

WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING

In Touch

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04/07/2026

edition 22



*Employee of
the Season
deadline is
September 26th*



*Summer
Edition*



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Example: A €20,000 loan over 5 years will cost €85/week. Rate 3.9% (3.97% apr) Total Cost of Credit €22,019.33. Rate applies to New Car purchases only. All loans are subject to approval. T&Cs Apply. WARNING: If you do not meet the repayments on your loan, your account will go into arrears. This may affect your credit rating which may limit your ability to access credit in the future. Credit Unions in the Republic of Ireland are regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.



Welcome to the 22nd edition of In-Touch! We're thrilled to bring you this special summer issue, coinciding with the beautiful early summer weather we've been enjoying recently. The bright mornings and extended

evenings have certainly lifted our spirits—there's nothing like a dose of sunshine to energize us all.

We are delighted to announce our **Summer 2026 Employees of the Season**. For the first time, this award is shared by two outstanding Personal Assistants: **Kathleen O'Grady** and **Bridget O'Keefe**. Kathleen and Bridget have supported their client with exceptional dedication for many years, providing unwavering care, advocacy, and compassion until her transition to residential care. Their person-centred approach, professionalism, and commitment made a lasting difference to their client's quality of life and truly exemplify the values of West Limerick Independent Living. Choosing this season's recipients was particularly difficult due to the outstanding standard of nominations received. We would also like to recognise **Emma Cahill** and **Margaret Mullane**, whose dedication and excellent work are sincerely appreciated.

Congratulations to Kathleen and Bridget on this well-deserved recognition, and thank you to all of our Personal Assistants for the exceptional care and commitment you demonstrate every day.

We are also delighted to welcome **five new Personal Assistants** to WLIL. Their arrival brings new skills and enthusiasm, and we look forward to the positive contribution they will make to our services.

As we continue to grow, we encourage all employees to take part in our **Refer a Friend** programme and help us recruit more dedicated people to join our team.

We are excited to announce that West Limerick Independent Living will again be hosting a Summer BBQ for all clients and their families, employees and friends! This event offers a wonderful opportunity for everyone to come together, enjoy delicious food, and socialize in a relaxed setting. To ensure we have the perfect weather for our gathering, let's all keep our fingers crossed—and perhaps place a Child of Prague statue in the garden for good measure!

Stay tuned for more details in the coming weeks

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge **Lillian Burke**, HSE Case Manager, who has recently moved on to a new role.

Lillian was a pleasure to work with throughout her time as a HSE Case Manager. She played an important role in supporting people with disabilities across the greater Limerick area, always approaching her work with professionalism, fairness, and genuine care. She was consistently responsive and supportive, helping to ensure clients received the supports they needed. Her collaborative approach and commitment were greatly appreciated by our staff, our clients, and their families. We would like to sincerely thank Lillian for her hard work and support over the years and wish her every success and happiness in her new role.

We welcome nominations or feedback, suggestions and articles for inclusion in our magazine. We would love to hear from you; simply send an email to margaret@limerickcil.com or call 06977320.

Regards Margaret



WE'RE HIRING PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

Make a real difference every day
by supporting independence and choice.

 Meaningful Work

 Support Independence

 Flexible Hours

 Full Training Provided



BE THE
Difference
EVERY DAY

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069 77320

Short Story: The Tension Between Them

by Service Coordinator

I want to share something from a recent visit, because I think a lot of us who do this work will recognise it. I've changed the names, of course — no prizes for guessing who's who.

I called out to see Martin and his PA, Sarah, a few weeks ago, and I could feel something was off before either of them said a word. Martin was sitting with his shoulders turned slightly away from the table. Sarah was across from him, still holding her car keys, like she might need to leave any second. The kettle was going in the background. Neither of them looked at ease.

What struck me was that, on paper, there was nothing wrong at all. Sarah was showing up for every shift. The calls were covered, the meals were made the way Martin liked them, the laundry was done properly. Martin agreed with all of that himself. And yet something between them had quietly tightened.

I sat down and asked how things had been since my last visit.

"Fine," Martin said.

"Yeah, alright," Sarah said, almost in the same breath.

Both answers landed flat. Martin picked up his mug but didn't drink from it. I've learned to notice that kind of thing — when an answer is just a word, with nothing behind it.

"It's just a bit awkward sometimes," Martin admitted after a moment.

"Awkward how?" Sarah asked.

"I don't know," he said, with a short laugh that wasn't really a laugh. "Hard to explain. It's not one thing."

From what I'd been hearing over the previous weeks, none of it sounded serious on its own — Sarah seeming a bit quieter, arriving a few minutes later than usual once or twice, conversations getting shorter, a small mix-up in the kitchen here and there. The kind of thing most people shrug off without thinking twice. But instead of settling, it had hardened into something neither of them could quite name.

"I honestly didn't realise things felt off," Sarah said, leaning back a little.

"That's the thing," Martin said. "Half the time I couldn't tell if I was imagining it."

I noticed Sarah finally set her keys down on the table. A small gesture, but it told me she'd decided to stay and actually have the conversation.

"You can tell when someone's distracted," Martin said quietly. "Or when they don't really want to talk."

Sarah looked down at that.

I could almost see the misunderstanding sitting on the table between them — too small to point to directly, but too large by now to ignore.

"Can I ask you something," I said. They both looked over. "What do you think the other person believes is going on here?"

Martin looked puzzled. "What do you mean?"

"What do you think Sarah is thinking — about you?"

He rubbed at his sleeve. "She probably thinks I'm hard to please," he admitted.

Sarah let out a breath that was almost a laugh.

"And you?" I asked her.

She hesitated. "He probably thinks I don't like working here."

Martin looked up, more surprised than defensive.

"Well..." He shrugged, a little awkwardly. "Maybe a little."

Sarah nodded slowly. "I didn't realise it came across that way." She paused. "My son's been having a rough time at school. Bullying, that sort of thing. My head's just somewhere else half the time, if I'm honest."

Something in Martin's expression eased. "I had plenty of that myself, years ago," he said. "School can be cruel enough."

She gave him a faint smile.

"You worry about them because you remember what it felt like yourself," Martin said. "But children get through more than we give them credit for."

That was really the turning point. Nothing dramatic happened, but for the first time since I'd arrived, the two of them were speaking to each other instead of through me.

While Sarah put the kettle on again, I sat back and watched the tension drain out of the room. And it struck me, the way it usually does in this work — these situations rarely arrive all at once. They build quietly, out of almost nothing. A tone misread here, a silence misunderstood there. One person distracted, the other person overthinking. Two people guessing at what the other meant, instead of simply asking.

And after a while, the guess becomes the reality — even when neither person could tell you exactly where it started.

International Men's Health Week

International Men's Health Week (MHW) will run from Monday 15th until Sunday 21st June (Father's Day). HSE Health and Wellbeing is proud to work in partnership with the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) to support this important annual campaign. The overall aims of the week are to support men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices/activities and encourage the early detection and treatment of health difficulties in males.

This year's theme, 'One Step at a Time', encourages men and boys to focus on progress, not perfection. Men's Health Week is an opportunity to promote practical, positive action, raising awareness, building health knowledge, supporting healthier lifestyle choices, strengthening wellbeing and encouraging early action when health concerns arise. Small steps taken consistently make a meaningful difference over time.

Why focus on men's health?

While many men are living healthier and longer lives in recent years, challenges remain. Men continue to experience higher rates of premature mortality compared to females across the leading causes of death:

- Cancer = 17% higher

- Cardiovascular disease = 148% higher
- Accidents, suicides and poisoning = 172% higher
- Diseases of respiratory system = 32% higher
- Diseases of the digestive system = 58% higher

These figures highlight why targeted action matters. Men are often more likely to engage in risk-related health behaviours, including higher levels of smoking, alcohol and drug use, and are less likely to engage with primary care and screening services. Social, economic, and structural inequalities also play a major role, with some groups and communities facing particularly significant men's health challenges.

But Men's Health Week is not just about raising awareness of preventable health problems for males, it's about recognising and building on progress. Across Ireland, men are taking positive steps to improve their health every day in workplaces, Men's Sheds, health centres, communities, sports clubs, families and friendships. By creating supportive environments and practical opportunities, we can help more men take action, not only adding years to life, but life to years.

Whether it's booking a check-up, getting more active, talking to someone, improving diet, supporting a friend, or making an effort to recruit more men to your service, every positive action counts. How will you be a part of Men's Health Week this year?



Men's Health Week

Monday 15th – Sunday 21st June 2026

ONE STEP AT A TIME – progress, not perfection

Find out more at www.mhfi.org



Holding the Line: The Growing Recruitment Crisis in Disability Services

Across Ireland, disability services are facing one of the greatest challenges they have encountered in many years — staffing. While much attention is often focused on funding, waiting lists, or policy announcements, the reality on the ground is that without enough Personal Assistants, support workers, and frontline staff, independent living services simply cannot function effectively.

At , recruitment has become a constant and ongoing effort. Like many organisations throughout the country, we are continuously advertising across social media platforms, attending job fairs, promoting vacancies locally, and encouraging word-of-mouth recruitment. Significant efforts have also been made to improve rates of pay and provide supports such as travel contributions to make these positions more attractive.

However, despite these efforts, it can often feel like running to stand still. Even when new staff are recruited, many existing staff move on to other sectors or different forms of employment. The result is that organisations frequently find themselves replacing staff rather than growing services. While this challenge affects providers, the real impact is ultimately felt by the people who depend on services to live independently within their communities.

Nationally, the issue is well recognised. Staffing shortages across disability and community services continue to place enormous pressure on providers and frontline workers alike. The Oireachtas has acknowledged ongoing recruitment difficulties within disability services, while reports across the health and social care sector continue to highlight retention and workforce concerns.

The reality is that many frontline disability support roles are demanding positions carried out by dedicated people who genuinely want to help others. Staff are supporting people in their homes, assisting with daily living, promoting independence, helping individuals access education, employment, healthcare, and social opportunities, and often becoming a vital part of a person's support network.

At the same time, workers themselves are dealing with the pressures of rising living costs, housing difficulties, travel expenses, and the wider cost-of-living crisis affecting communities across Ireland. For organisations like West Limerick Independent Living, this can at times feel deeply frustrating and demoralising. Providers exist to support people and promote independent living, yet staffing shortages can sometimes create situations where services cannot be delivered exactly as intended. This can leave organisations feeling as though they are letting people down, despite significant efforts being made every day behind the scenes to recruit, organise, coordinate, and maintain services.

The frustration is shared by everyone involved — service users waiting for support, families trying to bridge gaps, frontline staff carrying additional pressure, and providers working continuously to maintain services in extremely challenging circumstances. Despite these difficulties, the commitment to independent living remains strong.

The reality is simple: independent living depends on people. Behind every hour of support delivered is a workforce that makes community participation, choice, dignity, and independence possible. Protecting and strengthening that workforce will be one of the most important challenges facing disability services in the years ahead.



AI and Disability – Opportunity or Risk?

Artificial Intelligence, better known as AI, is rapidly becoming part of everyday life. From smartphones and voice assistants to healthcare systems and online services, AI is already shaping how people communicate, work, travel, and access information. For people with disabilities, AI has the potential to become one of the most important technological developments in decades — but it also brings genuine concerns that cannot be ignored.

Across Ireland and internationally, disability organisations are increasingly discussing both the opportunities and risks associated with AI. Used correctly, AI could greatly enhance independent living, communication, safety, and access to services. Used poorly, it could also increase exclusion, reduce human contact, or create barriers for those who are already disadvantaged.



From an independent living perspective, one of the most practical and exciting opportunities is the development of AI-powered smart home systems. Imagine a person living independently at home who has limited mobility or dexterity. Through voice-controlled AI technology, they may be able to:

- Turn lights, heating, and televisions on or off
- Open doors or control curtains
- Make phone calls or send messages hands-free
- Receive medication reminders
- Use emergency voice activation during a fall or medical incident
- Control household appliances without physical assistance

For someone with a physical disability, this type of technology could increase independence, privacy, confidence, and safety within their own home.

AI also has the potential to improve communication supports for people with sensory disabilities. Speech-to-text systems, real-time captioning, image recognition, and AI-powered communication devices are improving rapidly and becoming more widely available. However, there are also concerns.

One major risk is that technology could unintentionally replace human interaction instead of supporting it. Independent living is not simply about efficiency — it is about dignity, relationships, community participation, and choice. There is also concern that some AI systems may not be designed with disabled people in mind, potentially creating new barriers instead of removing them.

Privacy is another important issue. AI systems often rely on collecting large amounts of personal data, including voice recordings, movement patterns, or health-related information. People need reassurance that their information is protected and used appropriately. Like many new technologies, AI itself is neither entirely good nor entirely bad. The key issue will be how society chooses to use it.

For disability services and organisations promoting independent living, AI may offer powerful new tools to support autonomy and participation. But it must always be developed in a way that keeps the individual, their rights, and independence at the centre of the conversation.

The Cost of Disability – Will 2026 Bring Change?

For many disabled people across Ireland, the “cost of disability” is not an abstract political phrase — it is an everyday reality. Higher electricity bills, increased transport costs, medical expenses, specialist equipment, dietary requirements, and the additional day-to-day costs associated with living with a disability continue to place enormous pressure on individuals and families throughout the country. While inflation and the wider cost-of-living crisis have affected everybody, many disabled people argue that they have been carrying an additional financial burden for years.

The Cost of Disability
It's more than most people think.

Many disabled people face extra everyday costs. A Cost of Disability payment would help create a fairer, more inclusive Ireland.

Everyday extra costs

- Higher bills**
Heating, electricity and running essential equipment.
- Transport**
Getting to appointments, education, or work costs more.
- Healthcare**
Medications, therapies and regular treatments add up.
- Equipment**
Specialist equipment and repairs can be very expensive.
- Everyday living**
Additional costs for dietary needs, clothing, and daily essentials.

“It's not about luxury. It's about equality, independence and taking part in life.”

A Cost of Disability payment would make a real difference. *Let's make it happen.*

Have your say. Talk to your local TD about supporting a Cost of Disability payment. Your voice can help build a fairer Ireland for everyone.

Over the past year, the issue has become one of the most widely discussed topics within disability services and disability advocacy groups. Political pressure has continued to grow on the Government to introduce a dedicated Cost of Disability payment to help address some of these extra expenses.

Taoiseach Micheál Martin recently described the issue as a “defining priority” for Government, acknowledging publicly that disabled people face additional financial pressures that must be addressed. However, while the Government has signalled support for the principle of a payment, no formal announcement has yet been made regarding exactly when or how such a scheme may be introduced.

At present, there is growing speculation that further developments may emerge as part of the next national Budget discussions. During the spring, submissions and consultations were invited from organisations, advocacy groups, and stakeholders connected to the disability sector. West Limerick Independent Living made a submission highlighting the real and ongoing financial pressures experienced by many disabled people and those relying on independent living supports. For many people, the issue is not simply about income — it is about equality, independence, and participation in society. The additional costs associated with disability can often limit opportunities, increase social isolation, and place strain on individuals and families already navigating complex challenges.

At the same time, there are still many unanswered questions:

- Who would qualify for any future payment?
- Would it be means-tested?
- Would it apply to people in employment?
- How would the level of support be calculated?
- Would it genuinely reflect the real-life costs people experience?

These are questions that many within the disability community continue to raise.

Regardless of political viewpoints, one thing is clear — the conversation around the cost of disability is no longer going away. Awareness of the issue is growing nationally, and many organisations, service providers, and advocacy groups continue to push for meaningful action.

For those wishing to learn more or make their voices heard, one practical step is to contact local TDs and public representatives to ask where they stand on the issue and whether they support the introduction of a dedicated Cost of Disability payment.

The months ahead may prove significant in determining whether this long-discussed issue finally moves from public debate to practical action.

ADARE STATION – THEN

TEMPORARY STATION – NOW

THE COSTLY CYCLE IS IT VALUE FOR MONEY?

- SOLD 2013 €216,000
- BOUGHT BACK 2025 €2 MILLION
- TEMPORARY STATION FOR RYDER CUP €3 MILLION

STOP THE CYCLE. BUILD IT RIGHT. BUILD IT FOR EVERYONE.

Instead of spending millions on a temporary solution, it's time to build a permanent, fully accessible station that delivers better value, better services and a lasting legacy for Adare and beyond.

- Step-free access
- Accessible toilets
- Audio announcements
- Safe, independent access for all

A PROPER STATION – THE RIGHT SOLUTION

ADARE STATION

Would a permanent, fully accessible station in Adare deliver better value, better services and a better legacy for everyone?

Accessible for everyone

This is an AI generated image for illustration purposes only.

Building for Weeks or Building for the Future?

Iarnród Éireann is central to independent living for many disabled people across Ireland. For people with mobility difficulties, wheelchair users, older persons and those unable to drive, accessible public transport is not a luxury — it is essential. Rail services connect people to hospitals, education, employment, social events and everyday life. That is why recent controversy surrounding Irish Rail raises important questions. The company is facing scrutiny over a failed national train traffic management and signalling project which has reportedly resulted in a €50 million write-down. At the same time, attention has now turned to Adare ahead of the 2027 Ryder Cup.

Construction has begun on a temporary railway station in Adare to serve the international golf event. Reports suggest the temporary station could cost approximately €3 million. However, critics have pointed out that the original Adare railway station and lands were sold around a decade ago for just over €200,000 before later being repurchased for approximately €2 million. For many people, particularly disabled passengers, the key issue is not simply cost — it is long-term thinking. If millions are already being invested into rail infrastructure in Adare, would it make more sense to create a permanent, fully accessible station that could serve the community long after the Ryder Cup has ended?

A permanent station could potentially support tourism, reduce road congestion, improve regional connectivity and provide long-term transport access for local residents, older people and disabled passengers throughout West Limerick. Accessibility should not be treated as an afterthought or a temporary measure. Modern railway infrastructure should include level access, accessible toilets, proper signage, audio announcements, wheelchair-friendly platforms and safe independent access for all passengers.

Temporary solutions may solve short-term problems, but public infrastructure should ideally deliver public benefit for decades, not weeks. The Ryder Cup offers a major opportunity to showcase Ireland on the world stage. However, it also presents an opportunity for Irish Rail and Government to demonstrate better long-term planning, accessibility and value for public money. For many disabled people, the question is simple: if the money is already being spent, why not build something lasting?

West Limerick INDEPENDENT LIVING

Supporting
Independence,
Empowering
Lives



HEALTHCARE JOB FAIR



Tuesday
19th May 2026



Southcourt Hotel,
Limerick



"Supporting people
with disabilities
and their families
for over two decades"



Representing
West Limerick
Independent Living



**Cassie
Costello**
Service
Coordinator



**Michaela
Quirk**
Service
Coordinator



**Precious
Midubeko**
Coordinator

On Tuesday, 19th May 2026, West Limerick Independent Living proudly took part in the **Healthcare Recruitment & Jobs Fair** at the **Southcourt Hotel, Limerick**.

Our team had the opportunity to meet many people interested in careers in Personal Assistant and Home Support Services, share information about our work, and highlight the rewarding role our staff play in *supporting independence* in our community.

Thank you to everyone who stopped by our stand!



Supporting
People



Enabling
Independence



Empowering
Lives



Stronger
Together

West Limerick Independent Living recently attended a healthcare recruitment and jobs fair held at the South Court Hotel on Tuesday, 19th May 2026. The event brought together a wide range of healthcare and community organisations to promote career opportunities within the health and social care sector.

Representing West Limerick Independent Living at the event were Service Coordinators Cassie Costello, Michaela Quirk, and Precious Madubeko. The team engaged with many individuals interested in pursuing careers within Personal Assistant and Home Support Services and provided information on the organisation's work in supporting independent living across the community.

The jobs fair provided an excellent opportunity to highlight the important role Personal Assistants play in enabling people with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in their communities. Attendees were able to learn more about the flexible and rewarding nature of the work, the training and supports available, and the values that underpin the services provided by West Limerick Independent Living.

West Limerick Independent Living continues to actively recruit compassionate, reliable, and person-centred staff to support the growing demand for services throughout the region.



Planning for the Future – Could Community-Based Disability Housing Work?

A new disability housing initiative known as “Homes For Us” has sparked an important conversation across Ireland about the future of independent living and what happens when ageing parents can no longer care for their adult sons or daughters with disabilities.

The initiative, developed by families in Dublin, is based on a simple idea — people with disabilities should not lose their homes, routines, friendships and independence simply because their parents grow older or pass away. Instead of large institutional settings, the proposal focuses on small-scale housing within ordinary communities, supported by flexible personal assistance and independent living supports. It raises an important question for communities across Ireland: could a model like this work elsewhere?

For a town the size of Newcastle West, with a population of approximately 10,000 people, a modest development of perhaps four to eight accessible homes integrated into a normal housing estate could potentially work well if the right supports and funding structures were in place.

Limerick City, due to its larger population and wider range of services, might support a bigger model involving several smaller clusters of accessible housing spread throughout different communities rather than one centralised development. However, the discussion also raises difficult questions. Who would buy the land? Who would manage the homes? Who would oversee staffing, maintenance, governance and safeguarding over the long term?

Many disability organisations are already stretched and may be reluctant to take on responsibility for housing developments in addition to the services they currently provide. Long-term volunteer involvement can also be difficult to sustain over decades. This means any future model would likely require a combination of State funding, professional housing management, family involvement and strong long-term planning.

One of the most important lessons from initiatives like this is that families and like-minded individuals may need to come together themselves if they want to see projects like this become a reality. Seeking professional advice, engaging with local authorities, housing bodies, disability organisations and community leaders, and building partnerships from the ground up may be the only realistic way of progressing such ideas.

While the State has an important role to play, many families fear that if they simply wait for somebody else to solve the issue, it could take many years before anything meaningful happens — if it happens at all. The future of independent living may depend not only on funding and policy, but on communities working together to create practical, sustainable solutions for the next generation.



*Celebrating Excellence,
Empowering Lives*

EMPLOYEE OF THE SEASON SPRING 2025

WLIL-ing To Assist!

At West Limerick Independent Living, our people are at the heart of everything we do. The Employee of the Season award celebrates dedication, compassion and the outstanding support that makes a real difference every day.

*A huge thank you to all
our amazing staff!*

3rd Runner-Up



BRIDGET KENNEDY

Personal Assistant
Pictured with Cassie Costello
(Service Coordinator)

Our Winner!



LAURA RICHARDSON

Employee of the Season

In recognition of your exceptional commitment, compassion and the positive impact you make every single day. Thank you for being an inspiration to us all!

Pictured with Laura Quinn (Client) and
Cassie Costello (Service Coordinator)

*Congratulations
to our Runners-Up!*



**LISA
O'CONNOR**

Runner-Up



**BRIDGET
O'CONNELL**

Runner-Up

Your dedication
changes lives.
Your care builds
independence.
**You are the heart
of WLIL!**

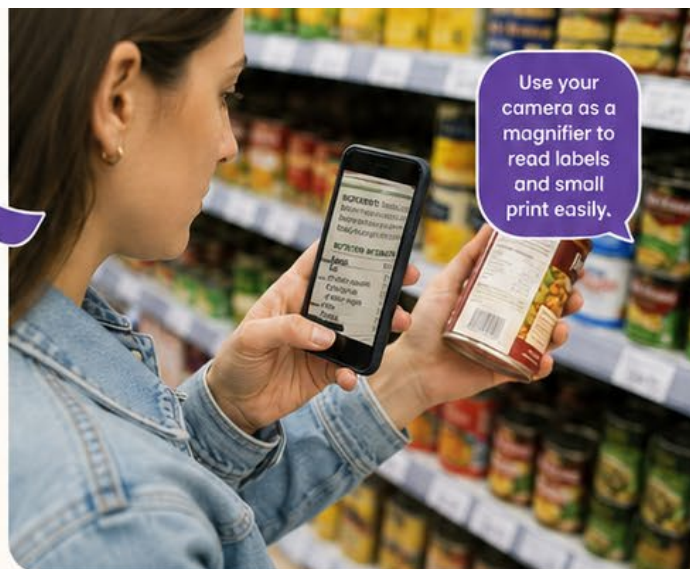


Thank you for living our values every day.

WLIL-ing To Assist!

WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING

THE SUPERPOWERS of a SMARTPHONE



Use your camera as a magnifier to read labels and small print easily.

Tools you already have. Features you might not know.

Your smartphone is more than just a phone – it's packed with accessibility features that can make life easier, safer and more independent. Take a few minutes to explore – you might be surprised by what's possible!

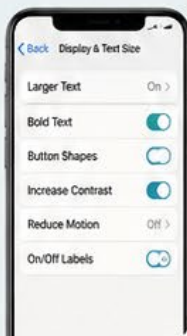


1 SEE IT YOUR WAY

Make text bigger, bolder and easier to read.

Adjust screen brightness, contrast and colours to suit your needs.

Look for: Display & Text Size (or Accessibility) in Settings.



2 USE YOUR VOICE

Control your phone, make calls, send messages and open apps – all with your voice.

Great for when your hands are full or you need a little extra support.



Hey Siri...



3 LET YOUR PHONE READ TO YOU

Screen readers read text aloud from your phone, including websites, emails and books.

Useful for people with vision loss, dyslexia or anyone who prefers listening.

Today's meeting will start at 10 o'clock in the main conference room.



4 LIVE CAPTIONS

Get real-time captions for videos, calls and conversations.

Perfect for noisy environments or if you are deaf or hard of hearing.



5 MAGNIFICATION MADE EASY

Turn your phone's camera into a magnifying glass.

Ideal for reading menus, medicine labels, prices and more.



6 HEARING HELP

Many phones can connect to hearing aids and enhance sound.

Some even amplify conversations or reduce background noise.



7 STAY SAFE

Use emergency SOS to call for help or alert your chosen contacts quickly.

Set it up today – it could make all the difference.



FREE APPS WORTH EXPLORING



Google Lookout
Uses your camera to identify objects, signs and text.



Seeing AI
Describes people, text and objects out loud.



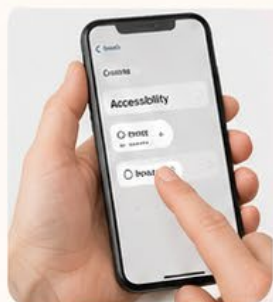
Be My Eyes
Connect with volunteers for visual assistance via live video call.



Voice Access
Control your Android phone using just your voice.



Live Transcribe
Converts speech to text in real time.



HOW TO GET STARTED

- 1 Open Settings on your phone
- 2 Tap Accessibility
- 3 Explore the features that suit you

Small changes can make a big difference!

QUICK FACTS



Over 2.5 billion people worldwide could benefit from assistive technology.



Accessibility features benefit everyone, not just people with disabilities.



Many tools are built-in to your phone and cost nothing.



Take a few minutes to explore – you might discover a new superpower!

Technology should remove barriers, not create them.

Your smartphone can help you stay connected, informed and independent.



EXPLORE. ENABLE. EMPOWER. The superpowers are already in your pocket.



MY JOURNEY LIVING WITH PARKINSONS

The year was twenty-fourteen, When the whisper first began, A quiet uninvited change,
That altered every plan,
Before the medication brought relief, I walked a heavy track,
I fell in to a very dark place,
And pushed the world right back. I closed the door on everyone, Isolated in my fear,
But my siblings never wavered, They were always standing near.

Acceptance was the vital key, I needed right from the start,
For medication cannot find its way,
Without an open heart,
The healing came, the darkness broke, The fog began to clear,
And looking out across the room, I held my family dear.



My husband Thomas is my rock, My anchor in the storm,
A devoted carer night and day, Whose love keeps safety warm, We didn't always see eye to eye,
He never spoilt me or let things slide, No morning tea served in my bed, "Get up right now" is what he said,
"if you stay down you will be left behind", His discipline was a strict design,
It may sound harsh to those who hear.

My children are my proudest joy, A steady guiding light,
Who supported me through everything, And helped me win the fight.
My dearest darling grandchildren, Bring laughter to the door,
They love to come and visit me, And fill the active floor,
With loads of musical instruments, For them to play.



Each morning a bright new start, And through the shadows loom,
My personal assistant Carmel walks right in, And brightens up the room,
A beautiful breath of fresh air, She knows just what to say,
To snap me out of heavy moods, And start a better day.
Without her care and bright spirit, I know I would be lost,
She helps me face the daily tasks, No matter what the cost.

Back in September twenty nineteen, when I first began the class,
I truly hated going,
Watching difficult hours pass. I used to stumble, trip and fall, And bang in to the wall, Thinking I had just one side, With no control at all.
But Thank God for how things alter, For I hate to miss one now,
As Pat O'Dea works wonders, Showing us the path and how.

He thought me how to focus, How to walk with a proper stride, Proving I am made of steel,
With strength and local pride. His brilliant care and passion, Helps us fight and truly strive,
To beat the odds, keep dementia back, And keep the pace alive.

Nora is an inspiration, a true and steady friend,
Who encouraged me to keep it up, On whom I could depend.
Then, our brilliant Margaret, Organises everything we do, With a golden heart of service, She guides our happy crew.
Maura Nolan lifts our voices With exercise and song,
A blessing that restores our speech, And makes our spirit strong.
We share a bond within this room, That time can never blend,
For all of us within the class, Are truly the best of friends.



When the day is winding down, The sweetest grace is found,
In memory of my heavenly Father Bill, A beautiful gentle sound.
He encouraged me to play music When I was just a child,
With the old black dot accordion, My childhood hours beguiled,
Now Lauras concertina brings a newer loving tone, Alongside my trusty harmonica,
When I play at night alone.

I come from a family of twelve, A grand and musical crew, most of them playing the accordion, Keeping traditions true.
 My sister Mary and her husband Mike, Are pillars by my side,
 Lovely singers in the rambling house, Where our favourite songs and tunes abide. Mike will take out his tin whistle,
 To play a tune with me,
 While I try to coax young Karina, To join our family glee.
 Anita grabs her old guitar, A true and rambling friend,
 Our harmonica and guitar duets, Brings joy that has no end.



When July arrives, it's my favourite time, The spirits starts to soar,
 Heading to the Willie Clancy week, To music and dance galore.
 I see the ferries from my Shannon view home, The Shannon Dolphin or The Shannon Breeze, To take us to Killmer,
 Across the Shannon wide.
 Stopping off at the Armada to grab a bite to eat Before heading off to Milltown Malbay,
 To play a tune in the street.

Before I finish this poem,
 I really want to say Pat must have the patience of Job, To put up with me each day,
 I want more and more dancing you see,
 But to give Pat his due he always does his best in glee.



According to research, movement to music seems to be the way to go, So that should
 So let the dangers try to loom, We meet it with a smile,
 With music, dance, love and grace, We conquer every mile,

I found light at the end of the tunnel, Shining bright and true,
 Living my journey every day, With a head reborn and new.

Written by Geraldine Mulvihill with the help of her husband Thomas and their granddaughter Sarah.
 I truly hope you enjoy the read.



Welcome

TO OUR

NEW PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

We are delighted to welcome our new Personal Assistants
who have recently joined West Limerick Independent Living.



Liam Walsh



Kate Doody



Megan Bradshaw



Martina Doherty



Camilla Lima



TURN YOUR BUSINESS IDEA INTO REALITY

ONLINE SELF-EMPLOYMENT COURSE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES 2026

TU Dublin, proudly supported by AIB, is offering a unique **ONLINE** self-employment programme for people with disabilities on the island of Ireland who have a business idea but have not yet started a business.

**The only tailored programme of its kind
in the Republic of Ireland.**



WHAT YOU'LL GAIN



CLARIFY YOUR IDEA

Explore and develop your business idea with expert guidance.



BUILD YOUR PLAN

Create a practical business plan tailored to your goals.



EXPERT SUPPORT

Benefit from 1-to-1 mentoring and group workshops.



FLEXIBLE & ACCESSIBLE

100% online delivery designed to fit around your needs.



NO COST TO YOU

Fully funded by AIB – there is no cost to participants.

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

- ✓ Delivered by TU Dublin's experienced lecturers and business advisors
- ✓ Tailored content for persons with disabilities and their unique journey
- ✓ Substantial individual support throughout the programme
- ✓ 20 places available – ensuring high-quality, personalised support
- ✓ No funding is provided, but you'll gain the knowledge and confidence to start your own business



APPLICATION DEADLINE:

**THURSDAY
17 JULY 2025**

PARTICIPANTS SAY...

“The programme gave me the confidence and clarity I needed to finally take the first step towards my dream.

– 2024 Participant

“The support was outstanding. I never felt alone in the process.

– 2023 Participant

HOW TO APPLY – IT'S EASY!



1 Visit the course webpage using the link below.



2 Read the full course details and eligibility information.



3 Complete the online application form.



4 Submit your application before the deadline.



5 Shortlisted applicants will be contacted for next steps.



READY TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP?

If you have a disability and a business idea, we'd love to hear from you!

FULL DETAILS & APPLICATION FORM AVAILABLE AT:



tudublin.ie/explore/news/aib-and-tu-dublin-self-employment-for-persons-with-disabilities-programme-2026.php

Your idea. Your future. Our support.

TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN.