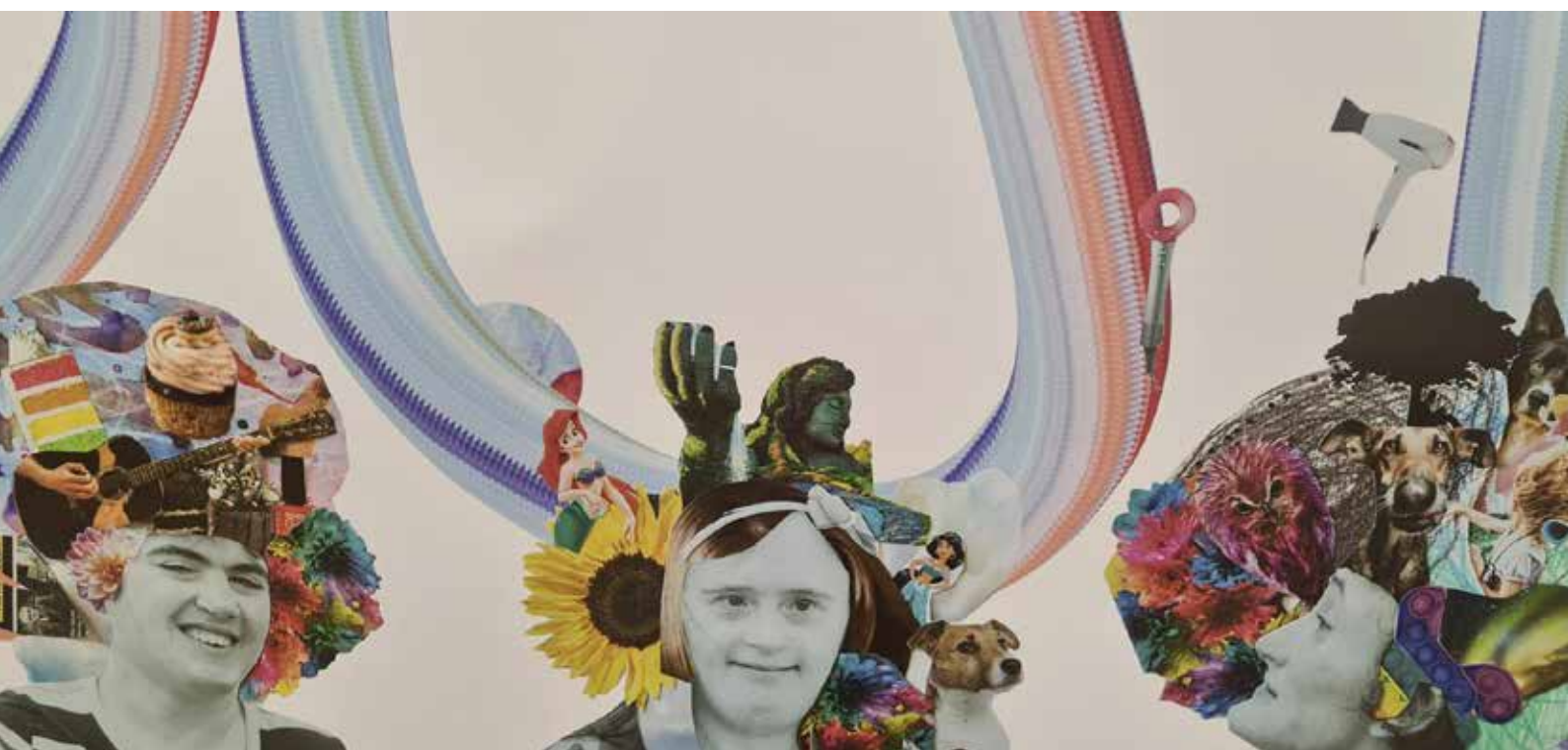




# WESTERN CARE ASSOCIATION

Supporting people to live their lives



## Strategic Plan 2022-2026

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Marking the 10th Anniversary of Primrose Hill Day service are: Tia Crowley Michael Warde, Declan Sweeney, Paul Prendergast, Clare O'Dowd, Val Hughes, Eric Kilcourse and Bridget Warde.

**Cover page:** A collaborative multimedia project developed by New Media Designer and artist Orla Casey and Westport Customs House featuring artists Trish Kelly, Una Kearns and Anna Rose Lowry.



THERE IS A SENSE OF BEING IN THE COMMUNITY, BEING PART OF THE COMMUNITY.  
*(Staff)*

A PLAN TO BE PUT IN PLACE WHEN PARENTS CANNOT LOOK AFTER THE FAMILY MEMBER. MORE EMERGENCY SERVICES NEEDED AND IF SERVICE USER WANTS TO STAY IN THEIR HOME WHEN FAMILY IN CRISIS, SUPPORT THEM TO DO SO.  
*(Family member)*

I THINK WCA IS GREAT FOR ME BECAUSE... I HAVE LOTS OF FRIENDS.  
*(Service user)*

WE SHOULD REMODEL SERVICES FOR PEOPLE AS THEY GET OLDER AND REMODEL SERVICES FOR THOSE WITH DEMENTIA. WE NEED TO PLAN FOR THOSE WHOSE NEEDS ARE CHANGING AS THEY AGE  
*(Staff)*

STAFFING IS A REAL CHALLENGE, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION IS VERY CHALLENGING.  
*(Staff)*

## 1.0 Joint Message From The Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer

We are delighted to share Western Care Association's (Western Care) new strategic plan 2022 – 2026 on behalf of the Board of Directors and Management in the association. Our hope with this plan is to maintain the mission and values that Western Care has held for the last 50 years. We embarked on this journey to find out what we are good at and how we keep improving.

The development of the strategic plan is an essential part of the journey in the provision of person centred supports to people with disabilities in Mayo.

The Board of Directors led the development of this plan and engaged in a far-reaching consultation process. It was vital to engage with people we support and their families, staff, service managers and volunteers to seek their views on our current and future service, as well as HSE funding partners, community groups and political representatives.

We sought this engagement through remote video focus groups, meetings, surveys and phone calls. We reached out to learn more about ourselves in Western Care.

In total we received valuable contributions from over 260 individuals and wish to express our gratitude to each and every one for taking time to share their views and ideas.

We have included quotes from those consulted throughout this plan.

We find ourselves in a time of unprecedented challenge on a number of fronts.

- The Covid 19 pandemic has severely impacted service provision and the health and welfare of service users, their families and staff.
- The demand for new services and supports is ever increasing and will increase further over the coming years.
- As Western Care tries to respond to increased demands for new services we struggle to meet the changing needs of our existing ageing population.
- In a time of almost full employment in Ireland Western Care have a challenge in attracting and retaining staff in the organisation. This is further compounded by the pressures of regulation and compliance.

The development of a strong strategic plan to guide the organisation through this turbulent time is essential. We believe the implementation of this strategic plan requires a collective effort and commitment to work towards shared objectives. Following the publication of this strategic plan, actions will be prioritised and an operational plan developed. Implementation of this plan will be monitored by the Board of Directors. With your help we will emerge from these challenging times stronger and with renewed focus on our purpose in supporting people with disabilities in Mayo.

**Frances Burke**  
Chairperson

**Tia Crowley**  
Chief Executive Officer

## 2.0 History

In 1966 a public meeting was convened arising from a deep concern at the inadequacy of services for children with a learning disability in Mayo. Almost 200 people attended the meeting in the Imperial Hotel Castlebar with Johnny Mee, Michael Joe Egan, Tom Fallon and Joe Mulrooney taking a leading role (Western Care Celebrating 40 years, 2006).

A LONG SERVING COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT. *(Family member)*

The organisation's journey began on that night, 56 years ago.

FAMILIES OF BOTH CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITY KNOW THAT THEY ARE NOT ON THEIR OWN, THANK GOD.

*(Staff)*

Western Care has grown and developed from those early days into an organisation that now provides a wide range of services and supports across county Mayo to adults and children and their families.

This expansion in services would not have been possible without the dedication of those pioneers and all who have been involved in the Association over the last 56 years.

Western Care's income has grown in line with increased levels of service provision with a current annual budget in excess of €43 million, of which the vast majority is provided by the Health Service Executive.

IT HAS A GOOD BRAND NAME, DEEPLY ROOTED IN ALMOST ALL THE COMMUNITIES IN THE COUNTY. IT IS A GREAT EMPLOYER. *(Staff)*

WE WILL NOT FORGET OUR HISTORY WHILE MAKING A NEW AND BETTER FUTURE

*(Staff)*

COMMUNITY APPRECIATE THAT WCA IS PROVIDING AS EFFECTIVE A SERVICE AS POSSIBLE GIVEN FUNDING LIMITATIONS. *(Board member)*

## 3.0 Vision, Mission And Values

Western Care's Vision, Mission and Values are set out below. It is important that we all continuously live these values in our interactions and strive to achieve the vision for those we support.

### Vision

To enable the people we support to live full, rewarding and happy lives.

GOOD, I LIKE MY  
POPCORN. I GET TO  
DO THINGS I ENJOY  
IN MY TOWN.

(Service user)

### Mission

Western Care 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.

We are a voluntary organisation, made up of parents/family members, service users, staff, supporters and volunteers.

### Values

- Fairness
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Honesty
- Inclusiveness
- Respectfulness

I BELIEVE WESTERN CARE HAS THE SAME  
VALUES TODAY AS THOSE WHO FOUNDED THE  
ORGANISATION IN 1966.  
WE MIGHT HAVE EXPANDED OUR ASPIRATIONS  
IN TERMS OF HOW WE DO THINGS BUT THE  
BASIC VALUES OF RESPECT, INVOLVEMENT AND  
INCLUSION STILL DRIVE THE ORGANISATION.

(Western Care celebrating 40 Years, 2006)

THE ETHOS OF  
HELPING PEOPLE  
WITH DISABILITIES  
TO BE ABLE TO LIVE  
A LIFE. (Family member)

EVERYTHING IS DONE  
WITH THE SERVICE USER  
IN MIND. IT IS WHOLLY  
PERSON-CENTRED AND  
SERVICE USERS ARE  
RESPECTED. (Staff)

THE QUALITY OF THE  
SERVICE AND THE  
WAY IT EMPOWERS  
PEOPLE TO LIVE  
FULL AND SATISFIED  
LIVES IN A CARING  
AND PROFESSIONAL  
MANNER THROUGH  
IT'S EXCELLENT  
STAFF AND  
VOLUNTEERS

(Family member)

## 4.0 Context: Challenges and Strengths

### Challenges

The environment in which Western Care operates has changed dramatically in recent years.

The level of funding provided to Western Care and other providers was reduced during the last recession, from 2008 onwards, leading to cutbacks and curtailment of services and staffing. While

some additional funding has been provided in recent years this has not been sufficient to meet the level of demand for services and supports and to adequately enable the organisation to respond to changing needs.

THERE IS A HUGE NEED FOR THE ORGANISATION TO PROVIDE MORE RESPITE TO TIRED AND EXHAUSTED FAMILIES, I THINK THAT THE ORGANISATION DOES NOT REALLY REALISE HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS TO THE FAMILIES AND THE SERVICE USERS.

(Family member)

WE NEED TO LOOK AT SPECIFIC SUPPORTS AROUND COMPLEX HEALTH NEEDS.

(Staff)

The substantial growth in regulation relevant to the sector has impacted service delivery as disproportionate resources and effort are expended on regulatory compliance and reporting.

The relationship with the funder (H.S.E.) while having remained positive, has also changed and compliance, monitoring and reporting requirements have impacted on the level of autonomy of the organisation. While accountability for the use of public funds is important it is essential that Western Care retains its autonomy as a limited company.

WE NEED CLINICAL SUPPORTS, PSYCHOLOGY, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY, PHYSIOTHERAPY, BEHAVIOURAL SUPPORT.

(Staff)

REDUCE THE PAPERWORK THAT'S REQUIRED SO WE CAN FOCUS ON SUPPORTING SERVICE USERS.

(Staff)

The Department of Health commissioned a capacity review (*Health Service Capacity Review 2018*) of the needs in the sector. This report was published in 2021 and it highlights a significant current and future demand with high levels of unmet need and requirements for additional specialist services and supports over the next

10 years and into the future. This level of unmet need increases the pressure on Western Care to respond, in addition to internal pressures to meet the changing needs of those already using our services.

CAN YOU GET RID OF COVID?

(Service user)

I WANT MORE RESPITE AT WEEKENDS.

(Service user)

PREPARE FOR (SERVICE USER) RETIREMENT, GRADUAL PROCESS, NEED TO SUPPORT THIS POSITIVELY. HAVE A PLANNED APPROACH WITH SUPPORT FOR PARENTS.

(Staff)

I THINK WCA IS GREAT FOR ME BECAUSE I HAVE ROUTINE IN MY LIFE. I HAVE LOTS OF FRIENDS. I HAVE A VERY MEANINGFUL DAY, AS I TAKE PART IN LOTS OF ACTIVITIES. I HAVE MADE LOTS OF FRIENDS THROUGH DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES. I FEEL A VALUED MEMBER OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

(Service user)

Staff are experiencing considerable pressure to meet the competing demands of addressing the individual needs of those they support, remaining person centred while ensuring compliance with reporting and regulatory requirements.

In addition to the above, National policy and decisions, such as Progressing Disability Services for Children, and the transfer of responsibility from the Department of Health and Children to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability,

Integration and Youth, have and will impact on services.

This strategic plan is an essential tool that will support Western Care to respond to the challenges now and over the next four years.

### Strengths

As part of the strategic planning process we asked the question. "What is good about Western Care?" and many strengths were identified by the respondents. This is a sample of what was said:

#### About Ethos:

EVERYTHING IS DONE WITH THE SERVICE USER IN MIND. IT IS WHOLLY PERSON-CENTRED AND SERVICE USERS ARE RESPECTED.

(Staff)

THE ORGANISATION HAS GROWN AND HAS GONE IN SO MANY DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS. IT IS EXTREMELY BUSY AND THERE IS A SENSE THAT PEOPLE ARE REACTING AND FIGHTING FIRES ALL THE TIME. STAFF AND MANAGERS ARE FEELING VERY PRESSURED.

(Staff)

SERVICE USERS HAVE BEEN LISTENED TO. THEIR LIVES HAVE BEEN IMPROVED.

(Staff)

THE SERVICE USERS- THEY ARE THE MOST FUN PEOPLE; THEY GIVE YOU ENERGY AND ARE A PLEASURE TO WORK WITH.

(Staff)

I GET TO DO NICE THINGS. I AM ALLOWED TO MAKE CHOICES, I HAVE FRIENDS, I AM RESPECTED, I AM LISTENED TO, I AM SUPPORTED.

(Service user)



Marcus Casey enjoying decorating his pancake on Pancake Tuesday



## About Community:

WE ARE ENGAGING WITH PEOPLE AND WITH THE COMMUNITY. (Staff)

I REALLY ENJOY [DAY SERVICE NAME] HAVING A MEANINGFUL DAY AT WORK AND TAKING PART IN DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES. I ENJOY BOWLING AND COOKING AND TRYING OUT NEW RECIPES. I HAVE MADE LOADS OF FRIENDS AND ENJOY LOTS OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES. (Service user)

GREAT INTEREST IN THE COMMUNITY SECTOR AND IN SUPPORTING CLIENTS TO ACCESS MAINSTREAM SUPPORTS, ACTIVITIES AND SERVICE. (Community partner)

## About Staff:

STAFF ON THE GROUND REALLY TRY THEIR BEST AND CARE ABOUT THE PEOPLE THEY SUPPORT. (Staff)

I LIKE [STAFF NAME] I LIKE THE STAFF. THEY MAKE ME FEEL BETTER. (Service user)

THE MANAGER IS A STAR AND A TRUE JEWEL IN THE CROWN. (Family member)

MY SON COULD NOT BE HAPPIER THAN THE WAY HE IS IN HIS DAY SERVICE IN... STAFF EXCELLENT. (Family member)

THE QUALITY OF STAFF IS EXCELLENT. (Family member)

## From Families:

MY SON HAS FOUND A SPACE TO SOCIALISE AND SHARE HIS INTERESTS. I FEEL WESTERN CARE IS VERY USEFUL AS I CAN ASK FOR HELP AND SUGGESTIONS IN TERMS TO SUPPORT MY SON. THEY ARE VERY IMPLICATED IN THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SERVICE USER. (Family member)

WESTERN CARE LOOKED AFTER MY FAMILY MEMBER DURING COVID. I WILL ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL. (Family member)

## 5.0 Strategic Objectives

Our strategic objectives were developed in response to the core themes that emerged from the consultation process. The feedback from the consultation was analysed and a number of core themes emerged from this. These formed the basis of the 4 broad objectives and associated actions that were developed for this plan. Each objective has a number of associated actions. These actions will be prioritised and worked on over the life of this plan.

The 4 objectives are:

### **Objective 1**

We will be true to our original purpose and history and promote the values of fairness, honesty, respect, inclusiveness, integrity and transparency.

### **Objective 2**

We will define who we are and what we do, and we will do that well.

### **Objective 3**

We will commit to delivering a quality service across all service areas.

### **Objective 4**

We will ensure that Western Care is a desirable place to work.

**Objective 1:** We will be true to our original purpose and history and promote the values of fairness, honesty, respect, inclusiveness, integrity and transparency.

## **Actions**

**1.** Remind ourselves daily of our vision and values and live them. Go back to basics and focus on the people we support.

**2.** Develop ways in which people we support can be heard and listened to.

**3.** Actively work to improve connections within the Organisation.

**4.** Develop and implement a plan for improving communication.

**5.** Actively work to improve connections outside the Organisation.

**6.** Recognise, acknowledge, and celebrate.

**7.** Challenge external constraints on organisational autonomy, which can limit our capacity to operate in line with our mission and values and to function as an independent organisation / company.



**Objective 2:** We will define who we are and what we do, and we will do that well.

## Actions

1. Carry out an organisation-wide review of the profile of people that we support and identify the needs of people we support now and into the future.
2. Critically review the existing suite and models of service, including funding, governance and staffing, in line with people's current and changing needs, to deliver sustainable services.
3. Carry out a review of the effectiveness and adequacy of transportation, in supporting service delivery.
4. Develop a plan for the future based on the reviews of the models of service incorporating transport and facilities.
5. Look at best practice and explore innovative models of services.
6. Explore funding opportunities to enable us to adequately fund and develop services.



Ian O'Donnell working on his art



Irene McLoughlin receiving her certificate after completing a Cookery and Nutrition course

**Objective 3:** We will commit to delivering a quality service across all service areas.

**Actions**

**1.** Implement an organisation-wide quality framework (incorporating quality, safety, rights and compliance).

**2.** Consult with people that we support, families and staff as part of this framework.

**3.** Further develop reporting and communication systems to ensure best practice and openness

**4.** Implement a lean and effective documentation / information system.

Social Farming participants Padraig Prendergast and Eric Kilcourse pictured with Oliver Dixon at Dixon's farm during Social Inclusion Week 2021



**Objective 4:** We will ensure that Western Care is a desirable place to work.

### Actions

1. Seek to obtain pay parity with HSE rates of pay for staff.
2. Critically review the suite of Human Resource processes (including recruitment, retention, and staff support).
3. Develop ways in which staff can be heard and listened to.
4. Support staff to access and partake in training and development opportunities.
5. Implement a management development programme across the Organisation.



Noel Brennan and PJ Noone enjoying life at Mount Falcon Ballina



Supporting Mayo in the All Ireland Final are: Michael Sayers, Delia Garvin, Eamon Mulhern, Sarah Paradise, Damian Reidy, Gerry Monaghan and Rita McNulty

Family Centred **Pioneering** Development  
**Connections** Rooted Employer **INNOVATIVE** Creativity  
Small Beginnings **EDUCATION**  
**MAYO COMMUNITY** Person Directed  
Individualised **Supports** **CITIZENSHIP**  
**Services** Partnership **CHALLENGES** Accountability  
**RELATIONSHIPS** Contributions **Sponsors**  
Achievements Volunteerism **THANK YOU**  
**TRANSPARENCY** Door to Door Collectors  
**ENGAGE** Potential Fundraising Special Olympics  
**Ability** Talents Recognition  
**ENABLE** Empowerment Encourage



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