

West Limerick Independent Living



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Regulatory and Compliance Information	3
Company Organisational Structure	4
Organisational Board	5
HSE Service Level Agreement	5
Looking Ahead	6
The Chairman's Statement	7
Manager's Report	9
SUPPORT SERVICES	11
Home Support Service	11
Personal Assistant Service	11
Client PA Service Hours	12
New Referrals	15
Home Support Service Hours	13
Client Feedback and Satisfaction	15
Passenger Transport Service	16
Restore Services	16
Improving Accessibility & Expanding Services	17
A Commitment to Quality Transport Services	17
InTouch Magazine	17
Employee Satisfaction and Future Initiatives	18
Health and Safety Report	20
Quality, Safety and Ethics Committee Annual Report	28
Introduction and Overview	28
Future Outlook and New Tendering Process	22
Conclusion	22
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT	23
Auditor's Report	Error! Bookmark not defined.

INTRODUCTION

West Limerick Independent Living (WLIL) is a non-profit organisation established to empowering people with disabilities by providing quality Personal Assistant (PA) and Home Care services. Established with a strong commitment to promoting independent living,

Our core mission is to support people with disabilities in achieving autonomy, dignity, and inclusion. We accomplish this through a person-centred approach, ensuring that our services are tailored to the unique needs of everyone. By offering practical assistance with daily tasks, mobility, and personal care, our professional staff enable service users to lead fulfilling and independent lives. In addition to direct support services, WLIL advocates for disability rights and works in collaboration with key stakeholders, including government agencies, healthcare providers, and local communities, to enhance accessibility and inclusion.

We are continuously evolving to meet the growing needs of our service users, and our commitment to best practices in health, safety, and staff training reflects our dedication to quality services. With a strong presence in Limerick and an office in Newcastle West, we remain focused on expanding our services, attracting skilled professionals, and ensuring that every person we assist has the support they need to live independently. At West Limerick Independent Living, we believe in the power of choice, inclusion, and dignity. Our work is more than just providing services, it is about enabling people to live the lives they choose, with confidence and support.

Regulatory and Compliance Information

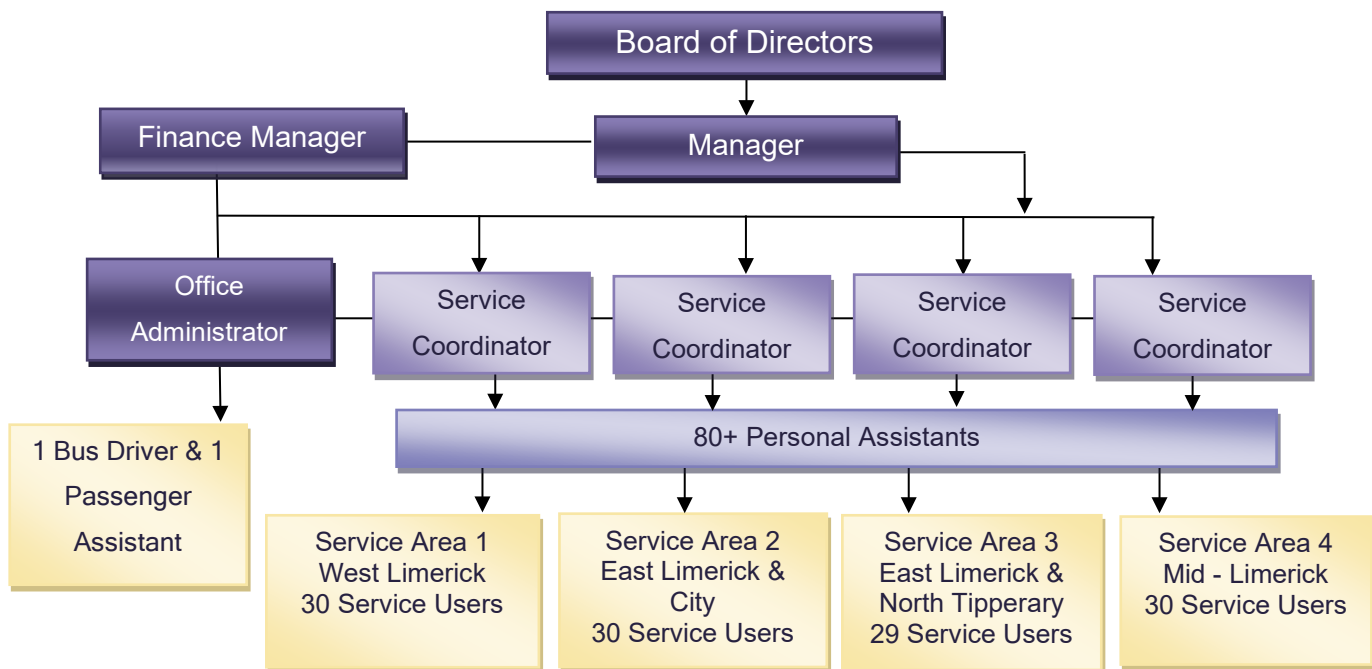
West Limerick Independent Living operates as a registered charity and company, adhering to all relevant regulatory and legal requirements. The organisation's official identifiers with key regulatory bodies are as follows:

Authority	Identifier
Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA)	20037192
Companies Registration Office (CRO)	271412
Revenue (Charities Unit) (CHY)	12592

These registrations ensure that WLIL maintains transparency, compliance, and accountability in delivering essential services to individuals with disabilities.

Company Organisational Structure

West Limerick Independent Living is a **company limited by guarantee**, established in 1997 with the mission of developing and delivering **personal support services** for people with disabilities across **Limerick City and County**. The organisation operates with a clear **governance and management structure**, ensuring the efficient delivery of services while upholding the highest standards of care, inclusion, and advocacy. WLIL is committed to **promoting a positive image and perception of people with disabilities**, fostering greater independence, dignity, and community participation.



The **organisational structure** of WLIL includes:

- **Board of Directors** - Provides strategic direction, governance, and oversight.
- **Management Team** - Oversees operations, service delivery, and compliance with regulatory standards.
- **Administrative & Support Staff** - Facilitate daily operations, financial management, and service coordination.
- **Personal Assistant & Home Care Staff** - Deliver essential support services to individuals with disabilities, ensuring quality support and independent living.

This structure ensures that **WLIL remains accountable, efficient, and responsive** to the evolving needs of the community it serves.

Organisational Board

West Limerick Independent Living is governed by a dedicated **Board of Directors**, composed of individuals with diverse expertise and lived experiences. The board provides **strategic leadership, oversight, and governance**, ensuring the organisation continues to deliver high-quality, person-centred services while advocating for the rights and independence of people with disabilities.

Board Members

Name	Role	Background
Mr. Ben Lenihan	Director & Chairman	Extensive experience in IT and business. A person with a disability and an active PA Service User.
Mr. John Creedon	Director	Report Technician with Sysco Ireland IT Department. Member of the Irish Wheelchair Association and the Disabled Driver Association. A PA Service User.
Mr. John Killowry	Director	PA Service User, studied at NUI Galway, and previously worked at Wyeth Nutrition.
Ms. Pamela Hogan Wallace	Director	Background in banking. A PA Service User.
Mr. Brendan Dunne	Director	Experience in the hotel and business sectors. A PA Service User.
Mr. Gerard O'Connor	Company Secretary	A background in community-driven organisations, a strong understanding of the sector, a understanding of regulatory frameworks, and information technology expertise.

The board plays a crucial role in shaping the vision and strategic direction of **WLIL**, ensuring that the organisation remains committed to its mission of **empowering people with disabilities through high-quality personal support services**.

HSE Service Level Agreement

West Limerick Independent Living, like many other organisations funded under **Section 39 of the 2004 Health Act**, delivers a **Personal Assistant (PA) service** and **Home Support Service** as part of domiciliary care. These services are similar or ancillary to those provided by the **Health Service Executive (HSE)** and are supported through **HSE grant aid**. Section 39 bodies refer to agencies or groups that undertake services complementing those of the HSE and receive grant funding to do so. However, the HSE is not legally or statutorily obligated to provide these services directly. Instead, funding is allocated to ensure essential support is available to individuals who require assistance with daily living and independent living support.

Under **Section 39 of the 2004 Health Act**, titled *‘Assistance for Certain Bodies’*, all organisations receiving grant aid are required to enter into a **Service Level Agreement (SLA)** with the HSE. This agreement serves as a contract between the HSE and the organisation, outlining the **standards, compliance requirements, and legislative obligations** necessary to deliver high-quality, person-centred care.

WLIL remains committed to fulfilling the terms of its **Service Level Agreement**, ensuring that all services provided meet the required standards and continue to support individuals in living independently within their communities.

“The Board holds a pivotal responsibility in guiding WLIL’s vision and strategy, ensuring the organisation remains steadfast in its mission to empower individuals with disabilities through exceptional personal support services.”

Looking Ahead

As we look ahead at West Limerick Independent Living, our focus remains on strengthening personal assistant services, expanding our profile, and attracting dedicated professionals. By continuously refining our training programs, collaborating with local communities, and enhancing accessibility through modern technologies, we aim to uphold our commitment to empowering individuals with disabilities.

- **Service Enhancement:** We are confident that upgrading our service delivery models will lead to better overall client satisfaction.
- **Workforce Development:** We are confident that comprehensive training and career growth opportunities will help attract and retain top talent.
- **Community Collaboration:** We are confident that partnerships with local organisations will foster greater awareness and support for WLIL.

These initiatives will help ensure WLIL remains a leader in facilitating independent living for all.

The Chairman's Statement

As one of the largest providers of personal support services in Limerick City and County, the primary objective of West Limerick Independent Living is to support people with disabilities in our community. These services include the personal assistant service, a key provision of the independent living movement. Ultimately, the organisation seeks to promote self-empowerment to overcome the disadvantages imposed by physical impairments.



Mr. Ben Lenihan
Chairman

As of 2024, West Limerick Independent Living is proud to be part of the National Alliance of Centres for Independent Living (NACIL). NACIL allows Centres for Independent Living to work collaboratively to bolster the independent living movement. We believe that the establishment of NACIL will enhance the collaborative efforts of those of us working in the sector, furthering our mission to support and empower people with disabilities.

Recruitment and staff retention continue to be a challenge, not only for our organisation, but also for many similar organisations across the health and social care sector. Navigating these ongoing challenges remains a priority for West Limerick Independent Living. Over the last year, we have increased remuneration and introduced supportive initiatives, both of which aim to enhance job satisfaction and morale for our staff.

We would like to provide an update regarding the Health Service Executive's (HSE) ongoing plans for home care and personal assistant services. The new home support tender is currently being implemented, with a focus on progressively rolling out these improvements. Additionally, Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is actively involved in developing national standards to ensure safety and quality across the sector. While a specific timeline for the full rollout has not been announced, these initiatives are expected to progress over the coming months. These changes pose significant challenges for organisations like West Limerick Independent Living. We also do not yet know if they will result in substantial changes for individual clients receiving these services, but we will keep you informed with any necessary updates as things progress.

On behalf of the board, I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved in West Limerick Independent Living. The unwavering commitment of our board members is something that must be acknowledged; their selfless dedication and their steadfast adherence to values such as equality and fairness have made collaborating with this organisation an absolute pleasure. Additionally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to our dedicated staff, whose enthusiasm and strong work ethic ensure the continued delivery of

high-quality support to our clients. My thanks also to all our service coordinators for continuing to provide excellent service to our clients.

As for me, this is the last time I write to you as Chairperson of West Limerick Independent Living.

Since accepting the role in 2015, it has been an honour to work with this remarkable organisation, while gaining a wealth experience from working with such dedicated, intelligent, hardworking people.

A special mention must go to Gerard and Margaret who are truly at the heart, and the helm, of West Limerick Independent Living. It has been a pleasure witnessing them handle various matters across a multitude of domains, including operational, financial, strategic, legal, and personal. It has been truly impressive, and they are a credit to the organisation, as well as to themselves.

My time here has been immensely enriching, and I can only hope that my contributions have been of some value in return. I wish the very best to my successor, and to West Limerick Independent Living.

Go n-éirí an bóthar leat,

Ben Lenihan

Chairman

Manager's Report

It is my privilege as the Manager of West Limerick Independent Living CLG to present this Annual Report. Reflecting on the past year, I am deeply proud of our collective achievements. Despite numerous challenges, our unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation, and resilience has enabled us to reach significant milestones.



Mrs. Margaret O'Connor
General Manager

This year, we prioritized employee training, emphasizing the importance and professionalism of the Personal Assistant (PA) role. The position has evolved significantly and now requires recognized FETAC qualifications, reinforcing its status as a professional career.

Recruitment remains challenging due to nationwide full employment, resulting in intense competition for qualified staff, particularly within the care sector. To address this, we continually strive to offer competitive employment conditions within our available resources. A notable pay increase this year has enhanced the attractiveness of PA roles at West Limerick Independent Living, yet recruitment remains a demanding and continuous task for our management team. Our dedicated staff continue to champion equality and inclusivity, empowering service users to lead fulfilling lives. Supported by a compassionate and expert multi-disciplinary team, we deliver tailored support services addressing each individual's unique needs and aspirations.

Staffing challenges are not unique to our organization; the Health Service Executive (HSE) has experienced similar difficulties in disability services. Nevertheless, our collaborative relationships with the HSE remain robust, and we anticipate continued partnerships with like-minded organizations dedicated to building an inclusive society.

The HSE's introduction of the Demonstration Project for Personalized Budgets is a significant step forward. This project provides eligible individuals with a disability an allocated funding amount to manage their own support arrangements independently. Currently, one of our clients participates in this initiative, and we proudly support this evolving approach, empowering individuals to have greater control over their services.

In 2024, we conducted an employee survey aimed at enhancing workplace practices. The results indicated high employee satisfaction, with valuable suggestions to further improve our working environment and support systems. In response, we revised the Employee of the Season nomination process, recognizing all nominees' contributions. Additionally, responding to requests, we organized a successful Christmas gathering, celebrating long-term staff members who have served for over 15 years. We plan to repeat this event due to its popularity.

We further recognized employees' commitment through our Years of Service Awards, honoring those who achieved significant tenure milestones. This recognition reflects our ongoing dedication to maintaining a supportive workplace where employees feel valued.

West Limerick Independent Living joined the National Alliance of Centers for Independent Living (NACIL) in 2024. NACIL serves as a unified voice for all Centers for Independent Living (CILs) nationally. With upcoming changes in personal assistance and home support services, including tendering processes and the introduction of HIQA standards, NACIL membership positions us strategically to adapt effectively. Although specific details remain unclear, we will ensure continuous updates as developments occur.

Our commitment to innovation and continuous improvement continues, demonstrated by the ongoing success of our IT Management System introduced in 2022, which has notably improved service quality and operational efficiency.

Despite staffing challenges, we successfully increased the support hours delivered, thanks to our management and staff's dedication. Our strategic priorities for the coming year remain focused on innovation, enhancing client satisfaction, and nurturing continuous improvement.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our Board for their steadfast support of independent living principles and core values. Their contributions, along with the dedicated efforts of my colleagues, are instrumental to our organization's continued success.

Together, we will uphold our mission, empowering individuals to live independently with dignity, choice, and respect.

Yours sincerely

Margaret O'Connor

General Manager

SUPPORT SERVICES

Personal Assistant Service

Our Personal Assistant Service provides individualized support tailored to each client's unique needs and preferences. In contrast, the Home Support Service typically focuses on broader household tasks and general assistance within the home environment. Both services aim to enhance independence and quality of life for our clients. The Personal Assistant Service is unique in its individualized approach, providing tailored support that aligns precisely with each client's personal goals and preferences. This service empowers individuals by focusing on their specific needs, promoting greater independence and quality of life.



A PA supports independence by assisting with daily tasks, providing the necessary help while allowing individuals to make their own choices and maintain control over their lives.

Home Support Service

The Home Support Service provided by West Limerick Independent Living focuses on assisting individuals with disabilities in their homes. It includes personal care, household tasks, and companionship, enabling clients to maintain their independence. The service is highly personalized, with staff working closely with clients to meet their specific needs and preferences.

West Limerick Independent Living maintains a collaborative relationship with the Health Service Executive (HSE). This partnership is fundamental to delivering personal assistant and home support services.

The HSE provides essential funding and oversight, ensuring that services meet standards and are accessible to those who require these services. This collaboration helps ensure comprehensive support for clients.

In 2024, West Limerick Independent Living delivered a **total of 71,431 hours** of service across our Personal Assistant and Home Support Services, reflecting our dedication to enhancing the quality of life and independence for our clients.

Client PA Service Hours

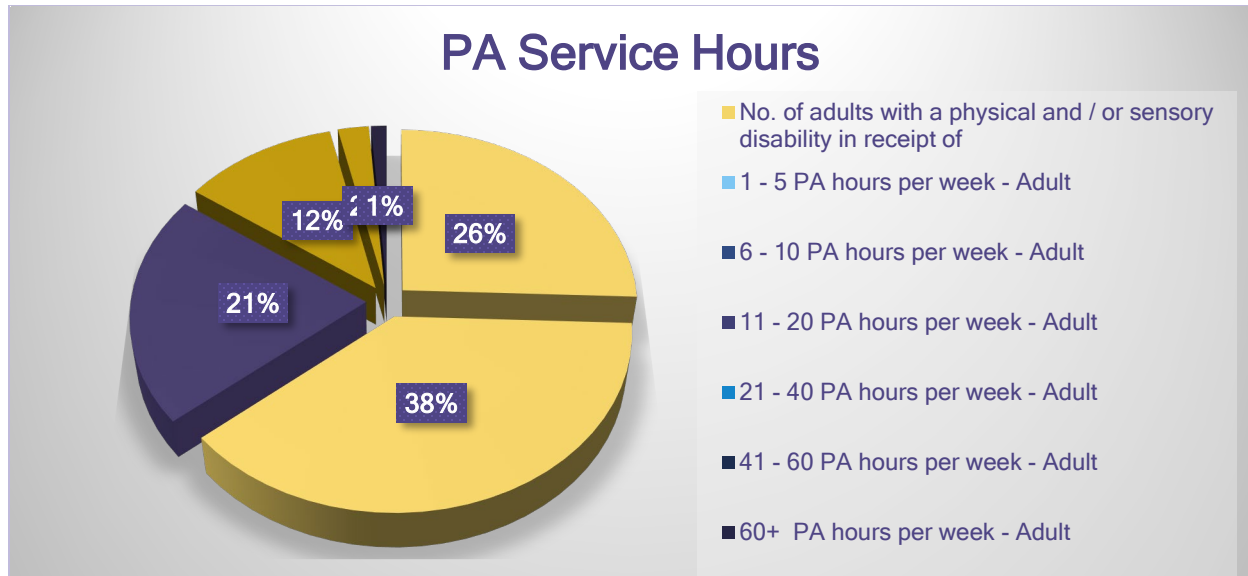
In 2024, our **Personal Assistant Service** delivered **56,294 hours** of individualized support to **88 clients**. This commitment reflects our dedication to enhancing independence and quality of life for everyone through personalized and flexible assistance.

The following data reflects the tiered distribution of Personal Assistant hours for adults with physical and/or sensory disabilities in 2024. A total of 22 adults received between 1 and 5 hours per week, 33 adults received 6 to 10 hours, 18 adults received 11 to 20 hours, 10 adults received 21 to 40 hours, 2 adults received 41 to 60 hours, and 1 adult received more than 60 hours weekly.

This breakdown underscores our commitment to individualised support that addresses the distinct needs of each client.

Description	PA Service Hours
No. of adults with a physical and / or sensory disability in receipt of 1 – 5 PA hours per week – Adult	22
No. of adults with a physical and / or sensory disability in receipt of 6 – 10 PA hours per week – Adult	33
No. of adults with a physical and / or sensory disability in receipt of 11 – 20 PA hours per week – Adult	18
No. of adults with a physical and / or sensory disability in receipt of 21 – 40 PA hours per week – Adult	10
No. of adults with a physical and / or sensory disability in receipt of 41 – 60 PA hours per week – Adult	2
No. of adults with a physical and / or sensory disability in receipt of 60+ PA hours per week – Adult	1

PA Service Hours Table



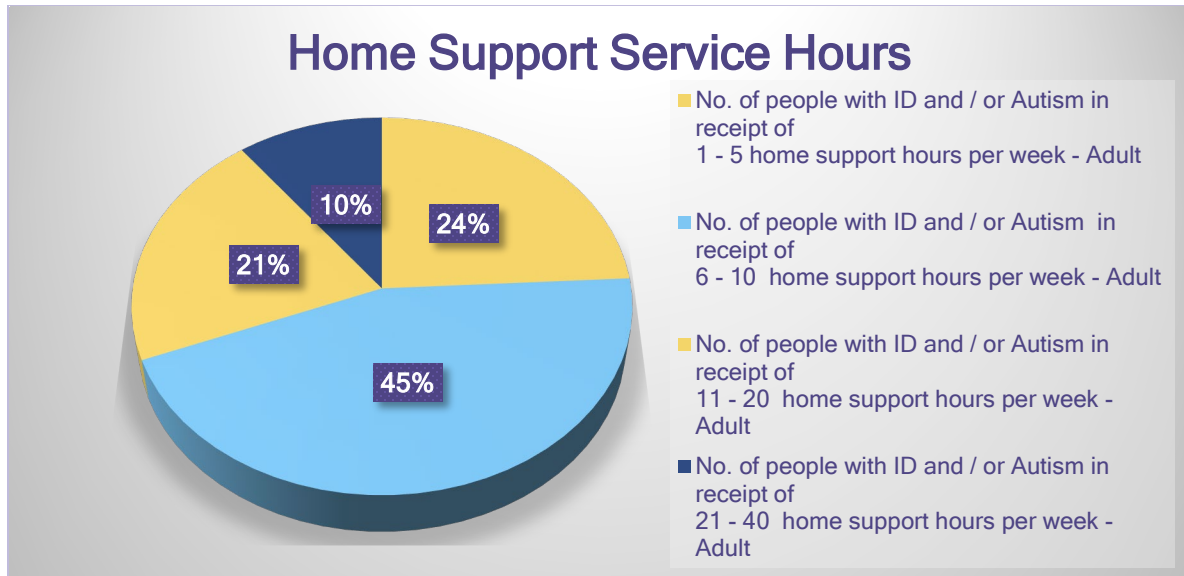
Home Support Service Hours

In 2024, our **Home Support Service** provided **15,137 hours** of assistance to **31 clients**. This effort underscores our commitment to providing essential support that promotes independence and enhances the quality of life for those we serve.

In 2024, the Home Support Service catered to adults with intellectual disabilities and/or autism, with 7 adults receiving 1-5 hours of support per week, 13 receiving 6-10 hours, 6 receiving 11-20 hours, and 3 receiving 21-40 hours. This tailored approach ensured everyone received the appropriate level of support.

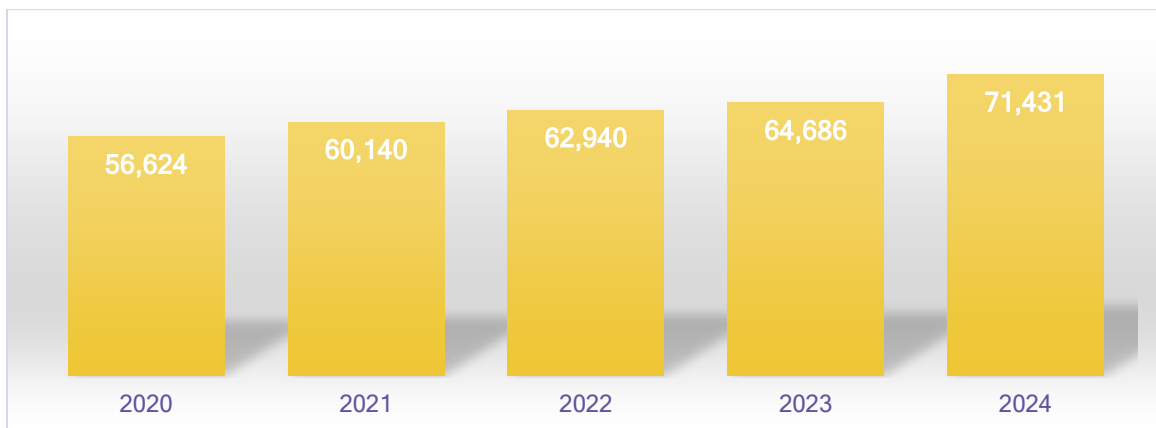
Description Home Support Service	Hours
No. of people with ID and / or Autism in receipt of 1 – 5 home support hours per week – Adult	7
No. of people with ID and / or Autism in receipt of 6 – 10 home support hours per week – Adult	13
No. of people with ID and / or Autism in receipt of 11 – 20 home support hours per week - Adult	6
No. of people with ID and / or Autism in receipt of 21 – 40 home support hours per week - Adult	3

Home Support Service Hours Table



In 2024, mainly due to significant staffing difficulties, we were unable to **deliver new home support services** for people with intellectual disabilities and/or autism.

Support Service Hours Table



Over the past six years, our organization has faced significant challenges, particularly in service delivery. In 2019, we delivered a high of 74,991 hours, but this sharply declined to 56,624 hours in 2020 due to the global impact of COVID-19 and staffing shortages. Despite these setbacks, we have demonstrated resilience and adaptability, with service hours gradually increasing to 60,140 in 2021, 62,940 in 2022, and 64,686 in 2023. This steady recovery underscores our commitment to overcoming challenges and adapting to changing conditions. In 2024, our service hours further increased to 71,431, reflecting our continued efforts to meet the needs of our clients and maintain service delivery.

New Referrals

In 2024, West Limerick Independent Living received 36 new referrals for adults with physical and/or sensory disabilities. Despite significant staffing challenges, we commenced services for six new individuals. We regret that we couldn't assist more in receiving the support they need to live independently. We have explored various means of recruitment and worked diligently to expand our workforce. We will continue these efforts in 2025 and will keep exploring all avenues for recruitment.

Client Feedback and Satisfaction

Our clients hold the **Personal Assistant (PA) Service**, **Home Support Service** and the **Passenger Transport Service** in high regard, reflecting significant satisfaction.

The **Home Support Service** is praised for assisting with household tasks, such as meal preparation and daily chores, enabling clients to maintain a high standard of personal care and hygiene within their homes. One client noted, *"Having this support, helps me with household duties and dinner preparation has made my life so much easier."* Another shared, *"The overall service allows me to live in my own home independently."*

The **Personal Assistant Service** is commended for providing comprehensive support that enhances clients' independence and quality of life. Clients appreciate the PA's professionalism, kindness, and understanding of their specific needs. A testimonial highlights, *"Without my PA I would not be able to function and complete my daily routine."* Another client mentioned, *"The PA support and help has a huge impact on my daily life and keeps me positive."*

Passenger Transport Service

New Accessible Minibus

West Limerick Independent Living is pleased to announce the acquisition of a **state-of-the-art accessible minibus**, further strengthening our commitment to providing **reliable and inclusive** transport services. This significant upgrade replaces our previous **Mercedes Sprinter** with a **Ford Transit**, sourced from **Cavanagh's of Charleville** and expertly customized by **Paramount Conversions** to meet the highest accessibility standards.

Accessible transport is **critical** in promoting **independence, social inclusion, and equal opportunities** for people with disabilities. It ensures that individuals, regardless of mobility challenges, can **safely and comfortably** access essential services, community activities, and employment or educational opportunities.

This new vehicle will **primarily serve rural areas of Limerick**, ensuring that passengers, even in the most remote locations, can benefit from **dependable and comfortable** transport. Given the **long travel distances**, with journeys lasting between **one to two hours**, the minibus has been specifically designed to **maximize comfort and safety** throughout each trip. On average, the transport service supports **five passengers per journey**, providing crucial links from **various locations in West Limerick** to several key centers in **Limerick City**.

Restore Services

During periods of lockdown in 2020 and 2021, our transport service was fully suspended.

Following the lifting of **COVID-19 restrictions**, we could only restore the service to a three-day-a-week schedule due to difficulties in recruiting drivers. With recent vehicle updates that **eliminated the D1 license requirement**, we are now prepared to return to a full five-day schedule in 2025, reinforcing our commitment to enhancing mobility solutions for the community.



Improving Accessibility & Expanding Services

A major advantage of the Ford Transit is its capacity to carry up to eight passengers, allowing it to be driven by individuals holding a standard driving license. Previously, our transport operations were limited to drivers with a D1 license, which contributed to staffing challenges. With this new vehicle, we now have greater flexibility in driver availability, ensuring improved service continuity.

“Restoring Full Service: Your Journey, Our Commitment.”

A Commitment to Quality Transport Services

The introduction of this modernized minibus represents a significant milestone in enhancing our transport services. Passengers have already expressed appreciation for the increased comfort, accessibility, and reliability of the new vehicle.

As West Limerick Independent Living continues to enhance its services, this investment underscores our ongoing mission: ensuring that individuals with disabilities across West Limerick have access to safe, reliable, and inclusive transport solutions—empowering them to travel with dignity, ease, and independence.

InTouch Magazine

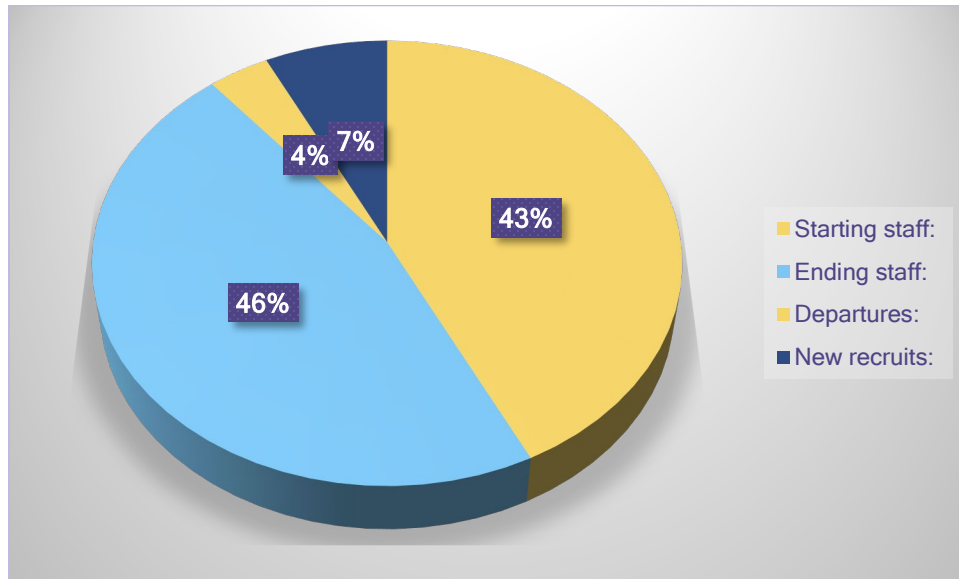
West Limerick Independent Living publishes **InTouch Magazine**, a key platform for promoting independent living, disability rights, and community engagement. The publication serves as an informative resource for service users, personal assistants, families, and stakeholders, providing updates on key initiatives, policy developments, and personal stories that highlight the impact of WLIL’s services.

In 2024, **InTouch Magazine** featured articles on independent living, updates on WLIL services, including personal assistance, home support, and transport. Contributions and interviews on the evolving landscape of disability services. Information on training opportunities, upcoming events, and community initiatives.

By fostering awareness and engagement, **InTouch Magazine** strengthens WLIL’s commitment to advocacy and empowerment, ensuring that the voices of individuals with disabilities are heard and represented.

Recruitment and Staffing Developments for 2024

At the beginning of 2024, West Limerick Independent Living employed 81 staff members. By the end of the year, this number had increased to 88. Over the course of the year, 7 employees departed, and 14 new recruits were hired.



Throughout the year, we encountered significant challenges in recruiting staff. To address these, we employed a range of methods, including social media, local radio, jobs fairs, printed press, word-of-mouth, “refer a friend”, and advertising boards in local shops. Although we initially attracted substantial interest, some candidates withdrew during the vetting and recruitment processes, which increased demands on time and resources. Nevertheless, our management team remained resolute in overcoming these obstacles.

In 2024, West Limerick Independent Living has implemented a range of initiatives to enhance employee retention and make our organisation a more attractive place to work. These include offering competitive compensation, providing career development opportunities, fostering a positive work environment, and promoting work-life balance. Additionally, we have focused on recognizing and rewarding employees, enhancing engagement, supporting well-being, and ensuring effective onboarding. These efforts are ongoing throughout the year and are key to retaining our valuable staff.

Employee Satisfaction and Future Initiatives

West Limerick Independent Living conducted an **Employee Satisfaction Survey** in October 2024. With participation from **25 employees out of 82 employees** (approximately 30% of the workforce), the survey offered valuable insights into the workplace environment and employee experiences.

The survey results reveal a **high level of satisfaction** among staff, particularly regarding **flexible working hours** and the **supportive company culture**. However, the survey highlighted areas for improvement and offered some recommendations.

Key actions have been implemented to address employee feedback:

1. **Communication Enhancements:** Training for coordinators has been introduced to ensure more consistent and timely responses.
2. **Recognition Programs:** In addition to the "Employee of the Season" initiative, new recognition strategies, such as career milestones, have been introduced.
3. **Wage Structure Review:** The feasibility of **transitioning to a weekly wage payment** schedule was evaluated, but due to the **high complexity of payroll** and the many adjustments required, it was not practicably feasible. Additionally, the **small payroll department** would not be able to cope with the increased workload.
4. **Professional Development:** More structured professional development opportunities, including training in conflict resolution, have been introduced.
5. **Social Events:** Regular social gatherings, including an annual Christmas get together, are being organised.
6. **Mileage Policy:** The possibility of reimbursing mileage from home to the first call is under review.

These measures demonstrate West Limerick Independent Living's commitment to fostering a positive and supportive workplace, ensuring the well-being and satisfaction of its employees.

Investment in Staff Training and Development - 2024

In 2024, **West Limerick Independent Living** significantly increased its investment in staff training and development, reflecting the organisation's commitment to enhancing service quality and employee competency. The total expenditure on training reached **€16,009.45**, a substantial increase from the previous year's **€7,900.50**.

This increase was necessary to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, improve staff skills, and enhance the overall safety and effectiveness of our services.

The following table outlines the breakdown of training costs for 2024:

Training Costs Breakdown - 2024

Training Program	Trainer Cost (€)	Staff Wages (€)	Total Cost (€)
Performance Management Training (4 Coordinators, Manager)	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00
Dignity and Respect at Work Training (All Employees)	650.00	2,520.00	3,170.00
Basic First Aid (20 Employees)	685.00	1,992.20	2,677.20
Epilepsy Training (16 Employees)	803.25	855.00	1,658.25
Manual Handling TTM (10 New Employees)	760.00	540.00	1,300.00
Manual Handling Optima (2 Sessions)	850.00	1,512.00	2,362.00
Safety Statement & Risk Assessment Training (4 Coordinators)	395.00	0.00	395.00
First Aid Responder (4 Coordinators)	495.00	0.00	495.00
Fire Marshall Training (4 Coordinators)	525.00	0.00	525.00
Bariatric Training (3 PAs)	975.00	162.00	1,137.00
Advanced Communication Skills for Health & Social Care (2 Coordinators)	790.00	0.00	790.00
Total	8,428.25	7,581.20	16,009.45

This substantial investment was made to address key areas, including **mandatory health and safety training, first aid certification, and specialist training** for both new and existing employees. As regulatory requirements evolve, it is essential to ensure that all staff members have the necessary qualifications and skills to provide high-quality, person-centered support. Additionally, the investment in performance management and dignity at work training reflects the organisation's commitment to fostering a professional and inclusive work environment.

By prioritising training, **West Limerick Independent Living** aims to enhance service delivery, improve staff retention, and uphold its commitment to best practices in independent living support. The board's continued support for training initiatives ensures that employees are well-equipped to provide safe, effective, and compassionate support.

Training and Development - 2024/25

West Limerick Independent Living continues to prioritise staff training and development to maintain high standards of care. In 2024, a significant investment was made in essential training areas, ensuring staff are equipped with the necessary skills and qualifications.

Looking ahead to 2025, the organisation will **review the HIQA Draft Standards for Home Support Services** to determine any further training needs and regulatory requirements. This ensures ongoing compliance and reinforces our commitment to delivering person-centred, high-quality support.

Achievements and Highlights

- **Expansion of Personal Assistant Services** - Increased the number of personal assistants to meet rising demand.
- **Enhanced Training Programs** - Implemented comprehensive training programs focused on skill development, client-centered care, and safety protocols.

Technology and Innovation

- Implemented the **Care Planner management system** to deliver remote services more efficiently and in a streamlined manner.
- This system allows staff on the ground to send messages, log in and out of calls and appointments, and report any issues directly back to management.

Community Engagement

WLIL actively collaborates with partners and stakeholders:

- **Awareness Campaigns** - Utilized social media and the WLIL In Touch magazine and website to raise awareness of disability rights and the importance of independent living.
- **Volunteer Programs** - Recruited and supported new board members, all of whom are volunteers, and provided training to enhance their ability to contribute effectively to the organization's mission.

Future Outlook and New Tendering Process

As West Limerick Independent Living continues to evolve, our focus remains on enhancing service quality, expanding accessibility, and strengthening partnerships. Additionally, we are preparing for the new Home Support Service tendering process. Key priorities for the coming year include:

- **Enhancing Training** - Expanding professional development opportunities for personal assistants, ensuring they receive ongoing training in best practices, client-centered care, and emerging service needs.
- **Strengthening Partnerships** - Establishing NACIL, a collaborative initiative between all Irish Centers for Independent Living (CILs), to enhance collaboration, share best practices, and secure long-term sustainability for independent living movement in Ireland.
- **Retention and Recruitment** - Prioritizing the retention of experienced staff and recruiting new talent to continuously build our workforce, ensuring we meet the evolving needs of people with disabilities in our community.
- **New Home Support Service Tendering Process** - Engaging with the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) to align with regulatory standards and meticulously preparing for the tender and licensing process to ensure compliance and readiness.

WLIL remains committed to continuous improvement, ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive the highest standard of support to live independently and actively participate in their communities.

Conclusion

This report reflects the sustained efforts of all WLIL stakeholders—staff, volunteers, and the wider community—to maintain exceptional levels of care, safety, and ethical governance. We remain dedicated to evolving our practices to meet the changing needs of our clients while adhering to the highest standards in our sector.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Summarizing 2024 expenditure

The total administration expenses increased by €290,210 to €2.201 million for 2024. Key drivers include a €359,000 rise in wages and salaries, making up 79.6% of expenses, and a €40,000 increase in PRSI. There was also a €57,500 gain on disposal, reducing expenses. New asset additions like motor vehicles (€116,000) and revenue of €112,151 from income like Sponsorship and Bequest.

Concise Expenditure Highlights - Financial Year 2024

- Total administrative expenditure: 2.20 million, an increase of €0.29 million (+15.2 %) in 2023.

Staff-related costs (core of service delivery):

- Wages & salaries €1.75 million (+€0.36 million, +25.8 %).
- Manager's salary €57 k (+€5.8 k).
- Employer PRSI €183 k (+€40.7 k).
- Pensions €16 k; Staff training €13.6 k (+€7.1 k).
- Together these items total €2.02 million and represent 82 % of all expenditure for the year.

Operating overheads (select movements):

- Insurance €52.8 k (-€6.2 k).
- Software & IT €13.7 k (-€5.5 k).
- Protective clothing €6.6 k (+€6.5 k) following bulk purchases.
- Travel - employees €74 k (broadly flat).

Nonrecurring items:

Gain on disposal of motor vehicles booked as a credit of €57.5 k, capital investment (outside P&L): purchase of replacement vehicles €116.6 k, largely funded through the proceeds of disposals. **Bottom line effect:** after recognizing €2.20 million in government grant income, the organization generated a surplus of €110.5 k (prior year deficit €27.3 k).

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Health and Safety Overview

West Limerick Independent Living is steadfast in its commitment to ensuring a safe and healthy environment for all employees, service users, and stakeholders. This report provides an overview of the organisation's performance concerning its safety objectives, in alignment with the principles outlined in the Safety Statement. It encompasses the diverse activities undertaken, associated risks, and the measures implemented to manage these risks effectively. As part of its ongoing dedication to safety, West Limerick Independent Living conducts an annual review to assess the effectiveness of its Safety Statement, policies, and procedures. This report highlights the organisation's investment in health, safety, and welfare, outlines preventative measures taken, and presents data on workplace injuries and occupational health trends. Key areas covered include:

- Safety Statement reviews
- Risk assessment evaluations
- Health and safety training completed
- Recorded incidents and trends
- New safety measures implemented during the year

This structured approach ensures continuous improvement in health and safety practices, reinforcing the organisation's dedication to a secure and compliant working environment.

Summary of Current Health and Safety Policies and Updates

West Limerick Independent Living remains committed to maintaining a safe and healthy working environment. The organisation's Health and Safety Statement is reviewed annually and serves as a clear statement of its dedication to compliance with safety regulations and best practices.

Key Policy Commitments:

- Compliance with all relevant safety legislation.
- Identification, assessment, and control of hazardous activities.
- Provision of appropriate training, information, and instruction to staff.
- Structured consultation between staff and management on health and safety matters.
- Allocation of necessary resources to ensure a safe working environment.

Risk Management Approach:

Given the wide range of activities undertaken by West Limerick Independent Living, various workplace risks are continuously monitored and managed, including but not limited to:

- Manual handling and lifting activities.
- Lone working situations.
- Prolonged use of workstation equipment and associated ergonomic risks.
- Potential for slips, trips, and falls in different work environments.

Safety Measures Implemented:

To mitigate these risks, the organisation enforces comprehensive safety arrangements, including:

- Incident and near-miss reporting procedures.
- Fire risk assessments and fire safety precautions.
- Ongoing health and safety training and staff instruction.
- Workstation assessments and eyesight screening for employees using display screen equipment.
- Risk assessments for remote/home-based work.
- Active communication and consultation through the Safety and Health Committee.

These measures ensure a proactive approach to workplace safety, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and compliance with health and safety standards.

Incident and Accident Report

In 2024, West Limerick Independent Living recorded one workplace accident involving a soft tissue injury to an employee's knee. The accident occurred when the employee, while overreaching, tripped over a pillow that had fallen on the ground. It remains unclear whether the employee saw the pillow or lost balance, resulting in an unfortunate fall. The incident was promptly reported and thoroughly investigated, and the employee is currently on medical leave.

This event underscores the importance of strict adherence to safety protocols. West Limerick Independent Living remains committed to continuous improvement of its Health and Safety statement, ensuring compliance with safety legislation, providing appropriate training, and facilitating effective communication between staff and management to prevent future incidents.

Risk Assessments

West Limerick Independent Living conducts annual risk assessments not only within its own office premises but also at each employee's workplace, including the homes of individual clients served by the organisation. These risk assessments are bespoke and specifically designed to address the unique work-related activities of the staff, ensuring they align with the organisation's comprehensive Health and Safety Policy. These proactive measures are critical in identifying and mitigating potential hazards, thereby safeguarding the well-being of both employees and clients.

Training and Development

In 2024, West Limerick Independent Living staff participated in comprehensive training on proper manual handling techniques and risk assessment to minimize or eliminate injuries related to manual handling tasks. The training was delivered by Optima Training and TTM Training, specialized offsite manual handling training providers. As part of the organisation's commitment to workplace safety, this training is refreshed every three years or more frequently if accident and illness records indicate a need for additional sessions.

Attendees were reminded to report any injuries resulting from manual handling activities to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the risks involved. This data enables the organisation to assess the effectiveness of its manual handling risk assessments and control measures, identifying opportunities for further risk reduction.

In 2024, Health & Safety training was conducted for company employees over five training days, with a total of 26 employees successfully completing the program.

The associated training costs were as follows:

Manual Handling Training: 26 participants	Trainer Costs: €1,610	Staff Wages Cost: €2,052
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This initiative underscores the organisation's commitment to maintaining a safe and compliant working environment.

Assigned Safety Responsibilities

First Aiders Responders:	Ms. Laura Mulqueen & Alison Oldfield
Fire Wardens:	Ms. Alison Oldfield, Ms. Laura Mulqueen and Ms. Precious Madubeko
Health and Safety Coordinator:	Ms. Sabrina Doran
COVID-19 Compliance Officer:	Ms. Margaret O' Connor
Safety Representative:	Ms. Alison Oldfield, Ms. Laura Mulqueen and Ms. Precious Madubeko

Improvements and Future Plans

West Limerick Independent Living has taken significant steps to promote health and safety in the workplace. This includes reviewing the Safety Statement, conducting annual risk assessments, and scheduling comprehensive health and safety training for all staff. For the upcoming year, initiatives will focus on enhancing these training programs, updating safety protocols, and implementing measures to foster a safer work environment. These efforts align with the organisation's commitment to ensuring the well-being of all.

QUALITY, SAFETY AND ETHICS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Introduction and Overview

West Limerick Independent Living remains committed to enabling individuals with disabilities to live independently within their communities. We serve a diverse range of clients by providing personal assistance, home support, and passenger transport services. In 2024, our strategic priorities include staff retention and recruitment, robust staff training programs, and the ongoing enhancement of quality standards.

Governance and Committee Activities

Our governance framework is overseen by the Board of Directors in conjunction with the Quality, Safety, and Ethics Committee. Meeting on a quarterly basis, the committee:

- **Reviewed** performance metrics and addressed emerging quality and safety concerns.
- **Monitored** compliance with regulatory standards and internal policies.
- **Recommended** improvements for enhanced service delivery and staff training.

Quality and Safety Initiatives

1. Service Delivery Reviews

- Continued monthly satisfaction phone calls by service coordinators to gather direct client feedback and ensure service consistency.
- Conducted annual client visits (or more frequently if necessary) to evaluate individual needs and adjust care plans accordingly.

2. Risk Management

- Operated a structured incident-reporting mechanism for swift mitigation of potential risks.
- Strengthened staff training on risk assessment, infection control, and emergency preparedness.

Membership and Attendance Record

During 2024, the Committee met eight times with attendance recorded in the table below.

Date	Manager	Finance Officer	Coordinator	Office Admin	Rep of WLIL Board	PA
31 st January	✓	✓	Sabrina Doran, Laura Mulqueen, Alison Oldfield Precious Madubeko	✓	X	X
10 th April	✓	✓	Sabrina Doran, Laura Mulqueen, Alison Oldfield Precious Madubeko	✓	X	X
21 st May	✓	✓	Precious Madubeko, Alison Oldfield Sabrina Doran, Laura Mulqueen	✓	X	X
2 nd July	✓	✓	Sabrina Doran, Laura Mulqueen, Alison Oldfield Precious Madubeko	✓	X	X
20 th August	✓	✓	Sabrina Doran, Laura Mulqueen, Alison Oldfield Precious Madubeko	X	X	X
2 nd October	✓	✓	Sabrina Doran, Laura Mulqueen, Alison Oldfield Precious Madubeko	✓	X	X
12 th Nov	✓	✓	Sabrina Doran, Laura Mulqueen, Alison Oldfield, Precious Madubeko	✓	X	X

Key: ✓ = In attendance X = Absent * = Deputy in attendance

Ethical Framework

West Limerick Independent Living adheres to a clear ethical framework:

Ethical Decision-Making: The HSE manages waiting lists and referrals to West Limerick Independent Living. Our role is to assess clients' needs and provide detailed information back to the HSE, which ultimately retains the authority to make final decisions on service allocations and additional hours.

WLIL implements a thorough process that includes monthly satisfaction phone calls by service coordinators and annual client visits, or more frequent visits if needed, to gather feedback and refine service delivery. This structured approach ensures balanced and transparent decision-making, upholding our commitment to quality and continuous improvement.

Staff Training: Throughout the year, we have prioritized comprehensive training to reinforce our commitment to ethics, safety, and quality service delivery.

This includes Performance Management and Advanced Communication Skills training to uphold service excellence, as well as Dignity and Respect at Work training to foster a supportive workplace.

Safety training, including First Aid, Manual Handling, and Fire Marshall sessions, ensures a safe environment for both staff and clients. These initiatives collectively enhance the quality and ethical standards of our services.

