

Table of Contents

Terminology and Acronyms.....	3
Foreword	4
Introduction	6
Professionals and Services supporting People with Disabilities	7
Professionals and Services in Irish Education	9
The Progression of Disability Services.....	11
Early Intervention Team and School Aged Team.....	12
Steps to having your Child Assessed	14
Immunisations.....	15
Developmental Milestones and Checks	16
List of Disabilities.....	19
Acquired Brain Injury.....	20
Asthma	21
Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder	22
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).....	24
Cerebral Palsy.....	29
Cystic Fibrosis	30
Deaf and Hard of Hearing.....	31
Diabetes	34
Down Syndrome.....	36
Dysgraphia	37
Dyslexia	39
Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)/Dyspraxia.....	40
Epilepsy	41
Fragile X Syndrome.....	42
Muscular Dystrophy.....	43
Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder.....	45
Prader-Willi Syndrome.....	46
Specific Speech and Language Impairment.....	47
Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus	48
Visual Impairment	49
Mental Health	51
Communication Tools	53

Table of Contents

Disability Language and Etiquette	55
Education for the Person with Additional Needs	56
Transport Supports	62
Housing Supports	64
Day Care, Residential and Respite Services	66
Employment Supports and Services.....	69
Benefits and Allowances.....	71
Additional Supports and Services.....	76

***The information in this publication is checked carefully and believed to be correct at the time of going to print. No responsibility can be accepted if any errors occur.
February 2017.***

Terminology and Acronyms

ABA	Applied Behaviour Analysis
ABI	Acquired Brain Injury
AON	Assessment of Need
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
CARS	Childhood Autism rating Scale
CCC	County Childcare Committee
CD	Conduct Disorder
CF	Cystic Fibrosis
CP	Cerebral palsy
CT	Computed Tomography (CT scan)
DCD	Developmental Coordination Disorder
DFI	Disability Federation of Ireland
DS	Down syndrome
DSI	Down Syndrome Ireland
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EIT	Early Intervention Team
EPSEN	Education for Persons with Special Education needs
GP	General Practitioner
HSE	Health Service Executive
IDG	Inter-Departmental Group
IDP	Individual Development Plan
IEP	Individual Education Plan
MD	Muscular Dystrophy
MDI	Muscular Dystrophy Ireland
MDT	Multi-Disciplinary Team

MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging
NCPD	National Council for People with Disabilities
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
OT	Occupational Therapist
PECS	Picture Exchange Communication System
PPN	Public Participation Networks
PWDI	People with Disabilities in Ireland
ROC	Resource Outreach Centres
SAMO	Senior Area Medical Officers
SAT	School Aged Team
SBHI	Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Ireland
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENO	Special Education Needs Officer
SERC	Special Education Review Committee
SESS	Special Education Support Service
SLI	Specific Speech and Language Impairment
SNA	Special Needs Assistant

Foreword

During the past decade, the rapid expansion of early years provision in Ireland has been accompanied by increasing demands for regulation, standards and curriculum development as well as professionalisation of the early-years' workforce.

To advance and support the provision of childcare facilities on a local level, City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs) were established in 2001. Funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), 30 of these organisations operate across Ireland and over the last 15 years have been at the centre of all state developments and initiatives aimed at supporting the early-years' sector.

In addition to supporting the administration of all Government funded programmes for childcare, City and County Childcare Committees act as the local delivery agent for early childhood services including childminders and parents seeking support with quality development, human resources, governance, financial sustainability and continuing professional development.

CCCs have evolved and are now a pivotal organisation locally whose reach and impact now extends beyond the early years acting as a local coordinating body facilitating projects including this Local Area Disability Collaborative Project.

Longford and Westmeath CCCs, as part of a Local Collaborative Project, established the Local Area Disability Co-ordinator Posts. These posts, financed by the Dormant Accounts funding stream, focused on providing an inclusive culture for all children and young people within Longford and Westmeath to access information on supports and services from across the various statutory and voluntary organisations that are in existence. Having a co-ordinator to support access to this information to sign post and, in some cases, explain the services that are available is the corner stone of the Local Area Model.

The disability environment is a complicated, multifaceted arena of information and supports and navigating these can be daunting and disheartening if parents are not equipped and supported.

This model is at the core of and personifies the national strategy "Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures", where the very focus is on the delivery of services that meet the needs of all children and young people. Sustaining this co-ordination model will help us empower parents and inform decision making. This in turn can inform a very influential model of parent participation where parents can challenge agencies to be the vehicle for change in the development of the disability sector.

One of the key recommendations is to assign the role of Local Disability Co-ordinator within each county to ensure a co-ordinated model which is responsive to local needs in the provision of local information and to ensure this is constantly updated and relevant. Housing this model under a local structure would ensure alignment to the local County Development Policy, the Children Services and Young Peoples Committees, and feeding into the various local HSE plans. This model would also provide a vehicle to inform

national policy agendas promoting the voice of the child and the primary care giver. This model is also proven to be adaptive in implementing and delivering on new programmes that may be developed. While it is acknowledged that the challenges of disability are a lifelong matter for people, this model would only be looking at the 0-24 year as a referenced starting point.

We call on the Minister for Disability to show vision, commitment and determination to lead us in a true sense of shared responsibility for co-ordinating the Disability Sector.

To conclude, I would like to thank the Dormant Accounts Project Team of Katy Flanagan, Stephen Hogan and Margaret Joyce for their comprehensive work in completing this project. Furthermore, the support of the steering group, Angela Sullivan, Catriona Corcoran, Dermot Leavy, and Breege Donoghue, who reinforced this project with their knowledge and guidance. We also acknowledge the kindness and time that our local parents gave in the proofing and providing feedback of this document and the guidance of NALA and the NCBI in relation to the language and presentation of this publication. I would also like to acknowledge our key funders the Dormant Accounts Fund, and our many co-funders including Westmeath County Council, Longford County Council, Tusla and Muiriosa foundation. The last word of thanks and appreciation goes to you the parents and service providers who support and care for our children and young people who have disabilities. I hope you find this Directory of Services a valuable and empowering tool.



Muriel Flynn

Eimear Carron

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**On behalf of the Dormant Accounts Fund Local Area Co-ordination Project,
Westmeath & Longford County Childcare Committees.**

Introduction

Westmeath and Longford County Childcare Committees developed this directory to provide information and supports to parents and services who are caring for or educating a child or young person age 0-24 years with special needs.

Sourcing information is a difficult task regarding all aspects of disability.

The ultimate goal is to empower and help parents to source the information and supports they need to ensure their child can lead a full and independent life.

The work of the Longford and Westmeath Local Area Coordination project strongly indicates the need for one point of contact and support for disability services.

Information is itself an empowerment tool however, sourcing, using and understanding this information are barriers that parents, families and carers face.

A model that collates and updates information and coordinates support meetings would be a massive step forward in the provision of disability services in Longford and Westmeath and could be duplicated as a model of best practice throughout the country.

NOTE:

- Throughout the publication the terms *disability*, *special needs* and *additional needs* are used interchangeably.
- When we refer to parents throughout this publication it is to be understood in the broad sense and relates to a parent, guardian or carer.
- A child or young person may have a dual or multiple diagnosis of disabilities

Professionals and Services supporting People with Disabilities

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Longford and Westmeath Contact

Primary Care Unit,
St. Lomans Hospital,
Mullingar,
Co. Westmeath
(044) 93 95518

Citizens Information Centres – provide information on public services and entitlements.

Longford CIC, Level 1, Longford Shopping Centre, Longford	Phone	(076) 107 5890
	Website	www.longfordcic.ie
	Email	longford@citinfo.ie
Athlone CIC, Elliott House, St. Marys Square, Athlone	Phone	(076) 107 6610
	Website	www.citizensinformation.ie
	Email	athlone@citinfo.ie
Mullingar CIC, Mount St, County Building Complex, Mullingar	Phone	(076) 107 6660
	Website	www.citizensinformation.ie
	Email	mullingar@citinfo.ie

Professionals and Services in Irish Education

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

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

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

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

Go to: www.ncse.ie

Contact information for Longford and Westmeath SENO:

Longford	Westmeath
National Council for Special Education C/o Government Buildings Convent Road Roscommon Phone 090 6628791	National Council for Special Education Friars Mill Road Mullingar Co Westmeath Phone 044 9390226

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Progression of Disability Services

A national programme called 'Progressing Disability Services for Children and Young People' is changing the way services are provided across the country to make it equal and consistent for all. This Progressing Disability Services is currently a work in progress in being fully developed across all counties.

- **Primary Care Teams** - Many children with delays in development can have their needs met by their local general practice services also known as Primary Care Teams. Teams include the PHN, Speech and Language therapist, family doctor or physiotherapist.
- **Children's Disability Network Teams** - Children's Disability Network Teams will provide services for all children with complex needs and their families, regardless of the child's disability or where he or she goes to school.
- **Specialist Disability Services** - Specialist Disability Services may be needed for some children whose specific needs require a level of expertise which may not be met by the primary care teams and disability network teams.

Local Health Office: The Local Health Office works with a range of voluntary services in the area of Longford and Westmeath to provide care, training and development for children and adults with a learning or physical disability.

Initial contacts should be made with the Local Health Office at the following contact:

Disabilities Service Office Phone (057) 935 9919

Longford Local Health Offices	
Ballinalee (043) 3323212	Ballymahon (090) 6432384
Colehill (044) 9357522	Drumlish (043) 3324440
Edgeworthstown (043) 6671157	Granard (043) 6686068 / (043) 6687110
Killashee (043) 3341341	Lanesboro GP surgery (043) 3321832
Longford (043) 3350169	Aughnaclyffe (049) 4335195
Newtown Cashel (043) 3325445	

Westmeath Local Health Offices	
Athlone (090) 6424811	Ballymore (044) 9356274
Ballynacargy (044) 9373104	Castlepollard (044) 9661479
Kilbeggan (057) 9332444	Kinnegad (044) 9375289
Moate and Glasson (090) 6481165	Mullingar (044) 9340221

Early Intervention Team and School Aged Team

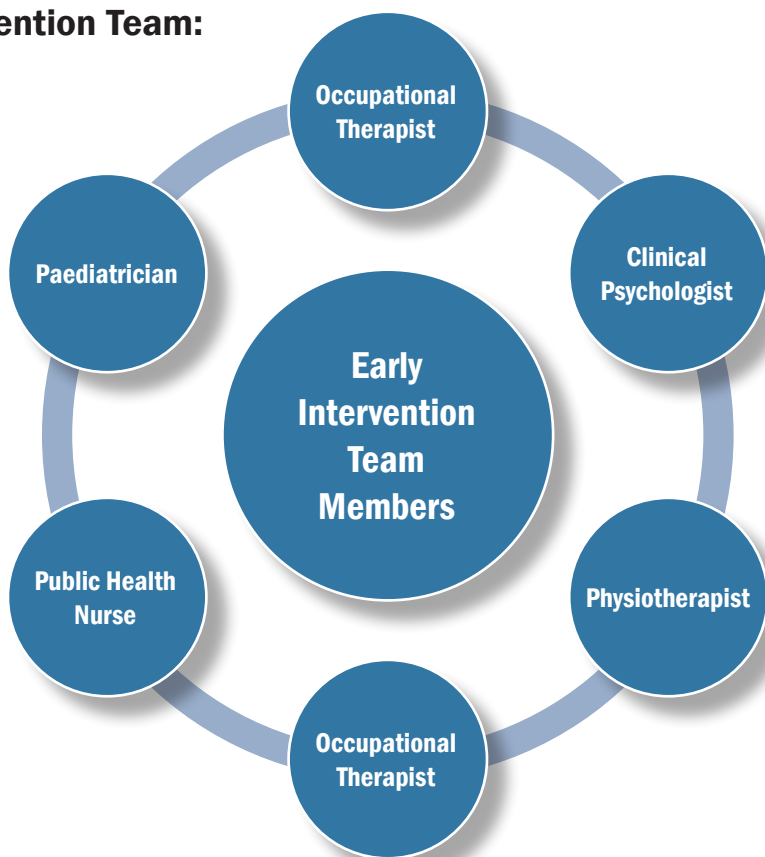
If you have concerns that your child may have a developmental delay or a disability you should speak to your GP or other members of the primary care team. Depending on the concerns and age your child may be referred to an Early Intervention Team, a School Aged Team or another service more appropriate to the need of the young person.

Aged 0-5 - Early Intervention Teams - EIT

Early Intervention Team

An EIT work with other professionals offering assessment, support and services for children, aged 0-5 years and their families who are experiencing difficulties in the ability to function successfully across a variety of environments

Early Intervention Team:



Referring to the Early Intervention Team

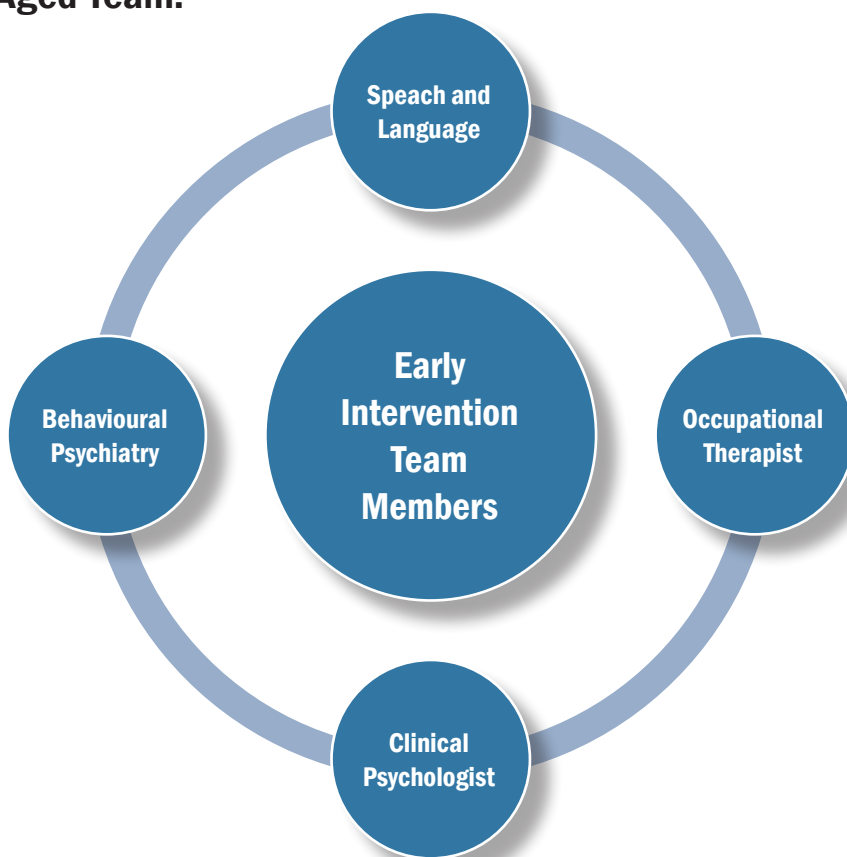
Early Intervention Teams accept referrals from Parents, GPs, PHN or other Health Professionals for children who are under 5 years of age with queried developmental needs, who are experiencing difficulty in their ability to function successfully across a variety of environments. Children are seen for intervention until their 5th birthday. Following referral, the team will discuss it at an intake meeting. After this, parents and the referral agent will be notified of the outcome i.e. if a child has been accepted for evaluation or not accepted. If a child has not been accepted the reason for this will be explained and other supports will be suggested.

Aged 5 – 18 - School Aged Teams – SAT

School Aged Team

The School Aged Team works with other professionals offering assessment, support and services for young people aged 5 – 18 and their families. The team supports children in developing new skills and engaging in the community.

School Aged Team:



Referring to the School Aged Team

SATs accept referrals for young people who are aged 5 – 18 years old who have questions based on a developmental need. These needs may include no less than two of the following areas: speech and language, social skills, managing emotions, motor skills and/or learning new tasks. A referral can be made to the School Aged Team by Parents, GPs, physiotherapist and other health care professionals. Following referral, the team will discuss it and contact the family member to talk about the most appropriate service for the young person. The family and young person are then invited to attend a meeting to carry out an initial assessment.

Early Intervention and school aged Teams in Longford and Westmeath		
Longford	Phoenix Centre, Longford	(043) 33 32477
Athlone	Clonbrusk Resource Centre, Athlone	(090) 64 71103
Mullingar	Springfield Centre, St Lomans Campus, Mullingar	(044) 93 97321

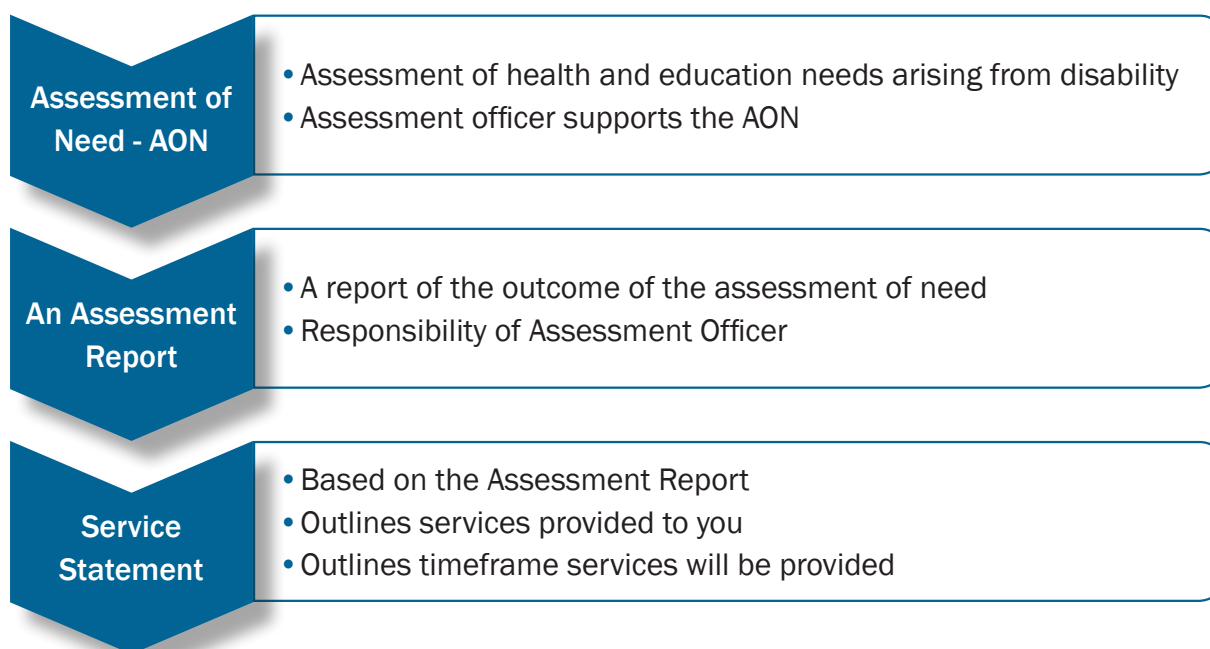
Steps to having your child assessed

Any child born after June 1st 2002 is eligible to apply for an Assessment of Need (AON) under the **Disability Act 2005** regardless of their age at the time of application.

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

The Assessment Officer, The Phoenix Centre, Dublin Rd, Longford. Phone 043 3332419

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



- Young people and families have the right to make a complaint if they are not happy with any part of the process.
- Longford and Westmeath Local Health Office can provide information of the services available.
- There is a provision under the Disability Act, 2005, for a personal advocate to be assigned to a person with a disability if needed. The National Advocacy Service Board provides this.

National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities, National Office, C/O Citizens Information Board, George's Quay House, 43 Townsend Street, Dublin 2, D02 VK65	Phone	076 107 9000
	Email	info@advocacy.ie
	Website	www.citizensinformationboard.ie/en/services/advocacy/

Immunisations

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

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

Schedule 1:			Schedule 2:	
Current Schedule			Schedule for babies born after 01/10/16	
Age	Immunisations	No of injections	Immunisations	No of injections
Birth	BCG Vit K	1	BCG Vit K	1
2 Months	6 in 1 PCV	2	6 in 1 PCV Men B Rotavirus	3 + oral
4 Months	6 in 1 Men C	2	6 in 1 Men B Rotavirus	2 + oral
6 Months	6 in 1 PCV	2	6 in 1 PCV Men C	3
12 Months	MMR PCV	2	MMR MenB	2
13 Months	Men C Hib	2	Men C/Hib PCV	2
4-5 years	4 in 1 MMR	2	4 in 1 + MMR	2
11-14 years	Tdap	1	Tdap	1
Females in 1st Year of Secondary School	HPV	22 doses	HPV PCV MenB Rotavirus	2 doses

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

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

Developmental Milestones and Checks

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

Age	Physical Developmental Milestones	Language and Communication developmental milestones	Checks
0-3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold their head up for short periods of time Respond to your voice Cry, Coo, Smile Look at faces Turn their heads towards light Grows and gains weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to his/her name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Heal Prick Test at birth First developmental check with PHN 6 Week health check with GP Check for developmental dislocation of the hip at 6-8 weeks Congenital heart disease 6- 8 weeks by GP
3-6 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kick vigorously Keep their head up with little support Put weight on their feet when held standing up Sit with support Roll from their front to their back Grab small objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to familiar voices Responds appropriately to friendly and angry tones Vocalisation with intonation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developmental Checks with Public Health Nurse at 3 months
6-9 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baby may understand significant events Can respond to their name More mobile – pushing themselves up and rolling Sit without being held or supported Attempt to crawl Can hold toys between thumb and forefinger Continues to grow and gain weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands simple instructions especially when accompanied by vocal and physical cues 	

Age	Physical Developmental Milestones	Language and Communication developmental milestones	Checks
9-12 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pull themselves into a standing position Attempt walking Use index finger to poke small objects Display emotion by holding body stiff when you pick them up Walk using furniture for support Begin to stop drooling and putting objects in their mouths Continues to grow and gain weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses one or more words with meaning (may be broken words) Is aware of the value of speech 	Developmental Checks with Public Health Nurse at 9 months
12-18 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk with arms out to balance Carrying objects while walking Crawl up and down stairs Scribble using crayons Throw objects to the floor to watch where they fall Continues to grow and gain weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can use up to 20 words Is able to follow simple commands Tends to repeat familiar words 	
18-24 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become more stable on their feet Drag objects along the floor Walk upstairs with help Climbing on furniture Engage with parent and enjoys helps with household tasks Continues to grow and gain weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using more words Following simple commands Talking to themselves Use books and holds pencils 	Developmental Checks with Public Health Nurse between 18 and 24 months

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

Parents or carers can refer to the above time lines and look for delays. Remember that each child develops differently and may achieve a milestone at a different time to another child. If you feel there is a delay, discuss it with your child's GP doctor or if you have any concerns about your child's development or growth please discuss this with your PHN.

List of Disabilities

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

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

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

Sensory processing disorder

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

Acquired Brain Injury

What is it?

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

Symptoms

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

Diagnosis

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

Support and Information

Service	Headway: Brain Injury Services and Support
Purpose	Information and Support
Phone	1890 200 278
Website	www.headway.ie

Service	Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, 64 Mulgrave Street, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin
Purpose	Rehabilitation and Support
Phone	01 2804164
Website	www.abiireland.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/abiireland

Asthma

What is it?

- An illness that causes the airways of the lungs to become irritated and to swell
- The airways may also become smaller
- This may cause trouble breathing and wheezing

Symptoms

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

Causes of Asthma

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

Treatment of Asthma

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

Support and Information:

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

The Asthma Society of Ireland aims to ensure that people with asthma have the information and ability to manage their asthma well so it does not affect their lives.

Service	Asthma Society of Ireland, 42-43 Amiens Street, Dublin 1
Purpose	Information, workshops, videos and literature and telephone helpline
Phone	01 8178886
Email	nurse@asthmasociety.ie, office@asthmasociety.ie
Website	www.asthma.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/asthmasociety/?fref=ts

Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder

What is it?

- Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or hyperkinetic disorder (HKD) is one of the most common childhood disorders that often continues through the teenage years and beyond.
- It is characterized by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity beyond the range of developmental norms, which may impact the child's functioning in many environments from classroom to family to social situations.
- ADHD is three to four times more common in boys than girls.

Three key features define attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or hyperkinetic disorder (HKD)

- inattention
- hyperactivity
- impulsivity

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

Characteristics

ADHD will become more noticeable from 18 months and peak at the age of three. Persistent problems with the following:

- Difficulty with focus and paying attention
- Difficulty controlling behaviour
- Hyperactivity and noisy
- Difficulty with restlessness
- Impulsiveness

Diagnosis/Support

- A diagnosis of ADHD is made by a psychologist. This is done through a combination of observations and gathering information from parents and teachers about the child's behaviour.
- Behaviour therapy and sometimes medication are used in the treatment of ADHD.
- Behaviour therapy teaches the child to control their impulsivity, hyperactivity and lack of attention which is based on a reward system. It will also help to improve social skills.
- Medication is often in the form of stimulants which helps the child to bring their behaviour under control.

Support and Information

Service	INCADDS at Unit 17A, Ballybane Enterprise Centre, Galway
Purpose	Support and information
Phone	091 755090
Email	info@incadds.ie
Website	www.incadds.ie

Service	HADD, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7
Purpose	Support and Information
Phone	01 8748349
Email	info@hadd.ie
Website	www.hadd.ie

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

What is it?

Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is defined as a 'neuro developmental disability' which affects the development of the brain. It mainly impacts on a person's

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

Characteristics

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

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

Diagnosis

- Carried out by an Early Intervention Team (EIT) headed by a psychologist.
- Made based on observations and using early screening instruments such as the Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS) or the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5th edition (DSM5). DSM5 has 3 levels on which it rates ASD. Different diagnostic tools are used by varying professionals to establish diagnosis.

Support

- Early intervention is paramount so the earlier the child is diagnosed the earlier education and training programmes can begin.
- Three educational options for children with ASD; mainstream school, mainstream school with specialised service or Specialist Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) school.
- ABA schools deliver intense one to one intervention to children. Children can be enrolled in these schools from as young as two and a half years of age and may continue in some cases until the age of eighteen. The ABA schools have longer school days and a longer school year to ensure retention of skills acquired.
- Many mainstream schools now have ASD units attached which cater for children either at pre-school, primary or post-primary level. Typically these classes have six children with a teacher and two Special Needs Assistants (SNA's).
- Most use a combination of methods of teaching such as the TEACCH programme, the use of Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS), social stories and sometimes the use of technology.
- Children with ASD can sometimes avail of Home Tuition, July provision (an extension of the school year), transport and other financial benefits.

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

ABA is a scientific approach used to promote positive behaviour and to help with social interactions in children and people with ASD. ABA Support can improve the quality of life for the child/person with ASD and their family in the areas of speech and communication skills, social interaction and positive behaviour reinforcement.

Go to: www.aba-ireland.com

Saplings schools are the main providers of ABA. There is one Saplings school in Mullingar catering for pupils aged four to eighteen years.

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

Support and Information

Service	Irish Autism Action, Coole Road, Multyfarnham, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
Purpose	Raising awareness, information on education and intervention support, advocacy, counselling, home based support, research information and advice for families
Phone	044 9371680
Email	info@autismireland.ie
Website	www.autismireland.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/Irishautism

Service	MWB Autism Support
Purpose	A parent led support group for families of children diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder
Phone	087 9877342
Email	ngerety@eircom.net info@mwbautism.com
Website	www.mwbautism.com
Facebook	www.facebook.com/longfordautismgroup

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

Service	The Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland, Coleraine House, Carmichael Centre, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7
Purpose	Parents supporting parents
Phone	01 8780027/29
Email	education@aspireireland.ie
Website	www.aspireireland.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/AspergerSyndromeAssoc

Service	AADI, Mallow House, Shortcastle Street, Mallow, Co. Cork
Purpose	Provides highly trained assistance dogs for children with ASD and their families
Phone	022-43851
Website	www.Autismassistancedogsireland.ie

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

ASD Classes - Westmeath

ASD 1 Primary class: St Joseph's NS, Corcloon, Miltownpass, Westmeath.			
Phone	044 92 22515	Email	miltownpassns@eircom.net
ASD 1 Primary class: Presentation School (senior), Harbour St. Mullingar			
Phone	044 93 40933	Email	adminsnr@presentationmullingar.ie
ASD 1 Early Intervention class and 1 Primary class: St Mary's NS, College St. Mullingar			
Phone	044 93 41517	Email	stmarysmullingar@gmail.com
ASD 2 Primary classes: St Joseph's NS, Rathwire, Killucan, Mullingar			
Phone	044 93 74591		
ASD 1 Primary class: St. Etchen's National School, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath			
Phone	044 93 75463	Email	stetchens.ns@gmail.com
ASD 1 Early Intervention and 4 Primary classes: Mullingar Educate Together, Rathgowan			
Phone	044 93 48005	Email	mullingar.etns@gmail.com
ASD 1 Early intervention and 2 Primary classes: Summerhill NS, St. Joseph's Drum Rd. Athlone.			
Phone	090 64 92037	Email	summerhill.ias@eircom.net
ASD 2 Post Primary classes: Mean Scoil an Chlochair, Kilbeggan			
Phone	057 93 32292	Email	mercykilbeggan@eircom.net
ASD 2 Post Primary classes: St Finian's College, Longford Road, Mullingar,			
Phone	044 93 48672	Email	info@stfinianscollege.ie
ASD 1 Post Primary class: Castlepollard Community College, Castlepollard,			
Phone	044 96 61163	Email	admin.ccc@lwetb.ie

ASD Classes Longford

ASD 1 Early intervention and 3 Primary classes: Killoe NS, Clontumper, Ballinalee

Phone	043 332 3352	Email	snaomhtreasa.ias@eircom.net
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ASD 1 Early Intervention and 3 Primary classes: St Mary's NS, Edgesworthstown

Phone	043 667 1750	Email	stmarysetown@eircom.net
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ASD 2 Post Primary Classes: Ardscoil Phadraig, Granard, Co Longford

Phone	043 668 6209	Email	admin.apg@lwetb.ie
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ASD 1 Early Intervention Class: St Matthews Mixed National School, Ballymahon

Phone	090 64 32578	Email	stmatthews@gmail.com
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ASD 1 Post Primary Class: Mercy Secondary School, Ballymahon, Co. Longford.

Phone	090 64 32267	Email	info@mercyballymahon.ie
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St. Christopher's Services, Leamore Park, Battery Road, Longford

Phone	(043) 33 45698
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An up to date list of all ASD and special classes is listed on the NCSE website each year and can be accessed at: www.ncse.ie/special-classes

Cerebral Palsy

What is it?

- It is a physical disability which affects movement, muscle tone or posture.
- Caused by damage or failure of the brain to develop, usually before birth.
- In a small percentage of cases the damage is caused during childbirth or after birth. It is non-progressive.

There are three main types of CP all of which will have different symptoms:

- Spastic cerebral palsy
- Athetoid cerebral palsy
- Ataxic cerebral palsy

Some children may have a combination of all three types and may or may not have associated conditions such as a general learning disability, epilepsy or blindness.

Causes

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

Diagnosis

If there is a cause for concern that a child may have CP a full developmental history will be taken and a neurological examination will be carried out. An MRI or CT scan will often be necessary, particularly if the cause of CP is unknown.

Support and Information

Therapies, drugs and sometimes surgery will be used to enhance the quality of life for the child.

Enable Ireland provides supports for people with physical disabilities.

Go to: www.enableireland.ie

The Special Education Support Service (SESS) offers support to school-age children.

Go to: www.sess.ie

Facebook support group:

Go to: www.facebook.com/Cerebral-Palsy-Ireland-265454886901768/

Cystic Fibrosis

What is it?

- Cystic fibrosis (CF) is an inherited condition and is genetic.
- A defect in one particular chromosome causes cystic fibrosis (CF). This gene produces a protein that controls salt and water in and out of your body's cells. In people who have CF, the gene makes a protein that does not work well.

Symptoms

- CF primarily affects the lungs but may also affect the digestive system, the reproductive system and the pancreas.

Diagnosis

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

Support

CF treatments have improved greatly over the years. Treatments concentrate on prevention of infection, particularly in the lungs, and maintaining good nutrition. Physiotherapy is extremely important to keep the airways clear. Some children will be on a continuous dose of antibiotic medicine, or use inhalers or steroids as needed.

Support and Information:

The Cystic Fibrosis Association of Ireland is a voluntary organisation that was set up by parents in 1963 to improve the treatment and facilities for people with Cystic Fibrosis in Ireland. The CFAI also co-operates with medical professionals to give maximum assistance to parents and children/adults with Cystic Fibrosis.

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

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

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CysticFibrosisIreland/

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

What is it?

- A hearing impairment prevents loss of sounds through the ear. A person may have partial loss of hearing or be completely deaf.
- Two types of hearing impairment; Conductive Impairment and Sensorineural Impairment; some children can have a mixture of the two.
- Sensorineural impairment is caused by problems caused by the connection of the inner ear to the brain.
- Some forms of deafness are genetic.
- Head injuries and brain tumours can cause hearing loss.
- Infections such as measles, mumps and meningitis cause hearing loss/ deafness.

Symptoms

- In babies hearing loss will become obvious when he/she does not reach appropriate milestones for language and development.
- An older child may display signs which could indicate a hearing problem such as; speaking very loud, ignoring others, turning up the TV or sitting very close to it, disruptive at school when involved in listening activities or extremely quiet.

Diagnosis

- It is possible to screen babies soon after birth.
- Parents should contact their GP or public health nurse if they have any concerns about their babies hearing.
- Hearing is formally screened at the seven month check-up.

Support and Information

Support depends on the degree and type of hearing loss.

- Hearing aids and cochlear implants are used for moderate to severe hearing loss.
- Irish Sign language (ISL) is used by deaf people in Ireland and is best learnt at as young an age as possible.
- Lip reading is a technique used to understand speech and is often supplemented by gesture, mime and writing.

Service	Visiting Teacher (VT) Service supports children with hearing impairments in mainstream schools.		
Purpose	They provide direct teaching and support and advice for parents and mainstream teachers. They provide support in the home for parents and younger children.		
Westmeath	087-8222008	Email	Maree_Farrell@education.gov.ie
Longford	087 9819359	Email	Amandaa_Duffy@education.gov.ie
Website	www.education.ie/en/Parents/Services/Visiting-Teacher-Service/		

Service	HSE Audiology Centres: Health Centre Athlone/Mullingar, Longford Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath (Adult and Paediatric)		
Phone	(044) 939 4981	Email	midlandsc.audiology@hse.ie

Service	Irish Deaf society (IDS), Deaf Village Ireland, Rathoath Road, Dublin 7		
Purpose	National Advocacy organisation that recognises Irish Sign Language as a means towards Deaf empowerment and equality.		
Phone	01 8601878	Email	info@irishdeafsociety.ie
Website	www.irishdeafsociety.ie		
Facebook	www.facebook.com/IrishDeafSociety		

Service	DeafHear, 35 North Frederick Street, Dublin 1		
Purpose	Provide specialist services to Deaf and Hard of Hearing people and their families.		
Phone	01 8175700	Website	www.deafhear.ie

Service	Deaf Sports Ireland, Deaf Village Ireland, Ratoath Road, Dublin 7		
Purpose	Promotes the social and community benefits of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people participating in sports.		
Website	www.deafsportsireland.com		
Email	info@deafsportsireland.com		

Service	The Irish Deaf Youth Association (IDYA)		
Purpose	Caters for children aged 13-17 through organised activities run by Irish Deaf Teens.		
Phone	085 1984166	Email	info@irishdeafyouth.com
Website	www.irishdeafyouth.com		



Service	Sign Language Association Ireland (SLAI)		
Phone	086-0888202	Email	secretary@slaireland.com
Website	www.slaireland.com		

Service	ISL everywhere –ISL app for smart phones and tablets		
Website	www.isleverywhere.ie		
Email	sharingthejourney2011@gmail.com		
Phone	087-916-3168 or 085-722-5659		



Diabetes

What is it?

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

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of diabetes in children are:

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

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

Diagnosis

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

Support and Information

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

Support and Information

Service	Diabetes Ireland, Westmeath branch
Phone	089 2268735
Email	stephenpurcell0@gmail.com

Service	Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service, HSE Dublin Mid-Leinster, Marlinstown Office Park, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
Phone	044 93 53220
Email	community.dietitians@hse.ie

Service	Diabetes Ireland
Purpose	Provides support, education and motivation to everyone affected by diabetes.
Phone	1850 909 909
Email	info@diabetes.ie
Website	www.diabetes.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/DiabetesIreland/

Down Syndrome

What is it?

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

Diagnosis

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

Support and Information

Supports may include physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and sometimes surgery to address congenital heart defects.

Service	Longford/Westmeath branch of Down Syndrome
Phone	(087) 757 7131
Email	longfordwestmeathdsi2015@gmail.com

Down Syndrome Information booklet

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

Facebook support and information group

www.facebook.com/groups/577711845573217/

Service	Down Syndrome Ireland, Unit 3, Park Way House, Western Parkway Business Park, Ballymount Drive, Dublin 12, D12HP70
Purpose	Support and Information
Phone	087 757 7131
Email	info@downsyndrome.ie
Website	www.downsyndrome.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/downsyndromeireland

Dysgraphia

What is it?

- Dysgraphia is a difficulty with handwriting.
- Children with dysgraphia can usually write but the writing will appear very basic and untidy.
- Children may also have difficulty with skills such as tying shoes, opening and closing buttons and other tasks which require hand-eye co-ordination.
- The disorder is generally noticed when the child first starts writing. Letters may be inappropriately sized and letters poorly spaced. However, many children will have a high IQ with no learning difficulties.

Symptoms

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

Diagnosis

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

Support and Information

Dysgraphia can be helped through the use of techniques to aid handwriting usually recommended by an OT, and/or by using another means of communication other than writing.

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

Service	St Peter's National School (Snr), Excise St., Athlone, Co Westmeath
Purpose	Mild general learning disability class
Phone	090 64 92363
Email	stpetersgnsath.ias@eircom.net

Service	Dyslexia Association of Ireland
Purpose	Support and Information
Phone	01 8776001
Email	info@dyslexia.ie

Service	State Examinations Commission (SEC)
Purpose	Provides supports for pupils in second-level examinations
Phone	090 6442700
Email	sec_specialneeds@education.gov.ie
Website	www.examinations.ie

Dyslexia

What is it?

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

Diagnosis

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

Support and Information

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

Service	Dyslexia Association of Ireland
Purpose	Provides out-of-school supports for children with dyslexia either on a one-to-one basis or from a trained tutor
Phone	01 8776001
Email	info@dyslexia.ie

Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)/Dyspraxia

What is it?

- DCD is a difficulty with co-ordination.
- It is a brain based condition that poses problems with balance and posture.
- It can affect the development of skills such as climbing and running.

Symptoms

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

Diagnosis

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

Support and Information

Service	DCD Ireland
Purpose	Support group and information website (Mullingar based)
Phone	086 380 8194
Email	dcdireland@gmail.com
Website	www.dcdireland.ie

Service	Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland Helpline
Purpose	Support and Information
Phone	01 8747085
Website	www.dyspraxia.ie

Epilepsy

What is it?

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

Symptoms

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

Diagnosis

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

Support and Information

Epilepsy is most commonly treated by medication. The medication may help stop the seizures from occurring.

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

Fragile X Syndrome

What is it?

- Fragile X syndrome is a condition that affects both boys and girls.
- It primarily causes learning difficulties.

Symptoms

- Often babies are slow to smile, sit and walk and may have disturbed sleep patterns.
- Language delay is often apparent at an early age.

Support and Information

Fragile X syndrome is diagnosed by a blood test.

Special Education Support Service:

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

Service	Irish Fragile X Society (IFXS), c/o Inclusion Ireland, Unit C2, The Steel Works, Foley Street, Dublin 1
Purpose	Support and Information
Facebook	www.facebook.com/IrishFragileXSociety/

Muscular Dystrophy

What is it?

- Muscular Dystrophy (MD) is characterised by progressive weakening and wasting of the muscles of the body.
- There are nine different types of MD. Duchenne MD is the most common.
- Duchenne MD is genetic and it tends to run in families.

Symptoms

- Babies do not initially show any symptoms but it usually begins to appear in children before the age of six.
- The first signs of MD usually affect movements, such as falling often, difficulty in running and jumping, walking on the toes, stiffness or pain in the muscles.
- As the condition progresses walking and movement becomes more difficult.

Diagnosis

Due to the fact that the condition is inherited families are often aware of the genetic link. However, for some there will be no genetic link and the condition occurs spontaneously. The condition is usually formally diagnosed by a blood test in addition to a biopsy of the muscle tissue.

Support

- Medications and therapy can help manage the condition.
- Physiotherapy helps considerably.
- Occupational therapy is also very important and enables the child in self-care skills such as washing, dressing and self-feeding.
- Hydrotherapy (water therapy) is often recommended as limb movement is much easier in water.
- Speech therapy and mobility aids are important for the child to be out and about and communicate and socialise as much as possible.

Support and Information

Service	MDI office, Mullingar Employment Action Group, The Enterprise Centre, Bishopsgate St, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
Purpose	Support and Information
Website	www.mdi.ie
Email	lisa@mdi.ie
Phone	086 3899285 / 086 6066106



Service	Muscular Dystrophy Society of Ireland Ltd., 75 Lucan Road, Chapelizod, Dublin
Purpose	Provide information and support to people with neuromuscular conditions and their families through a range of support services
Phone	01 6236414
Email	info@mdi.ie
Website	www.mdi.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/mdiireland/



Oppositional Defiant Disorder And Conduct Disorder

What is it?

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

Symptoms

- A person with CD often display more physical aggression and threatening behaviour and often appear to lack empathy for others.

Support and Information

Children and young people with ODD are usually taught strategies to manage their own behaviour. Many children with CD often have very complex problems and usually involve a team of agencies and professionals working together on a comprehensive plan.

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

Prader-Willi Syndrome

What is it?

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

PWS is a multiphase syndrome:

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

Symptoms

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

Supports

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

Support and Information

Special Education Support Service:

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

Service	Prader-Willi Syndrome Association Ireland (PWSAI), Carmichael Centre, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7.		
Website	www.pwsai.ie		
Phone	087 2522832	Email	info@pwsai.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/Prader-Willi-Syndrome-Association-Ireland-PWSAI-371644382923390/		

Specific Speech And Language Impairment

What is it?

Specific speech and language impairment (SLI) can affect both the spoken word (expressive language) and understanding (receptive language). This is a developmental language impairment and not related or caused by other developmental impairments such as hearing loss, cognitive or brain injury.

Symptoms

- Difficulty with spoken language, may have very limited vocabulary for his or her age and a poor grasp of grammar.
- Although understanding of language might be quiet good, it may impact on social development and imaginative play.
- If the child has difficulty with receptive language they are most likely to have difficulties in listening, following instructions and generally understanding direction.
- Some children may have difficulties in both spoken language and receptive language.

Diagnosis

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

Support and Information

Support involves implementing a programme by the Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) which is usually supported by the parents and the school, if the child is school age. This programme will address the specific area the child has difficulties with. The Department of Education and Skills require an assessment by a Psychologist and a Speech and Language Therapist before they will grant extra supports to a child.

Specific Speech and Language Unit, Presentation School, Gracepark Rd., Athlone			
Phone	090 64 72321	Email	stmarysathlone@gmail.com
Specific Speech and Language Unit, Presentation School, Harbour St., Mullingar.			
Phone	044 93 40933	Email	adminsnr@presentationmullingar.ie
Specific Speech and Language class, St Joseph's National School, Dublin Rd., Longford			
Phone	043 3345700	Email	stjosephsnslongford@gmail.com

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

Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus

What is it?

- Spina Bifida causes incomplete development of the spinal cord in the womb.
- The spine is made up of bones called vertebrae which protect the spinal cord, sometimes one or more of these bones do not completely form and split and protrude out onto the back in a bulge.
- It literally means a split in the spine.

Symptoms

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

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

Diagnosis

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

Support and Information

Support varies depending on the type and severity of the condition and is provided through a medical practitioner and early intervention team.

Service	Longford / Westmeath SBHI Support Worker
Phone	085 7119062
Email	sjacobsen@sbhi.ie

Service	Spina Bifida hydrocephalus Ireland (SBHI), National resource Centre, Old Nangor Road, Clondakin, Dublin. D22 W5C1
Website	www.sbhi.ie
Phone	01 457 2329
Email	info@sbhi.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/Mid-West-Spina-Bifida-Association-409585175763522/

Visual Impairment

What is it?

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

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

Symptoms

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

Diagnosis

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

Support and Information

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

Service	NCBI, Clonbrusk Resource Centre, Coosan Road, Athlone, Co Westmeath.
Purpose	Support and Information
Phone	090 6473575

Service	National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI), Whitworth Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9
Website	www.ncbi.ie
Phone	1850 334353
Email	info@ncbi.ie

Service	ChildVision: National Education Centre for Blind Children, Grace Park Rd., Dublin 9
Phone	01 8373635
Website	www.childvision.ie
Website	www.facebook.com/search/241115562629910/local_search?surface=tyah

Service	National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
Purpose	Information for Parents/Guardians of Children and Young People who are Blind/Visually Impaired
Email	www.ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Pamphlet-5-Vis-Imp-01_09_14.pdf

Service	Fighting Blindness, 3rd Floor, 7 Ely Place, Dublin 2, D02 TW98
Purpose	www.fightingblindness.ie
Phone	01 6789004
Email	info@fightingblindness.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/Fighting.Blindness.Ireland/

Service	Irish Guide Dogs, National Headquarters and Training Centre, Model Farm Road, Cork
Website	www.guidedogs.ie
Phone	1850 506 300 or 021 4878200
Website	www.guidedogs.ie
Facebook	www.facebook.com/irishguidedogs/?fref=ts

Service	Feach, PO Box 11581, Dublin 18
Purpose	A support group for parents of blind and visually impaired children
Website	www.feach.ie
Email	feachmail@gmail.com
Facebook	www.facebook.com/FeachVIP/?fref=ts

Mental Health

What is it?

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

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

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

Some things you can do to improve Mental Health

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

Supports

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

Longford and Westmeath Services	
St. Loman's Hospital Mullingar	(044) 934 0191
Community Mental Health Centre Mullingar	(044) 939 4540
Day Centre Grace Road Athlone	(090) 649 2969
Community Mental Health Centre Ré Nua	(090) 648 3190
Community Mental Health Centre Longford	(043) 3346992
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Services	(044) 939 4219
Psychiatry for Later Life	(044) 938 4363
Suicide Resource Office	(057) 93 27909 or 086-8157320

National Services

Service name	Phone	Social Media
The Samaritans: Emotional support	116123 – Freephone Text 087 260 9090	www.samaritans.org
SpunOut.ie: Youth information website	01 6753554 Text 087 7730000	www.spunout.ie info@spunout.ie
Teenline Ireland Helpline: Teen emotional support	1800 833 634 – Freephone 8pm-11pm Free Text: Teen to 50015	www.teenireland.ie
Pieta House: Suicide and self harm	01 623 5606	www.pieta.ie
Childline: Child emotional support	1800 666666 – Freephone	www.childline.ie
Grow: Mental health support and recovery	1890 474 474	www.grow.ie
IACP: Counselling and Psychotherapy	01 230 3536	www.iacp.ie
Aware: Depression, bi-polar, anxiety	1800 80 48 48 - Freephone	www.aware.ie
Shine: Mental health supports	01 860 1620	www.shine.ie
Outreach - Online youth and mental health service	01 764 5666	general@reachout.com
Bodywhys – Eating disorders association of Ireland	1890 200 444	www.bodywhys.ie
Irish Advocacy Network: Peer advocacy in mental health	01 872 8684	www.irishadvocacynetwork.com
Mental Health Ireland: mental health supports	01 284 1166	www.mentalhealthireland.ie info@mentalhealthireland.ie

Communication Tools

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

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

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

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

TEACCH

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

Lámh (Sign Communication System)

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

For further information on Lámh contact

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

Phone 059 9139657

Website www.lamh.org

Email info@lamh.org

Facebook www.facebook.com/L%C3%A1mh-Sign-561057320634068/

Youtube www.youtube.com/user/Lamhsignsystem



Social Stories

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



Disability Language and Etiquette

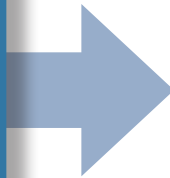
Children with special needs have the same basic needs as every other child, together with some additional needs.

It is very important to see the child first and his or her additional needs second. Always recognise the individual strengths of each individual child before their additional needs.

Using correct terminology is empowering for both parents and children. Negative terminology is hurtful. This table gives examples of negative and positive uses of language and etiquette when engaging with people with disabilities.

Negatives

Sarah is wheelchair bound
John is mentally retarded
The handicapped or disabled
Ann is Autistic or diagnosed with...
Tom is a down syndrome child
Mentally handicapped or retarded
Mentally ill, disturbed or a psycho
Make jokes about disabilities
Speak as if they were not there



Positives

Sarah uses a wheelchair
John has a cognitive disability
People with disabilities
Ann has ASD or a diagnosis of ...
Tom has down syndrome
Speak directly to the child/person with Special Needs
Use correct words/name of condition
Person with a general learning disability
Person with mental health condition
Always be respectful

Education for the Person with Additional Needs

Early Childhood Education

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

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme provides TWO free years of childhood care and education. Children are eligible for the ECCE scheme if they are aged over 3 years and no older than 5 and a half years.

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

These can include:

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

The Access Inclusion Model – AIM

The Access and Inclusion model (2016) aims support inclusion of a child with a disability in ECCE services. This model, rather than focusing on a diagnosis to access supports, focuses on the developmental level of each child and their functional ability and the specific strengths and needs of each individual child.

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

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

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

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

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

website which will be reviewed by the Early Years Specialist Service and if deemed necessary they will contact the HSE.

- **Level 7** – will provide for extra support in the classroom to enable the reduction of staff. Where the child's needs cannot be met without additional supports, an application can be made for additional supports for the service.

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

Special needs pre-schools in Westmeath

Lir Pre-School, 2 Cullionbeg, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath – 044 9385809

This pre-school is run by the HSE with the help and assistance of The Muiriosa Foundation. The school caters for children with a wide variety of disabilities.

Clonros Pre-School, 4 Coosan point road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath – 090 6478940

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

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

Home Tuition Scheme

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

For more information go to: www.education.ie

School Age Education

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

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

Mainstream classes

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

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

Special classes in mainstream schools

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

ASD units cater for pre-school children, primary and post-primary ages.

For full listing refer to pages 27 and 28 or go to: www.ncse.ie/special-classes

Special Schools

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

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

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

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

School	St. Christopher's Services, Leamore Park, Battery Road, Longford		
Phone	(043) 334 1073	Email	reception@stchristophers.ie
Website	www.stchristophers.ie/pages/special_school.html		

School	St. Hilda's Special School, Grace Park Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.		
Phone	090 6475825	Email	sthildas1@eircom.net
Website	www.sthildas-specialschool.ie		

School	St. Brigid's Special School, Harbour St., Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.		
Phone	044 9342354	Email	stbsschool@gmail.com
Website	www.stbsschool.wixsite.com		

Special arrangements for particular disabilities

Some students may be entitled to get an exemption from certain educational requirements.

For more information go to: www.ncse.ie

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has published an information booklet for parents.

For more information go to: www.ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ChildrenWithSpecialEdNeeds1.pdf

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN Act) 2004 outlines how children are to be educated in an inclusive setting unless this would not be in the best interests of the child.

For more information go to: www.sess.ie/sites/default/files/EPSEN_Act_2004.pdf

Exemptions for examination components:

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

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

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

Go to: www.education.ie

Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Examinations RACE

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

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

Home Tuition Scheme

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

If granted, the home tutor must be recruited by the parents and qualified in the relevant sector and registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland.

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

July Provision Programme

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

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

Parents must recruit their own tutor who is qualified in the sector and is registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland.

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

Equipment grants

Grants are available for furniture, equipment and other supports to both primary and post-primary schools to fund the purchase of equipment for educational purposes for special needs pupils only. The scheme applies to pupils with physical or mental disabilities.

Go to: www.education.ie

Youthreach

Youthreach is a training and work experience programme provided by the Department of Education and Skills, for early school leavers aged 15 – 20. The programme offers young people the opportunity to identify options within adult life, and provides them with opportunities to gain certification in an area of interest. Youthreach is an alternative option for early school leavers to acquire an education and skills for future work or further education life. Youthreach support students who have difficulties learning and promotes positive mental health and wellbeing.

Go to: www.longfordwestmeath.etb.ie

Third level Education

AHEAD- The Association for Higher Education Access and Disability

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

AHEAD also provided information for graduates who have completed third level and seeking employment

Service	AHEAD, East Hall, UCD Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Phone	01 7164396
Website	www.ahead.ie
Email	ahead@ahead.ie

Funds for Students with Disabilities in further or higher education

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

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

Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is an alternative admissions scheme to third level education for students whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education. DARE offers reduced points places to school leavers who as a result of having a disability have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education. **Go to:** www.accesscollege.ie/dare/

Transport Supports

School Transport

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

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

School Transport Scheme

Where the transport cannot be provided, you may be eligible for a Special Transport Scheme to help with the cost of making private transport arrangements.

Escort Provision

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

To apply for the Special Transport Scheme contact:

Service	Department of Education and Skills, School Transport Section, Portlaoise Rd, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
Phone	057 9325466/7
Website	www.education.ie
Email	School-transport@education.gov.ie

The Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland-DDAI

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

Go to: www.ddai.ie

Irish Wheelchair Association-IWA

Provide a range of transport and mobility supports and services to people with mobility impairments, go to: www.iwa.ie/services/motoring

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

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

Drivers may be entitled to other schemes including:

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

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

www.ddai.ie

www.iwa.ie/services/motoring

www.citizensinformation.ie

Local Link – Longford Westmeath Community Transport LTD

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

Service	Local Link, Áras an Chontae, Mount Street, Mullingar, Co Westmeath
Website	www.westmeathruraltransport.ie
Phone	044 9340801
Email	swrta@eircom.net

Housing Supports

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

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

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

Westmeath County Council County Buildings Mullingar Co. Westmeath 044 93 32240	Westmeath County Council Civic Offices Athlone Co. Westmeath 090 64 42185	Longford County Council Great Water Street Longford 043 3343409 / 043 3343375 housing@longfordcoco.ie
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Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) can receive nominations from the County Council to provide social housing for people who cannot afford to buy their own homes.

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

For further information contact:

Service	Irish Council for Social Housing, 50 Merrion Square East, Dublin 2
Phone	(01) 661 8334
Website	www.icsh.ie
Email	info@icsh.ie

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

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

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

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

Social Housing – qualifying is in accordance with up to date legislation and eligibility criteria and allocation of a property, in due course, is in accordance with the ‘Scheme of Letting Priorities’. The purpose of this scheme is to determine the order of priority for allocation of housing.

For further information on housing and grants go to:

www.westmeathcoco.ie/housing

www.longfordcoco.ie

www.citizensinformation.ie/housing

Day Care, Residential and Respite Services

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

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

Listed below are the various organisations that provide these services

St. Christopher's Services Leamore Park, Battery Road, Longford, Co. Longford	Phone: (043) 33 41769 / (043) 33 45698 Email: reception@stchristophers.ie Website: www.stchristophers.ie Facebook: www.facebook.com/stchristopherslongford
Provide: Day service and Respite	
Phoenix Centre, Mount Carmel Hospital, Dublin Road, Longford	Phone: 043 3332477 / 043 3332497
Provide: Day service	



Irish Wheelchair Association Longford and Westmeath	Phone: 043 332 2992 / 090 647 1118 Email: kenagh@iwa.ie / athlone@iwa.ie Website: www.iwa.ie
Provide: Day service and Respite	

Rehab Care Longford and Westmeath	Phone: 043 3344043 / 090 649 1452 Email: sally.budd@rehabcare.ie - Longford veronica.cullinan@rehabcare.ie – Athlone Website: www.rehabcare.ie
Provide: Residential and Outreach	

GALRO, Mill House, Killashee St., Longford	Phone: 043 3349991 Website: www.galroireland.ie
Provide: Residential and Independent living support in both counties	

Nua Healthcare Longford and Westmeath	Phone: 045 856 592 Email: info@nuahealthcare.ie Website: www.nuahealthcare.ie
Provide: Day service, residential and independent living support	

Praxis Care Longford and Westmeath	Phone: 041 687 1904 Email: info@praxiscare.ie Website: www.praxisprovides.com
Provide: Day service, residential, independent living support and outreach	

St. Hilda's Services, Grace Park Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath	Phone: 090 6475825 Email: info@sthildas.ie Website: www.sthildas.ie
Provide: Day service, residential and respite	

Lough Sheever Center, Mullingar Hospital, Co. Westmeath	Phone: 044 9384372
Provide: Day service and residential	



Centre For Independent Living Longford and Westmeath	Phone: 043 3331702 - Longford 044 9375610 - Westmeath Email: wmeathcil@eircom.net
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Provide: Independent living support

Share a Break Muiriosa Foundation, 2 Valley Bungalows, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath	Phone: 044 9340980 Email: info@scjms.ie Website: www.muiriosa.ie
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Provide: Residential and respite in both counties

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

Employment Supports and Services

The Supported Employment Scheme

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

EmployAbility Midlands

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

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

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

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

Longford	Government Buildings, Ballinalee Road, Longford	043 33 40000
Athlone	Government Offices, Grace Park Rd, Athlone, Co. Westmeath	090 64 49600
Mullingar	Blackhall Street, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath	076 62 85100

Or contact EmployAbility

Longford	086 3872855	longford@employabilitymidlands.com
Athlone	086 3842496	athlone@employabilitymidlands.com
Mullingar	086 8338027	mullingar@employabilitymidlands.com

National Learning Network

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

Go to: www.nln.ie

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

Longford	6 Grafton Court, Longford, Co. Longford.	043 3342255
Athlone	Belhavel Training Services, Golden Island, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.	090 6479293
Mullingar	1st Floor, Fairgreen House, Green Bridge, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.	044 9345117

Irish Association of Supported Employment (IASE)

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

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

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

Go to: www.iase.ie Or

Service	Longford Employment Development and Information Centre, 11a, 2 Mastertech Business Park, Athlone Road, Co. Longford
Phone	043 3347515
Email	idicentreservices@gmail.com

The National Council for the Blind of Ireland

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

Go to: www.ncbi.ie

Benefits and Allowances

Financial benefits

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

Some of the more common allowances include the following:

Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA):

This is a monthly payment to the care giver of a child aged under 16 with a severe disability, who requires ongoing care and attention. The Department of Social Protection assess applications for this allowance.

To Qualify:

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

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

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

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

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

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

To apply, fill in a Domiciliary Care Allowance form. You can also get an application form

by texting FORM DCA followed by your name and address to 51909 (standard text rates apply) or from your Intreo Centre or social welfare local office or local Citizens Information Service.

Note: All Counties send application form to this address:

Domiciliary Care Allowance Social Welfare Services Office Department of Social Protection College Road Sligo	Phone (071) 915 7100 Locall 1890 500 000 www.welfare.ie
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If you wish to talk to someone face-to-face about your entitlements, you can visit your local Citizens Information Centre, local social welfare office or Intreo Centre.

Carer's Allowance:

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

To qualify for a Carers Allowance you must

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

The person being cared for must be:

- Over 16 and dependent on full time care
- Or under 16 and receiving Domiciliary Care Allowance

Carers Benefit

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

Carers Support Grant

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

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

Department of Social Protection Carers Support Grant Section PO Box 10085 Dublin 2	Phone (01) 673 2222 www.welfare.ie
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Disability Allowance

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

To Qualify:

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

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

Longford	Intreo Centre Longford, Government Buildings, Ballinlee Road	(043) 3340000
Mullingar	Blackhall Street, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath	(076) 6285100
Athlone	Government Offices, Grace Park Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath	(090) 6449600

For more information go to www.citizensinformation.ie

Medical Card

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

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

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

For more information contact your Local Health Office

Lo-call 1890 252 919

clientregistration@hse.ie

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

GP visit cards

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

GP Visit Cards for children under six

With the GP Visit Card children under the age of six are entitled to free GP visits, assessments at age 2 and 5 and care for children with asthma from July 1st 2015.

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

GP Visit Card – Under 6s		
Po Box 12629		
Dublin 11	Lo-call 1890 252 919	www.hse.ie

Incapacitated Child Tax Credit

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

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

Go to: www.citizensinformation.ie

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

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

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

Cross Border Directive - CBD

The HSE operates the Cross-Border Healthcare Directive (CBD), for people entitled to public patient healthcare in Ireland who are seeking to avail of that healthcare in another EU/EEA* member state

The CBD can provide for the cost of publicly funded healthcare in Ireland to be availed of in a EU/EEA* member state and the costs to be reimbursed subject to application terms. Patients must familiarise themselves with the administration requirements of the HSE prior to availing of cross border healthcare in order to confirm entitlement or for reimbursement of treatment costs. The HSE has established a National Contact Point (NCP) office for the administration of the CBD in Ireland and the contact details for the NCP are:

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

Phone 056 778 4546

Email crossborderdirective@hse.ie

Additional Supports and Services

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

ÁIRC Midlands - Supporting children with disabilities

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

Irish Wheelchair Association - IWA

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

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

Athlone Regional Centre Clonbrusk Resource Centre Coosan Road Athlone Co Westmeath	09064 71118 Email: athlone@iwa.ie
Kenagh Enterprise Centre Kenagh Co Longford	043 3322992 Email: kenagh@iwa.ie
Mullingar Springfield Centre Delvin Road Mullingar Co Westmeath	044 9347511 Email: mullingar@iwa.ie

Muiriosa Foundation

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

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

Guardian Ad Litem and Rehabilitation Office - GALRO

GALRO advocate for and promote the best interests of children involved in court proceedings. This process considers the wishes and feelings of a child and presents them to the courts. GALRO offer independent needs assessment and supports access to services for people with a disability.

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

St. Christopher's Services

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

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

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

Service	St Christopher's Services, Leamore Park, Battery Road, Longford
Website	www.stchristophers.ie
Email	reception@stchristophers.ie
Phone	043 3341769 / 043 3345698

Rehab Care

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

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

For Longford and Westmeath services	
Phone	042 9337417
Website	www.rehabcare.ie

Praxis Care

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

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

Nua Healthcare

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

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

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

Assist Ireland

Assist Ireland is a website providing information about aids, appliances and assistive technology for people with disabilities. It includes a directory of products available from suppliers for people with disabilities and older people.

Apps: There are a range of apps available for people with disabilities to use with a smart phone or tablet PCs, that can support and aid people with disabilities including apps for people with:

- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Communication difficulties
- ASD and other related disorders
- Mobility difficulties

Go to: www.assistireland.ie

Independent People with Disabilities

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

Service	Independent People with Disabilities, 96 Seán Costello Street, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
Email	independentpwd@gmail.com
Phone	090 6470044 / 086 8586135

Good2Talk

Counselling and Psychotherapy Support Services

Service	Good2Talk, 1 College Street, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
Website	www.good2talk.ie
Email	info@good2talk.ie
Phone	044 9332531 / 087 6088291

National Disability Authority

The National Disability Authority (NDA) provides information and advice to the Government on policy and practice relevant to the lives of people with a disability.

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

Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency DESSA

DESSA works with community development organisations to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities and their families at community level through their engagement in local community. **Go to:** www.dessa.ie

Barnardos

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

Go to: www.barnardos.ie

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

Barnardos Regional Office 7 Ashdale Athlone Co Westmeath	
Phone	090 6476422
Email	info@athlone.barnardos.ie

Barnardos Centre 1 Belville Apartments The Longford Road Mullingar Co. Westmeath	
Phone	044 93 352 82
Email	info@mullingar.barnardos.ie

Jack and Jill Foundation

The Jack and Jill Children's Foundation provides direct funding, to families of children up to the age of 4, with brain damage and who experience severe intellectual and physical developmental delay. The Jack and Jill Foundation can provide nursing care and support for children with severe neurological development concerns. This funding can enable families to buy home respite care for their child. The foundation can also provide end of life care to all children up to the age of 4 years.

For information on Longford and Westmeath supports contact 087 6004118

Website	www.jackandjill.ie
Email	cathy@jackandjill.ie

Disability.ie

Disability.ie is an online service offering easy access to comprehensive information for people with disabilities and special needs including family members. Information on disability related topics include: Entitlements, Education, Employment and Health related issues.

Website	www.disability.ie
Email	info@disability.ie

County Childcare Committees - CCCs

The CCCs are often the first port of call for both parents and childcare providers when trying to access early years care and education initiatives, schemes and grants.

County Childcare Committees provide:

- Information and Supports on Access and Inclusion Model AIM
- Support for access to the three national programmes (ECCE, CCS, CETS) for children with additional needs
- Support, information and guidance to local service providers and parents on national programmes and service quality
- Provision of Training including Continuous Professional Development to service providers
- Information on early childhood and access to Disability Services
- Signpost all training and supports for services available for providers and parents

Longford County Childcare Committee, Longford Enterprise Centre, Templemichael, Longford. N39 T9Y1	Westmeath County Childcare Committee, Old Mullingar Area Office, Mount Street, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. N91 E430
Phone 043 3342505	Phone 044 9335454
www.longfordchildcare.ie	www.westmeathchildcare.ie
www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/EarlyEducationandChildcare/Pages/CCCs.aspx	

NALA - National Adult Literacy Services

The National Adult Literacy Agency is an independent charity committed to making sure people with literacy and numeracy difficulties can fully take part in society and have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs.

Go to: www.nala.ie

Adult Learning Service

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

Go to: www.longfordwestmeathetb.ie

Inclusion Ireland

Inclusion Ireland is a national rights-based advocacy organisation who promotes the rights of people with an intellectual disability and their families. The Vision of Inclusion Ireland is that of people with an intellectual disability living and participating in the community with equal rights as citizens, to live the life of their choice to their fullest potential.

Go to: www.inclusionireland.ie

Disability Federation of Ireland

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

Go to: www.disability-federation.ie

National Advocacy Service

The National Advocacy Service (NAS) offers free independent, representative advocacy services for people with all types of disabilities throughout Ireland.

It is supported by the Citizens Information Board. People with disabilities can contact NAS directly or be referred to the services by family, friends or services.

Phone	076 107 3000
www.citizensinformationboard.ie/services/advocacy_services	

Play Therapy

Play therapy is the dynamic process between child / adolescent and play therapist. The child's / teenagers inner resources are enabled by the therapeutic alliance to bring about growth and change. Play therapy is child centred, in which play is viewed as the primary medium and speech may operate as the secondary medium.

Ruth McDonagh – Athlone	087 6547377
Anne Brennan – Mullingar	087 2210211
Grace Grimes – Longford	087 2128001

For a list of therapists go to: www.playtherapy.ie or www.ipta.ie or www.iaptp.ie

Donal Murtagh Mobility Ltd

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and Conversion Specialists

Phone	090-6481050 / 087-8400403 / 087-3994500
Website	www.dmmobility.ie

Wheelchair Cars Ireland - Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

Service	Wheelchair Cars Ireland, Glasson Village, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
Phone	090 6439438 / 087 4662895
Website	www.wci.ie
Email	sales@wci.ie

