Community Sensory Garden in Crossmolina was officially opened on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2019, by Mayo Senior County Player and local girl Rachel Kearns.

## Newport Resource Centre & Primrose Hill, Claremorris



Michael creating a beautiful piece of pottery

We received UPSTART funding from the Arts Council, under Mayo County Council and developed a project in collaboration with artist Henri Hedou and local transition year students to undertake pottery exploration in Balla community centre. Participants were given the opportunity to immerse themselves in various aspects of pottery from using the wheel to moulding beautiful pieces of art. They worked through moulding their piece, to painting and decorating and finally varnishing their pieces before firing took place.

The course culminated in an exhibit of their work in Balla Community Centre.





## The Scannan Creative Writing Group

The Scannan Writing Group was formed with a small group with the common goal of getting their thoughts on paper. We believed, that regardless of our literacy ability, our literary aspirations were grounded in conveying the world as we see it to others, through the use of our own words. This goal remains core to our writing ambitions. The group was facilitated in-house by local author Faith Hogan and workshops ran for a period of six weeks.

The goal at the time was to produce a piece to enter into the Listowel Writing Competition at which Jack Doherty won joint second in the prestigious competition. This motivated the group to keep writing.

On the back of this success we secured funding from Mayo County Council Arts Office and with renowned local author, Helen Falconer, the group undertook an extensive workshop series, supported by local volunteer Bertha Cooke.

Helen has worked with the group to develop craft, explore ideas and encourage us that our voices are of tremendous value. These workshops have led to a successful literary launch with a published body of work in the pipeline.



We are very thankful to Val Mc Loughlin for his generous gift of a painting towards fundraising for the group and allowing us to use the beautiful image for the cover.

### A selection of poems that will be used in the publication

#### **CATCHING JACK CHARLTON**

*Jack Charlton caught fish  
and my dad caught Jack Charlton!*

**By Jack Doherty**

#### **MY CHILDHOOD**

*School – the best days of our lives.  
Sunshine and loads of it.*

*Calmness is lovely – it is my nature to be calm. I was a peaceful child, and we were all a calm family, especially my dad.*

*My mum had blue eyes and she was wonderful, lovely and kind. She cooked lovely bacon and cabbage: it filled the gap! There were seven of us, and I was the second youngest.*

*I have my mother's blue eyes, and my father's bald head!*

**By Kevin Maloney**



## RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Western Care adult residential and respite services are delivered through a regional structure with the county divided into West, Central and North regions and oversight and co-ordination of services in these areas is managed by Regional Service Managers.

### WEST AREA

The services provided are Residential, Respite, Day and individualised living arrangements.

Geographically the area covers the following locations Newport, Westport, Ballinrobe, Claremorris and Kiltimagh with a small number of Services in Castlebar.

#### Newport

There are 3 services in Newport, 2 residential, Barrack Hill and Cois hAbhainn and 1 respite location in 7 Seaview.

One resident Frances Quinn, who is a keen artist, created some amazing pieces of art over the past year. This work was accepted for a local initiative, Salt of the Earth art exhibition that celebrates local artists. The exhibition was held locally in “Kelly’s Kitchen”. This was an achievement for Francis as it was her first exhibition; she was delighted to see her piece alongside other accomplished local artists. Francis continues to work on pieces for the next exhibition.

It is now a tradition that the services in Newport play a key role in the organising committee for the Annual Island Walks, Clare Island and Innisturk, this continued in 2019.

Cois hAbhainn service faced a difficult time in 2019 with the death of a resident who resided

in the service since the early 1980’s. This was a sad time for his family, fellow residents and his dedicated team of staff who cared and advocated relentlessly on his behalf.

The service had reasons to celebrate in 2019 as it was successful in its application to the Clár Project for funds towards the provision of accessible transport for the Services. It truly was a day of celebration when Minister Michael Ring visited the Newport Resource Centre to make his announcement of the successful applicants.

All services in Newport are registered with HIQA. The Authority made an unannounced visit earlier this year. All actions out of this visit were progressed.

#### Westport

There are three residential locations in Westport, with outreach supports to one individual who lives in their own home in the community. Two of the locations, The Paddock and Teach Banrach successfully went through their reregistration visit by HIQA in November 2019. The third location, Pinewoods was successfully re-registered with HIQA in January 2019 and is due an unannounced visit early 2020.

Following a lot of planning, consultation and



Shauna Kelly, proprietor, Kelly's Kitchen, Frances Quinn, Artist



engagement with two residents, their families and advocates, they have both had a very successful transition into the Westport Residential Services. This move has been very positive for both individuals, and is welcomed by their fellow residents and staff team. The team continue to support the residents with their new living arrangement, and now focus on developing connections in their new community.

Some additional good news is that Mayo County Council responded positively to a request from someone supported to move to a more accessible home. The individual is really pleased with the new house and its proximity to all amenities and other support services.

### **Ballinrobe**

There are three residential Services, Cois na Roba, Suimhneas and Rathkelly Close and one respite service Aisling Gheal in the Ballinrobe area. In 2019 the Services had three unannounced visits from HIQA across all four locations. All actions identified were addressed by the organisation; this included a review of the Respite Service with particular focus on compatibility of individuals using the Service. In early 2020 all four sites were reregistered with HIQA following announced visits.

The residents in Ballinrobe are contributing to the “Believe in Ballinrobe” project by actively participating in the Tidy Town’s project, keeping the locality looking good. Some people who use the Respite Service have indicated that they would like to grow some of their own produce in the back garden. Plans are in place with a hope to be able to have a small flock of chickens.

The organisation’s maintenance team have reconfigured one of the bathrooms in Cois na Roba to enhance the accessibility for all residents.

Over the course of last year both managers in the residential service resigned from their position, one to pursue another career path and one to relocate. This afforded the organisation an opportunity to review the local management structure, in response to which a new manager and assistant manager were appointed and have taken up their respective positions.

### **Claremorris**

There is one group home in Claremorris, St Rita’s along with a supported living

arrangement for people who live in their own homes.

St Rita’s had one unannounced visit from HIQA, and one announced reregistration visit in 2019. Both visits went well with some small actions that were addressed immediately.

In 2019 the passing of a long term resident of St Rita’s was an enormous shock and loss to his family, fellow residents and the close knit team in St Rita’s. The love and care for this person was clearly demonstrated in the way he was cared for right up to his passing. May he rest in peace.

In late 2019 a complete review of the use of internal space was carried out by, the manager, the team, and the wider support team, Health & Safety, Maintenance, and Occupational Therapy. Some reconfigurations were completed to afford the residents the best use of the space available to them. This has a positive impact on resident’s quality of life.

A real positive for all the people in the service in St Rita’s this year was their successful application to the Clár Project for funds towards a new accessible vehicle. A number of residents attended an event in Newport Resource Centre where Minister Michael Ring announced the successful applicants.

### **Kiltimagh**

The Services in Kiltimagh consist of one residential service, Pinegrove, Ballinamore and two day service locations, Shalom located close to the town and St John’s in Ballinamore, Kiltimagh.

Pinegrove had an unannounced visit from HIQA late 2019. This visit went well with minor actions that were addressed immediately. A new manager commenced in Pinegrove in early 2019.

Essential maintenance work commenced in Pinegrove, reconfiguring the bathroom, replacing some flooring, some essential work to comply with fire regulation and some redecoration. This is being completed by the organisation’s maintenance team.

In 2019 one service user went with the Irish Pilgrim Trust to Lourdes for a week’s break with no support from family or familiar staff. The service user attended pre planning meetings with his family, and the arrangements were made for him to attend the 2019 Pilgrimage to Lourdes.





The service user went to Lourdes with the Trust as a young child and the family felt he would enjoy the trip. The service user normally finds travelling difficult, and finds travelling by bus a challenge, however, he transitioned positively onto the bus to Belfast and then to the plane. He engaged well with his peers and support team, and some of his support team have remained in contact with him and his family.

Residents from Pinegrove attend the day service in St John's; some of the activities are captured in the following report by the Day Service Manager.

"On the 19<sup>th</sup> of August 2019 I was fortunate enough to commence the post of Social Care Leader in St. John's Resource Centre, which provides day supports to 14 individuals with Autism, intellectual disabilities and associated needs.

St John's Resource Centre is comprised of six units, one of which is based in the town of Kiltimagh and five which are based four kilometres away in the beautiful countryside setting of Ballinamore. On site in Ballinamore there is also a very impressive Multisensory environment, a gym and a unique tree lined forest walkway nearby.

In the eight months that I have been in post I have witnessed some amazing achievements for a number of individuals that we support. Two gentlemen took part in a community fundraiser in our local Super Valu, Kiltimagh. This event was run over two days and gave the gentlemen a great opportunity to meet many people from the local community.

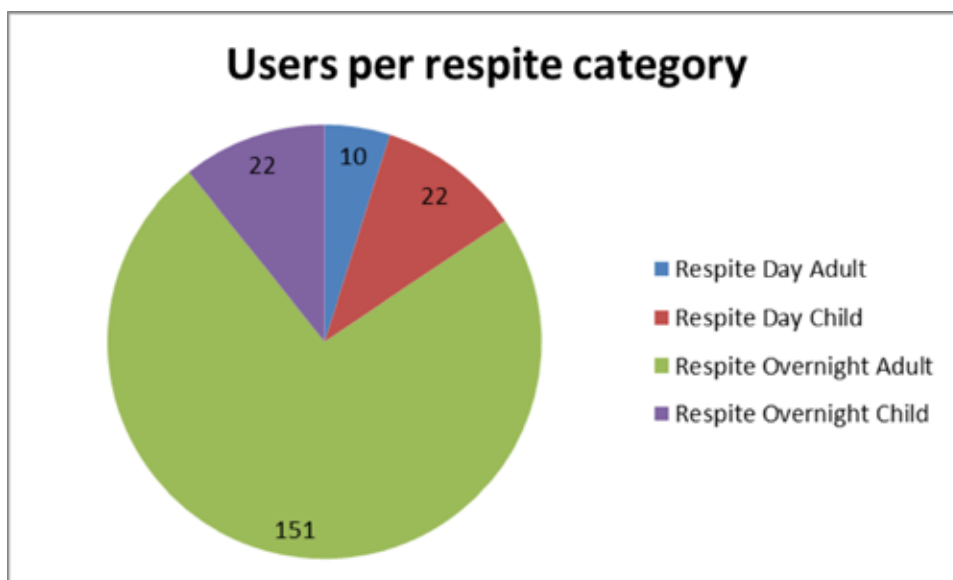
One of these gentlemen will be taking part in his fourth Social Farming Placement on a

nearby farm, and was delighted to receive sponsorship to facilitate this. The second gentleman will be beginning his first Social Farming Placement on the same farm this year, which he is very excited about, as it is something he has wanted to do for quite some time. Farming is something he has a great interest in, it is wonderful to see an individual embracing their passions.

Some of my focus has been linking with the Community Inclusion Co-ordinator who gave me lots of ideas and made me aware of various groups and funds that I could try and connect with or avail of on behalf of St. John's. Currently we have begun a project with the Rural Social Scheme who is going to carry out some work to refurbish the gym in St. John's as it is in need of a lift and some refurbishment of the building. We were lucky enough to receive €750 from the Candlelight Ball proceeds to support us with this project and another €750 to develop an outdoor space for the people we support to enjoy.

We hope that these projects will open up new roles, activities and areas of enjoyment for the people we support but also for other individuals within the organisation, members of the community and community groups.

We are excited and hopeful for the year ahead for St. John's Resource Centre and look forward to seeing many more accomplishments by the people we support."





## **NORTH AREA**

### **The Acres Residential Service:**

The Acres residential house is situated in Foxford Village. The service received HIQA registration in October 2018 and there have been a number of HIQA inspection visits since with positive outcomes. The service is due to have an inspection in 2020. Service users are actively involved in the running of the house and enjoy strong connections to their local community and community groups. The Foxford community and facilities are an integral part of their daily lives.

They take part in country walks, local festivals/markets, shop locally, visit the Foxford Woollen Mills for coffee and much more.

The service is also supported from a WCA multi-disciplinary team i.e. Behavioural Support Specialists, Speech and Language Therapists. They have been supporting service users by developing and implementing stress management plans, communication plans and additional support plans to help them lead a meaningful stress free life.

There were some changes to the interior of the house. A wet room, a separate TV/living room were added and interior decorating. This gives the space for time alone when needed.

In 2019 the staff team, manager and others talked about the living arrangements. This led to a "Choose Live" project. This is to talk to the service users, their families and supports about their thoughts on how and where they want to live now and in the future.

### **Aras Aoibhinn Residential Service:**

Aras Aoibhinn is a residential service situated in Ballina Town.

Active Support continues to play an important part in the daily lives of the people supported when identifying and progressing their goals. A Speech and Language Therapist is continuing to support the staff team with communication systems. They are using a number of systems from natural objects to visual schedules. The use of technology is very important for some. One person is using communication apps such as WhatsApp and this has really increased links with their family.

Adaptations have been made to the physical environment to make areas of the house more accessible. This in particular has made a huge change for some people, who can now access

all area in the environment. We have also installed sensor lighting so there is no longer a need to use light switches in areas of the house, making the areas more accessible and safer, as the lighting detects movement.

The team continue to ensure the service is a home that everyone enjoys living in. We will continue to make changes and adaptations to meet the needs of everyone living in Aras Aoibhinn as positive and enjoyable as possible.

### **Glade House Residential Service:**

Glade House has received HIQA registration and has maintained this to date with positive reports.

Glade House is situated in the town of Ballina in a quiet estate. They are very involved in the community, using local facilities, walking, being part of the residents association, being employed in a local pub, attending the local masses and attending classes.

They are very focused on leading a healthy and active lifestyle and maintaining a stress free and comfortable environment to live in.

They are working on a communication system in the home and are currently in agreement it should be Lámh. This is working for one person and this means the staff team and friends, family and housemate will be trained in Lámh to make sure everyone can understand each other. This is going to be delivered by our Speech and Language therapist.

One person is supported to spend a weekend per month in their family home, with the support of staff. They have been supported to refurbish their family home to their own style and taste, and has resulted in them being proud to invite neighbours to tea, during their weekends there.

### **Abbeydeale Residential service:**

Abbeydeale residential service is situated in Crossmolina village. This service received registration in March 2018 following an inspection visit. They had an unannounced HIQA inspection on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019 which led to a positive report about the service.

A significant amount of maintenance work was completed in the service which has led to a nicer living environment and the grounds outside are looking much better.

The people who live in Abbeydeale make all decisions in relation to the running of the house



and they discuss things regularly in house meetings/chats. They have jobs, social roles and are very involved in local Crossmolina village life.

Some people living in Abbeydeale can access the community independently and all attend most events that take place locally. One person visits an elderly neighbour regularly and they have become friends. They chat to their neighbours and have built relationships with people locally. They have become familiar with the staff from local shops, pubs and other establishments within the community.

They were all invited to take part in the lights parade on St Patrick's Day as one person was a member of the group who organised this.

They visit their families regularly and keep in contact through phone calls, visits, Skype and Facetime.

They purchased a new vehicle and this has enabled them to go on longer journeys should they want to.

**Orchard Grove Residential Service:**

Orchard Grove is situated on the outskirts of Ballina town. Orchard Grove received HIQA registration in April 2018 following an inspection. The report received was a positive reflection of the service. There was a follow up unannounced inspection on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2019. This was a positive report on the service. One person moved out of the house to an alternative accommodation after living here for

many years. The people living in Orchard Grove maintain a friendship with this person. They are regularly involved in local events; they use the local services and are familiar with people/staff locally.

They make daily choices of what they want to do by using a picture communication system, supported by staff. By using these supplementary systems they are supported to communicate their will and preferences on a daily basis and continue to have choice and control over their lives. They are involved in the running of the house and consulted with regularly by the team.

Maintenance work has been completed on the house both internally and externally, which makes the environment safer, more accessible, more comfortable and tastefully decorated. The house was decorated using autism friendly colours and this helps everyone feel more relaxed. There is a strong multi disciplinary support in the house from Speech & Language Therapy, Behaviour Support Specialists and Psychology.

**Cois Fharrage Respite and Residential Services:**

Cois Fharrage is situated in Belmullet town. Following an unannounced inspection in January 2020, we received a positive report, which ensured we maintained our HIQA registration. The report highlighted that there is a comfortable, safe home environment, with fun and respectful engagement between the staff



Presentation of iPads from the proceeds of the Candlelight Ball to Hillview Respite & Residential Services, Ballina  
 Back row: Julie & Brendan Chambers, Tom Collins, Bernard O'Regan, Caroline Costello.  
 Front row: Dara Dunne, Christine Reape, Emma O'Donnell, Shelby Gavin, Steve O'Donnell



and those living there.

Those supported in these services are independent and assertive, and make the daily decisions in relation to the smooth running of their home and in the respite house.

They access the community regularly for the things they are interested in. They all have different interests and preference of activities. One person has a social role delivering a local magazine to shops and establishments in the town. One person has paid employment in a local shop.

A new person moved into the house in July 2019. This transition was supported by a multi-disciplinary team including social work, BSS, senior management and staff. The person has settled into their new home very well and everyone developed a new friendship. One person participates in household tasks and maintaining the gardens and is currently developing their cooking skills and growing vegetables.

One person joined Men on the Move social group. The team have been working to learn new skills to continue to be independent. It resulted in a positive outcome for one person to attend two community events. This would not have been possible for the person before now.

In respite, everyone sits down to decide what they will do for the duration of their stay.

During the year we said good bye to Michelle who was manager for many years in our service. Michelle is missed by everyone and they wish her all the best with her new venture.

A new management structure has been in place in the service since September 2019. The new staff who joined the team are very welcome.

Cois Fharráige received a new wheelchair accessible vehicle in July 2019 which has been a real bonus. Residents keep in touch with family regularly by visiting, using Skype, telephone calls and writing cards. When family visits there is plenty of rooms for privacy for this.

#### **Hill View Respite & Residential:**

Hill View is situated in Ballina town. There was an unannounced HIQA monitoring inspection in March 2019. It was a positive report with actions which are completed. The team have done considerable work this year in planning and completing the refurbishment of the interior of the houses, to make them a more

pleasant and safer environment for everyone to be in. The interior design theme is relaxation/spa experience for all.

Work has been completed on the exterior of the building, offering additional parking to the front of the building and creating space for buses.

We enjoyed a successful year with the new social club, which was set up as an alternative to overnight respite. People attended discos and monthly social engagements which all agreed was most enjoyable.

Those attending the overnight respite service have enjoyed a good year with lots of socialising locally and learning skills i.e. making their own lunch, cooking skills, house keeping etc.

A recruitment drive has taken place and the roster was reviewed, resulting in additional respite being offered to some who need more help. This meant changes to the number of nights respite allocated to people and an increase to some people whose carers need more of a break.

One person who lives permanently in the residential section of the service has enjoyed a lot of community involvement, and a tailored one to one service which is now entirely based from their home. This is what this person wanted for a long time and they are very happy with the arrangement in place now. The manager reconfigured the staffing schedules to facilitate this.

There is a strong multi disciplinary support coming into the service from SLT, BSS, physio, OT and Social Work. They and the staff team have completed several support projects with us throughout the year which has enhanced our lives.

#### **Ceol na hAbhainn Residential Service:**

Ceol na hAbhainn is situated in Foxford village. HIQA completed an inspection which led to the service maintaining their registration and a very positive report about the service.

One person has been walking into town to visit the shop frequently as opposed to taking the car, been attending weekly swimming locally, visiting retail outlets to purchase their own clothes, visiting the local barber frequently for haircuts. The individual independence skills have also significantly improved in the last year, with assisting staff in completing daily household chores. Various family members visit



their family member with people using the service also having overnight stays with their families.

Both apartments are very well maintained both inside and out. The internal décor has created a relaxing, peaceful environment tailored to each person's tastes and styles.

Work has been completed by maintenance while the Rural Social Scheme continue to complete excellent work on the gardens. We have recently completed the driveway as a result of a fundraising event organised by the manager and the fundraising department.

The sensory garden has been developed further and the plan is to keep working on this over spring and summer.

**Individual Living:**

The people supported are closely connected in their local area. One person has a paid job, one person is involved as a volunteer with the Tidy Towns group and they attend day services during the week. They are supported to attend concerts, Mayo matches, pub and walking groups. 'Healthy Lifestyle' is the motto and it is working well.

**North Area Additional Information:**

A number of recruitment drives have taken place to ensure there is a sufficient number of staff available to cover the rosters in the services. This has posed a challenge due to a

national shortage of available skilled workers in the country. The HR department work closely with Regional Service Managers and the Managers to ensure this is a priority.

There have been a number of changes to Persons in Charge through recruitment, which was a success.

A review of the respite services commenced in 2019 which led to a number of changes in some respite services. The Assessment of need, the allocation of respite nights and the priorities for the delivery of respite were all reviewed. It resulted in the introduction of alternative respite. A social club was set up to meet the needs of those who were using respite as a social outlet only.

This review will continue for another respite service in to 2020, which will ensure respite services are being delivered in the most effective way to meet the needs of service users and their families.

The maintenance team have completed works to all our houses in the North which has created more comfortable and tastefully decorated environments to live in. They have been responsive to all work requests throughout the year.

**CENTRAL AREA**

The following is a brief overview for the Central Area during 2019.

The central area has seen some changes during



Presentation of a cheque for €1,000 for the purchase of sensory equipment.to Croi Oscalte Residential Service Ballyhaunis.

Back row: Brendan Chambers, Tom Collins, Caroline Costello, Bernard O Regan.  
Front row: Teresa Ward, Marie Cribben, Mary Jordan, Dara Dunne, Steve O'Donnell.



the course of 2019 including change of geographical spread. The area now encompasses the townlands of Ballyhaunis, Kiltimagh, Kilkelly, Balla, Hollymount, Parke, Straide, Turlough, Manulla and Castlebar.

This number comprises of individuals availing of residential, respite and individualised services, together with individuals who do not wish to avail of direct service provision and instead opt for community activities through the Saturday club with their peers.

2019 has seen a lot of positive changes for individuals in the central area with regards to living options. Individuals, families, advocates and staff teams together with service reviews highlighted the need to provide alternative living arrangements for some. Through consultation with the relevant stakeholders we embarked on a journey of exploration with individuals which culminated in a variety of living options being achieved. A lot of time, effort and hard work went into the planning and delivery of this by a group of dedicated people, however the front line staff in particular have to be thanked for their dedication in supporting each individual achieve their end goal.

To achieve these alternative living arrangements we needed to look at what we could do differently. We looked at what was available to us and how best we could use the

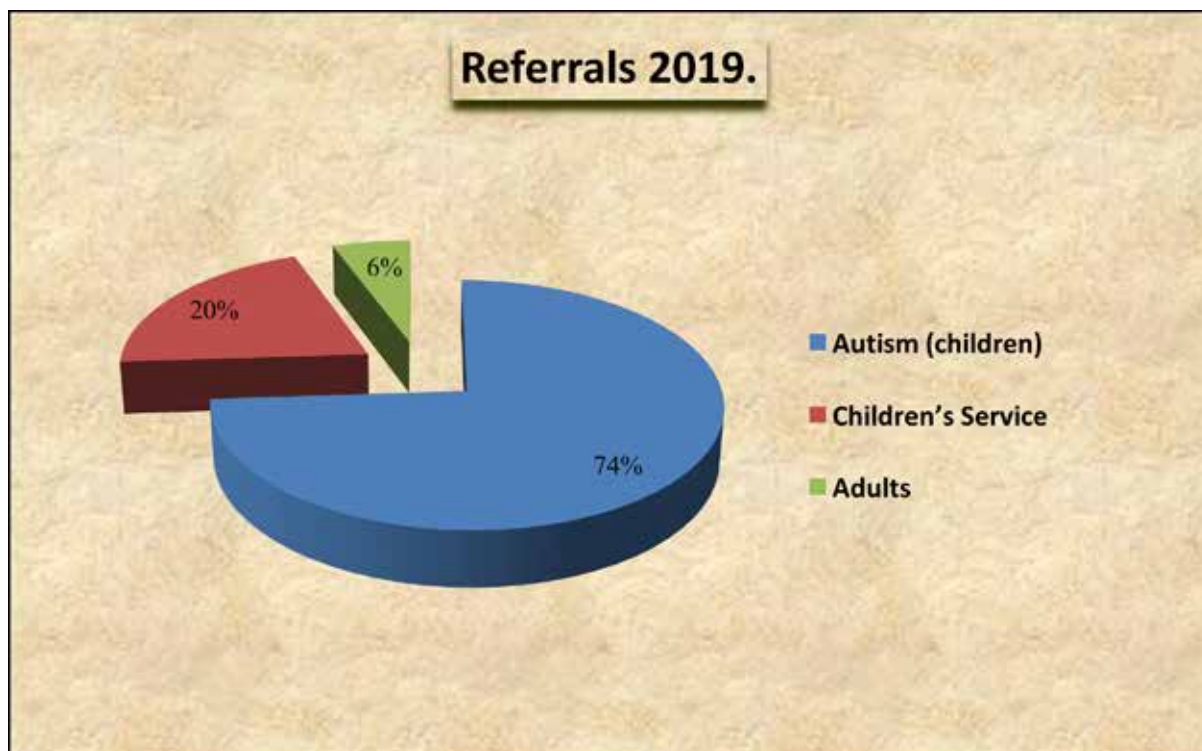
resources we have. This resulted in reconfiguring an existing building into three self contained apartments. In listening to people's wishes and supporting them to move to living options of their choosing.

We closed one service, Barr an Chnoc (Highland Lodge), Kilkelly. This was a long standing service which was supported hugely by the local community which we are very thankful for. This building will be reconfigured going forward and this will be described later by the Head of Projects & Planning.

Over the year we also concentrated on maintaining our registrations with HIQA (8 Designated centres encompassing 10 services). This involved some unannounced visits and thematic inspections on restrictive practices. We received positive feedback from these inspections which is a reassurance we are getting it right.

In an effort to ensure we continue to deliver the best possible services we also focused on our risk management and risk registers ensuring while risks are inevitable in all aspects of life that we are aware of this and manage them appropriately.

2019 brought lots of changes for the central area; we are thankful for the positive outcomes we have achieved and we remember fondly those who left us prematurely. We will continue to work together with service users,





their families and staff to provide services in line with people's wishes and needs.

### **St. Francis, Castlebar**

St. Francis had a busy 2019. We got a new housemate who has settled in very well. We also were lucky to get a new vehicle which has plenty of space for the many trips and will carry our suitcases when we go on holidays again. This year we went to Wales for holidays to a holiday park and everyone thoroughly enjoyed it. The annual garden party is held every August and was a huge success with lots of people joining us including family, neighbours and friends. We are looking forward to organising this again.

During 2019 one of our friends who used to live with us passed away, we talked about how we could say goodbye to him and decided with his family to have him repose at St Frances for a short while where we could tell stories of the past and to say our goodbyes. This was a very special time for everyone and we miss him a lot.

### **Cheile Creidim, Castlebar**

Cheile Creidim is a respite service which caters to the needs of 30+ people. This is a busy service where demand is high and to this regard we have welcomed a number of new respite users during the year. Cheile Creidim offers a homely environment where comfort is a must and to ensure this feeling is maintained we upgraded our bathroom and kitchen facilities during the year.

There were many enjoyable times during 2019 where community activities and participation is the core of our existence. The location of this service enables respite users to avail of all the amenities located in Castlebar town and the surrounding area. Concerts in local venues, meals out, bowling and the cinema are a few of the firm favourites together with coffee with friends, shopping trips and movie nights.

### **Cois Locha, Manulla**

Cois Locha is located on the outskirts of Castlebar and is home to four individuals. We support both male and female individuals with intellectual disabilities who also have associated complex needs such as physical and sensory disabilities and consequently have high support needs. The environment is adapted to support the needs

of residents with the necessary equipment in place to provide an excellent quality of care.

2019 was a busy year for the service with significant milestone birthdays celebrated in style. One individual celebrated their milestone birthday with several celebrations in a variety of venues with family and friends. Another resident celebrated their milestone birthday by travelling to New York with their family to celebrate while also taking in a match supporting his brother who plays for the Mayo team.

### **Croi Oscailte:**

Sadly we experienced the loss of a resident who had lived in Croi Oscailte for over 12 years. This was a difficult time for her family, fellow residents and staff and she is fondly remembered by all.

In Croi Oscailte two individuals got to experience a trip of a lifetime to Disneyland Paris. This was a thoroughly enjoyable trip with memories to last a lifetime. Both individuals' experienced new opportunities and were supported by staff that planned and prepared this trip with them and made it all possible.

### **Hazelview**

Hazelview is a busy service where being out and about in the local community is an everyday activity. We use the local services and are known in the community. Communication systems are in place to support people to make daily choices and make their preferences known. We have regular house meetings where residents make choices and plans for the week ahead and are involved in the running of the service.

We welcomed a new resident into Hazelview which has brought a new dynamic to the service. This move has been positive and the team continue to support all residents with this new living arrangement

In both Croi Oscailte and Hazelview works are ongoing to develop the garden areas to ensure everyone has a comfortable accessible outside space to use when the sun shines.

### **Lannagh View, Castlebar**

Lannagh View is a residential service located in the heart of Castlebar. A strong



focus for the residents is community participation, where we are constantly exploring new opportunities for people to be part of their local community.

Residents are involved in a variety of community groups and activities including a bowling group who meet on a weekly basis. Participants not only enjoy the bowling aspect but also the social side of it where new friendships have been developed and encouraged. There are a number of GAA fans in Lannagh View so attending matches is important and if this is not possible we ensure it can be viewed on TV.

At Lannagh View we encourage and support residents to achieve their dreams. One such example for 2019 was the trip of a lifetime to America for one resident with his family. This took a lot of planning between the individual, their family and the team and to say he enjoyed his experience is an understatement. We will continue to support individuals to achieve their goals for the year ahead,

#### **Cherry Blossom, Castlebar**

2019 has been a positive year in Cherry Blossom. A focus for this service was to establish a consistent staff team. This has been achieved and the individual has a bespoke service where their needs are met in a manner that is in keeping with their preferences. Community participation is a fundamental part of life and this is agreed and achieved on a daily basis on the individual's terms.

#### **Abbey Residential and Respite Services, Ballyhaunis**

2019 was a busy time for the service. One service user was offered the opportunity to take up another living option. However they declined on foot of the support of NAS, the NCBI and our own risk assessment process which supported him to remain in his current home allied with his own expressed wishes. One service user was successful in undertaking a successful work experience leading to part-time work in a Nursing Home close to his childhood home locality and re-connecting with some people he had known well years ago. 2019 saw two important birthday celebrations for service users with one service user celebrating their 60th birthday in March with a party for family and close friends while the other celebrated

their milestone 70th birthday with an intimate party in their home in December.

2019 saw the successful achievement of full and permanent homes for two long standing respite service users who had been striving for that for some time. This led to the return of a dedicated focus for the respite service. The service saw some long awaited garden improvements and saw the introduction of some Individual plan changes. The service saw the departure after 15 years of two long serving staff members. The service also welcomed some new respite users and looks forward to developing many new relationships with them and their families.

We encourage participation in our local community where respite users can avail of activities they are interested in. When planning for respite stays we ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that people with similar interests and who are friends avail of the service at the same time so it's a more enjoyable experience.

#### **Hazelhill Downs, Ballyhaunis**

2019 saw a number of changes in service provision due to changing needs. It also saw the departure of two long standing staff to retirement and they are missed by everyone. Supporting natural relationships and reconnecting with childhood memories is a priority for this service and will continue into the future.

#### **Bláth na hOíge, Castlebar**

2019 has proven to be another busy, positive year for all in Bláth na hOíge. We continue to strive, with families, to improve the quality of each person's life, and support them to lead full and satisfied lives. Involving siblings has proved to be very positive for all involved. Being active in the local community is a priority for everyone and we continue to build on these successes and use every opportunity to build Community Connections. A lot of thought, consideration, and consultation go into choosing goals, which are meaningful for each person which ensures their IP is active.

Holidays and time away from the usual routine, were goals that were realised for two individuals in 2019. This will remain a priority as this was so successful for the individuals involved. As always we support individuals to have a positive self image both in terms of physical and mental wellbeing and this will also continue as per individual wishes.





Internal enhancement of the service was completed in 2019 and for the year ahead we intend to improve on our external environment.

Our fundraising goal to purchase a new vehicle continues. Between monies donated, and fundraiser events we have entered 2020 in a good position. We are hopeful this goal will be realised in 2020. All of the people in the Service are involved in trying to achieve this goal.

We continue to miss friends who have departed, we hold their memories close.

### **Individualised Services**

In the central area we have a total of nine individualised services. This offers a range of living options that differ from traditional group home settings. This means for each person that supports are designed around their individual requirements where their choice and preference in everyday life is to the fore. Individuals are supported in a number of activities from educational opportunities, sporting activities, social roles to name but a few.

### **WORKING TOGETHER TO CREATE CHANGE AND IMPROVE LIVES**

2019 was a significant year for change in Western Care. Once such change project was the decision to close Highland Lodge in Kilkelly to develop more person-centered living solutions for the users of the service.

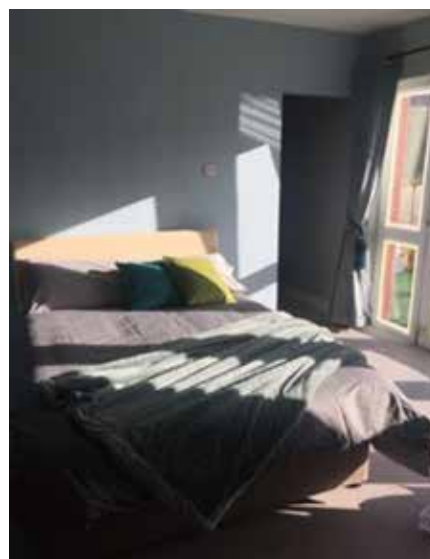
Highland Lodge was a residential service supporting 6 adults diagnosed on the Autism

Spectrum that opened in 1983. In a service review of Highland Lodge in early 2019, it was acknowledged that the needs of individuals living at the service had become incompatible and the environment was challenging for supporting the individuals who lived there. Despite the very best efforts and commitment of staff and management throughout the years, individual needs had changed and it was recognised that a vision to create a better life was required for each individual.

We were given the opportunity to dream with people in the planning of what a better life would look like. To say we had a blank slate on which to work on would be an over-statement though, as whatever plan of solutions was being dreamed up, it had to be realised and delivered within existing resources.

The most fundamental and important part of creating any plan of change for people is working collaboratively with all stakeholders to develop a vision. Our stated vision was to create much improved and person-centred living solutions for the people involved and that this must be achieved within our existing resources. Planning how to achieve that objective was done in collaboration with numerous stakeholders, not least the person where possible, their families or advocates and the staff teams that support them and know them well.

The planning of the closure of Highland Lodge involved large scale collaborative working and included family members, frontline staff, managers, Regional Service Managers the



The sitting room and bedroom in one of the apartments



Social Reform Fund, Day Services as well as the Human Resources Department and Finance Departments in Western Care. After a number of months of planning and collaboration, a plan was agreed for the future living of all individuals living at Highland Lodge.

The plan agreed was multi-faceted and involved two individuals transitioning to another Western Care residential service. A third person moved to a short term individualised setting as an interim measure while a long term arrangement was being planned. The plan also involved the redevelopment of the recently unoccupied property at Ballinamore, Kiltimagh into 3 adjacent one bedroom apartments. A deadline date of Christmas 2019 was set for completion of the closure of Highland Lodge.

### **The Redevelopment of Riverside into Forest View Apartments**

The design of Forest View apartments was considered to ensure that each person had their own one bed room self-contained and individually designed apartment and that all 3 apartments were separated by a 2 bedroomed staffing apartment where staff slept. The design facilitates residents to experience individualised living, where they have the security of staff at hand or close by, but are not continuously staffed. Residents would be free to request staff to leave, when not required and staff support can be targeted to required times rather than continuous.

Renovation work began on Forest View Apartments in September 2019. These were major renovations and were carried out exclusively by Western Care Association's maintenance team. The three month deadline for completion of work made this a very ambitious and pressurised project. The project however was defined by a jointly held vision to ensure that the standard of accommodation provided would be of the highest standard, be individually designed to the preferences and needs of each resident and would be finished for Christmas.

At this point Debbie Rooney joined the project team to guide the interior design of each apartment. Debbie works in the Administration Team in Western Care and outside of her work in Western Care is a well-respected and talented interior designer. Debbie brought an

extra special dimension to the project and challenged us to think outside of the box in how we design our accommodation for people. Debbie in turn shared our vision for this project with her own interior design contacts in Ireland and overseas, which resulted in an unbelievable expression of generosity from designers and suppliers from far and wide.

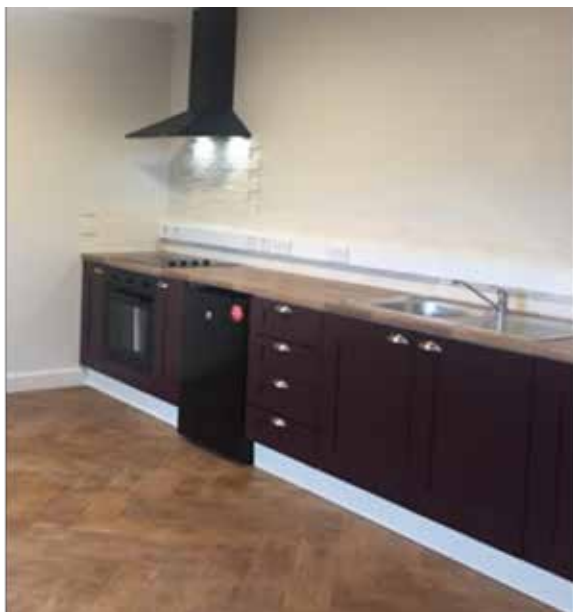
In parallel to the renovation works, extensive work was being done in collaboration with staff, managers and the HR department to ensure the re-deployment of staff from Highland Lodge to continue to support people in their new living environments. This was essential to ensure the continuity of valued relationships already established. Considerable work was also taking place in helping residents to transition to new living environments and in helping others prepare to transition.

After Trojan efforts from all concerned, on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2019, the final remaining residents of Highland Lodge moved to their new home at Forest View Apartments, just ahead of our Christmas deadline. The transition went extremely well for all and it is obvious now that this model of individualised living is resulting in much improved outcomes for these individuals, as well as being a much improved environment for staff to work in. The icing on the cake of this initiative then came in March when the individual who had moved to an interim living arrangement was awarded a brand new local authority house in their home town. A special thanks for Mayo County Council for their support with this.

Reflecting on this project, some valuable lessons can be derived that can inform future change projects that arise. Including stakeholders in decision making and developing a positive vision together, puts a fire in the belly of all and that collective energy can guide us through obstacles and lead to transformative change.

A big thank you goes out to all people involved in this project. A very special word of thanks to:

- Our Maintenance team who worked tirelessly to ensure residents celebrated Christmas in their new homes



The Kitchen in one of the apartments

- Debbie Rooney for her vision and hard work and to the very extensive group of generous and thoughtful donors.
- To the frontline staff who shared their extensive knowledge of the residents to guide our planning and who worked extremely hard to ensure that residents transitioned to their new homes in such a positive manner

### **A Word from Debbie Rooney**

I was delighted to be asked to work on the Forest View Project; it was an opportunity to use my passion for Interior Design.

For my part I set myself a Project Goal at the start which I kept as my focus throughout: To create independent living spaces with a high quality of comfort, providing service users with an individual home. This was an opportunity to change the normal setting that we might have been used to in disability services. I wanted to base the design on their personal needs and to be completely individualised to them.

There were some challenges along the way, the main one being budget! With most of the budget going towards the renovation works I needed to be creative in order to achieve the end result that was in my head. So, using my contacts in arts/interiors, I took to my Instagram account and asked if anyone would like to donate to this worthy project.

So many people worked on the project and everyone played their part, going above and beyond to get the residents in for Christmas. I am immensely proud to have been a part of what I hope was the first of many such projects for the organisation.

### **CHILDREN'S AREA**

Western Care provides centre based respite for children in the Castlebar and Ballina areas. Both Designated Centres are under the auspices of HIQA, the national regulatory body for Centres for children and adults with intellectual disability.

Both centres pride themselves on providing a "home from home" ethos and work in partnership with the childrens' families and members of the multi disciplinary team in supporting the children to achieve their preferences, priorities and personal goals. In essence, the services promote opportunities for fun and enjoyment – the welfare, safety and happiness of the children is paramount.

#### **Cara Respite Service**

Firstly and most importantly, Cara Respite Service remembers a very special, fun loving and much loved young lady, who passed away in early 2019, R.I.P. She is missed very much by everyone connected with Cara Respite Service.

As the service has become more established and familiar with the local area, connections with the local community have grown and developed.

As part of the plan for 2019, Cara Respite has focused on improving the outdoor environment for the children, with various grants and fund raising monies contributing to the purchase of a wheel chair swing, a bucket swing and various outdoor play items. The Service is fortunate to have a very large garden and these enhancements have made it stimulating, interesting and fun for the children.

As a service, there has been a focus on furthering the transition plan for the young person who is resident within the service presently. This has meant advocating for him with regard to future planning for his living arrangements, which in turn would enable the service to then be more responsive to the respite needs of other children and families. Cara Respite continues to facilitate some respite provision as currently agreed with families.



House meetings involving staff, children and families, have been a feature of the service for some time. However it was acknowledged that families had many commitments and busy schedules and were not always in a position to attend. Cara Respite service has established a quarterly Newsletter as a way of promoting additional communication and connectivity with families. This does not replace the regular, ongoing family contact, but provides information on service improvements, new ideas/suggestions and various resources and events that may be of interest to families. Very positive feedback has been received on this more novel approach.

The service always endeavours to be consistent in its commitment to delivering a high standard of service to all those who avail of it. It maintains an open, transparent policy where feedback on the service from families and individuals is welcomed and promoted.

### **St. Stephens Respite Service**

2019 was an exciting and productive year for St. Stephens! Three new children were welcomed to the service and further introductions planned.

The Renault Master 2019 arrived and has facilitated more community participation. It is a very welcome addition to the service and has allowed the service to plan more events, in particular with the children who use wheelchairs as the vehicle provides the capacity to transport two children who are wheelchair users together if they wish. Many thanks to all who supported the fundraising efforts and those who contributed to helping decide what vehicle would best suit the service. Hopefully, there will be many miles on the clock by this time next year!!

St. Stephens have designed a sensory area for the garden. Some ground works require completion in order to establish this fully. A soft play surface is the next project, so that the children can access the garden along with a sensory wall. This will support the children to make choices about what they would like to grow. Funding from N.C.B.I can contribute towards this. Monies raised from the Christmas Raffle and Card Game in December will make a significant contribution to developing further the garden projects.



New wheelchair swing at St. Stephen's Children's Respite

St. Stephens had an inspection from HIQA in 2019 and the report is available.

St. Stephens continues to look forward to the coming year and will continue to support the children to progress their goals and support them to develop more friendships within, and outside of the service.

Our Children's Respite Services have only been able to provide a limited service to a small number of children for a few day or evening hours with exceptionally limited capacity to provide overnight respite to those children. There has been no capacity to provide respite to children and their families who are waitlisted for this service due to the necessity to provide overnight service to two children due to crisis circumstances. This has severely affected service provision and meant that families whose children have been waitlisted for a significant period of time, continue to experience extreme stress, pressures with no centre based respite available to respond.

### **HOMESHARING**

The Home Share Providers offer a unique opportunity in their own home to children and adults with intellectual disabilities, having been recruited, screened and trained to undertake this role, generally for short breaks, regular weekly breaks or for more long term arrangements such as "Shared Living".

This provides opportunities for the child/adult to develop new relationships, participate more in their communities and experience an



increased sense of inclusion in their community and the family environment.

As Irish society is changing, family units are becoming smaller. Increased social mobility can result in people becoming more isolated in their communities. Closer family networks which used to be a greater source of support, may no longer be the norm for a lot of people.

Individuals with intellectual disability and their families have demonstrated to us that home share is an option they like to consider and frequently prefer to avail of, as a first preference in service supports.

Constant caring can be demanding and at times may become overwhelming. The provision of home sharing has been found to reduce stress, strain and burn out in families, and so provide a valuable means of enhancing families coping resources. As some families don't have the option of help from family, neighbours or friends, the availability of home share can be a more "natural" support model.

Home share providers create further opportunities for participation and inclusion for service users in their communities. The concept of "family/partner/individual" based support not only provides support in the communities but also support by the community. It upholds the principle of social inclusion, which is the right of every individual. It promotes choice for the individual service users as to who (s)he might like to live or spend time with and what social and leisure activities (s)he may want to get involved in.

"Home share takes account of service user's right to be treated with dignity and respect, their right to presence in ordinary places, their need for opportunity to develop a wide range of relationships. It supports their right to make choices about daily life and activities and follow their personal goals in life. Finally it recognises the need we all have, to have opportunities to develop new skills".

Home Share Providers receive an allowance for providing a home share service to individuals in their family home. The cost of this in comparison to an individual availing of centre-based traditional respite is considerably less. Studies on homesharing as a model of support to the individual with a disability and their family have shown a high level of parental satisfaction and positive outcomes for the individual, as well as it being clearly a very cost-effective service.

The HSE "Homesharing in Intellectual Disability Services in Ireland report of the National Expert group 2016" is based on national and international best practice for people with intellectual disability in need of support services.

The report provides very clear specific recommendations across all aspects of home share as a service model.

Western Care Association has provided a home share service for 30 years and has implemented and is continuing to strategically work on taking on board the requirements of the National Expert Group.

The focus of 2019 in this regard was a successful proposal to secure funding to pay home share providers an allowance that is aligned to national recommendations.

A full review of our home share process from initial enquiry from a prospective home share provider, right through to cessation of placements has taken place and a comprehensive guidance pack is in place for all involved in the Home Share service. This includes assessment, approval of placements, matching, establishing placements, service specifications/agreements, monitoring and review. Support to home share providers is integral to promoting person centred and safe services.

Training in mandatory courses including Safeguarding, Fire awareness etc, have taken place and the level of coverage is increasing.

Other training events based on identified need have and will be offered.

Recruitment of suitable Home Share Providers is always a priority and we constantly look at creative ways to do this.

Out of 16 enquirers in the last 8 months of 2019, 44% of these enquiries yielded a positive outcome. This would be deemed to be a high success rate based on national patterns and feedback.

#### **Looking to the future:**

We endeavour to continue to work in a supportive and co-ordinated manner in the home share service, focused on increasing the number of home share providers and addressing waiting lists for the service. We are constantly reflecting on recruitment methods, and are in the process of developing recruitment materials with a more extensive community based presence to prompt interest



across as large a number of individuals as possible throughout Co Mayo.

We look forward to seeing the results of this and providing more opportunities for children and adults to experience positive experiences in typical family based situations.

### INDIVIDUALISED SERVICES

The Individualised Area of Services supports people across the county of Mayo, in various arrangements which are personalised to their needs.

The services are based in people's homes, the majority of which are rented by the person with the support of community welfare, Rental Accommodation Scheme or the Housing Assistance Programme.

#### Developments in 2019

In September we supported a person with their transition from Aras Attracta to their own home in the community. Since 2017 we have supported five people to move to a home of their own with very close involvement of their Parents, siblings and wider members of their families.

Most people moved to an area that is close to

where their family members are and where they were born.

This has been quite a mammoth task as we had a few challenges along the way including finding the right home for the person, finding staff in an economy that had more than full employment and there were a lot of emotional issues connected with a move for people who had spent a long time in a setting that they were familiar with. People needed time to process and evaluate the move in order to be fully informed.

The results have been very positive for all of the five individuals who now spend time in their communities where they are getting to know new people and the most positive outcome is that they are much more connected to their families where they visit their family home and have hosted family members to come to their home.

We have eight designated centres in the Individualised Services area, two of which were opened during the year. We received five visits from HIQA inspectors during the year all of which were positive.

The development of a service called the Mobile Night Attendant has been a valuable resource in responding to situations that might



A birthday to remember - Jodie and his Mum, Kathleen, enjoying a cup of tea and cake in his new home



arise. This service consists of a staff that is based in a service and is available to respond to emergencies that arise out of hours including evenings and weekends. This service supports service users who may be going through a difficult time and enables staff that support them to manage situations across the county.

We are fortunate and grateful to have a committed team of staff at all levels who are inspirational in their support to people on a daily basis and who have developed strong relationships with the people they support. We look forward to continually supporting people to live a safe, healthy and happy life.

### HIQA REVIEW

Throughout 2019, we had 19 HIQA inspections across our residential and respite services. The table on pages 31 and 32 sets out an overview of the areas of compliance and those where further follow up was required. Most inspections found good levels of compliance and reported positive examples of staff working to provide effective support and positive experiences for people supported.

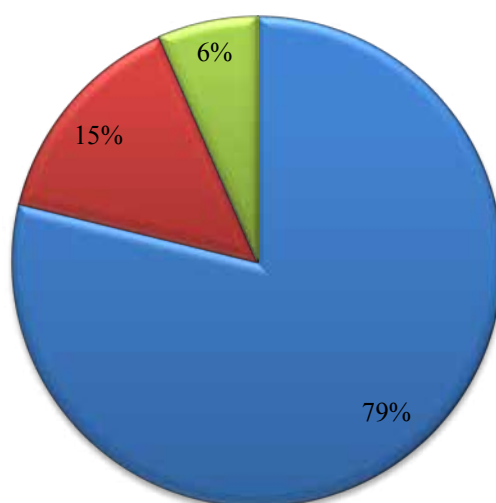
A particular highlight was the organisation's first restrictive practice thematic inspection which was very positive and found the service to be fully compliant with HIQA's Restrictive Practice Thematic inspection. We continue to work actively where there are areas of concern. This year, we focused our improvement efforts in particular in the area of risk management.

We worked to improve our local register documentation and systems so that evidence was more available for inspectors on site to reassure them of our systems to respond to areas of health and safety concern. We engaged with external advisors to review our risk management policies and we are currently implementing a streamlined system for line managers to identify and track any issue of concern electronically.

In the coming year, we are working through a significant number of re-registration visits, where HIQA conduct a detailed three yearly inspection over and above their monitoring visits. In this work, we will continue to engage positively with the regulator to both demonstrate areas of good practice and respond proactively to areas of challenge.

## HIQA INSPECTIONS 2019 - COMPLIANCE RATES

■ Compliant ■ Substantially Compliant ■ Not Compliant





Capacity and Capability

Inspection	REG 3 Statement of Purpose	REG 4 Written Policies and Procedures	REGISTRATION REG 5: Application for registration or renewal of registration	REG 14 Person In Charge	REG 15 Staffing	REG 16 Training and Staff Development	REG 19 Directory of Residents	REG 21 Records	REG 22 Insurance	REG 23 Governance and Management	REG 24 Admissions and Contract for the Provision of Services	REG 30 Volunteers	REG 31 Notification of Incidents	REG 32 Notification of Periods when Person in Charge is Absent	REG 33 Notifications of Procedures and Arrangements for Periods when Person in Charge is Absent	REG 34 Complaints Procedure	REG 5 Individual Assessment and Personal Plan
1	Compliant			Compliant	Not Compliant	Not Compliant				Not Compliant							Not Compliant
2				Compliant	Compliant	Compliant				Substantially Compliant		Compliant	Compliant			Compliant	Compliant
3					Compliant					Compliant			Compliant			Compliant	
4	Compliant		Compliant	Compliant		Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant						Compliant
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9	Compliant				Compliant	Substantially Compliant				Not Compliant			Not Compliant				Substantially Compliant
10	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant		Compliant	Compliant	Substantially Compliant						Compliant
11				Compliant	Substantially Compliant	Compliant				Substantially Compliant			Compliant				Compliant
12			Not Compliant														
13	Compliant			Compliant	Compliant	Compliant			Compliant	Compliant			Compliant			Compliant	Compliant
14	Compliant	Substantially Compliant	Compliant	Compliant		Compliant			Compliant	Compliant							Compliant
15	Substantially Compliant			Compliant	Substantially Compliant	Compliant	Compliant			Compliant			Compliant				Compliant
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18	Substantially Compliant			Compliant	Compliant	Compliant				Substantially Compliant	Compliant					Compliant	Substantially Compliant





019 HIQA Inspections

Quality and Safety

REG 6 Healthcare	REG 7 Positive Behaviour Support	REG 8 Protection	REG 9 Residents' Rights	REG 10 Communication	REG 11 Visits	REG 12 Personal Possessions	REG 13 General Welfare and Development	REG 17 Premises	REG 18 Food and Nutrition	REG 20 Information for Residents	REG 25 Temporary Absence, Transition and Discharge of Patients	REG 26 Risk Management Procedures	REG 27 Protection against Infection	REG 28 Fire Precautions	REG 29 Medicines and Pharmaceutical Services
Not Compliant	Substantially Compliant	Not Compliant	Not Compliant					Not Compliant				Not Compliant		Not Compliant	Not Compliant
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## AUTISM SERVICES

### Resource Worker Support in Mayo Early Intervention Services (“MEIS”) (0-6)

#### Purpose

To work in partnership with parents and a multidisciplinary team to empower parents to support and help their child to develop skills, meet milestones and reach their full potential; to enable the child and family be included in and become active members of their own community.

Under Progressing Disability Services (PDS) for children 0-18, the early intervention (0-6 years) autism team amalgamated into Mayo Early Intervention Services (MEIS) in January 2018. The objective of this service is that the pathway to services will be the same no matter where you live in Ireland.

We work as part of a team on referral to our service. Once an initial visit is completed by a MEIS team member; from this visit an individual family plan is developed with the parents who identify their priorities for the team to support them with.

We model and demonstrate to parents how to use specific strategies e.g. use of visuals to help their child understand daily routines, explain the rationale for the strategy, support the parent to implement the strategy, problem solve with parent and team, monitor and review progress of support on an ongoing basis.

Support may be short term or in some instances it is extended for a specific period and closed on the understanding that Resource Worker support can be referred for again as and when required by the parent or a team member. We liaise with other team members involved and follow the therapist’s recommendations under their guidance and sometimes bespoke training for us by therapy service is provided. We attend therapy appointments with the family if required and relevant to our support.

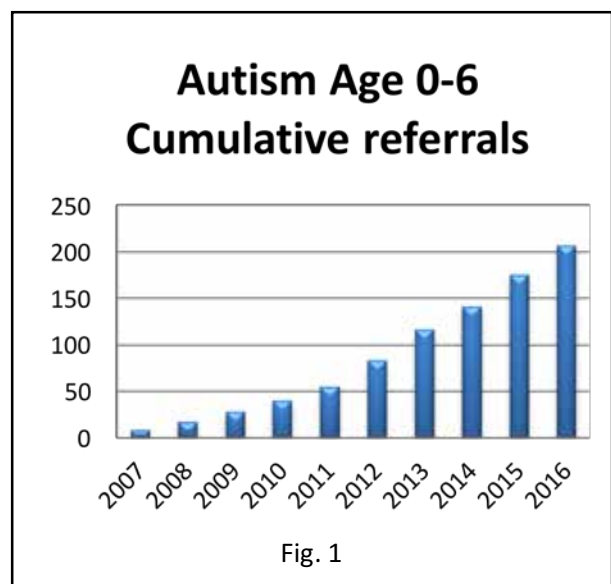
Another area we support is with groups such as Mother and Toddler, both community led and team led groups dependent on family need. Also, we support in Social Skill groups led by Speech & Language Therapists.

As part of MEIS, we continue to provide Autism Early Bird Parent Training Programme twice /three times yearly for six families. Each programme is run over a thirteen week period.

#### Community Engagement

In 2018/2019 we supported a group of MEIS parents to set up a group for children with autism. This progressed to consultation with parents and the WCA School Age Autism Manager on setting up a summer camp for children with autism and their siblings, led and organised by the parents. This progressed to the parents engaging with a community group who facilitated the camp by providing a venue and both the parent group and community group applied for funding jointly. This parent group ran other events in the community venue and plans for more events are ongoing. Resource workers are referred to in order to support the parents and volunteers (sourced by the parents) during the events to understand the autism specific strategies that help children who use our services. The parents and community group noted it is a great success and they hope to have continued successful events in the future.

Resource Workers support the child/family in a range of community activities to enable them to participate as fully as possible in all community environments such as parks, fun parks, shops, church, hospital, playschool (by linking with preschool leaders if required).



### Children’s School Age Autism team (6-18)

#### Service Scale and purpose

The School age Autism team serves **512** children within Mayo. The aim of the service is to empower and support families and children to engage as fully and successfully as they



possibly can within their own community, home and school environments. Each family is assigned an Autism Resource worker (ARW). The ARW operates as a named staff/key worker to families. They work in specified geographical areas with a defined caseload.

ARWs support the parents in their application of strategies in daily living, e.g. First-Then, visual schedules, Social Stories in conjunction with the autism specific School Age Parent Training that parents attend. The supports can be direct to the child, indirect (as needed) and can be solely focussed on working with parents depending on family need. Examples of work has been supporting families to change schools, to access community successfully (going to the shops, joining sports social club, attending a conference), supporting transitions to secondary school, to adulthood, supporting families and children to manage anxieties both at home and in school environments and supporting the family with Autism Spectrum Disorder (“ASD”) informed strategies for all social and practical situations.

The team works in a multi-disciplinary framework in conjunction with the HSE school age disability and primary care teams. The team links with all agencies and has developed working relationships with TUSLA family support via the Meitheal process, TUSLA child protection, CAMHS and Paediatric services and has a strong relationship with Schools NCSE and the NEPS teams. We have developed strong links to community organisations such as the Family Support Centre and Youth services such as the Edge project. The team is primarily focussed in

supporting families within their own home and community and is strongly centred on developing personal and community capacity around the awareness, understanding and manageability of supporting children with Autism within the mainstream settings.

### **LEGO® based therapy (LBT) ‘Bricks Club’ and Autism Supports Advisors (ASA’s)**

In Mayo we have supported the training, establishment and running of LEGO® based therapy with primary and post primary schools. We have engaged with 86 schools and there are over 50 Brick clubs running currently. This is a major undertaking which has seen large scale results in improving children’s skills in the areas of social development and has been a significant pathway to building ASD informed capacity in schools. A recent evaluation provided excellent feed back from all schools involved stating that it was a significant and major part of the teaching strategies within the school day for all children. The programme has been run and developed by the Autism Supports Advisors (ASA). The Advisors have also set up school holiday break social skills groups, Bricks clubs and have established a coffee morning for parents in the Ballinrobe area. The ASA’s also provide a key role in offering ASD informed training to school staff teams, parents, community groups and foster links within the wider community.

### **Lighthouse Parent Training**

This is a long established series of evening workshops, devised by the team, which provides information around some of the key areas parents may encounter when supporting



Ewan and Tomás enjoying a social skills group with Joanne Hoban (Autism Supports Advisor)



a child with Autism. They are open to parents, other family members, teachers, Special Needs Assistants and other supportive individuals.

### Outreach Respite team

Two new 15hr posts have been established this year to meet the growing demand for non traditional respite. For individuals with Autism some traditional respite services are not always suitable and a different approach is required. We have limited resources and require this to be developed to meet the growing demand.

### Bright Knights History Club and School break club.

This initiative has been running for a number of years very successfully. It is supported and staffed by the Autism team and provides the children an opportunity to socialise with like minded people and share their interests and passion. Visits have included, Belfast Ulster Museum, Irish Military Museum, Comicon, Rathcroghan archaeological sites and numerous adventures up mountains and valleys to explore ancient burial mounds and ruined buildings. It is highly successful and a unique and dynamic support to children and families.

The team also provides a school holiday break club for children both from the Autism Team and Children's Services Team. It is focussed on fun activities and visits and similarly to the Bright Knights is run during most school holiday breaks. Trips have included Achill aquarium, Ballina Belleek woods /Tumble Jungle, Aillwee Caves, Co. Clare and many more.

### Challenges for the Autism service

Despite the considerable achievements and progress the team has made in the past few years underlying challenges limit the ability of the team to function as an effective and fully supportive service.

The team is underfunded and understaffed to meet the level of demand for support. The number of children with the diagnosis has grown consistently over the past few years while the staff complement has remained stagnant and in some areas contracted. The growth of referrals is clearly illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. There is an upward trend year on year with a significant spike of referrals from 2017-2019. The significant detail is the referral figures for 2018-2019 which were extremely high considering that all

early intervention referrals were transferred to and registered with HSE MEIS.

### The growth in the number of Children with Autism in school Age services has risen by over 125%

The current model of supports, as described above, is focussed on the Autism Resource workers managing their caseloads and the families' needs with the support of the manager and the team. Typically resource workers are either part time varying from 10-23 hours per week, part time split between Early Intervention ("EI") and School Age ("SA") or full time split between SA and EI. On average they have a case load of 25-40 children. The continual year on year growth will reduce the Autism Resource Workers ("ARW's") capacity to adequately respond to families.

The reduction in specialist support sets another limitation on the service. Behaviour support is one of the primary needs for many families and schools.

Autism being a spectrum disorder raises a variety of challenges. It has been long established that a form of family respite is one of the primary needs for families supporting a child with Autism. In the 2012 national report on Autism, it was cited as the highest requested intervention by families. The nature of Autism requires a multi-dimensional approach to providing respite; one approach will not serve all.

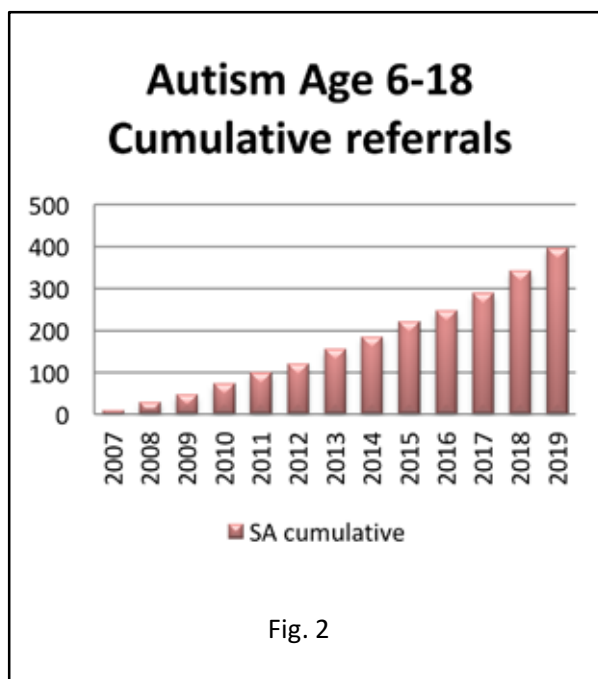


Fig. 2



## **SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPY**

2019 was another busy year for the Speech and Language Therapy Department. The Speech and Language Therapy Department (“SLT”) provides a service to both adults and early childhood services. Four Speech and Language Therapists provide a service as part of Mayo Early Intervention Service, which is a collaboration by Western Care Association with Enable Ireland and the HSE.

Two speech and language therapists provide a service to adults. A range of services are available, as appropriate:

- Communication Assessment/Intervention
- Feeding, eating, drinking and swallowing (FEDS) Assessment
- Support to staff so that they can enable service users to achieve their full potential and maximise community inclusion and participation through total communication. (Total communication is communicating through any means or mode to be understood or get your message over)
- Staff training

### **Feeding, Eating, Drinking and Swallowing Difficulties (FEDS)**

Following a FEDS assessment, a Speech and Language Therapist can recommend changes to the consistency of food as one of the ways of assisting the individual to swallow safely. Up to September 2019 the description of consistencies followed Irish Consistency Descriptors for modified Fluids and Foods 2009. September 2019 saw the introduction of the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative in Ireland. It was necessary for the Speech and Language Therapist working in Adult services to re-train all staff working with service users with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties in terms of the new consistencies and testing methods. This work is ongoing and expected to be completed in March 2020.

### **Audit**

An audit in relation to FEDS was carried out by the Speech and Language Therapy Department in 2017. A number of recommendations were made at that time. Two of those recommendations came to fruition in 2019 and are part of the organisations dysphagia (swallowing difficulties) policy, namely, the service user’s right to refuse

recommendations and FEDS on-site induction training for new staff.

### **Feds Regional meetings**

The Speech and Language Therapists maintain strong links with SLT’s working in the area of Adult Intellectual Disability through the regional FEDS meetings and the Adult in Learning Disability Special Interest Group, which ensures up-to-date clinical knowledge and the maintenance of good practice.

### **Communication**

Lámh is a manual sign system used by children and adults with Intellectual Disability and communication needs in Ireland. Many service users of Western Care Association make use of Lámh signs to help express themselves and to understand others. Bernard McDonnell is one such person. Bernard learned and used signs from an early age to help get his message across. The key to successful communication using Lámh lies in those around the Lámh user knowing the signs they use. So in 2019, Bernard, with the support of his Speech and Language Therapist (SLT), and his staff at the Ridgepool Day Service began a process of identifying signs he knew and teaching these to his peers and staff at Ridgepool Day Service. Bernard chose the process of ‘co-teaching’ with the SLT as he had great enthusiasm for teaching and also had a performance background in drama and acting! He just needed a little support to get the process up and running. They started with his close friends and staff in Ridgepool but word quickly spread and over the year this has grown to more than 20 staff and service users attending his teaching sessions on Thursday afternoons! The SLT supported Bernard to add more signs each week and even some new signs that Bernard asked to learn and teach to the group. To date, Bernard has been supported to teach 68 signs and also most of the Irish Sign Language (ISL) alphabet, which can be used to indicate people’s names. When his SLT was on leave, Bernard continued to run the sessions, recruiting staff and even some enthusiastic helpers among his peers! Bernard’s confidence has increased and he has become an advocate for Lámh use in his Day service and also at home. The next goal is to widen the net to more people Bernard interacts with regularly e.g. extended family, bus drivers, work placements, and people in the community. Bernard has already helped create a ‘Lámh friendly environment’ in Ridgepool and SLT will build on this, for him and others who use the service.



SLT can support anyone looking to build on existing Lámh use or to look at introducing it to support people who use our services. As you can see, it can have wide reaching benefits for the Lámh user and those around them! #SpreadTheLámh!



Bernard teaching Lámh signs to his friends

Lámh also introduced a further 86 signs in 2019. The Lámh tutor received training in respect to those signs and carried out training with the other SLT's in the department. The new vocabulary reflected the increased use of technology, with signs for Wi-Fi, iPad, YouTube and charger for example, as well as signed vocabulary for sports and recreation, examples being golf, rugby, lego and trampoline.

### **Accessible Information**

The Speech and Language Therapy Department, along with the Behavioural Support personnel continue to update information for service users into more accessible formats.

### **Helping Social Studies students understand Communication and the role of Disability Services like Western Care Association in supporting this.**

One of our social workers is a lecturer on the Social Studies degree course in GMIT Castlebar and teaches the module Disability in Social Care. She invited some of the multidisciplinary team from Western Care to speak to the final year Social Studies class in GMIT Castlebar in March 2019.

One of our SLTs spoke to the students about the communication needs of people with disabilities and the role of the SLT in supporting people with intellectual disabilities. She presented on the meaning of communication, different ways of communicating and how to support people with

communication needs. She emphasised the need to slow down and give people time to process information and to get their message across. The importance of acknowledging and respecting all means of communication was also highlighted and some specific systems were discussed e.g. Lámh signing. She also briefly explained the SLT role in supporting people who have difficulties in Feeding, Eating, Drinking or Swallowing (FEDS).

One of our Behaviour Support Specialist (BSS) also visited the same day to present on Positive Behaviour support for people with disabilities. She helped the students understand the link between Communication and Behaviour and pointed out that all behaviour communicates something. She explained how SLT and BSS work together and how proactively supporting people to communicate i.e. to understand and to express themselves can avoid frustration and having to use other behaviours to get their message across. We need to listen and respond to the person no matter the form of communication in order to support them well.

The feedback received was very positive and the lecturer is seeking to make it an ongoing feature as a valuable learning component for her students.

### **Dementia**

Staff training commenced in 2018 with regard to staff awareness of dementia, through "Supporting Derek" and this training was further offered in 2019 to 12 staff from Day and Respite Services and one family member of a service user with Dementia in the North of the county, over 3 dates in October and November 2019. This training was run by SLT with support from the Behaviour Support Specialist, both of whom were working closely with the person, their staff and their family to provide person centred support.

The Speech and Language Department, as part of a multi-disciplinary team provides ongoing support to the staff and families working and living with a service user with a diagnosis of dementia.

A position Paper on a proposed dementia service within the organisation was completed on behalf of the multidisciplinary working group and accepted by management. A working group to commence the work outlined will commence in 2020.



## PHYSIOTHERAPY

Western Care Association continues to commit to providing one Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) Physiotherapy post which is divided between Children's Services (0.8 of the post), and Adult Services, which benefits from the remaining allocation.

Involvement in Mayo Early Intervention Services, supporting children 0-6 years with complex needs, in collaboration with the HSE and Enable Ireland service providers, is considered to be a valuable use of this resource and is structured to ensure alignment with the ethos of the Association outlined in our mission statement.

With regard to Adult Services, the demand for input in relation to manual handling guidance, mobility assessments and direct contact continues to increase year on year with a marked upward trend during the past year. Ideally an increase in resources would allow for more direct input for our adult population and is a major goal for the organisation in the year ahead.

## PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

The Psychology Department at Western Care Association saw a number of changes in the last year. Paul Cecchetti, Senior Psychologist, retired from Western Care Association after being involved with Western Care on and off for almost 40 years. During this time, Paul worked in many psychology roles including as a trainee psychologist, senior psychologist, and principal psychologist. Paul retired from the service on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The psychology department and all at Western Care would like to thank Paul for his contribution to the service and wish him well in his retirement. A recruitment campaign is planned to recruit a Senior Psychologist to replace Paul.

In August 2019, two new psychologists joined the psychology department on a part-time basis working with the school age and adult services. Previous to this, both psychologists worked in a variety of settings including primary care, mental health and disability services.

In late 2019, the psychology department at Western Care Association began working with colleagues in the HSE to launch a new parenting programme called 'Circle of Security'. All psychology staff at Western Care Association are now trained Circle of

Security Facilitators. The Circle of Security is a relationship-based early intervention program designed to enhance attachment security between parents and children. The Circle of Security® Parenting™ program is an 8 week programme based on decades of research about how secure parent-child relationships can be supported and strengthened. Recognising parents as the experts on their own children, we use video examples to support parents and caregivers to:

- Understand their child's emotional world by learning to read emotional needs
- Support their child's ability to successfully manage emotions
- Enhance the development of their child's self esteem
- Honour the innate wisdom and desire for their child to be secure

The first Circle of Security parenting programme was commenced in early 2020 with parents of children who access services from WCA. We plan to roll out this programme to even more parents, with plans to offer this programme on a bi-annual basis.

## Behaviour Support Service

Western Care Association (WCA) Adult Behavioural Support Service, is part of WCA's psychology department and is made up of three practitioners, referred to in WCA as Behavioural Support Specialists. WCA's Adult Behavioural Support Service, embraces a non-aversive multi-element positive behaviour support (PBS) approach. The service also believes effective Person-Centred Planning is integral to developing a good quality of life for the Service User and should reduce the need for intensive behavioural input. The role of the behaviour support specialists is to assist the service user, staff and carers to understand the person's behaviour, what it means, and how the context (lifestyle) in which the person finds himself/herself living relates to their behaviour. The behaviour support specialist assesses many variables to try to understand the behaviour of concern. They assess the social and the physical environment in which the behaviour occurs and in doing so liaise widely with all stakeholders and use the understanding which evolves to develop a relevant plan which aims is to improve the quality of life of the individual involved.



## COMMUNITY PROJECTS

### **Launch of “Social farming and Intellectual Disability Services” by Minister Finian McGrath**

Western Care Association has been involved with Social farming since 2017 when it first began in Co Mayo. As part of our ongoing work on Community based projects we worked as part of the steering committee in Mayo led by South West Mayo Development Company to offer Social Farming as an option to people in Services. This regional committee is part of Social Farming Ireland the national project led by Leitrim Development Company. Social Farming is based on ordinary farms alongside local farmers and their families to give people an opportunity to experience all that farm life has to offer. It is a great opportunity to meet new people, build new relationships while doing something you enjoy. Over the last few years we have worked with six farmers and a number of people have spent time on Social Farms (generally one day per week). It has been very successful for those who took part and were also part of the national research project.

Social Farming provides a planned,

outcome focused, support placement for people on a farm using the natural assets of the people, the place, the activities and the community to support a person to achieve some of their own chosen goals. It is fundamentally based on spending time with farmers and their families in the natural environment of the farm, enabling valuable, meaningful activities and social and community connection.

We were delighted when it was announced that the national event to launch the report on the Social Farming in the ID sector was to be launched by Minister for Disabilities, Finian McGrath, on one of the farms we work with in Claremorris. Eric Fitzgerald and Pdraig Prendergast are the two participants on Dixons farm. They both worked very hard to prepare for the event alongside Oliver and Anna Dixon (Social Farmers) and greeted the Minister on his arrival at the launch. Participants and Social Farmers from the other farms also all attended on the day. Others shared their experiences through stories and also through photo displays.

Over 200 people from around the country gathered in warm sunshine on July 23rd 2019 to hear from social farming participants,



Oliver Dixon, Minister Finian McGrath, Pdraig Prendergast, Eric Kilcourse and Anna Dixon at the launch of the Report on Social Farming on Oliver and Anna’s farm in Claremorris





staff and management from intellectual disability services, parents and from Social Farming Ireland about the real value of social farming in enhancing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.

Introducing the report, Social Farming Ireland Policy Officer, Dr Aisling Moroney focused on how Social Farming both reflects and helps drive forward policy and change in the intellectual disability sector. "The shift in policy and increasingly in practice is away from a more medical and segregated model of care to a more social model where people are instead supported and empowered to do what they want to do. We know that most people just want to contribute, to do ordinary things in ordinary places, to be independent, to make friends, to have fun, to have autonomy and to take risks." Dr Moroney concluded; "Social Farming provides an opportunity for people with an interest in farming or being out in nature to experience all of that in their own local communities and without having to build anything new or reinvent the wheel. Social Farming simply uses the assets of people, place, environment and community which are already embedded in Irish farming life in new ways to benefit both participants and farm families."

Launching the report, Minister of State for Disability Issues, Finian McGrath T.D., spoke of his long-standing and ongoing support for Social Farming as an initiative which celebrates ability rather than disability and where people can develop their potential and improve their physical and mental health. Minister McGrath commended all of the stakeholders who have worked to advance social farming opportunities for people with disabilities in Ireland - participants, farmers, services and Social Farming Ireland - and emphasised the need for people to continue to work together and with him as Minister to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

A great day was had by all and we would once again like to thank Oliver and Anna

Dixon for hosting the event and to all the Social Farmers who attended and who continue providing Social farming opportunities to people.

We would also like to thank South West Mayo Development Company and Social Farming Ireland for their ongoing leadership and support to this project.

### **Community Partnerships in Ballyhaunis**

Community inclusion is an integral part of the work in Western Care Services. We are continuously working to offer community based opportunities to people who attend our services. It is important that we work together with other community organisations to offer a range of options in venues that are available to everyone.

Across the county there are many examples of services and community organisations providing these opportunities collaboratively. This is a sample of one such Community partnership that was set up in 2019 in Ballyhaunis.

This group has also been supported by the ETBs community education grant to access a horticulture course in Mayo Abbey. This very much complemented the work in the Friary grounds as they also have a community allotment there. During the year, some individuals completed a horticulture course with a tutor in Mayo Abbey, and transferred these skills to their allotment in the Community Gardens located on the Family Resource Centre grounds. And as a complement, they completed a cookery course using the facilities in the Family Resource Centre to learn how to cook some of the vegetables they grew in the allotments. This was funded by SWMDC and supported by Caroline. We would like to continue to develop this further by developing people's skills in cookery and horticulture, while also developing links within the community with people of similar interests, using the natural links within the FRC community.



Self Advocacy means Speaking Up for yourself and/or others. This can be a very difficult thing for any of us to do as it takes confidence and courage.

**Confidence and Courage** are two words, but how powerful they are in all our lives. Advocates gain confidence and get courage every time they Speak Up for themselves or others. In order to do this, they need to be kept informed so that they have plenty of opportunities to make choices, be involved in decisions and give their opinion. This shows them they are listened to, respected and what they think matters.

Our Mission Statement reads **“Western Care Association exists to empower people with a wide range of learning and associated disabilities in County Mayo to lead full and satisfied lives as equal citizens”**

There are thirteen elected members in the group. Their main focus is:

- To represent their local advocacy group by attending fortnightly workshops.
- Bring issues forward that cannot be solved locally.
- Bring information back to their local group.
- Participate in ongoing personal development activities during workshops and continue “Learning Through Experience”
- Continue to work closely with their local advocacy coordinator.

The highlight of 2019 for the Mayo Self Advocacy group was the production of the Safety Roadshow staged in St. Marys Hall in G.M.I.T. with a large audience in attendance. All advocates and supporters participated.

Advocates wished to highlight everyday safety issues that occur in people’s lives i.e.

- Safety in the Community and in the Home.
- Safety Online (Banking and Social Media).

It was delivered through the medium of drama in an interactionary and fun way so that the message was clear and simple for everybody to understand.

We worked in collaboration with G.M.I.T. Gardaí, Fire and Ambulance Service, Road Safety Authority, Ulster Bank, Rights Review Committee and a number of colleagues from Western Care. All of the above provided information stands and answered questions from the audience after each scene. Outside G.M.I.T., emergency vehicles could be viewed and to finish the event the Fire Service demonstrated extinguishing a fire.

All was filmed by Scannan Technologies in Ballina where a D.V.D. will be produced.



### National Safeguarding Focus groups:

All advocates participated in the focus groups. One in G.M.I.T. in Castlebar and one in Ballina Arts Centre. The purpose of this nationwide information gathering was to ask advocates about their experiences and understanding of Safeguarding and to give them the opportunity to express their opinions. These groups were



facilitated by staff from the Institute of Public Health.

When all the focus groups have met around the country, a report will be prepared for the Department of Health to help them develop new Safeguarding guidelines to keep people safe.

### Facilitation Training:

This six week course was facilitated by Ailish Irvine and funded by the Disability Federation of Ireland (“D.F.I.”) a member of Mayo Community Participation Network (CPN) as a follow up and response to current and upcoming co-facilitators of courses such as “Speaking Up for Myself”. It had been identified at CPN meetings that the co-facilitator required further training and information to be better prepared for future work. One advocate attended some training sessions.

Due to Covid 19 the Advocacy Coordinator is now in weekly contact with some members of the Mayo Self Advocacy group. Advocates would like to share their thoughts and comments with you.

### Plan for 2020.

All advocates have discussed and agreed a new plan of work for 2020-2021. This plan will continue to build on their advocacy skills thus ensuring greater confidence to speak up. Learning through experience encourages us all to continue on the work we are passionate about, whether it is self advocacy, peer advocacy or some other pathway, as it is by doing that we do not forget.

Watch out for another roadshow “Friends and Relationships”



**“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn”**

Benjamin Franklin.



## Extract from the Directors' Report and Financial Statements

### Extract from the Directors Report and Financial Statements for Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

#### Income and Expenditure account for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

	2019	2018
	€	€
Income	40,366,335	37,107,220
Expenditure	(39,407,070)	(37,181,090)
<b>Surplus/ (deficit) for the financial year</b>	<b>959,265</b>	<b>(73,870)</b>

The company's income and expenses all relate to continuing operations.

#### Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2019

	2019	2018
	€	€
Surplus/(deficit) after taxation	959,265	(73,870)
Remeasurement of defined benefit scheme Assets and liabilities	(306,000)	287,000
<b>Total comprehensive income relating to the year</b>	<b>653,265</b>	<b>213,130</b>

#### Statement of Financial Position as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

	2019	2018
	€	€
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	12,961,261	13,842,403
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	353,951	319,758
Cash and cash equivalents	369,004	113,738
	722,955	433,496
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>(3,760,956)</b>	<b>(4,904,575)</b>
<b>Net Current Liabilities</b>	<b>(3,038,001)</b>	<b>(4,471,079)</b>
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>9,923,260</b>	<b>9,371,324</b>
<b>Provision for liabilities</b>	<b>(1,355,000)</b>	<b>(1,287,000)</b>



	2019 €	2018 €
<b>Capital Grants</b>	<b>(3,833,566)</b>	<b>(4,033,610)</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>4,734,694</b>	<b>4,050,714</b>
<b>Reserves</b>		
Revaluation reserve	5,858,522	6,039,522
Capital reserves and funds	375,170	344,455
Income Statement	(1,498,998)	(2,333,263)
<b>Members Funds</b>	<b>4,734,694</b>	<b>4,050,714</b>

#### Statement of Changes in Equity as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

	Retained Deficit	Revaluation reserve	Capital conversion reserve	Total
	€	€	€	€
<b>As at 1 January 2018</b>	<b>(2,546,393)</b>	<b>6,039,522</b>	<b>421,723</b>	<b>3,914,852</b>
Deficit for the year	(73,870)	-	-	(73,870)
Other gains and losses	287,000	-	-	287,000
Total comprehensive income	213,130	-	-	213,130
Other movements in members funds	-	-	(77,268)	(77,268)
<b>As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018</b>	<b>(2,333,263)</b>	<b>6,039,522</b>	<b>344,455</b>	<b>4,050,714</b>
Surplus for the financial year	959,265	-	-	959,265
Other gains and losses	(306,000)	-	-	(306,000)
Total comprehensive income	653,265	-	-	653,265
Other movements in members funds	181,000	(181,000)	30,715	30,715
<b>As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019</b>	<b>(1,498,998)</b>	<b>5,858,522</b>	<b>375,170</b>	<b>4,734,694</b>

Approved by the Board on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2020 and signed on its behalf by:

Frances Burke  
Director

Michael Leyden  
Director

The full Annual Financial Statement is available on the Western Care Association website  
[www.westerncare.com](http://www.westerncare.com)



## Development and Fundraising

**The Voluntary Sector 1966 – 2020:** From humble beginnings Western Care Association has grown and developed its Community based services throughout the County from Day Centres, Residential Homes, Respite Homes to Individualised Services. Those services are available to service users and their families in almost every community throughout Mayo.

**The Door to Door Collection** throughout the County during the month of May each year, is without doubt one of our principal and most important fundraisers. The continued success of this Collection is attributed to a very large voluntary group of dedicated, committed and loyal collectors all over Mayo. The Western Care ethos is portrayed by all our collectors in their local communities. They earn the respect of everyone by giving so generously of their time within their own areas. Without the continued support and good will of these collectors the door to door collection would just not be possible. In addition we must not forget the extraordinary generosity of the people of Mayo who continue to support us in the provision of our extensive range of services. This support is needed now more than ever as we find our funding significantly reduced.

**Mayo Based Charity:** The financial benefits of the Door to Door Collection cannot be underestimated but it also creates a real connection with local communities enhancing the sense of ownership that these communities have of Western Care. It is also worth noting that Western Care is a Mayo based Charity, deeply rooted in almost all the communities throughout the County. Western Care employs over 900 people making it one of the largest employers in the County. Western Care is now a widely respected organisation with a well-deserved reputation, which is a testament to the outstanding support that it continues to receive from the people of Mayo and beyond.

**2019 Branch Income, Door to Door Collection, Donations & Other Branch Fundraising are outlined in the table to the right.**

**Fundraising:** During 2019 the people of Mayo raised **€186,742** in support of Western Care Association services through fundraising events, and projects, donations and grants. This funding is vital to Western Care as it provides the Association with extra resources to fund projects like: Assistive technology, iPads, Sensory gardens, garden furniture, art and drama, sporting equipment, Lego Based Therapy, transport, renovations to some of our buildings making them nice spaces for the people we support.

**Thank You:** A huge Thank You to all the wonderful volunteers who give so generously of their time and energy in organising so many different fundraising events throughout the year, we really appreciate your support as we simply could not do this without you. A special **Thanks** to the people of Mayo and beyond for their generosity to Western Care. Western Care has a place in the hearts of so many Mayo people, we extend a heartfelt “mile buiochas”.

If you would like to help Western Care in any way in participating in or organising a fundraising event or make a donation, I would be delighted to hear from you.

**Teresa Ward**  
**Fundraising & Development Manager**  
**M: 087 2467857**  
**T: 094 9029174 / 9029144**  
**Email: [tward@westerncare.com](mailto:tward@westerncare.com)**

**Find us on Facebook:**  
**Western Care Association –**  
**Fundraising**

### 2019 Branch Income, Door to Door Collection, Donations & Other Branch Fundraising:

Achill	€11,187
Ardagh	€2,328
Balla	€2,067
Ballina	€6,128
Ballinrobe/The Neale*	€7,617
Ballintubber/Ballyheane	€1,665
Ballyhaunis	€6,284
Belmullet	€1,069
Bohola	€595
Bonniconlon	€4,685
Burrishoole/Newport	€2,994
Clogher	€280
Castlebar	€28,048
Charlestown	€1,144
Claremorris	€4,751
Cooneal	€963
Cong	€480
Crossmolina (Plus EGC)	€6,303
Currane	€370
Drummin	€625
Foxford	€1,730
Kilawalla	€1,650
Kilfian	€1,160
Kilkelly/Kilmovee	€4,339
Killala	€935
Kilmaine*	€3,785
Kilmeena	€315
Kiltimagh	€6,675
Knock	€2,928
Knockmore/Rathduff	€6,045
Lacken	€395
Louisburgh	€950
MayoAbbey/Facefield	€2,155
Murrisk	€146
Robeen/Roundfort	€300
Shrule/Glencorrib	€5,266
Swinford	€662
Taugheen/Crossboyne	€1,365
Tourmakeady	€4,312
Westport	€2,829
<b>Total</b>	<b>€137,523</b>

### Income from 2019 Fundraising Events and Projects

Cáirde Crann Mór Contributions to Ballinrobe Services (including 2019 Bingo, Summer Cabaret, Seamus Langan Memorial Golf Tournament, etc)	€35,752
Card Games, Christmas Development Draw & Table Quizzes	€16,366
Christmas Cards	€7,565
Corporate, Community Groups & Personal Donations	€47,972
Golf Events	€6,785
Hug For Charity	€3,994
In Memory of	€6,380
Kathleen Conneely Memorial Walk on Clare Island & Inishturk Island	€15,097
Mayo Four a Side Darts	€8,388
Max T Barnes	€4,663
Mini Marathons (West of Ireland Woman's & KBC Dublin)	€7,401
Staff Deductions/Standing Orders	€3,483
Three Peaks Challenge	€5,933
Textile Recycling	€12,960
Tour of Lough Conn Cycles	€4,003
<b>Total</b>	<b>€186,742</b>



### **Minister for Rural and Community Development, Michael Ring TD, delivers on funding for vehicles from the 2019 Clár programme for Western Care Services.**

Under Michael Ring's Department of Rural & Community Affairs, Western Care Association received funding of €190,887.50 for the purchase of 4 Vehicles under the 2019 Clár programme.

Our transport service currently has 17 routes which run daily across all of Mayo. We serve the transport needs of over 200 service users. We aim to provide accessible transport to a range of services in the Mayo area enabling the service users to access the local Day /Respite Services and facilities such as shops, hairdresser and medical/dental appointments. Also recreational amenities such as the cinema, swimming pools, and sports such as football, basketball and bowling and, where possible, participate in these clubs as members.

The Minister's support has enhanced the quality of life for service users by providing them with access to everyday facilities that most people take for granted. A large number live in

remote areas and as such are cut off from access to the services mentioned above.

The provision of these four new specially adopted vehicles is paramount in being able to offer a developing and forward thinking service for all service users within Western Care. For the young adults residing within Western Care these things do not come easily. They need constant access to specialised transport in order to fulfil most of their basic daily activities, to access vital medical care, to engage with their family and friends and to integrate with their local community.

There was €15,000 secured under the Small Capital Grants Scheme, to support Carrowbeg Day Service in Westport. This money was so much appreciated by everyone in Carrowbeg and is making a real difference to people's lives.



Anthony McCormack, Chairperson, Frank Flynn, Transport Manager with Minister Michael Ring, taking delivery of one of the Clár funded vehicles delivered to Western Care Services in 2019.



## Governance

It is essential that organisations such as Western Care Association do everything in their power to maintain the trust of the community, of the people who use its services, of the government and its agencies. In order to reassure the public, the Board has agreed to undertake the following:

- The publication of all senior manager salaries in the 2019 Annual Report
- Compliance with the ICTR Fundraising principles that the Association signed up to previously.
- To meet the requirements of the Charity Regulator's Code of Governance.
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the Service Agreement we enter into with the HSE and with all governance requirements included in this document

✓ = attended  
A = Absent  
N/A = Not Applicable

## Attendance at Board of Director Meetings 2019

Meeting Date	Frances Burke	Helen McHugh	Michael Leyden	Paddy Geraghty	Marie Munnely	Kieran McGloin	Ed Rose	Iarla Duffy	Marilyn McNicholas	Michael Prendergast	Denise Swanick	Ann Loftus (Appointed Nov 19)	Anthony McCormack	Philip McKiernan	Pat O'Brien	Annette Dillon
28/01/19	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	A	✓	A
25/02/19	✓	A	✓	✓	A	✓	A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	A	✓
01/04/19	A	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	A	✓
29/04/19	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	A	A	A
20/05/19	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	A	A	A
17/06/19	A	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	A	✓	✓
15/07/19	✓	A	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	A	A	✓
19/08/19	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	A	A	✓
16/09/19	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A
21/10/19	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	A	A	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
18/11/19	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The December meeting of the Board was cancelled as a mark of respect following the death of Mary O'Connell.

## General Information

Board of Directors (at 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2019)	Sub committees in place during 2019	
Ms. France Burke (Chairperson) Ms. Helen McHugh (Vice-Chairperson) Mr. Michael Leyden (Company Secretary) Mr. Paddy Geraghty Ms. Marie Munnely Ms. Ann Loftus Mr. Kieran McGloin Mr. Ed Rose Mr. Iarla Duffy Mr. Michael Prendergast Ms. Marilyn McNicholas Ms. Denise Swanick  <b>Outgoing Directors during 2019</b> Mr. Anthony McCormack Mr. Pat O'Brien Ms. Annette Dillon Mr. Philip McKiernan	<b>Finance &amp; Audit Sub-Committee</b> Mr. Michael Leyden Mr. Paddy Geraghty Mr. Kieran McGloin Mr. Kevin McHugh  <b>Quality &amp; Safety Committee</b> Mr. Philip McKiernan Mr. Chris Pratt Ms. Mary Daly Mr. Paddy Geraghty Ms. Connie O'Regan Mr. Bernard O'Regan  <b>HR Committee</b> Mr. Ed Rose Ms. Pauline Brennan Ms. Marie Munnely	<b>Nominations Committee</b> Mr. Anthony McCormack Mr. Ed Rose Mr. Philip McKiernan Mr. Bernard O'Regan  <b>Governance Committee</b> Mr. Anthony McCormack Mr. Ed Rose Mr. Philip McKiernan Mr. Bernard O'Regan  <b>Remuneration Committee</b> Mr. Anthony McCormack, Mr. Ed Rose, Mr. Philip McKiernan

## Membership

### Would you like to become a member of Western Care Association?

Would you like to make a difference to the lives of people with an intellectual disability and Autism? Have your say, by becoming a valuable member of Western Care; you can help us strive for the best possible service for the people we support.

For more information, please contact Teresa on 087 2467857 or alternatively log on to [www.westerncare.com](http://www.westerncare.com)



# Report on the Rights Review Committee



The Rights Review Committee (“RRC”) was formed in 2004 to ensure that adults and children using Western Care services had their rights protected in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, the purpose of which was “to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.”

The RRC is typically comprised of 12 members from people using services, family members, community members and staff but, given current vacancies, the committee operated with 10 members throughout 2019.

**Review of 2019:** The table below presents a review of the numbers of cases seen last year, the outcome of each review and the numbers projected for 2020:

Process	Number	Discharged	Held for further review
Seen by Committee	46	10	36
Checked by RRC Chair	14		
Total Reviewed	60		
Total to be followed up in 2020	51		

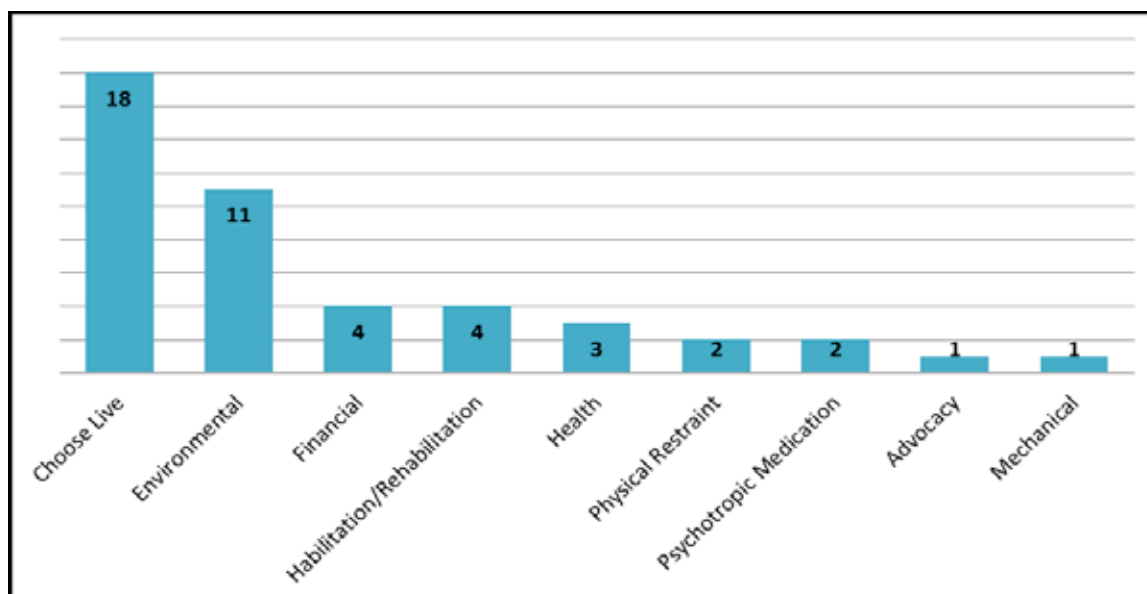
- We will get additional members for the committee from people outside of the association who have an interest and a passion for upholding the rights of people with disabilities
- We will look at ways to develop the staff role on the committee in response to changes in membership and as a way of improving the work of the committee
- We will progress plans to schedule a rights seminar for families and people supported
- A review of practices regarding psychotropic medication in the organisation
- We will develop ideas on how best to share learning from case reviews across the organisation; with families and people supported, the Board of Directors, CEO and Management and all staff.

### Aims for 2020:

- We will continue to monitor progress in addressing rights issues for individuals on our review list
- We will do this by visiting individuals on site where possible/necessary and by presenting an overview of the issues raised to the committee
- The RRC chair will continue to screen new cases as they come in each month and to process them as required depending on the issues raised

**Types of Recommendations Made:** Across the 46 cases discussed by the committee, the two most frequently occurring recommendations were to do with issues caused by the person’s living situation and the use of environmental restrictions such as alarms, monitors and locked doors. Please see graph below.

**Nature of Cases Reviewed**





The Human Resources Department provides advice and support in relation to all aspects of Human Resources including

- There is a significant workload in the HR Department to ensure the day to day operations are completed in a timely manner, this continues to increase year on year due to the increasing staff numbers. This includes engaging with employees, line managers and area/department managers in relation to the day to day components of employee contracts e.g. dealing with statutory and non statutory leave entitlements, recruitment, Garda vetting, occupational health, pensions and employee wellbeing.
- There is a strong link with payroll department to ensure accurate remuneration of staff.
- Together with payroll we have commenced the upgrade of Core HR Information System to ensure greater optimisation of the system and to streamline the processes for HR and Payroll returns.
- A vital part of the HR supports include workforce management, resource planning, recruitment and selection practices to support the delivery of the services.
- Interpretation and implementation of employment legislation as it pertains to employment in the Association.
- Policy and Procedure development and the implementation of same.
- Engagement and negotiations with Trade Unions on various staff related issues and change projects.
- Participation in third party referrals to Workplace Relations Commission and other external bodies where relevant.
- Participation in various projects and committees as members of the National Federation of Voluntary Service Providers.

Employee Welfare is an important aspect of HR work and the Association provides access to the Employee Assistance Programme for its employees.

Health and Safety, Insurance and Transport are also part of the remit of the Human Resources Department.

We have a Community Employment Scheme (C.E.S.) funded by the Department of Social Protection operated under the guidance of the HR department. This scheme is approved for twenty five participants and a supervisor. C.E.S. participants are employed in various roles, including care assistants, administrative and IT in the Association and make a valuable contribution to the services they support. Following completion of their time on the scheme many of the participants continue to secure employment with the Association.

The Human Resources Department comprises six staff employed in various roles to support the operation of the Department. They play a pivotal support role to staff across the Association.

## **Bereavements**

2019 was a difficult year for the staff of the Association as three colleagues died during the year. The three staff members had worked in the Association for several years and are missed by the service users, their work colleagues and friends.

**Sadie Mullarkey, RIP:** Sadie worked with the Association from May 2004 until 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019. She worked in Newport Day Service as a Care Assistant.

**Mary O'Connell, RIP:** Mary from November 1981 to 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2019. She worked in Administration in Head Office, Castlebar as PA to the Director of Finance and provided administrative support to the Board of Directors.

**Mary Reilly, RIP:** Mary worked from August 1996 to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2019. She worked in Crann Mor Day Service, Ballinrobe as a Care Assistant.

*We extend our deepest sympathies to their families, friends and colleagues.  
Ar dheis De go raibh a n-anamacha.*



## Employment Statistics 2019:

### Staff Profile by Employment Category and Job Type for 2019

Employment Category	Job Type	WTE
Front Line Staff	Care Assistant	386.45
	Social Care Worker	114.14
	Social Care Leader	54.00
	Paramedical	22.65
	Transport	16.16
	<b>Total Front Line Staff</b>	<b>593.40</b>
Support Staff	Administration & Management	44.67
	Maintenance	6.00
	<b>Total Support Staff</b>	<b>50.67</b>
<b>Overall Total WTE</b>		<b>644.07</b>

Staff Headcount at 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2019 = 943

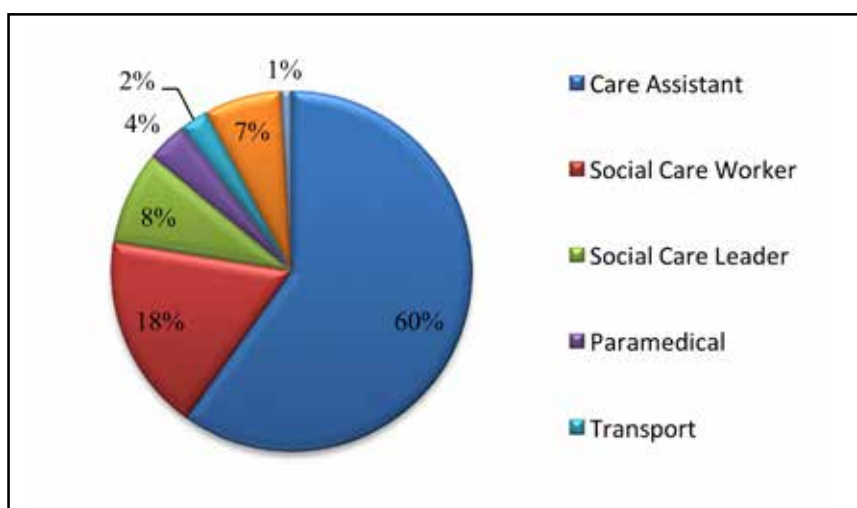
With respect to staff paid over €65,000 per annum, the following salary scales apply in Western Care Association:

Salary Range	Number of Staff
€95,000 - €104,999	1
€85,000 - €94,999	4
€75,000 - €84,999	2
€65,000 - €74,999	7

The Association does not pay any other bonus or top-up payments to the CEO.

The Association operates a defined contribution pension scheme which has been approved by the Department of Health. The Employer contributes 7% towards the pension of all staff and each employee contributes 5% of their salary towards their pension.

#### All staff by Category





The Training and Development Department is responsible for the organisation and delivery of staff training and facilitation in Western Care Association.

## Staff Training in Basic Assurances

Basic Assurance training is concerned with a foundation level of knowledge and skills that address the capacity of staff to meet the needs of people in the areas of Safety, Protection, Health and Wellness.

## Basic Skills Courses

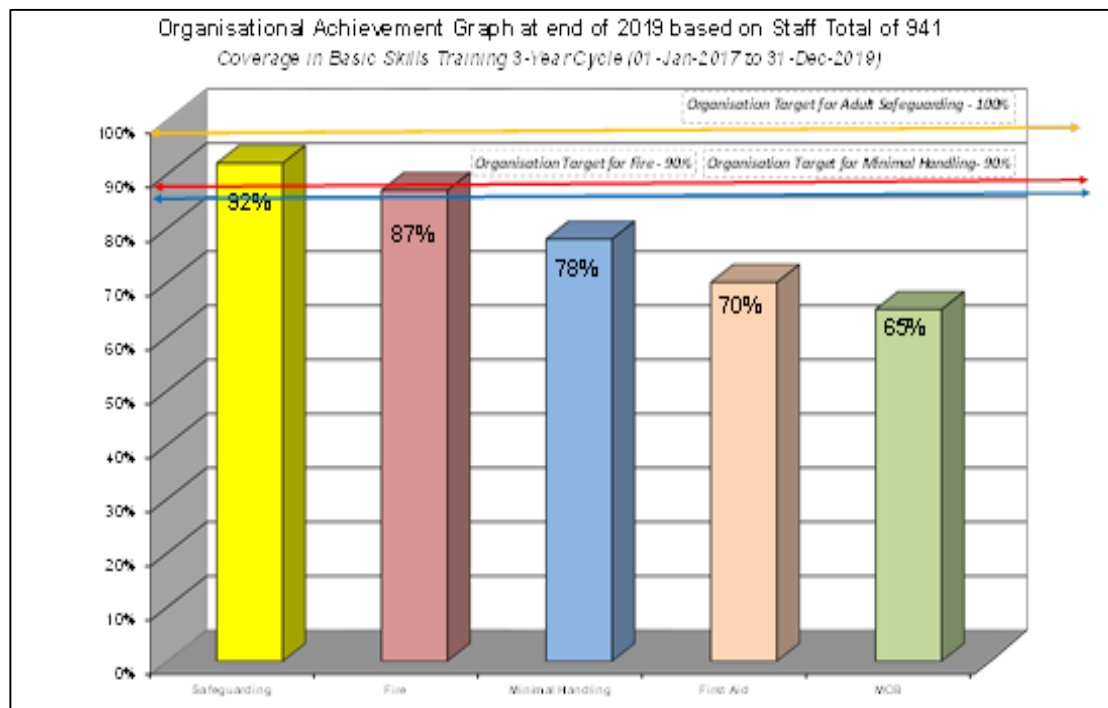
There were a total of 102 Basic Skills courses delivered in 2019 which provided places for 1,484 staff.

The data for 2019 (see graph below) shows that the coverage level for Adult Safeguarding/Child is 92%, Fire is 87% and Minimal Handling is 78% for the entire organisation. The increase in staff figures of 860 to 941 is a factor in targets for these mandatory courses not being reached in

2019. We will continue to focus on increasing coverage from the current rate. Note the coverage is higher when the stats are broken down to those working in direct services.

Completion of an online Children's First training module remains a requirement for all staff and volunteers in the Association. The target of 95% coverage for Western Care was achieved by the end of the year with 96% of staff being in coverage.

Since the requirement for staff to complete training in relation to GDPR was introduced in 2018, 590 staff are recorded as having completed it between July 2018 and end of 2019.



## Health & Wellness Training

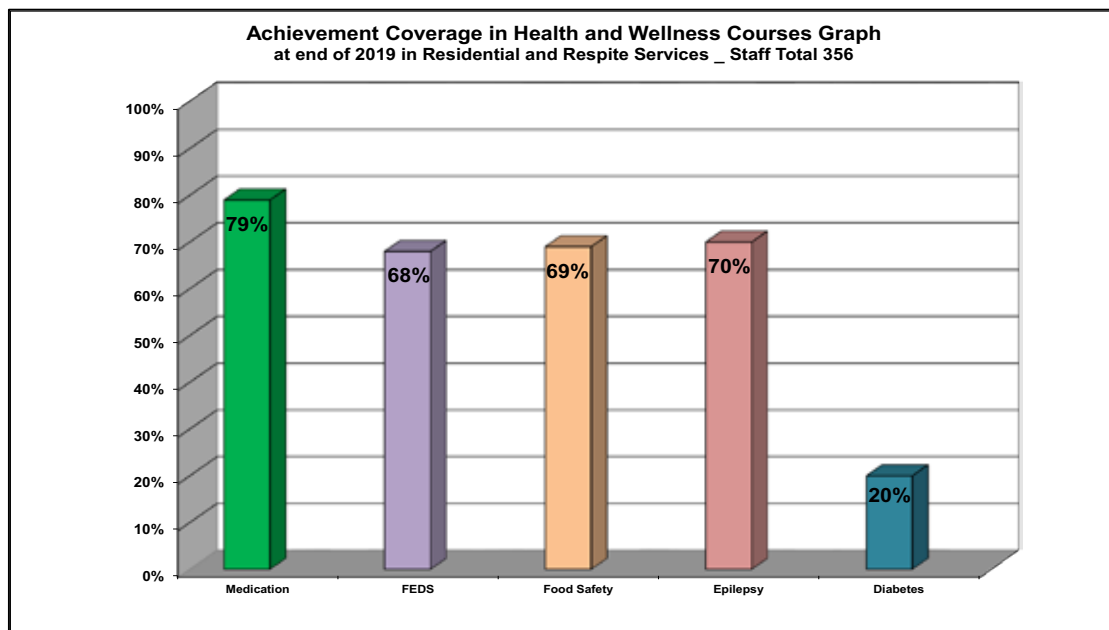
In the graph on the page opposite, our coverage for the area of Health and Wellness training is set out. These programmes were delivered mainly by accredited internal Western Care trainers who have completed Train the Trainer

events in topics such as 'Responsible and Safe Medication Management' and 'Supporting People with Epilepsy'. There were a total of 35 courses delivered in the category of Health and Wellness in 2019 which provided 370 places.



Bespoke events are targeted sessions with support teams around the particular needs of individual supported or particular needs of a team. Requests of this nature can occur where people are struggling to consider how the generic principles of basic training apply to the situation that they are involved in. Events of this nature account for a significant part of training

delivered to staff teams and can occur across various areas such as First Aid; Medication; Manual Handling; Managing Behaviours of Concern; Feeding, Eating, Drinking and Swallowing Difficulties. In total in 2019, there were 174 Assurance-type courses delivered which provided 2,234 staff training places.



### Enhancement Level Training

Enhancement level training refers to events which go beyond the basic assurance type of programme and are concerned with more advanced skills, methods and approaches and new ways of enhancing the lives and capacities of others.

Staff attended a broad range of Enhancement level training across 55 separate events providing 223 places.

One of the objectives of events of this nature is to provide staff members with opportunities to develop more advanced

knowledge and skills in particular areas relevant to their work which can be incorporated into their existing training and broaden organisational understanding in this area.

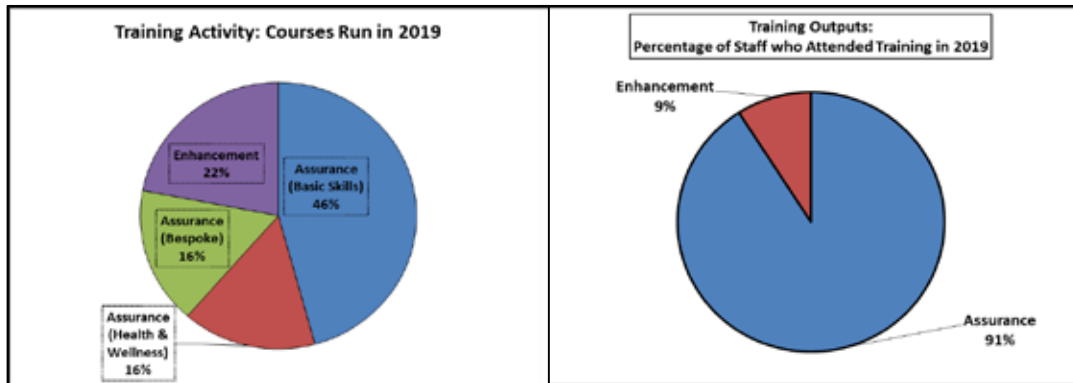
Staff from across the organisation and in various roles were supported to attend these events where it was deemed relevant and beneficial to the organisation. Staff were likewise supported to attend a series of workshops across a range of topics relevant to their specialist field and as part of their continuing professional development.

A significant portion of our training budget is focused on developing and maintaining staff knowledge and competencies' in assurance level requirements. It is becoming increasingly more challenging to maintain coverage levels where recruitment and retention of staff poses challenges for us in a manner that never previously existed.



## Training Summary

In summary, there were a total of 229 training courses provided in 2019. In total, training in Basic Assurance and Enhancement events provided 2,457 training places.



## COMPLAINTS

In the course of 2019, a total of 25 complaints were received by the Association. 5 of these were dealt with informally. 20 complaints were dealt with formally. Of the 5 complaints that were dealt with formally, all 3 were upheld. Of the 20 complaints dealt with informally, 15 were upheld and 5 were not upheld.

The nature of the complaints received fell under the categories of Safe and Effective Care, Communication and Information, Access, Dignity and Respect and Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons\*.

\* The Social Work Department are informed of all complaints that fall under the category of Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons and these are investigated under the Association's Safeguarding Procedures.

### Complaints should be addressed to:

Complaints Officer  
Western Care Association  
John Moore Road  
Castlebar  
Co Mayo  
Tel: 094 90 25133  
Email: [complaints@westerncare.com](mailto:complaints@westerncare.com)

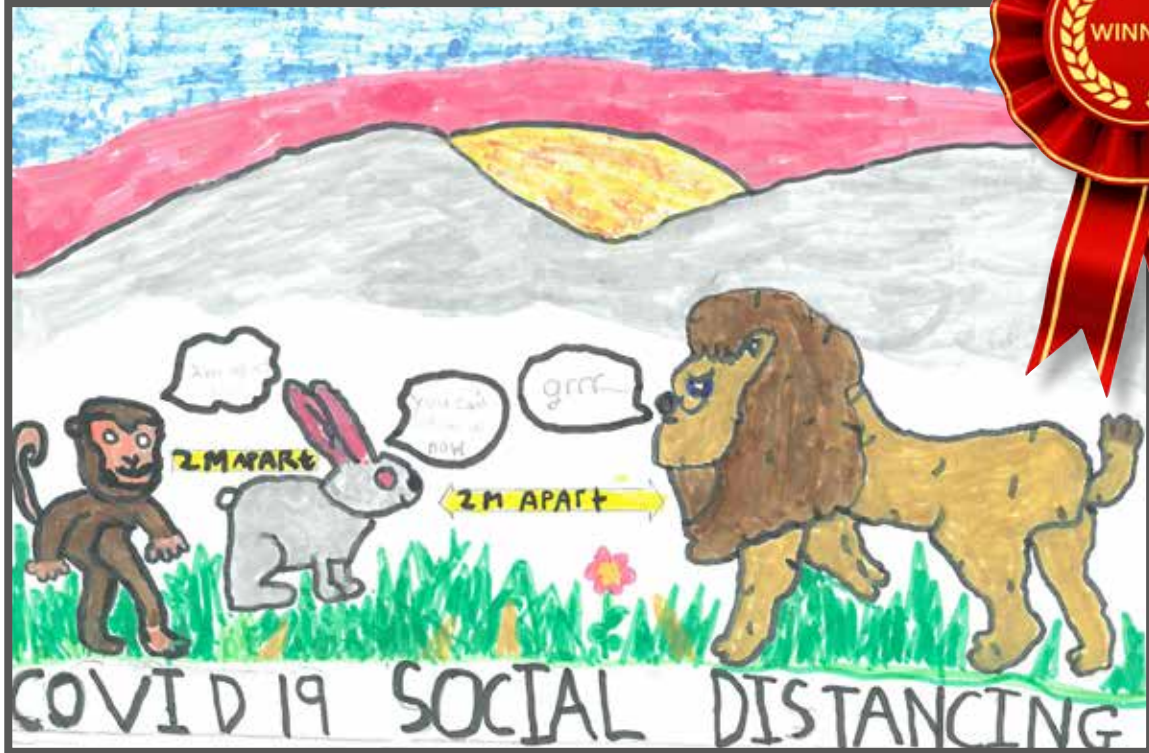
## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION

### Log of FOI Requests

In the course of 2019, we received one FOI request which was for non-personal information.

### Log of Data Subject Access (DSA) Requests

In the course of 2019, a total of four DSA requests were received by the organisation.



## “Covid 19 Social Distancing”

by Jonathan Brennan, age 11

Staff Family Colouring Competition  
Winner!

**Front cover:** “together within distance” Gary Durcan, St Hubert’s Day Centre, Castlebar

**Back cover:** Works of Art by: Annemarie McHale, Gladeview Residential, Ballina, Bernadette McFadden and Bernie Keane, Newport Resource Centre, Newport, Bridget Molloy, Cluainin Day Centre, Crossmolina Caroline Walsh, Aras Aoibhinn Residential, Ballina, Patrick Kelly, Riverwalk Residential, Crossmolina, Luke O’Connell, Individualised Services, “Clocha le Chéile” facilitated art project St. Huberts Day Centre Castlebar.

### Mission Statement

Western Care Association exists to empower people with a wide range of learning and associated disabilities in Mayo to live full and satisfied lives as equal citizens. We achieve this through the provision of a comprehensive range of innovative services and supports.



**Contact:**

John Moore Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.

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E-mail: info@westerncare.com  
Website: www.westerncare.com

Company Registration No: 28067  
Charity No: CHY5578  
Charity Registration No: 20008604