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In Touch

14/06/2025

edition 18



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First Time & Returning Borrowers







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Welcome to the 18th 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 in May. The bright mornings and extended

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

This summer also marks a significant moment for the Catholic Church. Following the passing of Pope Francis on Easter Monday, April 21, 2025, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost was elected as Pope Leo XIV on May 8, becoming the first American-born pontiff. Pamela, who is a client and board member, was fortunate to be in Rome during this historic event, see photos inside.

We're also delighted to announce our Summer 2025 Employee of the Season: Triona Sexton. Triona exemplifies the highest standards of care and dedication, consistently placing her clients at the heart of her work. This season's selection was particularly challenging due to the exceptional quality of all nominations. Ann Daly and Veronika Kubale were also nominated, congratulations to all.

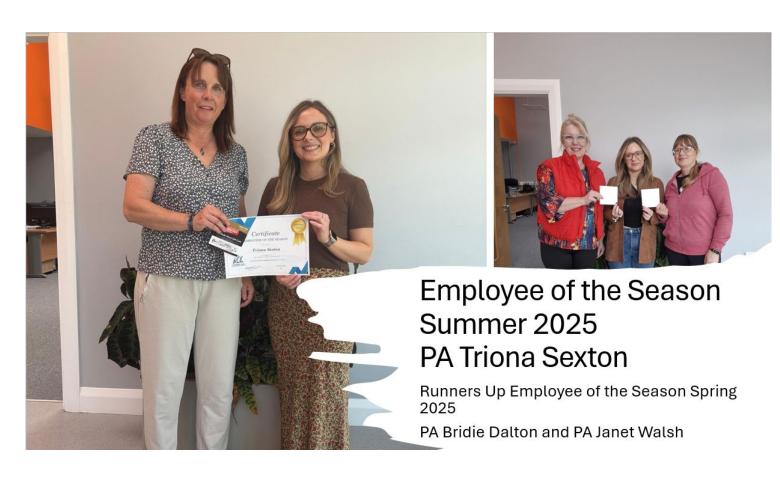
We are thrilled to welcome seven new Personal Assistants to our team! Their addition brings fresh energy and talent, and we look forward to collaborating to strengthen our services further. To continue building our exceptional team, we encourage all employees to participate in our refer a friend program.

We are excited to announce that West Limerick Independent Living will be hosting a Summer BBQ for all clients, 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!

Date: 25th July so please mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details in the coming weeks.

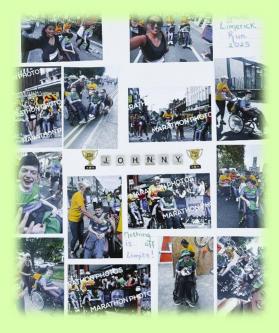
I'd like to encourage clients to submit their nominations for the Employee of the Season, deadline is 31st July 2024. We welcome feedback, suggestions and articles for inclusion in our magazine. We would love to hear from you; simply send an email to margaret@limerickcil.com or call 06977320.

Regards Margaret



The Great Limerick Run

The Great Limerick Run always brings out a fantastic community spirit and showcases some impressive athletic performances. The event is known for its inclusivity and encourages participation from people of all abilities. The event typically offers accessible routes and support for participants with disabilities, including wheelchair users and those with other mobility challenges. They strive to make the run a welcoming and supportive event for everyone.



We are delighted to share that Johnny Harnet, a client of West Limerick Independent Living, enjoyed a wonderful day out with his family and supporters. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Johnny and his mother for providing the photos that captured these memorable moments.



JOHNNY HARNET WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Farewell to Alison



It is with mixed emotions that we bid farewell to one of our service coordinators, Alison, who has been an integral part of West Limerick Independent Living for nearly four years.

Alison's dedication and compassion have left a lasting impact on both her clients and colleagues. Her clients held

her in the high regard, and the Personal Assistants who worked alongside her consistently praised her supportive nature and attentive ear.

As a colleague, Alison brought joy and camaraderie to our team. Her sense of humour and positive spirit made our workplace brighter, and we shared many memorable moments together.

Alison, as you embark on your next journey, please carry with you the essence of West Limerick Independent Living. We are grateful for the time we've shared and the contributions you've made.

Wishing you all the best in your future endeavours.



JOHNNY HARNET

Training: A Necessity for Excellence

Training is essential for all support workers. It ensures they have the up-to-date skills and knowledge to provide high-quality, safe, and effective care. Continuous professional development helps maintain compliance with industry standards and improves overall service quality.

At WLIL, ongoing training is not only essential, but also necessary to meet the high standards of our sector. As an employer and service provider, we are required to adhere to these standards to ensure the best possible service.



While not everyone may be enthusiastic about Fiona presenting Margaret with a lovely gesture for Training Support

additional training, it is a necessary part of our commitment to excellence. We are dedicated to supporting our staff in achieving the skills required to excel in their roles.



General Trivia Quiz

Test your knowledge with this fun mix of trivia! Answers are at the bottom (no peeking!).

- 1. What is the capital city of Canada?
- A. Toronto
- B. Vancouver
- C. Ottawa
- D. Montreal
- 2. Which element has the chemical symbol 'O'?
- A. Oxygen
- B. Osmium
- C. Ozone
- D. Opium
- 3. Who painted the Mona Lisa?
- A. Vincent van Gogh
- B. Michelangelo
- C. Leonardo da Vinci
- D. Pablo Picasso

- 4. What's the smallest prime number?
- A. 1
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 0
- 5. Which planet is known as the Red Planet?
- A. Venus
- B. Mars
- C. Jupiter
- D. Saturn
- 6. What year did the Titanic sink?
- A. 1912
- B. 1905
- C. 1920
- D. 1898
- 7. Which fictional detective lives at 221B Baker Street?
- A. Hercule Poirot
- **B. Sherlock Holmes**
- C. Miss Marple
- D. Sam Spade
- 8. What's the main ingredient in traditional Japanese miso soup?
- A. Seaweed
- B. Tofu
- C. Miso paste
- D. Soy sauce
- 9. Which country gave us the word "robot"?
- A. Japan
- B. Germany
- C. Czech Republic
- D. Russia
- 10. How many sides does a hexagon have?
- A. 5
- B. 6 B. 6
- C. 7 C. Czech Republic C. Miso paste D. 8
 - B. Sherlock Holmes

A: 1912

B. Mars

C. Leonardo da Vinci

A. Oxygen

C. Ottawa





Pope Francis: From Buenos Aires to Rome

by Gerard O'Connor



Pope Francis, born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires in 1936, led a life that spanned continents and cultures. Raised in a modest family of Italian immigrants, young Jorge was the eldest of five children. His father, Mario José Bergoglio, worked as a railway worker and accountant, while his mother, Regina María Sívori, was a homemaker. Despite financial challenges, the family instilled strong values of faith, education, and community.

Before joining the seminary, Jorge studied chemistry and took on various jobs, including working as a nightclub bouncer to support his education. These experiences gave him a unique perspective on life and people from all walks of life.

His journey in the Jesuit order took him across the globe. In 1980, he spent time in Limerick, Ireland, at the Jesuit Centre of Spirituality to improve his English, a formative experience that broadened his worldview.

Elected as the first Jesuit and first Latin American pope in 2013, Pope Francis became known for his humility and commitment to social justice. He championed causes like poverty alleviation, climate action, and Church reform, and was known for personal acts of compassion, such as quietly meeting with the homeless in Rome.

Pope Francis passed away recently, after a prolonged pneumonia-related hospital stay in February—March 2025, Pope Francis briefly resumed limited ministry but, the day after issuing his Easter message, suffered a fatal stroke and cardiac arrest on 21 April 2025. His 26 April funeral drew a quarter-million mourners and dozens of world leaders, and his last charitable act—donating the popemobile as a mobile clinic for Gaza's children—was announced on 4 May. His journey from Buenos Aires to the Vatican continues to inspire millions around the globe.

Incentivised Stop Smoking Service Pilot

Financial incentives to stop smoking (FISS) programs have been implemented internationally to encourage people who smoke to quit smoking. A Cochrane systematic review and meta-analysis of existing published evidence suggests that financial incentives are 50% more likely to lead to smoking cessation than other types of support.

The HSE Tobacco Free Ireland Programme is working with 3 pilot sites through a Health Research Board funded study in partnership with the RCSI and has developed a stop smoking gift voucher incentive scheme. This exciting new project commenced at the end of March this year.



The financial incentives to stop smoking (FISS) scheme is a HSE initiative to provide people from disadvantaged areas who smoke with an incentive to make a quit attempt and continue to engage with professional support to quit. The incentive increases engagement with stop smoking support and increases the chances of success. Incentives will be provided in the form of One4All gift vouchers. The maximum amount that someone can avail of is €400 (over a 12month period), but this is made up of smaller amounts per visit when someone is proven to be off cigarettes through standard clinical testing. For example, if you have quit for one week you can get €20, quit for 2 weeks you will get €20, and so on. Quitting smoking can greatly improve people's health. Incentives, such as money or vouchers, can be used to encourage smokers to guit, and to reward them if they stay stopped. Such schemes are routine practice in the UK for pregnant women who smoke.



childless-not-by-choice or due to circumstances. This is a safe space to voice frustrations, laugh with like-minded peers, and receive support.

> Every 2nd last Saturday of the month

10 AM - 12 PM

Market House Newcastle West V42 Y425

For more information email Alison at 20205060@ichas.ie



Rialtas na hÉireann Government of Ireland















Neurodiverse PARENTING GROUP

Are you a parent of a neurodiverse child and/or neurodiverse parent yourself?

All welcome to our new social support group for parents of autistic, ADHD, ADD and other neurodiverse children.

Come along and have your say in what you need from the group, meet with other parents, share ideas, celebrate achievements and offer mutual support

No prior registration needed Drop ins during this time are welcome For more Last Friday of information every month 8:30 - 10PM Market House Andi Mothersoul Newcastle West amothersoulewlr.ie V42 Y425



Rialtas na hÉirean nent of Ireland





For more info email: amothersoul@wlr.ie

TODAS AS NACIONALIDADES BEM-VINDAS

ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਕੌਮੀਅਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੁਆਗਤ ਹੈ

همه مليت ها استقبال مي كنند

ىالمىتدئىن الكاملد



TOUTES LES NATIONALITÉS BIENVENUES ЛАСКАВО ПРОСИМО УСІХ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОСТЕЙ







Shining in Silver: Royal Hospital Donnybrook recognised for Healthy Catering Excellence

Congratulations to the Royal Hospital Donnybrook on achieving the Silver level of the Happy Heart Healthy Eating Award. Led by Catering Manager Ruth McDonnell and Head Chef Kris Stefanski, the in house team and partner Aramark refreshed menus and cooking methods to meet HSE Nutrition Standards—offering healthier, great tasting meals for staff and visitors while controlling costs. The hospital now stands among 57 accredited healthcare sites nationwide, underscoring its visible commitment to staff wellbeing and a sustainable healthy food culture.



In 2021, the Irish Heart Foundation partnered with the HSE Healthy Eating Active Living Programme to further support healthcare services in meeting the HSE Nutrition Standards for food and drink provision.

What the Award Supports:

- A healthy food environment and a culture of wellbeing
- Long-term, sustainable changes in catering practice
- Visible commitment to staff health and wellbeing

This well-deserved recognition highlights the team's hard work and innovation in supporting staff and visitor wellbeing every day. Congratulations to everyone involved!

Welcoming Our New Personal Assistants

West Limerick Independent Living is delighted to introduce the newest members of our Personal Assistant team: Katie Condon, Linda Dinsberga, Lisa O'Connor, Bernie Molloy, Edyta Brablik, Elizabeth Curtin, and Theresa Killeen.

Each brings valuable experience, dedication, and a shared commitment to empowering people with disabilities to live independently. We are confident that their professionalism and enthusiasm will strengthen our service and enrich the lives of those we support. Please join us in extending a warm welcome as they embark on this important work with our



Inadequate Social Protection Payments Impact Disability Community

Recent reports have highlighted significant concerns regarding inadequate social protection payments provided to individuals with disabilities in Ireland. Many recipients of these payments find themselves struggling to afford basic necessities such as food, heating, and medical expenses, severely limiting their ability to maintain a dignified standard of living. Insufficient payment levels not only compromise daily quality of life but also hinder independence and social participation, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities within the disability community. Advocates argue that the current payment structure fails to reflect the additional financial pressures faced by persons with disabilities, such as specialised care, adapted housing, and accessible transport costs.

Policy change is urgently required to address these shortcomings. Advocacy groups are calling for immediate increases in disability payments, index-linking payments to inflation, and comprehensive assessments of living costs specific to the disability community. Taking these policy steps would significantly improve the economic stability, health outcomes, and overall well-being of individuals with disabilities, ensuring they receive equitable support and the opportunity for genuine independence.



Funding Challenges for Disability Organisations

Recent findings from the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) have highlighted significant funding challenges faced by disability organisations across the country. According to the survey, organisations providing essential services are experiencing increased financial pressure, impacting their ability to maintain quality service delivery and meet growing demand. The report outlines how inadequate funding compromises these organisations' capacity to hire and retain

qualified staff, upgrade essential facilities, and expand programs critical to supporting individuals with disabilities. It emphasises that sustained underfunding could lead to reduced service availability and quality, adversely affecting thousands who depend on these services for daily living.

The DFI recommends several potential solutions, including increasing government investment, establishing multi-year funding commitments, and enhancing collaboration between the government and service providers. These measures would provide organisations with the stability required to effectively plan services, improve staff retention, and ensure consistent, high-quality support. Addressing these funding issues is vital, not only to sustain but also to enhance the well-being and independence of individuals with disabilities in Ireland.

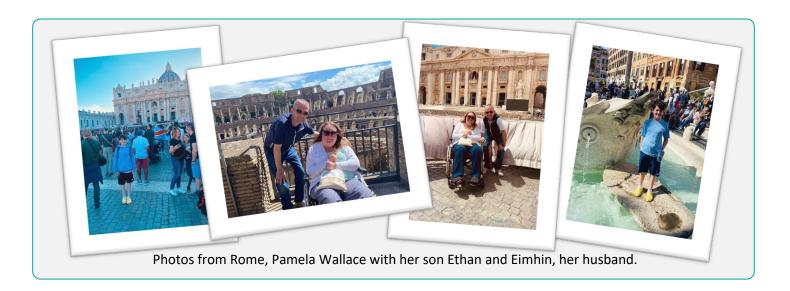


Support for Young Carers: A Call for Action

The Labour Party has recently renewed its call for a comprehensive national strategy to support young carers in Ireland. These young individuals, often providing essential care to family members with disabilities or chronic illnesses, face significant personal and educational challenges due to the responsibilities placed on them. Despite their vital contributions, young carers frequently remain invisible within the system, receiving limited recognition or support. Many struggle to balance schoolwork and social development with their caregiving duties, often at the expense of their own well-being and future prospects.

Labour's proposal emphasises the need for formal identification of young carers, access to tailored mental health and educational supports, and the provision of respite services. The party also calls for inclusive policy development that actively involves young carers and their families in decision-making processes. Recognising and supporting young carers is essential to safeguarding their rights, promoting their development, and ensuring they are not left behind. A national strategy would mark a vital step toward acknowledging their role and providing them with the necessary resources to thrive.





Community Support for Rory Motherway: A Story of Resilience and Solidarity



In a powerful demonstration of community spirit, 19-year-old Rory Motherway from Cork has returned home to a newly renovated house following a life-altering car accident that left him paralysed. The renovations, which were made possible through the dedication and generosity of local volunteers and donors, have transformed Rory's home into a fully accessible living space tailored to his needs. The extensive modifications include wheelchair-accessible entrances, adapted bathroom and bedroom facilities, and enhanced mobility features throughout the house. These improvements have enabled Rory to regain a sense of independence and comfort within his home environment.

The outpouring of support has highlighted the strength and compassion of the Cork community, whose efforts have not only addressed Rory's immediate physical needs but also sent a powerful message of solidarity and care. Rory's story is a reminder of the impact that collective goodwill can have in the face of adversity, and it continues to inspire others across Ireland to support inclusive living for all.

Free Bowel Screening is now available to everyone aged 59 to 70



Engage with Our Client Survey

In our last edition of *InTouch Magazine*, we introduced a client survey aimed at gathering valuable insights from our service users about their experiences with West Limerick Independent Living. This survey provides an important opportunity for you to share your thoughts and feedback on how our services are meeting your needs.

Your participation is vital, as it enables us to understand what we are doing well and where improvements are needed. By hearing directly from you, we can continue to develop our services in a way that respects your preferences, promotes your independence, and aligns with the values of person-centred care.

We extend our sincere gratitude to those who have already responded and encourage all service users to take part. Your feedback is invaluable in helping us enhance our services and ensure we continue to meet your needs effectively.



Summer in Irish Folklore: Myth, Magic & the Turning of the Year

As the sun climbs higher and the days stretch long into golden evenings, summer in Ireland has long been a season of magic, abundance, and powerful tradition. Rooted in ancient Celtic belief, Irish folklore views summer not just as a time of warmth and light, but as a mystical turning point—where the veil between worlds thins, and nature comes alive with meaning.

Let's explore some of the myths and stories that make the Irish summer so enchantingly unique.



Beltane: The Summer's Threshold

The arrival of summer was traditionally marked by Beltane (Bealtaine), one of the four great Celtic fire festivals, celebrated around May 1st. It was a time to welcome fertility, protect livestock, and honour the power of the sun.

Communities would light great bonfires, believing the flames had protective and purifying powers. Cattle were driven between two fires to guard them from disease. It was a liminal time, when spirits and fairies (known as the Aos Sí) were especially active—both revered and feared.

Today, echoes of Beltane live on in May Day customs like flower garlands, maypoles, and local festivals.

Fairies and the Wild Summer Landscape

In summer, Irish folklore tells of fairy folk emerging from their hidden realms in raths (fairy forts), glens, and sacred groves. The longer days were a reminder that nature itself is enchanted.

Fairy rings, circles of mushrooms found in fields, were said to be places where fairies danced at night. Disturbing one could bring misfortune. Certain flowers that bloom in summer, like foxglove and elderflower, were considered to be connected to the fairies and used with caution or respect in herbal lore.

Summer Spirits & Signs from Nature

Irish farmers and herders often watched for seasonal signs in nature to predict the weather and the harvest. If bees were active early in summer, it was seen as a good omen for crops. A scarlet sunset was said to mean fine weather ahead, while a heavy dew on June mornings signalled a good hay season. Nature was not just observed—it was read, almost like scripture.

The Sun Gods and Heroes

The sun held deep mythological meaning in Irish tradition. In some tales, the sun was personified by powerful figures like:

Lugh (Lú), a god of light, skill and summer harvests. His festival, Lughnasadh (August 1st), marks the start of the harvest season. It was a time of fairs, games, matchmaking, and feasting on the first fruits of the land. Lugh's myth involves him defeating Balor, a giant whose evil eye withered crops—a symbolic triumph of summer's light over darkness.

A Living Tradition

While today's summer is more BBQs and beach days than bonfires and blessing wells, Irish folklore continues to influence modern life—from local festivals with ancient roots to a renewed respect for seasonal living and the rhythms of the land.

So this summer, whether you're enjoying a quiet moment in a wildflower meadow or walking a country path, remember: you're walking through a land woven with stories—where even the sunlight has a legend.



Empower lives as a Personal Assistant - join our team today!

Phone 069 77320 or visit our website limerickcil.com

Fire Safety Awareness

Why Fire Safety Matters

Every year, thousands of house fires cause injuries, deaths, and property loss. Most of these fires are preventable with basic knowledge and precautions.

Output Top Causes of Home Fires

- Cooking: Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires.
- **Heating**: Space heaters and chimneys can ignite nearby combustibles.
- **Electrical**: Overloaded outlets and faulty wiring pose significant risks.
- Candles: Unattended candles can quickly lead to devastating fires.

1 Fire Safety Tips

- Install Smoke Alarms: Place alarms on every level, inside bedrooms, and outside sleeping areas. Test monthly and change batteries annually.
- Create an Escape Plan: Plan and practice two ways out of every room, and designate a meeting spot outside
- Keep Cooking Areas Clear: Never leave cooking unattended. Keep flammable items away from the stove.
- Use Candles Safely: Place candles in sturdy holders, away from flammable materials. Never leave them unattended.
- Maintain Heating Equipment: Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn. Have chimneys cleaned annually.
- Avoid Overloading Circuits: Plug only one high-wattage appliance into each outlet.
- Store Flammable Materials Properly: Keep gasoline and other flammable liquids in approved containers, away from living areas.

What to Do If a Fire Starts

- 1. Get out and stay out never go back inside.
- 2. Call 911 from outside.
- 3. If escape isn't possible, stay in a room with the door closed and signal for help.

Special Considerations for Vulnerable Clients

Mobility Impaired Clients

Keep mobility aids near the bed. Install ramps and ensure pathways are wide and clear.

• Cognitive Impairments (e.g., dementia)

Use clear signage and rehearse evacuation steps frequently. Consider monitored smoke alarms.

Hearing Impaired Clients

Install alarms with strobe lights and bed-shaker devices.

What NOT to Do

- Never use water on a grease fire—cover it with a lid or use baking soda.
- **Don't go back into a burning building** once you're out—call 911 from outside.
- **Don't use elevators** during a fire—use the stairs instead.

