

# **Longford Women's Link**

## ***Annual Report 2021***



**LWL**  
*Strategic Plan*  
*2017-2022*



*Linking women with resources to change their lives and transform their community.*



**LWL Longford Women's Link**

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*We confirm that our organisation is registered with the Charities Regulator  
We confirm that LWL is compliant with the Charities Governance Code  
We confirm LWL is GDPR compliant*

**CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE:**

The past year has continued to present challenges for many people and once again Longford Women's Link has been to the forefront in providing support and assistance to those who need it while at the same time advocating for change that would make a real difference to the lives of these people in Longford, and across Ireland.

That the Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the lives of women and their families in Longford and beyond is well-documented and it is now clear that the ripple effect of the pandemic, in its various iterations, will continue to be felt for some time to come.

In times of unprecedented challenges and tremendous uncertainty, Longford Women's Link has continued to be a beacon of hope for all those who need its services. In 2021, the Domestic Violence service provided face-to-face support to 380 clients (309 women and 71 children/young people) across a variety of supports.

In the area of counselling, over 1000 sessions were provided to 95 clients which is a hugely commendable figure given the restraints of pandemic restrictions.

In the Catkins Early Years Childcare Service, which was not fully operational until March, the service catered for 69 children and over 1000 mobile childcare bookings. This has been a very difficult period for early years provision with staff shortages having a massive impact on the service, and the sector in general. We must continue to advocate for the provision of adequate support for this vital sector in the coming year.

There was a significant number of training opportunities for those on the DSP CE Scheme where there continues to be a consistent progression rate of 70% into employment and education.

A key pillar of the organisation's work is education and this year over 300 learners attended education courses from Level 5 to Masters in 2021. The official signing of a progression agreement with IT Carlow Outreach was most welcome.

Longford Women's Link has continued to thrive in the area of representation in organisations such as Irish Rural Link, AONTAS and National Women's Council as well as locally via the PPN, LCDC and various SPCs.

One of the highlights of the year came when See Her Elected, the joint project between LWL and 50/50 North West, won the democracy category in the European Innovation in Politics Awards. The first group to be selected from Ireland, SHE was chosen as a finalist out of 400 projects across Europe. This was an incredible achievement for this relatively new project whose operations pivoted to digital during the pandemic. This year also saw SHE release the first ever guide to running in the local elections, a highly-

## *Longford Women's Link Annual Report 2021*

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acclaimed production which provides would-be candidates with all the information they need to contest a local election.

Across Longford Women's Link, there is one common factor in the continued provision of support and services to such a high standard - the staff. The staff of LWL have shown resilience, ingenuity and determination throughout the extraordinarily difficult year that was 2021. They are the glue that holds this organisation together and their work is changing the lives of women and children for the better every single day. There are not enough words to do their work justice but it is most important to acknowledge it and to say thank you to you all.

I would like to thank Tara Farrell who in her first year as CEO has been an inspiring and innovative leader at LWL and we look forward to working with her in the years ahead.

I would like to thank my fellow trustee members on the Board of Longford Women's Link in 2021. The current trustees are: Tess Murphy, Elsie Moxham, Pat Murphy, Stephanie Igoe, Mary Carleton Reynolds, Nancy Bermingham, Vicky Crosby, Teresa Kearney and this year we also welcomed Breege Kenny and Louise Lovett to the board. We bid farewell to board member Olive Quinn. We met 9 times in 2021 with all of those meetings held virtually.

As a board, we will continue to work towards ensuring that the objectives of LWL are attained and that the integrity of the organisation is protected.

I would like to thank our auditors O'Brien and Co., for their continued support and our funders without whose financial support we would be unable to provide services.

**Sheila Reilly, Chairperson, Longford Women's Link**



## **CEO REVIEW OF 2021**

Throughout 2021, the LWL team continued to meet the challenges presented by a pandemic now in its second year. Once again, our services were forced to alter methods of delivery and adjust plans in the face of the increased need for support in very challenging times. However the dedication and commitment of everyone within the organisation has been unfaltering. Despite the persistent impact of Covid-19, both board and staff were steadfast in their commitment to the work of the organisation. With this in mind, the reporting on LWL's Strategic Priorities takes into account the impact of Covid-19.

### **SP1 Crisis & Practical Support**

LWL Domestic Violence Service continued to see an increased demand for complex levels of support from women and children in Longford. LWLDVS were one of the few services who remained open nationally throughout the pandemic, ensuring that the women and children of Longford were able to access crisis support, often in very high-risk situations. Court accompaniment continued and specific supports were in place for children and young people, who are often not considered as victims in their own right. We continued to forge positive collaborations and partnerships with local and regional agencies and received continue support from TUSLA and the Department of Justice as well as welcome philanthropic support from Women's Aid, Safe Ireland and the Community Foundation, the latter supporting the development of an activity pack for Gardaí to support positive interactions with child victims of domestic violence.

Catkins Early Years Service reopened in March and the commitment of the Early Years educators in continuing to provide high quality early years care and education is very much acknowledged.

### **SP2 Economic and Social Choice and Opportunity**

2021 saw some of our programmes returning to the classroom but the majority remained online with excellent retention for all programmes, again a significant undertaking for all all involved (Education Manager, tutors and learners). Although recruitment continued to be a challenge in relation to programmes such as Community Employment, the CE Supervisors team continue to promote the CE Scheme within the community and the progression rates in employment and further education remain at a consistent 70%. We continued to participate in advocacy work conducted by AONTAS and their work resulted in the establishment of the Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage Fund at the end of 2020. LWL secured funding under this initiative and established a learner laptop loan scheme in 2021 which has enabled our learners to participate in online and blended

learning. Under Longford PPN we also established a facilitated Migrant Women's Group which met weekly online and engaged with a number of services within LWL. We hope to see further development of this group in 2022 as we return to in-person meetings. LWL also continued its work at European level under the Erasmus+ programme as a partner in the DEAL programme on Adult Education and Digital Skills. In November, LWL was successful as the lead partner in securing funding for the DEW (Digital Entrepreneurship for Women) programme.

### **SP3 Leadership, Networking & Influence**

2021 saw LWL continue its programme of advocacy work both locally and nationally. The SHE Programme (in partnership with 50:50 North West) continued to go from strength to strength in its development of an innovative rural strategy to support women wishing to become both more politically aware and active. To date, over 800 women have participated in SHESchool and in December 2021, SHE was awarded the 2021 European Innovation in Politics Award at a ceremony in Brussels – the first Irish project to win this prestigious award. LWL continued to be represented on national bodies and in 2021 CEO Tara Farrell was elected as Chairperson of Irish Rural Link, Education and Training Manager Pamela Latimer was elected to the board of AONTAS and DSP Supervisor Kerrie Prendergast was elected to the board of the EAPN.

### **SP4 Governance**

Despite the impact of the pandemic, LWL continues to ensure that the organisation is in a position to deliver on its strategic priorities but until government departments and agencies move to a model of core and multiannual funding, the precarious nature of the sector looks likely to remain for some time. We will continue to advocate for funding to support our core services.

I would like to thank LWL Chairperson Sheila Reilly and the LWL trustees for their support and dedication throughout the year. Finally, I would like to thank the entire staff team at LWL for the commitment and drive they have shown in another very challenging year. Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir as bhur dtacaíocht.

**Tara Farrell, CEO, Longford Women's Link**



## **Introduction and Overview**

### **About Longford Women's Link**

Longford Women's Link is a dynamic social enterprise which was founded in 1995 initially, to provide back to education and training opportunities for women who had left school early or who had to leave work when they got married. Over the past 25 years LWL has diversified and expanded to become a substantial organisation that advocates effectively on the issues that impact women and their families. It does this by providing practical supports such as affordable childcare and transport where possible and also providing the essential services of domestic violence support, counselling, women's community training, education and support in employment/self-employment options for women and their families. LWL has always been guided by a fundamental purpose of providing a space for women to 'develop their voice' in order to address the myriad issues that they and their families face. Despite major changes within the organisation and also locally, regionally and nationally over these years, LWL remains committed to this guiding purpose.

### **Vision:**

*Our vision is a world where every woman can determine her own life journey, where the voice, expertise and experience of women is heard, respected and celebrated in every aspect of our lives and all women can fulfil their potential, in a safe, just and equal society.*

### **Values:**

#### **Welcoming:**

Our aim is to provide a warm and friendly welcome for all women whatever their background, experience, needs or the story they wish to share with us

#### **Respectful:**

Our approach is to form mutually respectful relationships where we take time to listen and establish trust and understanding through our conversations and our actions

#### **Diversity & Inclusion:**

We are a learning organisation, committed to diversity and inclusion which involves questioning our thinking as always being open to new ways of working and engaging with women.

#### **Solidarity:**

The solidarity of women is crucial to real change. We believe in solidarity between women in all their diversity, through enabling, collaboration and participation and providing a safe space for women to have their say and be themselves.

## **Strategic Priorities**

At the heart of our work are LWL's four Strategic Priorities, all of which have community development and service delivery at their core

### ***Strategic Priority One - Crisis and Practical Support***

Inform and support women practically and emotionally in immediate crisis in their personal and family lives. Ensure support and information is provided by professionally trained staff and women are supported to take the action they need to act on the crisis which is actually a social crisis experienced personally

### ***Strategic Priority Two – Economic and Social Choice and Opportunity***

Encourage women to broaden their horizons and explore learning opportunities in previously un-imagined ways. Harness women's ambition by encouraging networking and peer support in achieving social and economic independence

### ***Strategic Priority Three - Leadership, Networking and Influence***

Develop responsive engagement structures that enable rural women to take up their leadership and influencing capacity in any context

### ***Strategic Priority Four - Governance and Sustainability***

The first three strategic priorities are underpinned by good governance and purposeful organisational collaborative and interlinked relationships (ISD, Inter-agency work, Local Regional & National Advocacy), resulting in capacity-building for the organisation and all stakeholders.

## Integrated Model of Service Delivery - Strategic Priorities

**PURPOSE:** LINK Women with RESOURCES to CHANGE their lives and TRANSFORM their community



### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



GOVERNANCE Sustain a Strong, Stable, Visible and Diverse Organisation

## **Strategic Priority One - Crisis and Practical Support**

The purpose of this strategic priority is to inform and support women practically and emotionally in immediate crisis in their personal and family lives. Ensure support and information is provided by professionally trained staff and women are supported to take the action they need to act on the crisis which is actually a social crisis experienced personally.

The services delivering on this priority are:

- **LWL Domestic Violence Service (page 13)**
- **LWL Counselling Service (page 16)**
- **Catkins Early Years and Afterschool Service (page 17)**
- **Catkins Mobile Childcare Solutions (page 18)**

# LWL Domestic Violence Service

## 2021

- Supports & Services:
- 1:1 Support
  - Group Support
  - Court Accompaniment
  - Advocacy
  - 16 Days Campaign
  - Interagency Collaboration
  - TY & Safe Space Programme



### Key Focus 2021

Crisis Accommodation plans worked

254 court accompaniment supports (during continued Covid restrictions)

Building partnerships with Gardai



2 Summer camps with 5 families

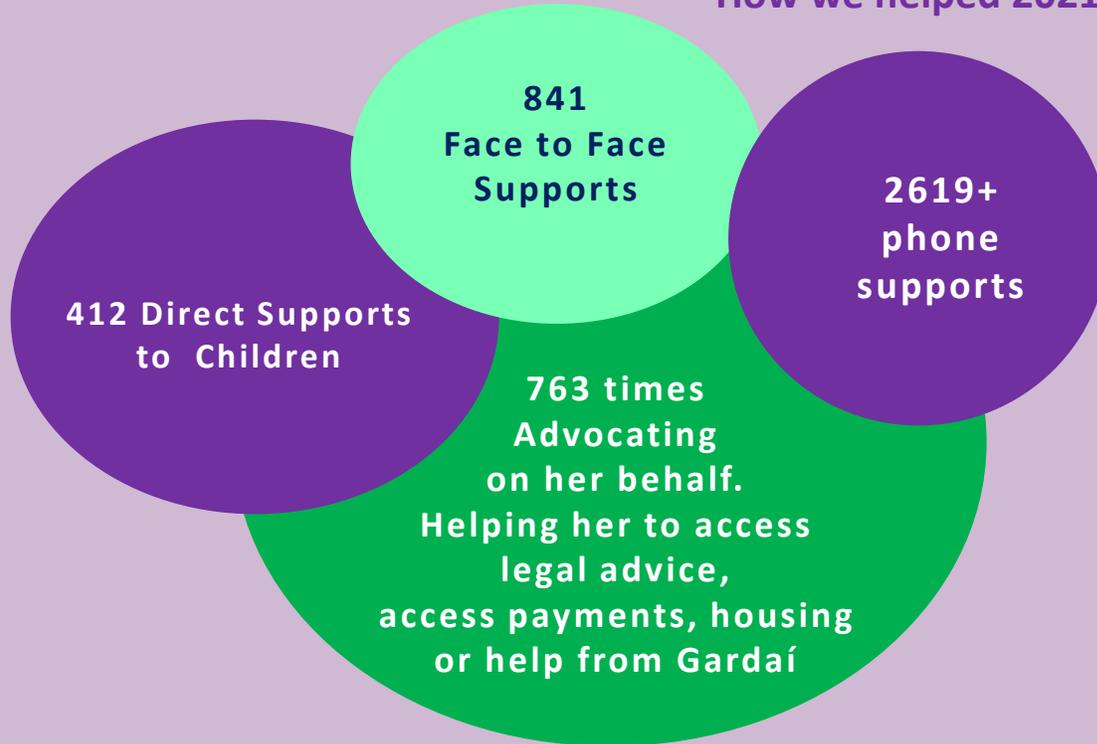
80 TY Students in 3 workshops

Information sessions in our community



## LWL Domestic Violence Service

How we helped 2021



New leaflet in 7 languages

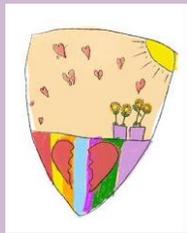


Helping the community help her



## LWLDVS Activity

2021 Team worked with  
71 Children and Young People  
to be Seen and Safer



Worked with  
Barnardos on  
Empowering  
children

**Our Rights, Your Responsibilities**      **Responding To Childhood Domestic Violence and Abuse**

1. **SEE US** Don't ignore us. We have lived with it too.
2. **Listen to us** WE MIGHT BE YOUNG BUT OUR VOICES AND OPINIONS MATTER!
3. **Believe** us in everything we say.
4. **BE KIND** to the children who are being hurt.
5. **ALWAYS TELL CHILDREN** IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
6. **Introduce yourself**, explain your job and be clear to us.
7. **Talk to us in a soft tone**. **NO RAISED VOICES.**
8. **Take time** to get to know us. Don't rush and don't start with the hard stuff.
9. **Always ask us how we feel**, even if we look happy. Sometimes we can look happy but really we are hurting.
10. **Be tuned into our needs.**
11. **TALK** about fighting and hurting with us - don't shy away from it.
12. **ASK** us questions about the problem when playing with us.
13. **DON'T PUT US UNDER PRESSURE BY ASKING ONE QUESTION AFTER ANOTHER REALLY QUICKLY.**
14. **Allow us to ask questions** - even if we have to ask them 10 times.
15. **Allow us to PRODUCE THIS INFORMATION** in our own time and then come back to us.
16. **Do things to help us Keep Calm** and comfort us.
17. **BE PATIENT** We have lived with this for so long it has become the norm.
18. **ALLOW US OUR INDEPENDENCE**
19. **We should be asked to give an opinion** about what's going to happen next.
20. **Keep us Safe** we have no control over what happens in the family.

By the Empower Kids Team hosted by Barnardos (CHY 6015/RCN 20010027)



## Walking in their Shoes



## 2021 LWL Counselling Service



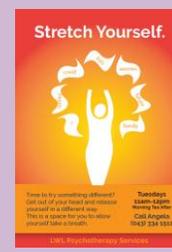
Face to Face Counselling Service in LWL

Development of Community of Support as people heal



Grant aided – accessible to all

Psychotherapy working with Social Justice and  
Community Development principles



# Catkins Early Years Service

## 2021

Community Childcare service:

- Full Day Care
- Sessional
- Drop-in (if available)

\*Sólta National Quality Framework

\*Aistear Early Years Curriculum Framework

Service operated for essential workers at beginning of year

69 children attending

Baby room got own access to outdoor play area

5 separate pods due to Covid-19

Worked through Covid-19 room closures effectively

Ongoing updates to environments

Increased interaction with parents via new technology

### Key Issues 2021

CE participant engagement

Dealing with staff shortages

Ongoing Covid-19 compliant

### Initiatives & Programmes



AIM – Access & Inclusion Model

Participation in Music Generation Programme

Renewal of Healthy Ireland Smart Start

Participation in Music Generation



# Catkins on the Move Mobile Childcare Solutions

2021



**Childcare Relief Service:**  
• Community & Private Crèches  
Mobile Childcare Service:  
\*Garda Vetted & QQI qualified



**Key Focus  
2021**

*Keeping COTM Workers  
above minimum wage*

*Travel time added  
343.5 hours = €4418.75*

**4 Full time  
2 Panel Workers**

**Our Transport (Catkins Mobile and Catkins Afterschool)**



## **Strategic Priority Two – Economic and Social Choice & Opportunity**

The purpose of this strategic priority is to encourage women to broaden their horizons and explore learning opportunities in previously un-imagined ways and to harness women's ambition by encouraging networking and peer support in achieving social and economic independence

The services delivering on this priority are:

- **LWL Education and Training Service (page 20)**
- **LWL DEASP Community Employment Childcare Scheme (page 21)**
- **LWL Willow Traders (page 23)**

# LWL Training & Education

## 2021



- Courses:**
- QQI Childcare Levels 5 & 6
  - QQI Special Needs Assisting Levels 5 & 6
  - Manual Handling/Fire Safety
  - First Aid Response (FAR) & Refresher
  - QQI Level 8 Certificate in Meeting the Challenge of Challenging Behavior
  - QQI Level 7 Childcare Degree and Level 9 Masters
  - Lamh

**324 Learners**

+24 with IT Carlow Degree and Masters Level courses

Graduation of IT Carlow BA in Applied Early Childhood Education and Care Level 7 – 12 learners.

QQI award:  
5 Certification Submissions to QQI.  
259 results submitted - 21 Major Awards and 203 Component Certificates

**13,033**

hours of learning (not including ITC Degree and Masters)

## Key Focus 2021

- *Masters of Arts in Leadership in Early Years Education and Care – Level 9 in progress*
- *Lámh Module One returned*

*LWL continued up deliver online learning in 2021. Google Workspaces set up for tutors training also provided.*

*Education and Training Manager elected to the Board of Aontas*

*Progression agreement in place with IT Carlow*

*Submitted to QQI for Reengagement, this process continues in to 2022.*

### Community Partners/Outreach

- *IT Carlow – We continue to host IT Carlow courses, introducing the Level 8 Certificate in Meeting Challenge of Challenging Behavior funded by the Ireland Funds which has proved to be very popular. Masters Group also in progress.*
- *Progression agreement in place with IT Carlow which represents several years of successful collaboration with IT Carlow.*

- *As a result of the Mitigating against Educational Disadvantage a Learner Laptop Loan Scheme is now in place and learners are availing of this service.*

- *Continued active participation in AONTAS/CEN initiatives*
- *Continue to work on QQI reengagement working closely with QQI and Aontas Community of Practice*
- *Participated in the Cross Border Co-Operation Project*

DEASP Community Employment Childcare Scheme

2021

- Support for training & employment:
- QQI qualification
  - On-The-Job training
  - 1:1 Support
  - Career Planning
  - Experience working in an Active working environment.
- \*Supported by the DEASP

New Training Opportunities Included  
Facilities Management  
Woodcraft  
Visual Merchandising  
Therapeutic Play Skills  
Lámh  
Challenging Behaviour

LWL Lead Sponsor for Co. Longford

9 participants achieved major QQI awards.  
78 QQI Minor Awards achieved  
83 industry awards achieved

Part of LWL QQI Reengagement Process.  
  
Participated in AONTAS weekly Zoom Webinars

Key Focus 2021

Created new opportunities at Willow Traders With the allocation of 5 new positions in the area of social media, retail sales and Storeroom assistant.

New innovative sustainable training skills were implemented, referencing the Sustainable Development Goal's, with an emphasis on upcycling and the environment.



3 CE participants completed safe pass training.

Every participant accessed training and most participated in multiple training opportunities

At the end of December 2020 44.4% of the existing Childcare staff were qualified with a minimum QQI L5 childcare award



70% Progression at LWL 2021

126 participated on the scheme since 2016- ALL have engaged in training

Since 2016, 87 participants finished on CE of these 68 secured employment (60 childcare) and 6 progressed to further education

In 2021, 10 participants finished on CE of these 6 secured employment ( 5 childcare) - 1 progressed to further education.



**DEASP CE training modules offered in 2021**

QQI Level 5 Childcare – Major Award

QQI Level 6 Childcare – Major Award

QQI Level 5 Special Needs Assistant

QQI Level 6 Special Needs Assistant

QQI Level 6 Therapeutic Play Skills

QQI Level 5 Retail Display

QQI Level 6 Child Psychology

QQI Level 4 Woodcraft

Level 7 BA in Applied Early Education and Care

Level 8 Certificate in Challenging Behaviour (IT Carlow)

First Aid

Refresher First Aid

Fire Safety

Manual Handling

HACCP Food Safety

Basic Food Safety Level 1

Visual Merchandising

Basic Computers

CPC ( Bus Driver Module)

Epipen Training

Advanced Manual Handling

Child Protection

Lámh

Essential Driver Training

Certificate in Facilities Management

Covid Re-opening and Operating

Hand Held Pesticide

Dyslexia Training (CPD)

Effective Room Leader (CPD)

Positive Behaviour Management (CPD)

Introduction to Play Therapy (CPD)

## Willow Traders



Charity Social Enterprise:

- Quality Furniture
- Clothing
- Household Items
- Books

New volunteering opportunities for Longford



### Key Focus 2021

Providing retail volunteering opportunities

[www.willowtraders.ie](http://www.willowtraders.ie)  
online trading

5,000+ likes on social media



## **Strategic Priority Three - Leadership, Networking and Influence**

The purpose of this strategic priority is to develop responsive engagement structures that enable rural women to take up their leadership and influencing capacity in any context.

The services delivering on this priority are:

- **SHE Programme/Longford Women's Manifesto Group (page 25)**
- **LWL Advocacy and Representation (page 28)**
- **LWL Migrant Women's Group (page 29)**
- **LWL Policy, Submissions & Media (page 30)**



Supporting women  
into local politics  
#rural #local

## 2021 Key Achievements

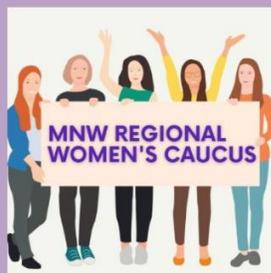


Winners of the Democracy  
category of the Innovation in  
Politics Awards. First time Ireland  
has won this prestigious prize



Published Ireland's first  
guidebook for candidates  
and campaign teams.

Supported by series of  
workshops.  
80 women registered



Collaboration with  
AILG to establish a  
regional caucus  
for women  
councillors



Wrote *Connecting Women  
to Local Government* for  
Longford County Council



Lights, Camera, Action- New Series of Political  
Videos to help you decide for Local Elections  
2024

As See Her Elected we encourage women to engage in the political arena through a series of workshops and practical support. As part of that ongoing support we have worked with the political parties and independents to create a series of videos which are available here on our website in a bid to help women decide which political party or issue they should vote for in the local elections 2024 and it is another example of the types of practical support we offer women.  
Over the coming weeks, of the particular order, we will post video messages from various political parties and independents which should help you to decide whether to vote for a party or to vote independent or community candidate for the forthcoming local elections. You decide.

Creating practical resources for women  
on our website





## Introduction to Politics

Active Citizenship. Ran on 5 separate occasions  
Structure of Councils. PPNs. 246 women registered  
Role of the Councillor.

## Women Learning from Each Other

Talks with candidates and 4 events  
councillors 227 women registered

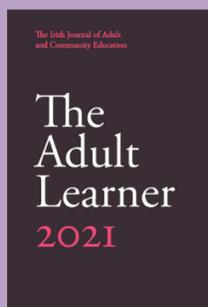
## Collaborations and Partnerships



100 women registered



100 women registered

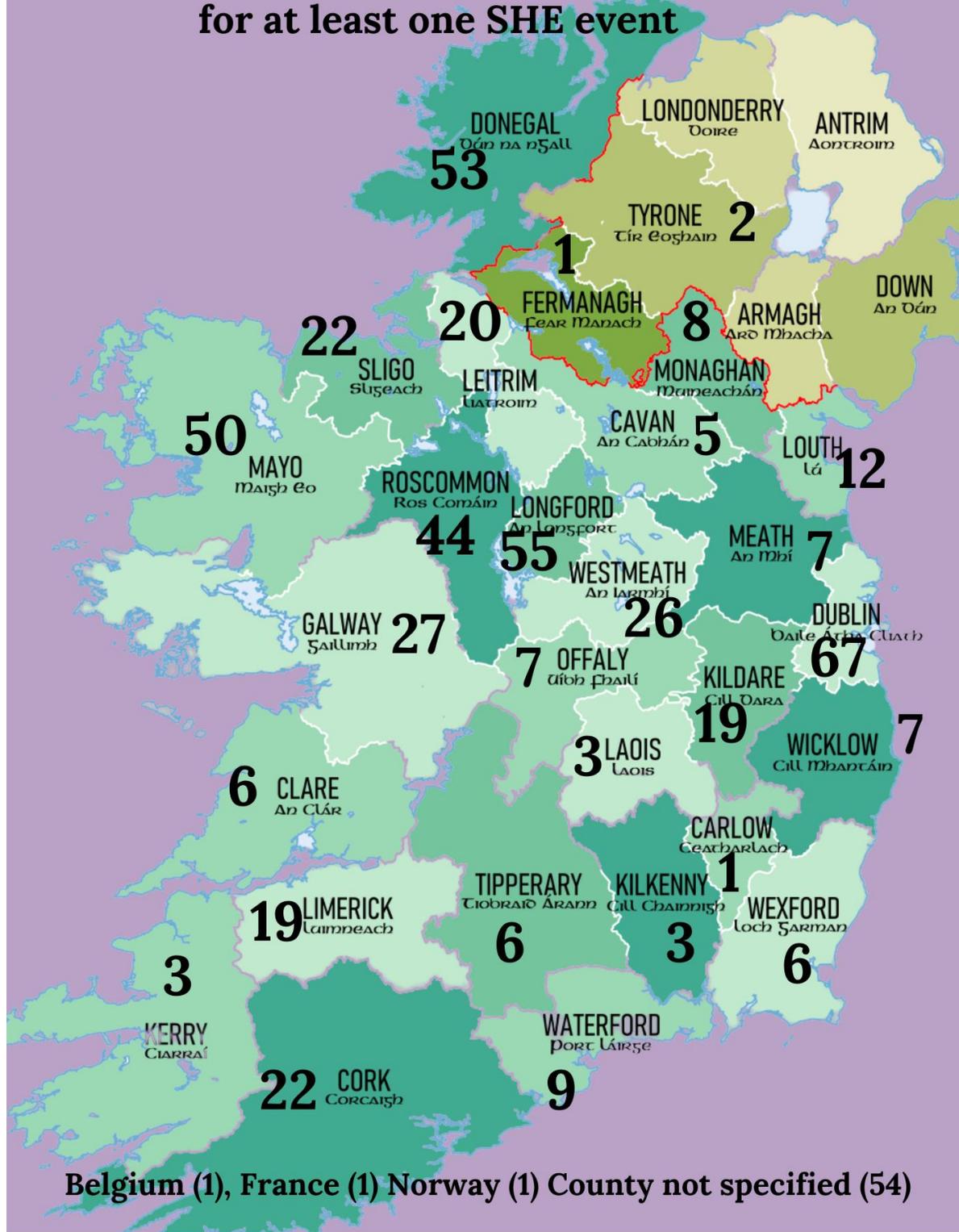


Article on SHEschool published



Invited guest presenter & speaker at 10 events

Since we began, 568 women have registered for at least one SHE event



## LWL Advocacy and Representation

Throughout 2021, LWL continued to engage with groups across the island of Ireland – although Covid-19 ensured many of these meetings were online, our voice continued to be heard at a variety of fora as well as in local and national print and broadcast media. LWL had two articles published in 2021 in the Journal for the Centre of Cross Border Studies and the Adult Learner Journal (AONTAS). We also continued our work with the Centre for Cross Border Studies and the Ad-Hoc Group for North-South East-West Cooperation. LWL continues to be represented on the Local Community Development Committee, Strategic Policy Committees and PPN.



# LWL Migrant Women's Group

## Migrant Women's Group



Supported by County Longford PPN –  
\*Online facilitated sessions  
\*Needs analysis conducted  
\*Community and practical information  
\*Social interaction

Input from LWL services – DV, Counselling, Education, Early Years.

Flexible online schedule during Covid-19 restrictions

Information on local services

26 members

Social interaction for women from migrant communities



Facilitation and Interpreter service



## *LWL Policy and Submissions*

### **Policy Submissions/Consultations**

Submissions were made in relation to the following policy documents:

- Submission to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration & Youth on the Review of the Equality Acts
- Input to AONTAS and Irish Rural Link Pre-Budget Submissions
- Ongoing consultation with Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government in relation to the participation of women in the 2024 local government elections (with 5050 North West)

### **Media Work**

LWL continues to engage with local media, both print and broadcast and has a wide following on social media with over 6,000 Facebook and Twitter followers. LWL Willow Traders has a Facebook following of almost 5,000.

Throughout the pandemic, LWL has ensured there is clear information on our service provision on our social media channels and has also engaged in active and concise messaging, providing up to date information to all those who may need it.

## Strategic Priority Four - Governance and Sustainability

The first three strategic priorities are underpinned by good governance and purposeful organisational collaborative and interlinked relationships (ISD, Inter-agency work, Local Regional & National Advocacy) resulting in capacity building for the organisation and all stakeholders.

### Organisational Development

#### Trustees

During 2021 the LWL Board of Trustees met 9 times with the CEO, while service managers delivered service presentations at each board meeting. The following trustees continued to participate in 2021: Tess Murphy, Elsie Moxham, Sheila Reilly, Mary Carleton Reynolds, Teresa Kearney, Stephanie Igoe, Pat Murphy, Nancy Bermingham and Vicky Crosby. Breege Kenny and Louise Lovett were ratified as new trustees at the November 2021 meeting.

**Figure 1** shows the LWL Board of Trustees attendance for 2020.

**Figure 1: LWL Board of Trustees Attendance Record 2021**

Board Member	January 18th	February 15th	March 23rd	April 19th	May 17th	July 19th	September 20th	October 18th	November 15th	Total Attendance
Elsie Moxham	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8 of 9
Mary Carleton-Reynolds	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	8 of 9
Nancy Bermingham	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	7 of 9
Pat Murphy	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	4 of 9
Sheila Reilly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	8 of 9
Stephanie Igoe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	6 of 9
Teresa Kearney	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9 of 9
Tess Murphy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9 of 9
Vicky Crosby	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	4 of 9

### **Staff**

As a result of increased funding and income generation, staff were able to undertake a substantial amount of training and CDP during 2021 compared to the dearth of opportunities in preceding years. This is a very significant for a community development NGO. Due to low programme directed salaries with no additional benefits, the only method of rewarding staff is through their professional development.

LWL are transitioning to a remote working climate as a result of the pandemic, but also in recognition of the promotion of a positive work-life balance culture at the organisation. All staff engaging in remote working have completed a Health and Safety Assessment as required.

A new HR system was also implemented during 2021 and will be fully operational in 2022. This system supports remote working with online/app signing in for work, requesting of annual leave etc. It will support remote working as well as reducing the amount of paperwork required for timesheets etc.

### **Compliance**

During 2021 LWL ensured that it was compliant with the Charities Governance Code and submitted its annual report to the Charities Regulator. LWL is also GDPR compliant and compliant with all its Funders requirements.

### **Governance**

During 2021, two new sub-committees were established:

- Governance
- Audit & Risk (ARC) – including external representation to ensure externality of financial oversight.

The LWL Company Handbook was also updated in 2021 to ensure more streamlined HR processes.

### **Financial Overview**

Key issues that emerged during 2021 and which have had a positive impact on Finances or which will impact the organisation negatively and must be addressed during 2022 are:

- Key Covid-19 were supports provided in 2021 including the EWSS (Early Years), Pobal Stability Fund, Business Restart Grants (Willow Traders) and Covid-19 funding from Longford County Council.
- LWL appealed a reduction in the Special Category Band A places from 4 to 2.5 places in 2020, based on the clear lack of understanding demonstrated by both Pobal and

DCYA around the dynamics of DV and the use of this service by victim's children. This was resolved and places restored in 2021.

- The Department of Housing & Local Government's support for the SHE programme will be instrumental in sustaining the Manifesto project and in positioning LWL as one of the go-to Rural NGOs in this field.
- Planned universal pension scheme. LWL will, with partner organisations, be lobbying State funders to include the employer contribution in future funding.
- Continued lack of support for adult learners. The majority of LWL's Education & Training supports come from philanthropic sources. However the establishment of the MAEDF fund as a result of AONTAS advocacy is a positive step towards core funding for community education.
- Difficulties in attracting new participants to the DEASP CE Scheme. LWL continues to make recommendations which would support better recruitment processes.
- The need to keep a watching brief on whether or not to separate out some services by forming independent companies in order to maximise the potential earning capacity of these services e.g. Training & Education and Willow Traders

In addition there is the longstanding issue of state funders not providing full cost recovery for the services they procure via NGOs.

**Figure 2** below provides a breakdown of income received during 2021 as well as income projections for 2021. Please note that **Figure 2** reflects Audited Accounts figures for 2021 and therefore takes into account pre-payments and accruals from 2021 and for 2021 in addition to depreciation and the release back to income of capital outlay. The outturn for 2021 is very positive i.e. a surplus of €262,452 however there is a need to be mindful of the very likely financial challenges which will be faced in the post-pandemic years.

Expenditure for the period was managed well with individual budgets implemented and monitored for each service area and progress on actual spend against budget reviewed regularly.

## **Reserves Policy**

The calculation of the required level of reserves is an integral part of the organisation's planning, budget and forecast cycle.

The Organisations Reserves policy was reviewed and updated by the trustees in April 2021. It states:

- Reserves to be maintained at a level which ensures that Longford Women's Link's core activity could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty.
- A proportion of reserves to be maintained in a readily realisable form.

At any given time readily available cash reserves should be sufficient to cover 6 months core salaries and total organisational operational costs

In addition it is prudent to carry forward 13 weeks core unfunded salaries until earned income begins to accumulate. This policy has been agreed with the Company's external auditors

See **Appendix 1** for copy of LWL's Reserves Policy

## Longford Women's Link Annual Report 2021

**Figure 2: LWL Audited Accounts 2021**  
**Detailed Income & Expenditure 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021**

	2021	2020
	€	€
<b>Income</b>		
Longford County Council - Healthy Ireland	19,763	11,750
Longford County Council - Community Support	-	1,200
Longford County Council - PPN	15,000	-
Net Fundraising Income	2,994	4,706
Court Donations	4,332	3,888
Counselling Fees	16,427	7,792
Rental Income	7,146	4,491
Course Fees	73,741	54,510
Willow Traders Sales	51,451	74,516
Related Party discount received - Willow Traders	-	6,563
Catkins Mobile Childcare Solutions	66,976	61,206
Catkins Early Years & Afterschool Services	73,471	52,080
TUSLA Child & Family Agency - DSGBV Prog	192,405	182,862
Pobal for DRCD - CSP Mobile Childcare Solutions	94,876	110,474
Pobal - DCYA - Childcare Grants	414,943	308,390
DEASP - Community Employment Scheme	755,208	853,447
Pobal Stability Scheme	55,360	96,871
TUSLA Child and Family Agency - Counselling Grant	13,755	7,477
CSVC Grant	29,902	21,000
Department of Housing Planning & Local Gov - SHE	104,000	71,364
Release - EOCP extension fund	3,164	3,164
Release - RDP New Building	4,344	4,344
Release - Ireland Funds Mini Bus	1,250	1,250
Release - Ireland Funds - Van	1,687	1,687
Release - DCYA - Childcare Capital Grant	2,914	2,914
Release - EYCP - New prefab(2016) & Creche Toys	625	625
Release - EYC Capital Grant 2017	6,241	6,241
Release - EYC Capital Grant 2018	2,139	2,102
Release - EYC Capital Grant 2020	750	750
Release - Community Enhancement Fund	625	625
Release - LWETB Grant	1,773	1,774
Release - School Aged Childcare	75	75
Release - EYC Capital Grant 2021	83	-
Community Foundation Comic Relief	9,399	-
Longford COCo Enterprise Grant	2,500	-
CYPSC - Teenage Trauma	9,800	-
Ireland Funds - Business Studies Grant	12,895	7,105
Grant - Safe Ireland Resilience Fund	172	708
Grant - DELSA - Training and Education	(680)	14,767
Grant - RBS Skills and Opportunities Fund	-	9,404
Longford County Council - Community Enhance Grant	1,000	-
Grant - Training LWETB	12,582	10,867
Grant - Longford Co Co - Covid'19	1,000	4,000
Grant - Pobal - DCYA - Covid'19	-	9,596
Grant - Tusla - Covid'19	9,565	11,300
Community Foundation Trauma Counselling	5,000	-
TUSLA - DV Survivors	12,000	-
DEAL Grant - T & Ed	14,128	-
Longford Library - DV/Counselling	1,800	-
Ireland Funds 2021	11,111	-
Revenue TWSS & EWSS	299,385	224,949
Longford Co Co - Restart - Covid'19	8,000	6,996
Pobal Re-Opening Support - Covid'19	-	10,000
Wheel Community Champion - Covid'19	-	9,000
Safe Ireland Covid 19	15,169	6,571
Rethink Ireland Social Innovation	-	10,000
American Ireland Funds - Covid'19	-	8,500
	<u>2,442,276</u>	<u>2,303,701</u>
<b>Overheads</b>		
Administration costs	(2,179,824)	(2,117,890)
<b>Operating Surplus</b>	262,452	185,811
Other interest receivable and similar income	-	11
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the financial year</b>	<u>262,452</u>	<u>185,822</u>

## Longford Women's Link Annual Report 2021

	2021	2020
	€	€
<b>Overheads</b>		
<b>Administrative expenses</b>		
Wages and salaries	898,368	860,131
DEASP CE Scheme Wages & Salaries	670,530	751,865
Employer's PRSI contributions LWL	78,788	70,852
Employer's PRSI contributions DEASP	18,613	19,340
DEASP CE Fuel Allowance & Christmas Bonus	25,452	28,263
Staff training	27,059	31,301
Service Participant Transport & Accomd. costs	19,918	11,596
Room rental	60	549
Rent of premises Willow Traders	7,360	6,745
Course Expenditure & General Training costs	58,651	47,616
Haulage & collection of donated furniture	-	10,938
Insurance	14,234	12,773
Light and heat	19,442	19,610
Cleaning and maintenance	31,331	27,439
Service charge payable	8,516	9,189
Printing, postage and stationery	14,952	10,292
Recruitment and public relations	12,468	13,047
Telephone	11,048	10,908
Computer costs	44,939	14,854
Motor expenses	7,298	10,609
Travel and subsistence	10,720	12,996
Legal and professional	-	1,001
Consultancy fees	37,768	6,045
Audit and accountancy	8,270	8,770
Counselling expenses	40,601	19,226
Bank charges	2,911	2,904
Catkins EY & AS - Running expenses	19,135	12,095
Catkins EY & AS - Relief staff cover	10,978	4,240
Doubtful debts - Provision	3,397	2,693
Canteen and catering	3,179	2,522
Staff Health & Safety Welfare	20,404	19,907
Subscriptions/Licenses	3,519	4,156
Depreciation on freehold property	19,489	19,489
Depreciation on long leasehold	1,057	1,057
Depreciation on FF & Equipment	29,493	28,872
Depreciation on motor vehicles	4,000	4,000
Profits/losses on disp of tangibles	2,670	-
	<u>2,179,824</u>	<u>2,117,890</u>

## Appendix I: LWL Reserves Policy



### Longford Women's Link Reserves Policy

The Organisations Reserves policy was reviewed and updated by the Directors at the LWL Board Meeting dated April 19<sup>th</sup> 2021. It states:

The directors have set a reserves policy, which requires:

- Reserves to be maintained at a level that ensures that Longford Women's Link's core activity could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty.
- A proportion of reserves to be maintained in a readily realisable form.

The calculation of the required level of reserves is an integral part of the organisation's planning, budget and forecast cycle.

It takes into account:

- Risks associated with each stream of income and expenditure being different from that budgeted
- Planned activity level
- Organisation's commitments
- Fluctuations in income
- Unplanned expenditure

A substantial proportion of the reserves shown in the balance sheet are represented by assets other than cash such as the buildings necessary to provide the service

At any given time, readily available cash reserves should be sufficient to cover 13 week's salaries and organisational operational costs. It does not include DSP CE Participants as these are covered by an advance salary grant

13 weeks Core Salaries inc. ERPrsi - (excluding DSP CE Participants only)	260,915
13 weeks Direct & Indirect Overheads (Core & Programme)	96,857
Contingency	25,000
Redundancy	50,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>432,772</b>
<i>In addition it is prudent to c/f 13 weeks Core Unfunded Salaries until earned income begins to accumulate</i>	<b>89,439</b>
<b>Total liquid reserves required at y/e</b>	<b>522,211</b>

Signed

*Sheila Kelly*  
\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson

Date: \_\_ April 19<sup>th</sup> 2021 \_\_\_\_\_

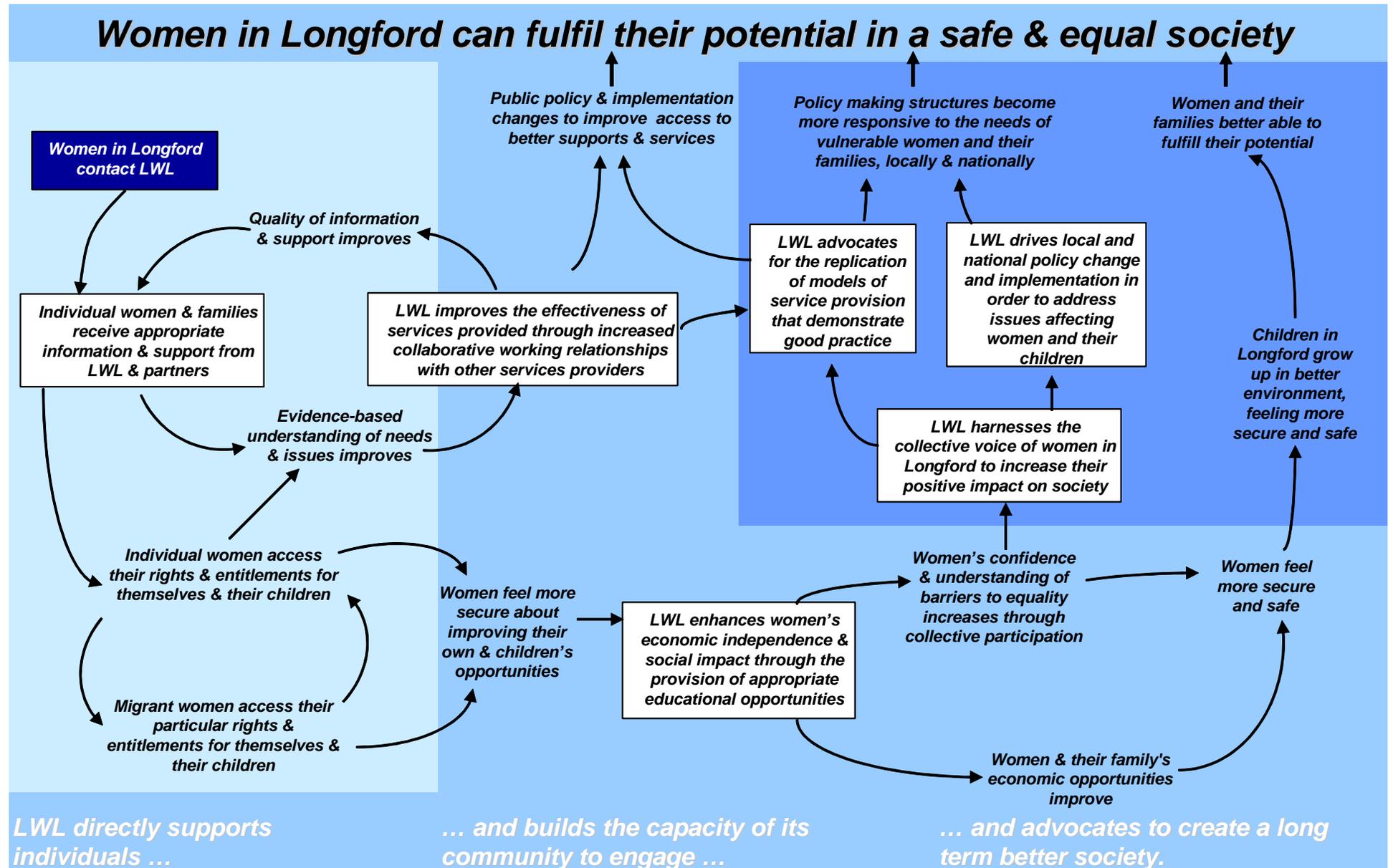
Signed

*Stephanie*  
\_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer

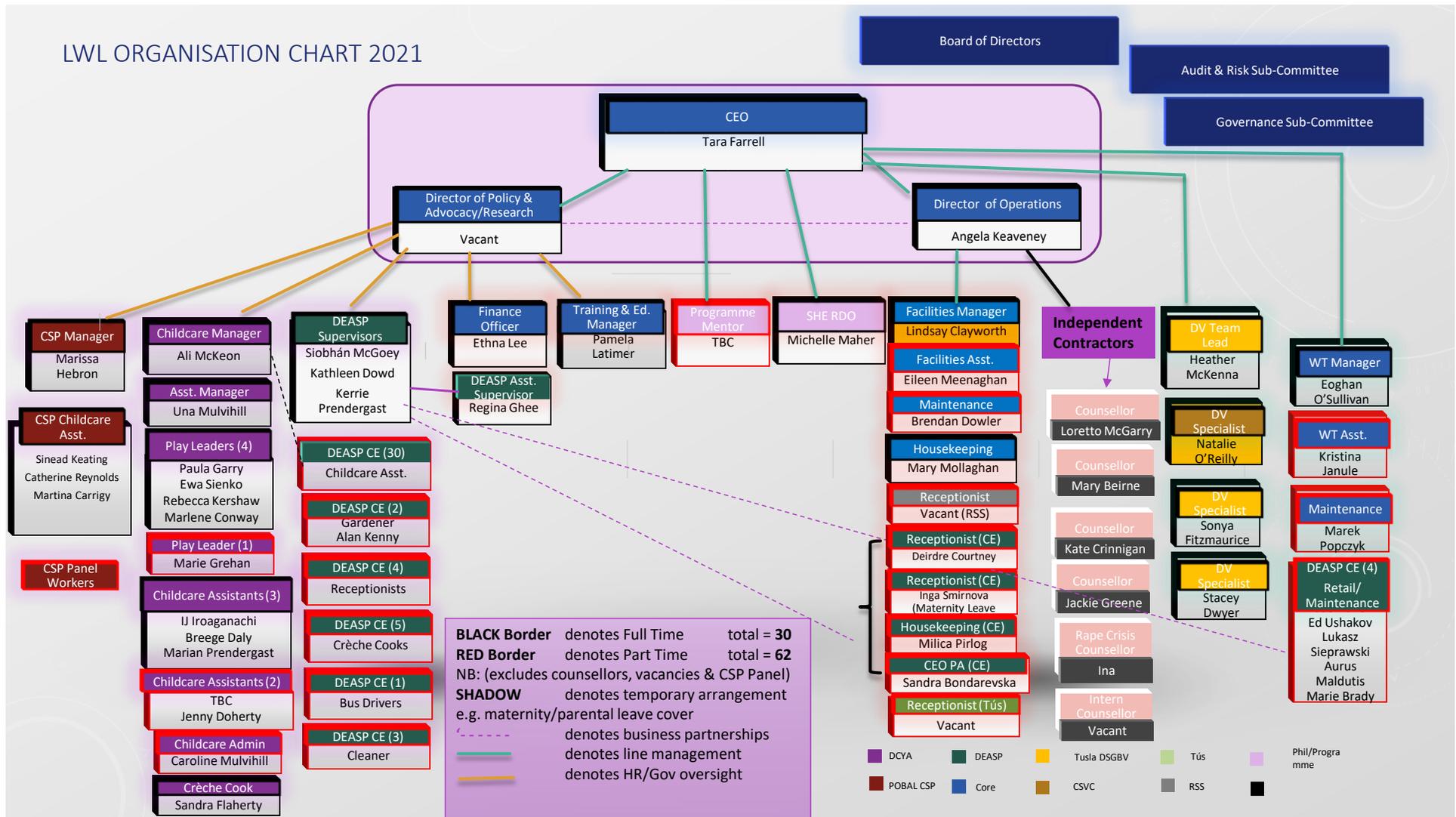
Date: \_\_ April 19<sup>th</sup> 2021 \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix II: Theory of Change Framework



# Longford Women's Link Annual Report 2021

## LWL ORGANISATION CHART 2021



# Longford Women's Link Annual Report 2021

## Appendix IV: Our Funders



Co-funded by  
the European Union



 The Community  
Foundation for Ireland



An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta  
agus Coimirce Sóisialaí  
Department of Employment Affairs  
and Social Protection



THE IRELAND FUNDS



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt  
Department of Justice



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,  
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth

Company Registration Number 241515 RCN: 20032937 Registered Office: Willow House, Ardnacassa Avenue, Longford.  
Chairperson: Sheila Reilly. Trustees: Elsie Moxham, Tess Murphy, Stephanie Igoe, Nancy Bermingham, Teresa Kearney, Pat Murphy,  
Mary Carleton Reynolds, Vicky Crosby, Olive Quinn