



our focus...



Limerick
Social Service
Council Ltd

Comhairle Sheirbhís Sóisialta Luimnigh Teo

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

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Limerick
Social Service
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talking, sharing, helping, listening...

“Working in partnership with parents has ensured their needs are met and that they are supported in the development of their children”

Crèche

“As the economic environment continues to be challenging it is increasingly important to attend to the social and psychological needs of the most vulnerable sectors of society. Older people are one such group”

Services for
Older Adults

“The counsellors faced more challenging client circumstances. Greater levels of stress and depression, complicated life situations and a continued gloomy overall economic situation serve to impact on the mental health of many people”

Counselling Service

“Support is provided to many families in times of crisis outside of office hours particularly those who engage with the Teen Parents Support Programme”

Parent Support
Programme





"A high level of trust has been developed between our staff and the residents of Southill, and by the end of 2012 we aim to have visited every home in the parish"

Family Support Initiative

"We recruited a parent representative to sit on the Pre-school committee; this has proven to be very worthwhile as it has given us a better insight into the needs of parents"

Pre-school Service

"We believe that children are generally best cared for within their own families, therefore we support the family to make a plan to help the child/young person (or children) within the family network, to ensure they are looked after and safe"

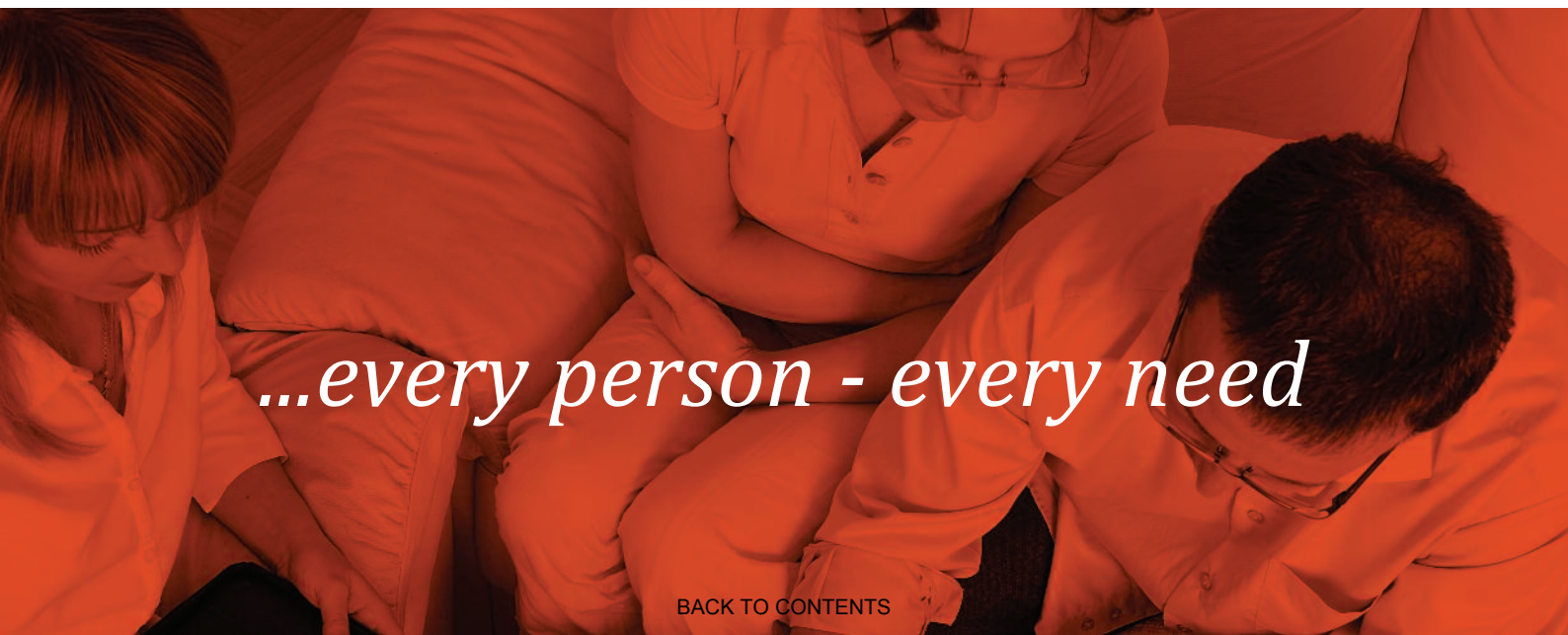
Family Welfare Conferences

"We support positive relationships between parents and all those involved in the care of their child. In 2011 we supported 53 parents/families that have children in care in Limerick City and County"

Family Advocacy Service

"A school girl completed her stay with us and left with a beautiful baby, she returned to education which was a great achievement on her behalf"

Pre-natal and Post-natal Service



...every person - every need

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General Managers Report

I am pleased once again to present our Annual Report for 2011. The past year was a very challenging year for Limerick Social Service Council Ltd not least because of funding uncertainty, cutbacks in funding and a significant increase in demand for our services. Most of our grants from statutory bodies have been reduced and our own fundraising programmes have found it increasingly challenging to meet targets in these difficult economic times.

Despite the difficult funding issues that we strived to manage efficiently and effectively in the last year the Council continued to adapt and change our services in order to meet the needs of the community we serve. To this end, Limerick Social Service Council Ltd in partnership with Limerick Regeneration Agency and the HSE established Family Support initiatives in Southill and Our Lady of Lourdes Parishes of the City. The primary objective of these projects is to enhance social inclusion in the area by the provision increased family support, primarily by identifying the needs, connecting and supporting individuals and or families to access appropriate services in the area. We are delighted to report that both projects are having a significant impact in the both communities.

The other significant piece of work undertaken by the Council was to change the legal structure of the Council from a Scheme of Incorporation to a Company Limited by Guarantee. This we feel will enhance good governance practices within the organization and make it more fit for purpose in the years ahead.

I would like to thank the Health Service Executive West, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Pobal, The Health Service Executive Crisis Pregnancy Programme, Limerick Regeneration Agency, Department of Social Protection through our Community Employment Programme, Family Support Agency and Limerick City Council for the continued financial support.

On the 6th December last Mr. Flann O'Neill resigned as chairman. Flann contributed a huge amount to Limerick Social Service Council over his 9 years as chairman. I would like to welcome Mr. Martin Golden as our new Chairman, Martin has a long association with the Council and this vast experience will be greatly beneficial to us as we moved forward in these challenging times.

I am very thankful to all the staff and volunteers of Limerick Social Service Council Ltd for their continued enthusiasm, hard work and commitment. Finally my sincere gratitude to the Directors and members of Limerick Social Service Council Ltd for their wisdom and guidance in throughout the year.



Brian Ryan, General Manager

Chairpersons Foreword

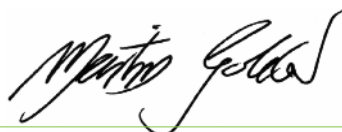
I'm pleased to present our Annual Report for 2011.

We are living in very challenging times where the services of the Limerick Social Service Council were never more relevant. This report clearly outlines the achievements of the past year and the developments that have taken place in response to the increasing demands from the families and individuals who are accessing our services.

I would like to acknowledge the continued financial support from the Health Service Executive West, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Pobal, The Health Service Executive Crisis Pregnancy Programme, Limerick Regeneration Agency, Department of Social Protection through our Community Employment Programme, Family Support Agency and Limerick City Council. Furthermore, I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the ongoing support of the Diocese of Limerick, in particular the financial support we receive through our two Church gate collections. I express my gratitude to our members and supporters for their continued donations.

I wish to thank the many people who contributed to our work during 2011, my thanks goes to all Directors and members of our Council, with a special mention to Mr. Flann O'Neill who resigned as Chairman of the Council in December 2011. Flann gave sterling service since taken over as Chairman in 2002/2003. He was instrumental in moving the Council forward to address the challenges of the 21st Century. His legacy is enormous, in particular his work and foresight in creating the position of General Manager for the Organisation in 2005, and the establishment of Limerick Social Service Council Ltd as Company Limited by Guarantee in 2011. On behalf of the Directors and members of the Council and all the Staff, I wish Flann and his wife Noreen continued good health and happiness in the years ahead.

The Council also warmly acknowledges the very valuable contribution of Staff and volunteers for their dedication and hard work in these challenging times. Finally, on behalf of the Council I wish to pay tribute to General Manager Brian Ryan and staff members in the Centre for their continued commitment and loyalty.



Martin Golden, Chairman

Parent Support Programme

The Parent Support Programme is a structured programme aimed at enabling parents to enjoy and participate more fully in their child's development by providing parents with support and encouragement.

Who we support and the support we provide

Parents:

The Parent Support Programme includes a number of services aimed at supporting the diverse needs of parents.

The Teen Parents Support Programme:

This is a programme for young people who are pregnant or who are parents. It offers support and information before and after the birth of the baby, including peer group support, one-to-one support and childcare support while in school. The programme supports the young person to remain in education through pregnancy and after the birth, and provides information on relevant services and entitlements. Support is also available to the young person's partner and members of their extended family.

The Community Mothers Programme:

A Community Mother is an experienced mother who is trained to visit the parents of new babies in their own home. The Community Mother provides information on many issues, including feeding, teething, and talking to and listening to your child. Families receive information and support on a number of issues in relation to their needs as a parent as well as being referred to the relevant agencies or organisations for specific support. Occasionally Community Mothers visit the parents of older children.

Lifelong Parenting Information and Support Programme:

This programme provides parents with information and support on all issues relevant to parenting. Information and support may be provided over the phone, one-to-one or in groups.

Out of Hours Service

Support is provided to many families in times of crisis outside of office hours particularly those who engage with the Teen Parents Support Programme. This includes supporting young parents or expectant young people who present as Homeless and require assistance in securing an emergency accommodation placement, emergency child protection issues and those seeking medical treatment or whose child/children may have been patients at the Regional and Maternity Hospitals in Limerick City.

In the case of young parents/people in particular these families may be visited in hospitals outside of office hours as well as being accompanied to the Emergency Department for Treatment

- Alternative arrangements are made to accommodate parents who are unable to access One-to-One Parenting Support during the day
- Parenting courses are delivered in the evenings at Limerick Social Service Council Ltd
- The PALS Group (Parents Alone Group) meet on a monthly basis on a Friday evening, the group identified this time as most suitable to their needs.

Experiences of service users:

"Supported me to go back to school and do my leaving cert"

"Very supportive and helped me anyway they could"

"Helped me with many issues in my life and with my son, they made life easier for me"

Teen Parent Support Programme

259 young people engaged with the programme

The Community Mothers

61 families were visited

The Lifelong Parenting Information and Support Programme

138 families availed of one-to-one parenting support

Drop-in visits to the offices

1,662 recorded drop-in visits to the offices of the Parent Support Programme



Positive developments of 2011

- Inter-Agency and advocacy work continued with participants of MILES (Men in Limerick Experiencing Separation). With many fathers who are separated from their children contacting the programme directly for support and information
- Parent and Baby/Toddler Groups continued to be provided in Limerick City and County, four groups were facilitated to meet on an ongoing basis throughout the year
- The Teen Parent Support Programme continued to evolve with 59 new referrals to the programme
- A total of 138 young people engaged with the Teen Parents Support Programme. Inter-Agency work and networking continued through regular attendance and active participation at the National Teen Parents Support Programme Inter-Project meetings
- Valuable links were made with the staff of Youthreach Centres of Education regarding supports for young expectant parents and young parents. A number of Outreach Information Clinics were provided to these young people between February and July
- At the request of Limerick Youth Service two Parenting Workshops were delivered to a group of young parents as part of its summer programme in July
- 42 young people were financially supported by the Teen Parents Support Programme, through funding provided under the School Completion Programme
- A fifth round of funding was awarded to the Teen Support Programme Limerick by The HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme to facilitate the City Slickers Group. This group facilitated 15 First Time Young Mothers from Limerick
- 27 young people attended the Ante-Natal Classes for teenage parents that are designed exclusively for young parents
- The PALS Group (Parents Alone Limerick Support) completed its second year to the community.

Looking to the future

- Development of a comprehensive Referral Form for Agencies referring families to the Parent Support Programme Limerick
- Funding has been provided to the Teen Parents Support Programme for 2012 under the School Completion Programme, to support young people in education who are pregnant or who are parents
- The Teen Parents Support Programme aims to deliver the Incredible Years Infant Programme to Teenage Parents
- Liaise with staff of St. Munchin's Regional Maternity Hospital regarding reinstating Ante-Natal Classes for expectant teenage parents
- Evaluate The City Slickers Group (Fifth Round of Funding)
- Redevelopment and Re-Launch of Parent and Baby/Toddler Group for Residents of Limerick City Centre and Docklands Area at Limerick Social Service Council Ltd
- Establish and facilitate a Parent and Baby/Toddler Group specifically for teenage parents in Limerick City.



Family Support Initiative

Through a caring response the Family Support Initiative, aims to promote the dignity and growth of individuals, families and groups. We provide a person-centred approach, and a belief that all people deserve acceptance, understanding, respect and dignity.

Who we support and the support we provide

The Family Support Initiative is a pilot project which was set up in January 2011 by Limerick Social Service Council. It is one of 26 initiatives funded under the Social Regeneration Programme by the Limerick Regeneration Agency.

The Family Support Initiative aims to assist in the process of identifying needs, supporting and connecting individuals and families with appropriate support services. This is carried out through an intensive visiting programme and engagement with individuals and families in the Southill area, including:

- Developing open, honest and effective relationships with individuals, families and service providers in the Southill community
- Engaging with individuals and families in the community by visiting them in their own homes or a setting of their choice
- Connecting individuals and families to appropriate services for assistance and support, based on their needs and experiences
- Demonstrate professional integrity, with respect for confidentiality and client interests
- Strengthen the links between families and services in the Southill area
- Advocacy is a cornerstone of our service and workers attend meetings with clients, including, counselling sessions, addiction assessments, and court appearances.

Out of Hours Service

In excess of 20% of the working week is focused on out of hours support. We provide support in the evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays. For example, Family Support Initiative was active in the community on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

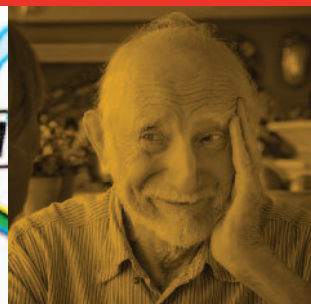
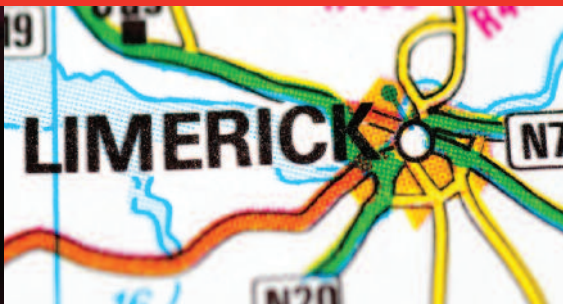


Experiences of service users:

"I have found the service provided by the F.S.I workers to be very beneficial to both myself and my family and believe that they provide a very worthwhile service"

"They have helped me to get to services and people, they came to counselling with me and doctor. It is good to know they are only a call away"

"I am getting great support from this service"



Positive developments of 2011

- In excess of 350 contacts are made to the service each month
- By the end of 2011, we had made contact with half of all households in Southill
- No refusal of access to homes has been encountered, or resistance from any agencies or services
- A high level of trust has been developed between our staff and the residents of Southill.

Looking to the future

- We aim to have visited every home in the parish by the end of 2012
- We aim to carry out a 'census' in the community, to provide information on the residents
- With input from FSI, a Directory of Services for Southill will be available to all services and households
- Contribute to the development and promotion of the service
- A second Family Support Initiative commenced in Weston/Prospect area of Limerick City in November 2011.



Crèche

Limerick Social Service Council Ltd Crèche aims to provide a quality, affordable and developmentally appropriate childcare service. We advocate working in partnership with parents, recognising parents as the primary carers of their children.

Who we support and the support we provide

Children:

The Crèche is approved to cater for 26 children aged 6 months to 3 years. Our experienced staff provide a high quality of care for the children who attend the Crèche. We believe that consistency of care for this age group is vital, and due to the low level of staff turnover in the Crèche consistent care and developmentally appropriate practice is delivered on a daily basis.

Parents:

The Crèche acknowledges the importance of working in partnership with parents; therefore we work very closely with the parents of the children who attend our Crèche. Working in partnership with parents and supporting them in their role as their child primary carer ensures that the service meets the needs of both children and parents.

Incredible Years Programme:

The Incredible Years Toddler Programme was implemented in April 2011. This programme is designed to mentor parents in the early development of their children. Additionally, the Incredible Years Infant Programme has become part of the ongoing service provided for parents.

Students:

We continue to provide training placements for the students of Mary Immaculate College studying the BA degree course in Early Childcare Care and Education.

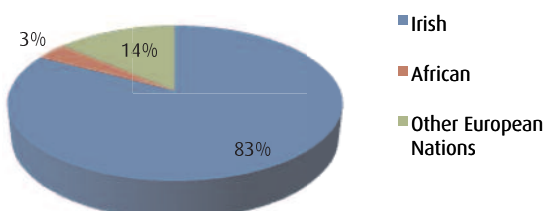
Experiences of service users:

"I have recommended this crèche to loads of people and will continue to do this as well as I think the staff are great"

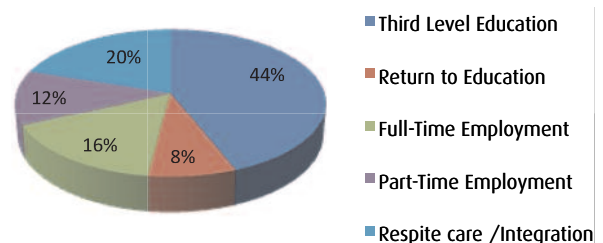
"The service has allowed me to attend full-time study"

"The service has helped me a lot, I now can go back to school while my daughter is in crèche"

Ethnicity of Children



Current Parent Profile





Positive developments of 2011

- We maintained our government sponsored Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (CCSS) and Childcare Employment and Training Support (CETS) Scheme for childcare provision. These schemes have widened the options of childcare to families within the catchment area of the Crèche.
- We elected a Parent Representative to sit on the Crèche Committee. This has provided a positive and valuable insight into the needs of parents
- 4 Community Employment staff progressed to employment
- Successful application and renewal of the Community Employment Scheme.

Looking to the future

- We will endeavour to maintain our high quality, affordable and developmentally appropriate childcare service
- Support our staff members with the implementation of Aistear and Síolta into our service
- All staff members and volunteers will attend Child Protection Training
- We are in the process of devising a parenting folder which will be completed in 2012
- Work in partnership with parents and support them in parenting their children
- Continue to meet the standards set out by the Health Service Executive West to ensure that we deliver a quality childcare service
- Engage in ongoing evaluation of our service
- Operate and comply with the Government Community Childcare Subvention Scheme and the Childcare Employment and Training Support Scheme
- Retain staff with qualifications and relevant childcare experience to provide personalised, responsive care
- Provide a supportive and professional work environment for staff.



Pre-school Service

Limerick Social Service Council Ltd Pre-School aims to provide a safe, secure and educational environment for the children who attend our Service. Our goal is to work with the children's primary carers/parents to ensure the children enjoy their childhood and are encouraged to develop to their full potential.

Who we support and the support we provide

The Pre-school is approved to cater for 20 children each morning between the ages of 3 to 5 years. Our qualified staff provide positive and meaningful interactions in the Pre-school environment each day. We believe the Pre-school experience is a very important time in the child's life; therefore we aim to deliver an environment which encourages all aspects of a child's development.

Parents:

We aim to involve parents in all aspects of their child's Pre-school experience and work in partnership with parents to meet the children's needs.

Incredible Years Programme:

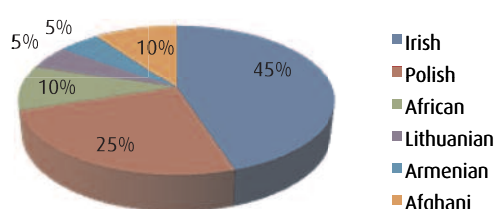
Incredible Years Toddler Programme was implemented in 2011. This programme is designed to mentor parents in the early development of their children. A number of the parents who avail of the Pre-school attended the training programme, and found it very beneficial.

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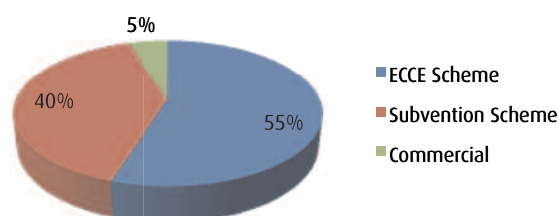
Students:

We continue to provide work experience placements to students studying a variety of courses such as the BA degree in Early Childcare Care and Education and the BEd Primary School Teaching from Mary Immaculate College.

Ethnicity of Children



Schemes





Positive developments of 2011

- A successful school trip to Buttercup Farm Croom in June to which 5 parents attended
- We held Summer Camps for 2 weeks in July and August, which were a great success
- A Christmas concert to which parents attended, followed by a visit from Santa Clause
- We recruited a parent representative in the Pre-school which has facilitated a better insight into the parents' thoughts and ideas about our service
- Members of staff have taken part in many training courses throughout the year including Speech and Language, First Aid, Buntús Sports Training and Inclusion and Diversity all of which have all been very beneficial in providing a high quality service
- Doras Luimní came to visit us during culture week and engaged the children in a number of activities, which was an enjoyable experience for the children and staff.

Looking to the future

- The Pre-school is working towards Síolta accreditation and hope to be accredited in 2012
- We will support our staff members with the implementation of Aistear into our service
- We are in the process of devising a parenting folder which will be completed in 2012
- Due to the success of last year's day out we plan on having another field trip in June
- We have a waiting list in operation for children wishing to attend the Pre-school in September 2012
- We will continue to provide ongoing training and development for all the Pre-school staff members
- We plan to engage in ongoing evaluation of the service and we will strive to meet the needs of the children in our service along with their parents.

Experiences of service users:

"The pre-school is providing an essential social outlet and great help to my child"

"We are very happy with this service and our daughter loves attending"

"I am constantly amazed by how much my child is learning, she loves her school and has made so many friends"



Pre-natal and Post-natal Service

The objective of our service is to provide quality semi-supportive, transitional accommodation at low cost to women who are pregnant or who have recently given birth as a first time mother. We aim to create an atmosphere of learning and support for our residents while also ensuring that each resident maintains their independence.

Who we support and the support we provide

We support first time mothers prior to and following the birth of their child.

The Service offers a range of supports to women to help them cope with the transition to motherhood and to assist them in moving to independent living as parents, including:

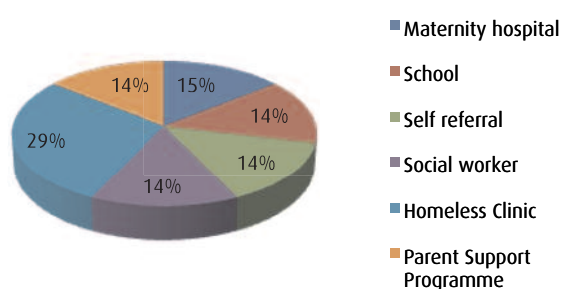
- Devising an individualised support package for each resident based on their individual needs
- Providing a residential setting for women so they can live temporarily in one of our apartment's during pregnancy and following the birth of their first baby
- Providing an outreach service to support the mother and child's transition from our service into their new home
- Ensuring a staff member is on site to offer support and guidance
- Link residents with the various departments of the LSSC, to ensure informed choices are made around the supports and services available to them
- Linking all residents with the housing authorities to set up rental entitlements and with statutory agencies, to ensure that medical and welfare supports are obtained (e.g. public health nurse, community welfare officer)
- Provide VEC classes in areas of interest to the residents and provide a crèche facility to support the parent to attend these classes.

Out of Hours Service

Our service provides support and assistance to our service users onsite during the day-time, night-time and weekend. Our staff members are also supported during out of hour's, with the option of contacting a manager for assistance via phone or email. We believe this level of support is essential for expectant mothers and mothers who have recently given birth for the first time to ensure they feel supported during their transition into motherhood.

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Referrals



Age profile of residents in 2010	No. of residents
No. Age profile of residents	
17-19	2
20-24	4
25-30	1



Positive developments of 2011

- We updated the application procedure and produced a new application booklet
- We introduced the Incredible Years Parenting Programme which was offered to current parents and previous residents. We continued to provide VEC classes in areas of interest to the residents. Three classes were provided each week in Beauty and Skin Care, Personal and Social Development and Alternative Therapies. During class times children were cared for in the crèche room
- A school girl completed her stay with us and left with a beautiful baby, she returned to education which was a great achievement on her behalf.

Looking to the future

- Work in partnership with parents and support them in parenting their children
- Engage in ongoing evaluation of our service
- Continue to link expectant and new parents with the different departments of the LSSC to ensure they receive the optimal level of support.



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Experiences of service users:

"Thanks to this service I've had a healthy baby who is thriving"

"The staff here have given me so much support and encouragement"

"I would like to thank the staff for the support and care given to me"

Services for Older People

The Services for Older People is a needs led service that aims to listen and respond to what older people need. The service has a number of different areas of focus. Chief amongst these is the goal of maximising the dignity and social opportunities for older adults in Irish Society.

Who we support and the support we provide

Care of the aged:

We support 15 Care of the Aged Groups in the Limerick Area. This year the budget was allocated in September, the aim of this budget is to assist local groups in the care of local older adults. It is especially aimed at helping older adults to access services and encourage older adults out of isolation and to connect with local groups.

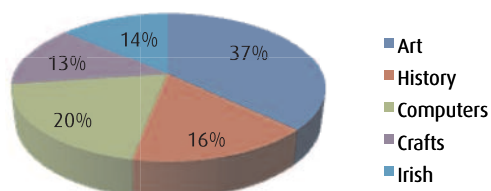
Community Education:

Every week over 114 older adults attend the Limerick Social Service council for community education classes. The education classes have been a great success and the number of older adults attending the classes has increased by 53% from 2010. The aim of the Community Education programme is to help overcome isolation commonly associated with older age and to increase the educational capacities of older people thereby positively impacting on their sense of esteem and self worth.

Community Outreach:

Members of the outreach team go to the communities where the most vulnerable and isolated older adults live and involve themselves in Parish Councils, Parish Community Groups, Meals on Wheels Sub Groups, Bereavement Support Groups, visits to housebound older adults and those in hospitals, care/nursing homes, organisation of weekly clubs for older adults, involvement in funerals for older adults and support to family and friends.

Community Education Classes



Community Outreach Activities	Total per week
Number attending weekly clubs	200
Number of weekly home & hospital visits	94
Liaison with Nursing homes/Day care centres	70
Number of bereavement support visits	28



Positive developments of 2011

- We delivered our own internal computer classes for the first time for the “Digitally Challenged”
- The Art group engaged in the Bealtaine Art Exhibit at Limerick County Library, Lissanalta House, Dooradolye
- The Irish class made a calendar in aid of Saint Vincent de Paul
- The history class engaged in tours of various historical sites including, Georgian House and Garden and Quakers Graveyard in Limerick
- We provided 1,124 meals at Ballynanty Hall throughout the year
- A contribution fee was introduced to service users engaging in the Community Education Classes in 2011, this contribution is greatly appreciated.

Looking to the future

As the economic environment continues to be challenging it is increasingly important to attend to the social and psychological needs of the most vulnerable sectors of society. Older people are one such group. We will continue to listen to the views, opinions and needs of older people and to provide the supports required to ensure their inclusion in society.

Experiences of service users:

“Thank you for providing the classes, I hope you realise how much I and the others enjoy the class”

“Thanks to this service I have learned different crafts and met new friends”



Counselling Service

The Counselling Service aims to provide a confidential, respectful space for people to explore their life issues. The Service offers a holistic approach to counselling by acknowledging that people have physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual needs.

Who we support and the support we provide

We support individuals and couples through the provision of a counselling service that is both confidential and respectful of their needs. Counselling acts as a preventative strategy, therefore we see the counselling service as an important resource in helping to manage the mental health of our clients.

Counselling sessions in LSSC:

Our team of 19 counsellors provide support to individuals and couples experiencing physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual difficulties.

Outreach counselling sessions:

In addition to providing our counselling service at the Limerick Social Service Council Ltd, Henry Street, we also provide a Counselling Service off-site, at various venues. These include, Newcastle West, Abbeyfeale, Rathkeale, Kilmallock and Kilfinane.

Out of Hours Service

We offer counselling sessions until seven o'clock one evening a week; we aim to extend this facility to provide counselling sessions on additional evenings and Saturday mornings.

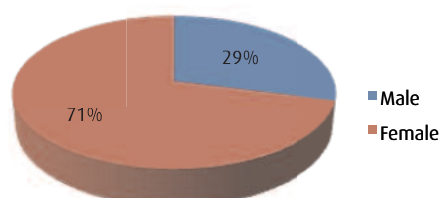
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Of those availing of the counselling service in 2011, all were adults, 29% were male and 71% were female. We provided 5489 sessions this year, 83% of sessions were delivered in Limerick City and 17% were delivered in the Limerick County.

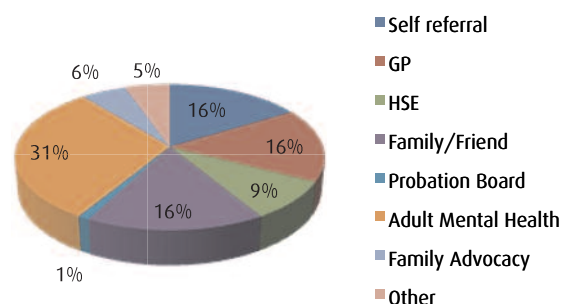
Experiences of service users:

"From my sessions I have learned to progress and continue on with my college studies, and be a good mam"

Gender Ratio



Referrals





Positive developments of 2011

- We extended our intake procedure to Co. Limerick by means of a flexible floating assessor to decrease waiting times
- There were 556 new referrals to the service in 2011, (up 25% from 2010), this rise would have effected waiting time but due to the LSSC allocating some additional resources we were able to minimise the effect on waiting times
- A total of 5489 sessions were offered to clients in 2011, which is an increase of 23% from 2010 and a 56% increase from 2009
- We also introduced a new database management system which allows us greater flexibility in tracking clients and maximising take up of sessions
- Our attendance rates last year were 86% which compares favourably with the UK average of 81%, (no Irish figures collected)
- In 2011 we introduced a client evaluation procedure to obtain the views of clients on their experience of the service. This was done by sending out Client Evaluation Questionnaires at closure which the service users filled in anonymously. The feedback from the questionnaires was very positive, with 84% of participants stating they found their contact with the service to be excellent. The feedback obtained from the Client Evaluation assists us in evaluating and improving our service
- In order to continue to provide our level of service a fee was introduced to service users, this contribution is greatly appreciated.

Looking to the future

- Aim to make our counselling service accessible to 16-18 year olds depending on obtaining consent
- We intend on engage in evaluations with our services stakeholders, including our referrers
- Continue to work on maximizing our clients attendance rates.



Family Welfare Conferences

We believe that children are generally best cared for within their own families, therefore we aim to support the family to make a plan to help the child/young person (or children) within the family network, to ensure they are looked after and safe.

Who we support and the support we provide

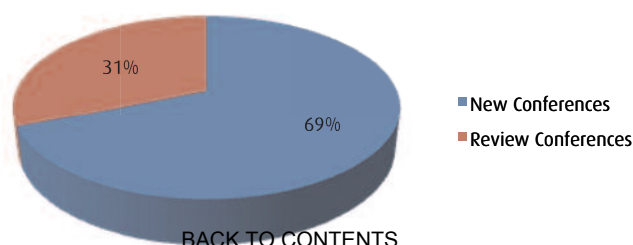
We support families by providing a Family Welfare Conference, this is a family meeting that is held when a family is in need of support for any reason or when there is concern about the welfare of a child/young person. The Service is open to both the city and county of Limerick.

- Welfare Conferences are arranged by the Family Welfare Conference Co-ordinator, who is both independent and separate from the Social Work Service and other agencies
- We support the family to put a plan in place that will safeguard the well-being and development of the child/young person. All agencies involved in the conference will support the family plan unless they feel it places the child/young person at risk
- We support the extended family members and the young person to come together with the services involved (e.g. social worker, teacher, project worker) to address any issues that may be causing difficulties
- A Family Welfare Conference is a voluntary process unless it is convened under the Children Act 2001. Under this Act, the HSE must arrange to convene a Family Welfare Conference where it is considered that the behaviour of a young person poses a serious risk to his/her safety and welfare and that it may be necessary in the interest of the young person to place him/her in a Special Care Unit
- In order to protect the privacy of the young person and family involved, all Family Welfare Conferences are confidential. All those in attendance are asked not to discuss the issues addressed in the meeting with anybody not involved in the Conference.



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Conferences





Positive developments of 2011

- Our service provided support to 17 families, the age profile of the children were from age 8 to 17 years. Predominantly referrals were of children in the teenage age bracket
- 11 Family Welfare Conferences were convened this year
- 5 Review Family Welfare Conferences were held
- We distributed our Family Welfare Conference Service brochure to all Health Service Executive Social Work Teams
- The Coordinator met with various HSE West Social Work Teams throughout the year.

Looking to the future

- Coordinate and convene Family Welfare Conferences as new referrals arise from the HSE West, parent or family member
- Liaise with the HSE West Child Care Managers Office regarding new referrals and development of the Family Welfare Conference Service
- Link with other Family Welfare Conference Coordinators nationally, to share information and statistics
- Complete a training course in Mediation and incorporate the skills learned into the Family Welfare Conference process. This training is seen to be important to the work of our service.

Experiences of service users:

“This service has supported me when I needed it, I would recommend it to anyone who needs support”

“It has shown me that I wasn’t alone.....you have helped me so much”

“You have helped me in every way, and helped to be positive”

Family Advocacy Service

The Family Advocacy Service supports families whose children are in care or who may be going into care. The service aims to facilitate the development of positive relations between parents and all those involved in the care of their child.

Who we support and the support we provide

We support families by providing a Family Welfare Conference, this is a family meeting that is held when a family is in need of support for any reason or when there is concern about the welfare of a child/young person. The Service is open to both the city and county of Limerick.

- Advocating on behalf of families whose children are in care or who may be going into care of the HSE West
- Empowering parents to participate fully in Child Care Reviews, Case Conferences and to ensure that they have been consulted on their child's care plans while they are in care
- Facilitating parents in understanding and addressing difficulties they may encounter in order for positive changes to be made in relation to their child's care plans
- We feedback to the HSE West in relation to issues raised by parents relating to policy and practice in the care system, so as to effect changes where needed
- Information shared with the Advocacy Workers by parents and family members is confidential unless the case worker believes that such information constitutes a substantial risk to a family member or other person. If such a situation arises the case worker will pass on the relevant information to the appropriate authorities.

Out of Hours Service

We offer out of hours support to clients where possible, for example we may meet with or have phone contact with a client in a crisis situation. We may also offer parent support meetings and parent training outside office hours.

Principles underlying the Family Advocacy Service

Involvement of parents and families with the service is voluntary.

Empowering families to arrive at their own realistic solutions to challenging situations.

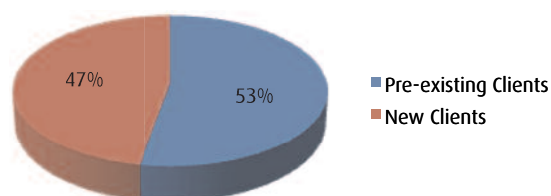
Respecting privacy and confidentiality.

The work is parent centred.

The Advocacy Worker seeks no records or background information from any source prior to meeting the parent.

Advocacy only takes place at the request of the parent or family member.

Clients





Positive developments of 2011

- The Family Advocacy Service worked with 53 parents/families that have children in care in Limerick City and County. In addition, 25 requests were made for information and support on family advocacy matters
- 10 Parent support meetings were held with an average attendance of 5-6 parents
- A seminar was held for parents on the Section 43 amendment to the Childcare Act 2007. 21 people from Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary attended
- In June Limerick and Clare Advocacy Services organized a social event for parents from the respective services to meet each other, 7 parents from Limerick and 7 from Clare attended
- In October a presentation was made by the Family Advocacy Service to NAS (National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities); this also included a discussion on practice and policy with 4 advocates from NAS
- A weekly parenting class ran from October to December facilitated by the Parent Support Programme at LSSC. The course arose from a request by family advocacy clients for a parenting course specific to their needs as parents with children in care. The course was attended on average by 6-7 parents at each session
- A draft protocol document for the Family Advocacy Service in Limerick was completed following a series of meetings to review policy, practice and procedures in Family Advocacy.

Looking to the future

- Put the Family Advocacy protocol into operation, so as to inform policy, practice and procedures
- Work closely on an ongoing basis with Social Workers and other relevant services involved in the lives of parents
- Continue to offer outreach support to parents who make contact with us from other parts of the country through phone, text or e-mail. Some parents keep in regular contact over a long period. We see this outreach support as being very important for them
- Continue our monthly support group and encourage new members to attend. We will invite relevant service providers to come to the group according to parents' wishes
- Deliver group work material appropriate to Family Advocacy clientele on specific issues such as anger management, communication skills, coping with anxiety/stress
- At a time of limited resources being available we are committed to the ongoing development of an effective advocacy service for parents who have children in the care of the HSE.

Experiences of service users:

"The service has helped me in every way, it has shown me that I wasn't alone"

"The service has helped me so much and advised me what to do"

"The parent meetings are very helpful, good to meet other parents in the same situation"



Limerick
Social Service
Council Ltd

Comhairle Sheirbhís Sóisialta Luimnigh Teo

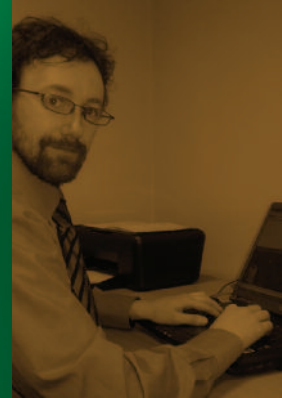
Centre Philosophy

Charitable enterprises can and should reach out to absolutely every person and every need.

Wherever there are people in need of food and drink, clothing, housing, medicine, education: wherever people lack the facilities for living a truly human life, or are tormented by hardships, poor health, or suffer exile or imprisonment, Christian charity should seek them out.

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New Links

The LSSC links with various agencies at Local, Regional and National Level. In 2011, these key contacts included:

- ADAPT Services
- Age and Opportunity (Dublin)
- Barnardos Mid-West
- Centre for the Unemployed
- Community Welfare Office
- Credit Unions
- CURA (regional and national)
- Doras Luimní
- Foster Carer's Association
- HSE West
- Limerick City Council
- Limerick Pastoral Centre
- Limerick Senior College
- Limerick Youth Service
- Limerick Institute of Technology
- Local Employment Service
- Local media
- Limerick Regeneration Agencies
- MABS (Money and Budgeting Advice Service)
- Mary Immaculate College
- NCVA
- Older Women's Network
- POBAL
- Parish clergy
- Victim Support
- VTOS
- FÁS
- PAUL Partnership
- The Family Support Agency
- Government Departments, including the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Department of Education and Skills.

Groups using the Limerick Social Service Centre

The life of the Social Service Centre continues after usual office hours due to the large number of voluntary groups who have access to the Centre. Every evening during the week, between four and six groups hold meetings at the Centre.

The groups who availed of the centre in 2011 include:

- Alcoholics Anonymous Groups
- Al-Anon Group
- Brainwave
- Bruree House (for people with addiction and their families)
- Cancer Support
- Coeliac Support
- CURA
- Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage Office
- Emergency Response Group
- Gam-Anon
- Inner Wheel
- Irish Countrywoman's Association (I.C.A)
- Irish Pre-school Playgroup Association (I.P.P.A.)
- Miles (Men in Limerick Experiencing Separation)
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Older Persons Group
- Overeaters Anonymous
- Parent Support Group
- Retired Civil Servants
- Retired Gardaí
- Schizophrenia Ireland
- Women's Group

Support Services

The LSSC links with various agencies at Local, Regional and National Level. In 2011, these key contacts included:

limerick youth service 

Limerick Youth Service

T 061 412444
E lys@limerickyouthservice.com
A 5 Lower Glentworth Street, Limerick



Crisis Pregnancy Services Cura Cares - crisis pregnancy support services

T 061 318207
A Upper Henry Street, Limerick

A Cura Centre is based at LSSC, offering a range of supportive Services, including:

- Crisis pregnancy counselling
- Free pregnancy testing
- One to one counselling for those feeling loss, grief or distress after an abortion.

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Adapt House

T 061 412354
E administration@adaptservices.ie
A Adapt Services, Adapt House
 Rosbrien, Limerick

Barnardos Mid-West (Regional office)

T 061 411313
E info@midwest.barnardos.ie
A Regional Office
 10 Sarsfield Street, Limerick

HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme

T 01 814 6292
E info@crisispregnancy.ie
A HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme
 4th Floor, 89 – 94 Capel Street
 Dublin 1

Limerick Local Employment Network

T 061 412999
W www.paulpartnership.ie
A Limerick Local Employment
 Network
 Unit 2 Tait Business Centre
 Dominic Street, Limerick

MABS (Money Advice and Budgeting Service)

T 061 310620
 Lo-call 1890 283438
W www.mabs.ie
A MABS (Limerick)
 87 O'Connell St, Limerick

PAUL Partnership

T 061 419388
E info@paulpartnership.ie
A Paul Partnership
 Unit 25a, Tait Business Centre
 Dominic Street, Limerick



people in need...



Limerick Social Service Centre

Upper Henry St., Limerick

Tel: (061) 314111

Fax: (061) 314069

E-mail: lssc@eircom.net

Website: www.lssc.ie