



Limerick
Social Service
Council Ltd

Comhairle Sheirbhís Sóisialta Luimnigh Teo

Limerick Social Service Centre

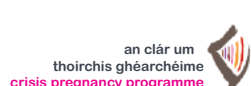
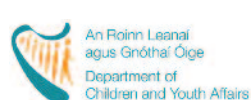
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Social Service
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Building Impact & Resilience in Limerick Communities

Annual Report 2013

THE LIMERICK SOCIAL SERVICE COUNCIL

The Limerick Social Service Council (LSSC) has been a leading voluntary service working in communities in Limerick for nearly five decades. It has a team of 75 employees supported by 21 CE Scheme participants and 20 dedicated volunteers. The LSSC team is led by the LSSC General Manager, Brian Ryan, and overseen by LSSC Board of Directors.

The LSSC delivers 20 community programmes, services and support groups at the Limerick Social Service Council Centre and through outreach in over 50 sites throughout the City and County.

These are delivered through the

- Parent Support Programme
- the Crèche & Pre-school Services
- the Counselling Services
- Services for Older People
- the Family Advocacy Service
- the Family Welfare Conference Service.

The LSSC also offers facilities at the LSSC Centre to a range of other agencies and organisations to enable them to serve their client groups within the community.

OUR VALUES

The Limerick Social Service Council aims to promote the self-worth and growth of individuals, families and groups by ensuring that:

- The dignity of every person is respected
- Quality services are developed
- Service provision is both preventative and supportive of individuals and families
- There is a multi-agency response to need, through networking with both statutory and voluntary agencies and organisations
- The services provided are affordable and accessible to those in need, or free of charge where appropriate
- Services are monitored and evaluated.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Through a caring response, the Limerick Social Service Council aims to promote the dignity and growth of individuals, families and groups.

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Welcome



Welcome to our Annual Report for 2013. This is my third year as Chair of the Limerick Social Service Council Board. As in previous years, I have been fortunate to work with fellow Board members who are keen to add their energies and experience to an organisation with a solid reputation for representing the interests and responding to the needs of children, families and individuals in Limerick.

Through a number of recent evaluations of our service users, we have found that our reputation is stronger than ever – our work is valued by people, communities and statutory agencies, as a provider of quality services, a reliable information source and a good partner to work with. All our services and programmes are rooted in the needs of the most disadvantaged and in vulnerable situations.

Like so many other parts of the country, this has been another challenging year for individuals and households in Limerick. With the recession still impacting on the economy and budget cuts to services, our project teams have been working harder than ever in response to requests for advice, information and support for all age groups through counselling, family support, advocacy, case conferences and services for the elderly. Our childcare and parenting programmes have continued to provide excellent support for parents to empower them to overcome the barriers they encounter so that they can give their children the best possible chances in life.

I want to thank all the LSSC staff for their commitment and dedication. They have worked with passion and commitment to support individuals and families on the receiving end of the recession's cuts and in the worst situations of poverty and distress. I wish to acknowledge the vibrant and generous spirit of goodwill that exists in our close community of volunteers for their time and kindness demonstrated to our service users.

I would also like to thank our supporters for enabling us to develop innovative services to ensure citizens in Limerick are assisted to have improved lives, stable home environments and hopeful futures. Thank you to all our funders from local and Government agencies, charitable trusts and the private sector for your support which has helped to ensure that vulnerable individuals, families and children have access to services and support and the confidence to play a fuller part in Irish society.

I look forward to LSSC's continued success as we move ahead in 2014 and beyond, to continue making a difference in the lives of people in Limerick affected by adversity and disadvantage.

Martin Golden

Chair

Building Impact & Resilience

The following gives a synopsis of the LSSC achievements in the year:

We provided over

50,000

contacts in person and by phone, by highly personalised and deeply engaged services through a range of programmes and activities at the LSSC Centre and through our outreach work throughout the City and County.

The Parent Support Programme expanded its work significantly and facilitated over

2,600

drop-in visits for information and advice, and provided over

640

families with parenting support through

- Community Mother's Programme
- Teen Parent Support Programme
- Lifelong Parenting Information & Support, and
- Family Support Initiative.

As in previous years, the Crèche and Pre-school services, maintained the provision of quality care with

43

children enrolled with support available to their parents and other family members.

The Family Welfare Conference Service convened a number of conferences in relation to child protection and child welfare cases on behalf of the HSE and the Family Advocacy Service continued to provide services to parents in Limerick who have children who are either in care or in the process of being placed in care of the state.

The Counselling Service saw a further increase in the quantity and complexity of caseloads, dealing with 778 new referrals in 2013 which reflected a 25% increase in referrals on 2012 figures. Since 2007, the number of sessions delivered has increased by over

265%

in 2013.

Effective needs assessments were undertaken by trained staff in the Common Assessment Framework model to ensure that responses were as adequate as possible within the resource capacity.

In terms of new service developments, Altamira Apartments were officially re-opened as a collaborative project between the LSSC and the Associated Charities Trust to providing long-term housing services to older women. Funding was secured to upgrade the premises in Hartstonge Street and expressions of interest were sought from potential partners to deliver a Tenancy and Accommodation Support service there.

Our premises at the LSSC Centre continued to be available to numerous agencies for the community to enable meetings to take place for those most in need; the LSSC Centre has been particularly successful in this regard in facilitating Primary Care Teams in their work.

Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to report on our achievements and changes in the last year.

In 2013, we have remained intently focused on what matters: people affected by disadvantage and adversity and our mission to improve their lives. In so doing, we have focused on where we can make the most impact in an external environment of increasing need and even more decreasing resources.

With almost 192,000 people living in our catchment area covering almost 276,000 hectares, the challenges appear at times to be overwhelming. In 2013, people in Limerick city were reported to have had the poorest health of all administrative counties in the country which reflects an indicator of social need that impacts on our target group. Nevertheless through the efforts of all our projects, I am satisfied that we achieved several notable successes that helped us perform at the highest level and positioned us to achieve even greater impact.

Facing today's challenges and working with success to support the most vulnerable in our society is a team effort. Our accomplishments would not be possible without the steadfast commitment of our Chairman Martin Golden, our Board members, our outstanding staff and dedicated volunteers.

Furthermore, our networks and partnerships have been key to galvanizing support for our work, and together we have combined diverse resources in responding to a range of common issues and caseloads. In this regard, we have been rigorous in how we utilised funding and voluntary donations from the public, Government agencies and other charitable bodies to ensure accountability is at the centre of all our activities; we are both accountable to our target groups, to our communities and to the partners with whom we work.

Our success has always been inspired by the people we serve who meet adversity and disadvantage with hope and resilience. I would like to acknowledge our service users who deal with such challenges and difficult circumstances with limited resources but enormous courage. The Limerick Social Service Council has worked to support such individuals, families and communities for almost five decades and we will continue to be here for as long as they need us.

I know what a positive difference our work has made to date to people's lives, particularly those in vulnerable situations. I look forward to the year ahead, leading major community initiatives to support individuals and families in Limerick to achieve a better life and for stronger, self-sufficient futures.

Brian Ryan

General Manager

Services & Highlights from 2013

Parent Support



The Parent Support Programme Limerick (PSP) is a structured programme aimed at enabling parents to enjoy and participate more fully in their child's development, supporting them in their role by encouragement, sharing experiences and information. The level of support can be formal or informal and is devised based on individual needs. Support varies from intensive crisis interventions to once-off support and information. PSP services are available to mothers, fathers, children, grandparents and other family members with the main aims of promoting parental competency and strengthening family life.

The Programme is made up of five components including the Teen Parent Support Programme, the Community Mothers Programme, the Lifelong Parenting Information & Support, the Family Support Initiative and the Traveller Health Advocacy Programme.

- i. **The Community Mothers Programme** is a home visiting service for parents with new babies/young children. A Community Mother is an experienced mother who is trained to visit parents in their homes and to encourage them to enjoy and participate more fully in their child's life. Visits are usually monthly for the first year of the child's life, or more often as required.
- ii. **The Teen Parent Support Programme (TPSP)** is a confidential support programme for young people who are pregnant or who are parents. Support is also available to the young person's partner and members of their extended families. The Teen Parents Support Programme Limerick is part of the National Teen Parents Support Programme.
- iii. **Lifelong Parenting Information & Support** endeavours to provide, where possible, information and support in relation to all issues relevant to parenting. This Service is available to all parents of children of all ages in Limerick City and County. Support is provided on a One-to-One Basis, Peer Group Support, Parent Support Groups and the delivery and facilitation of Parenting programmes and courses. This service also includes the posts of the Outreach Parenting Support Worker and Parenting Support and Sexual Health and Education Worker.
- iv. **The Family Support Initiative** works to identify needs and to support and connect individuals and families to services as appropriate. The Initiative is located in a number of communities in Limerick's Regeneration areas covering Southill, Ballinacurra Weston and Prospect.
- v. **The Traveller Health Advocacy Programme** aims to improve the health status and quality of life of Travellers in Limerick. An outreach service delivered by Traveller Community Health Workers forms the core of the Programme's work.

Where we work

The Programme is managed from the main LSSC Centre at Upper Henry Street, Limerick. Individual therapeutic and group support within each of the Programme's components are provided from the Centre and at various venues throughout the City and County with outreach offered directly to clients in their homes.

Some of the Highlights from the Parent Support Programme in 2013

DROP-IN VISITS:

Over 2,610 drop-in visits for individual and group supports were recorded to the offices of PSP, which marked an increase of 27% on 2012 data.

COMMUNITY MOTHERS PROGRAMME:

The Programme responded to 204 referrals in relation to mothers with babies and young children.

The Programme also facilitated four Parent and Baby/Toddler Groups with an average attendance of eleven parents attending the Groups on a weekly basis.

Eight parents and babies attended the first Baby Massage classes in the LSSC and Southill Health Centres facilitated by two Community Mothers.

Two 14-week Incredible Years Basic Parenting Programmes were delivered, with 25 parents graduating from the Programmes. One of the groups was co-facilitated with staff from Doras Luimní involving a number of migrant parents.

TEEN PARENTS SUPPORT PROGRAMME:

The Programme received 76 new referrals resulting in a caseload of 127 cases at the end of 2013, having closed 118 cases during the year.

The Programme's Parent and Baby/Toddler Group targeted at teenage parents had an average weekly attendance of ten young parents with their children.

Two 10-week City Slickers Groups, funded by the HSE Crisis Pregnancy Programme, involved 18 young parents aged between 16 and 22 years.

47 young people were financially supported with education related expenses through funding provided by the School Completion Programme - NEWB, Department of Education & Skills.

93 young parents participated in VEC/LCETB community education classes including paediatric First Aid, baby weaning, drama and personal development, parent /child arts and crafts.

ONE-TO-ONE PARENTING SUPPORT:

104 families received one-to-one parenting support covering issues in relation to the parenting of children, managing teenage behaviour, stress on parents relating to unemployment and the recession, issues for separated parents, shared parenting, and parenting step-children, etc. The numbers of parents receiving direct one-to-one parenting support increased by 9% on 2012 data.

PARENTING SUPPORT SEXUAL HEALTH & EDUCATION PROGRAMME:

135 parents and teenagers engaged with the Programme, which included 110 new families referred in 2013 and 25 families who were referred in 2012.

36 families participated in one-to-one support with the Project Worker which increased by almost 140% on 2012 data.

Five 10-week group Parenting Programmes were delivered to 73 parents at the LSSC Centre and in a number of schools in Limerick.

30 teenagers participated in three School Holiday Programmes to compliment the programmes attended by their parents.

OUTREACH PARENTING SUPPORT:

Nine young parents, aged 16 to 22 years, completed the Incredible Years Toddler Programme which was co-facilitated by staff from the Teen Parents Support Programme Limerick and the Outreach Parenting Support Programme.

10 parents who engaged with the Outreach Parenting Support Worker completed a 5-week Personal Development Course.

Six parents and their children attended a day trip to Fota Wildlife Park.

THE TRAVELLER HEALTH ADVOCACY PROGRAMME:

The Programme commenced during the last quarter of 2013 with initial activities covering recruitment, induction and training of thirteen women from the Traveller Community.

The Parent Support Programme at a Glance

Parent Support Programme:
Early years, teen & family support - designed to help children get the best possible start in life & there for families before they reach crisis point, providing the practical & emotional support that makes them stronger & more able to cope.

204 referrals received by Community Mothers Programme

104 families received direct one-to-one Parenting Support

9 parents, 16 to 22 years, completed Incredible Years Toddler Programme

Over 2,610 Drop-in Visits by parents for individual & group supports

135 parents & teenagers engaged with the Sexual Health & Education Programme

10 parents engaged with Outreach Support Worker & completed Personal development Courses

The Teen Parent Support Programme held 127 cases by year end & delivered two 10-week City Slickers Groups

13 traveller women recruited & received Induction & training as Community Health Workers

Family Advocacy Service



The Family Advocacy Service is a service provided by LSSC and is co-ordinated by a Family Advocacy Worker. The service is a free, confidential and independent service, open to parents in Limerick City and County who have children who are either in care or in the process of being placed in care of the state. The nature of the intervention and support provided is on a case-by-case basis and is led by the issues of the individual concerned.

Principles underlying the Service include the following:

- Involvement of parents and families with the Service is voluntary.
- Families are supported to arrive at their own realistic solutions to challenging situations.
- The privacy and confidentiality of Clients is respected and maintained as appropriate.
- Advocacy only takes place at the request of the parent or family member.
- The work is parent-centered.
- The Advocacy Worker seeks no records or background information from any source prior to meeting the parent.

Where we work

Contact with parents takes place at the LSSC Centre or at another mutually agreed location.

Highlights from how we did in 2013

In 2013, the Service worked with a total of 58 parents in the Limerick area. 33 new referrals were received from which 18 families engaged with the Service. At the end of December 2013, the active caseload was 24 clients.

Levels of activity with each client can be categorised as high, medium or low, and can fluctuate depending on the current needs of the Client. Level of work with individual parents fluctuated throughout the year but figures for year end showed the Service working with three parents at high intensity, nine at medium intensity and fourteen at low intensity.

The Service also offered telephone support to 31 other parents from around the country in relation to family advocacy matters.

Family Welfare Conference



The Family Welfare Conference (FWC) Service is a specialised service that is utilised by TUSLA Social Workers where child protection or welfare concerns exist within families or when broad family support is being sought. Under the Children Act 2001, child protection services are obliged to request that a FWC is convened if it believes a child or young person may be in need of a Special Care Placement. FWCs may also be requested through the Courts. In most cases, the FWC is arranged through a voluntary process.

FWCs are prepared and convened by the LSSC Family Welfare Conference Service which is independent of the HSE/TUSLA and other agencies. Referrals can only be made to the Service by HSE Social Workers. The main goal of the Service is to help, prepare and support family and extended family members to be involved and to participate in all aspects of the Conference process and plans for their children. The Conference also involves professionals whose task is to outline their concerns to the meeting rather than coming up with the answers.

This collaboration between family members and agencies in addressing concerns together, ensures that outcomes are more effective in promoting the safety, well-being and stability of children at home and in minimising any concerns for a child's welfare or any risks of abuse/neglect in the future.

Where we work

Contact with parents, members of extended family and young person (if age appropriate) takes place at the LSSC office, the home of the family member or at a mutually agreed location.

Highlights from how we did in 2013

In 2013, the number of families supported by the Service was fourteen and the number of children was 30. Levels of case activity varied depending on the nature of each individual family. The number of referrals received was twelve. There were fourteen Family Welfare Conferences and nine Review Family Welfare Conferences convened.

Crèche Service

As a long established service providing quality full-time care for children, the LSSC Crèche is acknowledged as one of the leading community childcare services in Limerick City. In its purpose-built facility, the Crèche forms part of the LSSC building and is therefore ideally located to enable parents who are living, working or in education/training in the City Centre to avail of the service.

In line with the LSSC ethos, the Crèche works in close partnership with parents with a clear focus on improving outcomes for young children and their families, particularly those vulnerable and /or at risk of disadvantage.

The Crèche Mission Statement is as follows:

The Limerick Social Service Council Crèche aims to provide a quality, accessible and developmental childcare service that allows all children whose needs we can meet, to gain access to and participate in early years' education. We support children's individual identity within their own culture, community and family. We aim to provide an environment which reflects the principles and standards of Siolta and the Áistear curriculum.

Where we work

The service operates five days a week in the purpose-built facility which forms part of the LSSC building and are therefore ideally located to enable parents who are living, working or in education/training in the City Centre to avail of the services.

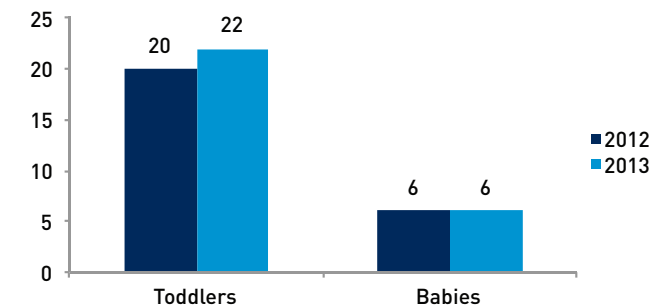
Highlights from how we did in 2013

In 2013, 22 toddlers and 6 babies were enrolled at the Crèche.

Programme of activities included: dance and movement class, review of nutritional choices, attendance at SPOT Lime Tree production for the under 3s, links with the City Libraries for storytelling activities, trips outside of the Crèche to extend children's experience of their environment and identity.

In addition, parents of these children were offered a range of supports by the Crèche Team and/or through referrals to other LSSC and external services. Crèche Staff participated in the Incredible Years Programme which is a prevention and intervention model devised to support parents in order to enhance social and emotional competencies in young children. The Crèche facilitated twelve participants in the CE Scheme.

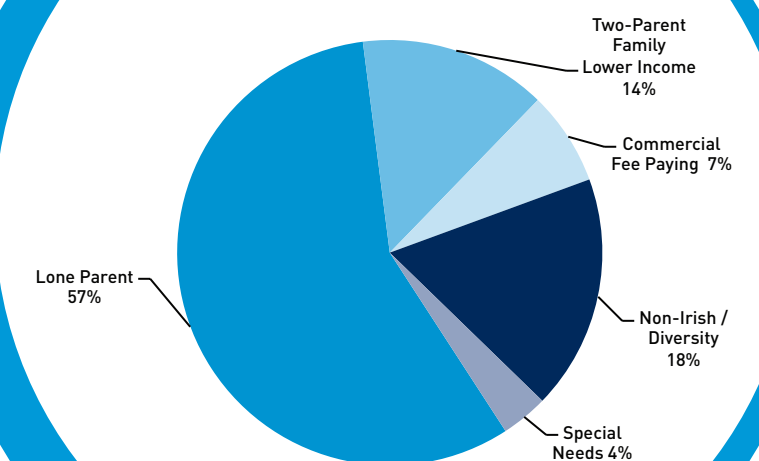
Children Enrolled at the Crèche



2013 data show increase by 8% on previous year's activity.



Profile of Children Enrolled in 2013



Lone Parent	16
2 Parent-Family Lower Income	4
Commercial Fee Paying	2
Non-Irish /Diversity	5
Special Needs	1
TOTAL	28

Pre-school Service



The Pre-school operates within the Crèche/ Pre-school purpose-built facility within the LSSC building. It is also centrally located and easily accessible for children whose parents are living, working or in education/training in the City Centre.

In line with the LSSC ethos and best practice for early years services, the Pre-school team also work in close partnership with parents. Seeing parents regularly several times a week means that its service is uniquely placed to play a vital role in supporting parents. Working in partnership with parents and helping them to develop a relationship with the Pre-school team enables parents to develop trust with their child's carer. This can make all the difference during times of difficulties for families when parents need advice or information and have no other service to contact. The LSSC recognises that this partnership between the Pre-school team and parents is an important aspect of the quality of the service, which in turn plays an important role in ensuring better outcomes for children's development and wellbeing.

Where we work

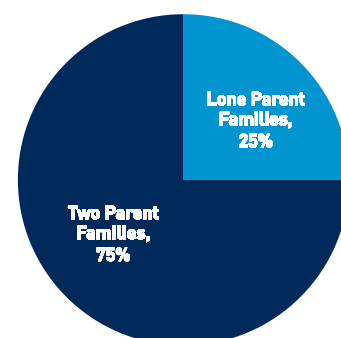
The service operates five days a week in the purpose-built facility of the LSSC building.

Highlights from how we did in 2013

15 children were enrolled at the Pre-school. The programme of events for children included a number of outings and trips outside of the Pre-school to extend children's experience of their environment and identity. Support was provided on an on-going basis to parents and two parents were referred to services for additional support.

Staff participated on on-going training in Siolta Standards and on team member completed Level 6 in Integrating Children with Special Needs in the Early Years.

The Pre-school handbook was made available to all parents.



Services for Older Adults



The Services for Older people is a needs led service that aims to listen and respond to what older people require. The Service has a number of different areas of focus, all underpinned by the goal of maximising the dignity of social opportunities for older people in society.

The service operates through a number of support groups, community education and community outreach either on a one-to-one basis or in a family context.

Where We Work

Services are offered at the Limerick Social Services Centre and in outreach at Parish Community Groups, hospitals, nursing homes, day care centres and in people's own homes.

Highlights from how we did in 2013

The service offered over 13 Care of the Aged Groups were supported throughout the City and County. These groups offered classes weekly through the Community Education Programme covering Irish, Art & Crafts, Local History and Computers. A number of educational and cultural trips were also organised.

Direct personal support was offered to at weekly clubs groups and through weekly home and hospital visits and contacts were made through the Nursing Homes/Day Care Centres. Support visits regarding loss and bereavement were also offered.

Meals were provided at Ballynanty Hall per month (110 on average).

Counselling Services

The LSSC Counselling Service offers support to adults in the Limerick City and County area through the guidance and help of experienced professional counsellors. The service is available to individuals and couples who are unable to cope alone and who are otherwise excluded from relevant services because of finance or shortfall in service provision.

The integrative approach adopted by the Service acknowledges that people have varying degrees of needs and that each Client has their own individual set of personal problems for which they cannot cope. The range of issues presenting to the Counselling Service includes depression, anxiety, abuse, addictions, low self-esteem, family break-up, relationship difficulties, bereavement and loss, life transitions, unemployment and loss of work, impact of physical and mental illness, etc. For many individuals, early intervention through the Counselling Service is a cost effective way of addressing a wide range of issues and a means to developing coping strategies for their day-to-day life.

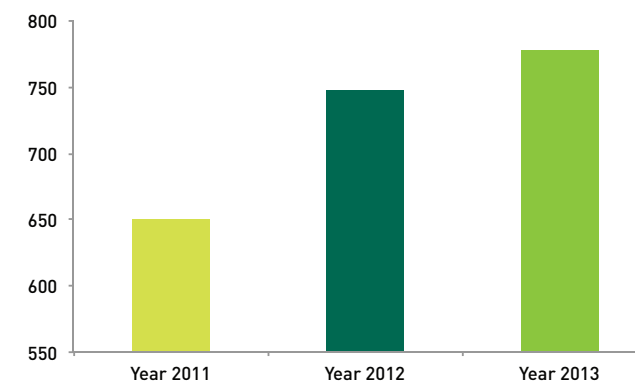
Where we work

80% of the Counselling Service is delivered through the main LSSC Centre at Henry Street, Limerick with additional outreach resources in Abbeyfeale, Newcastlewest, Rathkeale and Killmallock.

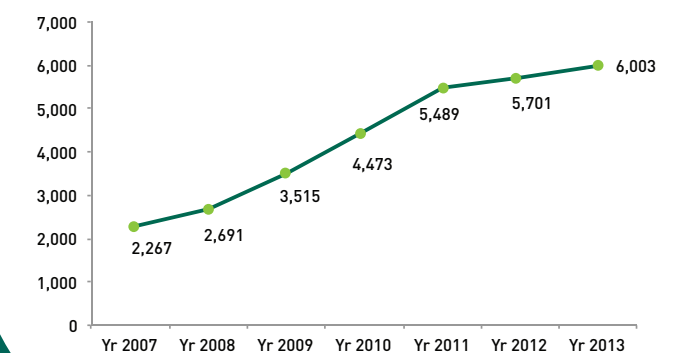
Highlights from how we did in 2013

- Between January and December 2013, the Service received 778 new referrals of which 36% were deemed to be high priority and 47% of medium priority. There was a noted increase in professional referrals from Adult Mental Health, which reflected a 25% increase in referrals on 2012 figures. While this indicates an increase in the profile of the service amongst mental health professionals, it also frequently involves a more complicated client profile.
- The number of on-going active cases was 259. The Service offered 6,003 sessions of which approximately 86% were attended. The number of sessions increased considerably in recent years, since 2007 the service saw a 265% increase in number of sessions offered.
- Sessions were divided between 32% for male clients and 68% were female. This was a change on 2012 data which reflected 27% male and 73% female clients.
- The Waiting List comprised 51 adults for Intake Appointments and 103 adults were waiting to commence counselling having completed an Initial Assessment.

Referrals Received 2011-2013



Sessions Offered 2007 - 2013





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Challenges /Plans 2014

Challenges 2014

Re-Structuring of Statutory Agencies:

The transfer of Community Welfare Officers from the HSE to the Department of Social Protection has led to significant changes in personnel and an end to many of the close working relationships LSSC staff have developed with key welfare staff over the years. This, and similar personnel changes in other statutory services, has adversely impacted on effective inter-agency linkages that previously allowed for faster access to information and services for mutual clients.

Supports for Separated Parents:

The difficulties in supporting parents going through a separation so that they remain focused on what is in the best interests of their child can be quite challenging particularly when there is anger and animosity between parents. Increased access to mediation services would help to alleviate such challenges.

Care of the Elderly & their Carers:

The demographic changes in the elderly population combined with the changes in the family structure such as the erosion of the nuclear and extended family, has increased the demand for care by older individuals within the community. Moreover, the profile of the family carer in the context of the elderly is changing. Due to social and demographic changes especially changes in the role and status of women, the traditional concept of 'family carer' is being eroded and supplementary or alternative measures are now required to ensure more effective community care of older people.

While family carers wish to continue to care for their elderly dependants at home, however, they themselves increasingly need support to enable them to continue. Moreover, the provision of adequate services is all the more important as carers themselves get older and renewed planning is necessary to provide support services for those who make the decision to care for elderly dependent relatives at home, if community care of the elderly is to be adequately maintained.

Impact of the Economy:

Key challenges continue to relate to the impact of the current economic climate on the quality of life of individuals and families. These include unemployment, housing, indebtedness, poverty, criminality, physical and mental health, Government Departmental cutbacks, etc. This has had a direct impact on the quality of life for individuals and families and has led to an increase in demand for service and supports provided by the LSSC.

Families in Unsuitable Accommodation:

The shortage of appropriate, affordable housing has led to families living in, at times, inappropriate accommodation. This is having an adverse effect on their family life, child/children's development, physical, emotional health and well-being. This has placed additional pressures on LSSC programmes to support families where accommodation is a key problem but not within the remit or capacity of the organisation to address.

Engaging Fathers:

Fathering practices have undergone significant changes in recent times. The LSSC recognises that families where fathers are actively involved as parents has positive benefits for child wellbeing. Work with unmarried fathers and fathers who are separated from their child/children continue to be an area of work that requires specialist attention by the LSSC programmes in order to support and promote father involvement as well as by understanding the obstacles that fathers face accessing and engaging with services.

New Strategies & Uncertain Budgets:

In terms of services generally and as demand for LSSC type services increase, the LSSC recognises that it must also identify newer strategies to respond to clients' problems while at the same working within its own environment of delivering a more efficient and quality service amidst the uncertainty of future budgets.

The following gives an overview of challenges identified by Programme staff as they worked with service users during 2013:

Activities Planned for 2014 will provide:

Plans for 2014

1 One-to-one parenting support across a broad spectrum of target and age groups

2 Parenting programmes for parents of children of varying ages, for lone parents, for parents of children in care and for fathers

3 The Community Mothers Programme home visitation service to a minimum of 200 parents

4 Four parent/baby & toddler groups and a new parent/baby & toddler group in the Southill area

5 Infant massage programmes in LSSC and Southill Health Centre and a pilot baby massage programme specifically for young parents

6 Ante-natal classes specifically for young expectant parents, in conjunction with staff from the University Maternity Hospital Limerick

7 The Incredible Years Parenting Programmes

8 Two City Slickers Programmes

9 The TPSP Summer Programme for young parents and their children

10 Administration of the School Completion Programme Funding and educational supports to help young people who are pregnant or are parents remain in and complete their education

11 The delivery of the Limerick City Traveller Health Advocacy Programme

12 Convening of Family Welfare Conferences

13 The Family Advocacy Service for 30-40 clients

14 Quality care for babies, toddlers and young children at the Crèche and Pre-school

15 Achievement of the Síolta National Standards by staff in the Crèche and Pre-school

16 Continue and expand the Counselling Service to 16-18 year olds

17 Support Care of the Aged Groups and deliver community education programmes

18 A review the LSSC Supervision and Child Protection Policies in line with best practice and forthcoming legislative developments

19 The recruitment of a Senior Social Care Practitioner

20 The updating of the LSSC Website

Governance & Accountability

The Limerick Social Service Council (LSSC) has sought to maintain the highest standards of governance to support its Mission and Values. This is facilitated through the leadership of the Board of Directors and the General Manager who maintain effective control over the activities of the LSSC Programmes. This is achieved by ensuring that all aspects of its work from administration, financial reporting, audits, planning, implementation, reviews, and evaluations operate by the highest standards in integrity and accountability. The Council also ensures that the LSSC strategic aims and key developments are achieved by management within an agreed budget.

Furthermore, the LSSC's governance practices emphasise active engagement across a broad community of stakeholders to promote accountability, transparency, and impact. It recognises that stakeholder engagement is a fundamental accountability mechanism as it involves those individuals, groups of individuals and external agencies who affect and/or could be affected by the LSSC's activities and associated performance. It ensures that activities can be reviewed appropriately to see what is making a measurable difference in people's lives and therefore as a means to drive continuous improvement. In this regard, it can effectively demonstrate the link between the outcomes achieved with families and individuals, and the wellbeing of the wider community.

The LSSC governance and accountability mechanisms helps the organisation to keep the focus on who or what it is targeting and what it wants to achieve, and it insists on staff answering the question

“how are our communities, individuals, families and their children better off as a result of all of our efforts?”

Service Refocus



Altamira Apartments:

The LSSC previously provided short-time accommodation to young and first time mothers at Altamira Apartments. Following an extensive review of services, the LSSC sought a more effective and innovative use of resources to address issues of marginalisation and homelessness in Limerick. Through a collaborative initiative with the Associated Charities Trust (Thomond House), Altamira Apartments were re-opened in 2013. This new project which works from a 'Housing Led' approach will offer accommodation to ten individuals experiencing homeless and in need of on-going support.

Hartstonge Street:

The LSSC premises at Hartstonge Street in Limerick City had previously housed the Pre-natal Service. Through a successful funding proposal, the LSSC was allocated funding for the refurbishment and upgrading of the existing premises. An invitation for expressions of interests was issued to suitable agencies to provide an accommodation support service to be provided for young vulnerable people. It is anticipated that this service will commence in 2014.



Linkages & Interagency Working

Through its practice, the Limerick Social Service Council promotes inter-agency and partnership working as an effective means to address problems with multiple and inter-related causes. It stresses the importance of inter-agency working across a number of levels: in communication, in decision-making, in needs assessment, in policy development, and at operational level in front-line service delivery.

The Limerick Social Service Council works in co-operation with other agencies throughout the region and has close linkages with a range of regional and national organisations through generous funding arrangements and consultative partnerships. In 2013, these included the following:

Statutory agencies and Government Departments including

Community Welfare Offices	HSE West
FÁS	Limerick City Council
MABS (Money and Budgeting Advice Service)	POBAL
The Family Support Agency	The Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform
The Department of Education & Skills	The Department of Children & Youth Affairs
Child and Family Agency	

Community, voluntary agencies and third level colleges including:

ADAPT Services	Age and Opportunity (Dublin)
Barnardos Mid-West	Centre for the Unemployed
Credit Unions	CURA (regional and national)
Diocese of Limerick	Doras Luimní
Focus Ireland	Foster Carer's Association
Limerick Institute of Technology	Limerick Pastoral Centre
Limerick Regeneration Agencies	Limerick Senior College
Limerick Youth Service	Local Employment Service
Mary Immaculate College	NCVA
Novas	Older Women's Network
Parish clergy	PAUL Partnership
Thomond House	University of Limerick
Victim Support	VTOS

Other Services that avail of the LSSC Centre

The LSSC is a well-established agency at the Centre of Limerick's statutory and NGO community. In its endeavour to support a wide range of individuals, families and groups, it opens its doors to facilitate other agencies and services to support those most in need. The LSSC Centre has been particularly successful in this regard in facilitating Primary Care Teams in their work. The Primary Care model works well with the LSSC ethos as a holistic and 'one-stop' approach to community needs on a social, welfare, housing, education and health needs basis.

During 2013, in addition to the Primary Care Teams, a number of other organisations, agencies and groups have availed of the Centre to deliver programmes, consultations and meet with clients. To facilitate many of these, the LSSC Centre has also been utilised after normal office hours on most evenings during the week. Approximately, between four and six groups held meetings at the LSSC Centre each evening in 2013. These groups included the following:

ACOA (Adult Children of Alcoholics)	Alcoholics Anonymous Groups
Al-Anon Group	AWARE
Bruree House	Cancer Support
CURA	Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage Office
Dyspraxia	Emergency Response Group
Epilepsy Ireland	Gam-Anon
Irish Countrywoman's Association	Limerick Community Law & Mediation Centre
MWM	Narcotics Anonymous
Older Persons' Groups	Overeaters Anonymous
Parent Support Groups	Retired Civil Servants
Retired Gardaí	SHINE
Women's Groups	

The Limerick Social Service Council is committed to building community relationships and connections with all organisations and individuals who support individuals, families and their children experiencing social exclusion, disadvantage and poverty.

“I’m very appreciative of all the help and support I have received for me and my son”

“I don’t think they could have helped me any more than they did. They were excellent”

“It was very helpful and helped me socialise with others like myself”

“I’ve given up going out now so when everyone else is out enjoying themselves, I’m sitting at home alone and often feel very lonely. Meeting others like myself stopped me from feeling sorry for myself”

“I loved the Programme and don’t want it to end”