



**LONGFORD
SPORTS
PARTNERSHIP**
— SPORT IRELAND —

LOOK

TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF
OUR UPCOMING EVENTS
WITH SOMETHING FOR
EVERYONE

Spring Newsletter

**Welcome to the
Longford Sports Partnership
Spring Newsletter.**

**Inside, you'll find updates on
a wide range of programmes
co-ordinated by our LSP
Development Officers across
the county, along with news on
ongoing research, new
initiatives, upcoming
opportunities, and much more.**



**SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND**



✉ **For more information email
sports@longfordcoco.ie**



BIKE WEEK 2026-MAY 9-17

There's never been a better time to get on a bike! It's easy, fun and there's something for everyone.

Enjoy a wide range of events including community and school cycles, fun bike festivals, safety workshops, and much more.

Bike Week events in Longford include:

- Women's Gravel Cycle
- Royal Canal Greenway Leisure Cycle
- Bikers' Lunch – Longford Town Lunch Cycle
- Clondra Cycle for Older Persons
- Inclusion Cycling Taster Session

✉ For more information email sports@longfordcoco.ie

For more details visit longfordsports.ie



SCAN HERE



An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport

Visit bikeweek.ie





BikeWeek



9th - 17th May 2026

IT'S **EASY**, IT'S **FUN**
 AND IT'S FOR **EVERYONE!**

EVENTS HAPPENING IN LONGFORD For #BIKE WEEK 2026

Date	Event	Location
May 9, 2026	Womens Gravel Cycle	Kenagh Community Centre
May 9, 2026	Inclusion Cycle	Longford Athletics Centre
May 11, 2026	Secondary Schools Royal Canal Cycle	Royal Canal - Ballymahon
May 11, 2026	Secondary Schools Royal Canal Cycle	Royal Canal - Ballymahon
May 12, 2026	Secondary Schools Royal Canal Cycle	Richmond Harbour Clondra
May 12, 2026	Secondary Schools Royal Canal Cycle	Richmond Harbour Clondra
May 12, 2026	Childrens Community Cycle Session	Longford Town
May 13, 2026	Secondary Schools Royal Canal Cycle	Market Square Longford
May 13, 2026	Bikers lunch	Market Square Longford
May 13, 2026	Secondary Schools Royal Canal Cycle	Market Square Longford
May 13, 2026	Childrens Community Cycle Session	Longford Town
May 14, 2026	Secondary Schools Royal Canal Cycle	Richmond Harbour Clondra
May 15, 2026	Secondary Schools Royal Canal Cycle	Richmond Harbour Clondra
May 15, 2026	Older Adult Electric Bike Cycle	Richmond Harbour Clondra
May 16, 2026	Royal Canal Greenway Cycle Tour	Richmond Harbour Clondra
All Week	Cycle Clubs Social Cycles	Various Locations
All Week	Community Social Cycles	Various Locations
All Week	Primary Schools Competition	Primary Schools



**For more information email sports@longfordcoco.ie
 or check out our website longfordsports.ie**

LONGFORD COUNTY COUNCIL SPORTS BURSARY 2026

The Longford County Council Sports Bursary 2026 is now open for applications, supporting aspiring athletes who are competing and succeeding at the highest levels of sport. If you have the ambition, dedication and talent to excel nationally or internationally, this opportunity is for you!

Funded by Longford County Council and delivered through Longford Sports Partnership, the bursary supports athletes with the costs of education, training, travel and equipment, helping you focus on reaching your full potential

Athletes from any Sport Ireland–recognised sport, who are born or domiciled in County Longford, are eligible to apply, including those currently studying or training abroad.

Closing date to apply is Tuesday, 19 May at 5pm.

Longford County Council Sports Bursary 2026

Applications Now Open

This Longford County Council funded bursary is awarded to individual sports people who have shown exceptional ability in their sport and possess the potential to achieve excellence at national and international levels.

For application information email sports@longfordcoco.ie

The closing date for applications is 5pm on Tuesday, 19 May



For more information email sports@longfordcoco.ie

WOMEN IN THE WATER PROGRAMME

Longford Sports Partnership is delighted to launch Women in the Water, a Level 2 Open Water Swimming Programme.

This programme is designed to help women build confidence and develop their skills in open water.

Taking place at Fitzpatrick Shore from 12th May to 13th June.

This five-week programme is suitable for those who can swim 25m and float on their back.

Sessions will be held on:

Tuesdays 7:00–8:00 pm

Saturdays 10:00–11:00 am

Supported by Longford Triathlon Club

Programme costs €50

Places are limited



For more information email afitzpatrick@longfordcoco.ie

LONGFORD PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR HEALTH PROGRAMMES IN 2025



**STRONGER TOGETHER,
HEALTHIER TOGETHER**

Supporting physical, mental and social wellbeing through inclusive, accessible programmes for a healthier Longford.



8 PROGRAMMES
delivered in 2025



**5 BLOCKS
OF 8 WEEKS**
per programme



**MULTIPLE
VENUES**
across Longford



**PROMOTING
HEALTH, WELLBEING
& INDEPENDENCE**



**ADULTS WITH
CHRONIC CONDITIONS
AND OLDER ADULTS**

OUR 8 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR HEALTH PROGRAMMES

**1 ADULT
DISABILITY CLASS**



Inclusive exercise to improve strength, mobility, confidence and overall wellbeing in a fun and supportive environment.

**5 BLOCKS
OF 8 WEEKS**

**12 PEOPLE
PER BLOCK**

**60 PEOPLE
ATTENDING PER YEAR**

**2 POLE
WALKING**



A full body, low impact workout that improves fitness, posture and wellbeing outdoors.

**5 BLOCKS
OF 8 WEEKS**

**12 PEOPLE
PER BLOCK**

**60 PEOPLE
ATTENDING PER YEAR**

**3 PULMONARY
REHAB**



Exercise and education to improve breathing, increase stamina and enhance quality of life.

**5 BLOCKS
OF 8 WEEKS**

**12 PEOPLE
PER BLOCK**

**60 PEOPLE
ATTENDING PER YEAR**

4 YOGA



Improve flexibility, reduce stress and support strength, balance and mental wellbeing.

**5 BLOCKS
OF 8 WEEKS**

**12 PEOPLE
PER BLOCK**

**60 PEOPLE
ATTENDING PER YEAR**

5 PILATES



Strengthen core, improve posture, flexibility and overall body awareness.

**5 BLOCKS
OF 8 WEEKS**

**12 PEOPLE
PER BLOCK**

**60 PEOPLE
ATTENDING PER YEAR**

6 TAI CHI



Gentle, flowing movements to improve balance, flexibility and relaxation.

**5 BLOCKS
OF 8 WEEKS**

**12 PEOPLE
PER BLOCK**

**60 PEOPLE
ATTENDING PER YEAR**

**7 SEATED
EXERCISE
CLASS**



Safe, supportive exercises to improve strength, mobility and independence while seated.

**5 BLOCKS
OF 8 WEEKS**

**12 PEOPLE
PER BLOCK**

**60 PEOPLE
ATTENDING PER YEAR**

**8 MENS
HEALTH
EXERCISE
CLASS**



A tailored programme to improve strength, fitness and overall wellbeing in a supportive environment.

**5 BLOCKS
OF 8 WEEKS**

**12 PEOPLE
PER BLOCK**

**60 PEOPLE
ATTENDING PER YEAR**

MOVING FOR BETTER BALANCE PROGRAMME DELIVERED THROUGH 5 VENUES ACROSS LONGFORD



**OVER 100
PEOPLE ATTENDING
PER BLOCK
ACROSS 5 VENUES**



**500 PEOPLE
ATTENDING
PER YEAR**

**5 BLOCKS OF 8 WEEKS
PER YEAR**

**BALLYMAHON
LIBRARY**

Ballymahon

**20 PEOPLE
PER VENUE**

**100 PEOPLE
PER YEAR**

**EDGEWORTHSTOWN
LIBRARY**

Edgeworthstown

**20 PEOPLE
PER VENUE**

**100 PEOPLE
PER YEAR**

**LONGFORD
LIBRARY**

Longford Town

**20 PEOPLE
PER VENUE**

**100 PEOPLE
PER YEAR**

EDI CENTRE

EDI Centre,
Longford Town

**20 PEOPLE
PER VENUE**

**100 PEOPLE
PER YEAR**

**GRANARD
LIBRARY**

Granard

**20 PEOPLE
PER VENUE**

**100 PEOPLE
PER YEAR**

TOTAL ATTENDANCE ACROSS ALL 8 PROGRAMMES PER YEAR: 860 PEOPLE

Adult Disability Class: 60 people | Pole Walking: 60 people | Pulmonary Rehab: 60 people | Yoga: 60 people
Pilates: 60 people | Tai Chi: 60 people | Seated Exercise Class: 60 people | Mens Health Exercise Class: 60 people
Moving for Better Balance: 500 people

HOURS OF DELIVERY (ESTIMATED)

Each programme:
5 blocks x 8 weeks
= 40 sessions
40 sessions x 1 hour
= 40 hours per
programme per year

7 standard programmes
40 hours x 7 = 280 hours
+
Moving for Better Balance
5 venues x 40 sessions = 200 hours

**TOTAL ESTIMATED ANNUAL
DELIVERY
480+ HOURS**
of structured physical activity
delivered per year

OUR IMPACT

- ✓ Improve strength, balance, mobility and cardiovascular health
- ✓ Support mental wellbeing and reduce social isolation
- ✓ Enhance confidence, independence and quality of life
- ✓ Contribute to falls prevention and chronic disease management



**IMPROVE
HEALTH &
FITNESS**



**BOOST
MENTAL
WELLBEING**



**REDUCE
SOCIAL
ISOLATION**



**BUILD
STRENGTH &
CONFIDENCE**



**SUPPORT
LONG TERM
WELLBEING**

STRONGER TOGETHER, HEALTHIER TOGETHER

Developing Health Professional Capacity Through Community Partnership: Evaluation of an Inclusive Exercise Program for Adults with Physical Disability in Longford, Ireland

Stephen McNally^{1*}, Michelle O Neill² and Sarah Mulligan¹

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Citation: McNally S, Neill MO, Mulligan S (2026) Developing Health Professional Capacity Through Community Partnership: Evaluation of an Inclusive Exercise Program for Adults with Physical Disability in Longford, Ireland. *J Biol & Heal Sci* 3: 132.

BACKGROUND



Adults with physical disability experience reduced access to structured physical activity and prolonged waiting times for rehabilitation services.

Traditional one-to-one therapy models may not adequately address sustained physical activity needs while maintaining service quality and capacity.

Community-integrated exercise pathways may offer a strategy to improve functional outcomes and alleviate system-level pressures.

AIM



To evaluate the functional and service-level impact of a community-based group exercise program implemented within an adult disability service.

METHODS



Service evaluation of a community-based group exercise program for adults with physical disability.



Delivered in partnership between HSE adult disability services and community physical activity providers.



8-week intervention of supervised exercise sessions.



Outcomes measured: Five Times Sit-to-Stand Test (5TSTS), Berg balance scale, gait speed (10-metre walk test), 6-Minute Walk Test (6MWT) and self-reported health (VAS).



Pre- and post-program assessments completed by trained staff.



Descriptive statistics, paired t-tests and Wilcoxon signed-rank tests used as appropriate. Effect sizes (Cohen's d) and percentage change calculated. Clinical significance interpreted using MCID thresholds.

KEY RESULTS

PARTICIPANTS



23
participants

14 female (60%)
9 male (40%)

Mean age: 51.3 years
(SD = 12.3)

Median age: 55 years

Age range: 21–65 years

MOBILITY (5TSTS)



↓ 14.8%
decrease
(clinically meaningful)

Improved lower limb
strength and mobility

BALANCE (BERG SCALE)



↑ 13.5%
increase
(clinically meaningful)

Better balance and
postural control

GAIT SPEED (10-METRE WALK TEST)



↑ 12.2%
increase
(clinically meaningful)

Improved walking
speed

FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY (6MWT)



↑ 15.7%
increase
(clinically meaningful)

Enhanced functional
endurance



↓ 93.9%
reduction
in physiotherapy
waiting list volume
(66-4 clients)

86.7%
decrease
in maximum
waiting time
(30-4 weeks)

CONCLUSION

A community-based group exercise pathway embedded within an adult disability service achieved meaningful functional improvements while significantly reducing waiting list pressures.

These findings suggest that redistributing appropriate signposting into structured community programs can enhance equity of access, preserve clinical capacity for complex cases and support sustainable service redesign.

KEYWORDS

- Physical disability
- Community-based rehabilitation
- Interprofessional education
- Service evaluation
- Exercise prescription
- Partnership working



Received date:
March 10, 2026



Accepted date:
March 24, 2026



Published date:
March 31, 2026

VISION SPORTS AWARENESS TRAINING



At the recent Vision Sports Awareness Training, Sean from Vision Sports Ireland delivered an excellent insight into supporting participants with visual impairments in sport. Participants learned about the different types of vision impairment and their impact in sport, sighted guide techniques for safe participation, the importance of clear communication and colour contrast, examples of adapted sports and equipment, and the supports available through Vision Sports Ireland.

They also took part in practical activities to experience guiding someone with a visual impairment and explored adaptations to make programmes more accessible. This training formed part of the Disability Training section of the Ability Coaching Programme.



COMMUNITY SPORTS PROGRAMME

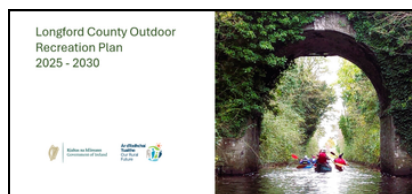


The Ladies Couch to 5K programme proved to be a very positive and successful initiative, with 25 women registering and engaging consistently over the 8-week period. Participants showed strong commitment and progression, building confidence, fitness, and a supportive community atmosphere throughout. The programme culminated in a successful 5K event, with many completing the distance for the first time, highlighting both personal achievement and group encouragement. Special thanks to tutor Sarah McPhilips for her guidance, support, and dedication, which played a key role in the programme's success.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Preparations are in place for the upcoming launch of County Longford first ever County Outdoor Recreation Plan. The Plan has now completed the environmental screening process and has been translated into the Irish language and has been put forward for printing. Once the Plan has been launched the establishment of the stakeholder forum will ensure that those in the county with an interest in outdoor recreation can contribute the development of outdoor recreation in Longford.

Longford County Outdoor Recreation Plan is currently available on Longford County Council's website, www.longfordcountycouncil.ie



YOUTH BASKETBALL PROGRAMME

🏀 Our recent Youth Basketball Tournament at Coral Leisure was a great success, showcasing strong competition, teamwork and impressive skill throughout. The energy and sportsmanship on display made it a memorable event for all involved, and we commend the young athletes whose enthusiasm and effort made the day so enjoyable. A sincere thank you to Micheal and everyone at Youth Service LCRL, Mick Murphy from Basketball Academy for his coaching and refereeing, and Longford Community Safety Partnership for supporting this fantastic initiative.



SPRING GAA PARTICIPATION PROGRAMME

The Spring GAA Participation Programme was a great success, with sessions delivered in Longford and Ballymahon to increase involvement in Gaelic games among children from a wide range of backgrounds. Delivered in partnership with local clubs, GAA Development Officers and LSP tutors, the eight-session programme introduced primary school children to fun, inclusive activities focused on movement skills, basic techniques and small-sided games, helping to build confidence, coordination and enjoyment of sport. Children in Longford Town also had the opportunity to try hurling, and the programme was strongly supported by local schools, clubs, coaches and volunteers throughout.



For more information email egillen@longfordcoco.ie

LONGFORD'S VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



We are proud to highlight that our Chairperson, Tony Headon, has been named County Longford's 2025 Volunteers in Sport Award winner by the Federation of Irish Sport. From his early days as a player with Longford Rugby Club to serving as Treasurer and two-time Club President, Tony's commitment has been unwavering. He has also played a key role in managing international match ticket allocations and, for the past seven years, has served as Chairperson of Longford Sports Partnership, guiding it through significant change. His dedication, leadership and community spirit continue to strengthen sport and physical activity across Longford.

GIRLS GET ACTIVE 2026



To celebrate International Women's Day in March, Longford Sports Partnership hosted its annual Girls Get Active TY Programme, bringing together students from secondary schools across the county for a day of activity, connection and fun. The event featured a mix of sessions including dance, Pilates, Boxercise, circuits and handball, all led by inspiring tutors who created a positive and supportive environment. The girls' enthusiasm and engagement made the day a great success and a fitting celebration of participation, confidence and female role models in sport.



**LONGFORD
SPORTS
PARTNERSHIP**
— SPORT IRELAND —



**SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND**



A.B.I.L.I.T.Y. COACHING PROGRAMME

**Inclusive Coaching.
Stronger Communities.
Brighter Futures.**



WITH THE RIGHT
SUPPORT,
anyone
CAN ACHIEVE
THEIR POTENTIAL.

The A.B.I.L.I.T.Y. Coaching Programme creates opportunities for adults with additional needs, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds and members of ethnic minority communities to become confident leaders in sport.

- A** Accessible to All
- B** Break Down Barriers
- I** Increase Awareness
- L** Listen and Learn
- I** Inspire Future Generations
- T** Transform the Pathways
- Y** You Are the Key

PROGRAMME IMPACT

12 NGBs linked in so far

95 Participants to date

Volunteers are linked to local clubs

Peer Coaching in Disability Services by services users

Club Development: Drumlish Inclusive Club launched in 2026

NGBs WE HAVE WORKED WITH



LONGFORD
GAA



GAA
HANDBALL
GAA
HANDBALL
IRELAND



ATHLETICS
IRELAND



VOLLEYBALL
IRELAND



ORIENTEERING
IRELAND



LEINSTER
RUGBY

NGBs WE WILL WORK WITH THIS YEAR



BASKETBALL
IRELAND



TABLE TENNIS
IRELAND

NGBs PLANNED LATER IN THE YEAR



PITCH & PUTT
IRELAND



BADMINTON
IRELAND

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:

- ✓ Coaching Course delivered by the relevant National Governing Body (NGB)
- ✓ Sport Ireland Safeguarding Course
- ✓ Active Disability Ireland Disability Inclusion or Autism In Sport Workshop or Vision Sports Ireland Vision Awareness Training
- ✓ Basic First Aid Course (added following participant feedback)



SUPPORT AFTER THE PROGRAMME

After the programme is complete, participants are supported to:

- ✓ Assist as volunteers in local clubs
- ✓ Help with the setup of inclusive clubs
- ✓ Peer coaching within Disability Services
- ✓ Develop a new club



INCLUSIVE PROGRAMME PATHWAY



The A.B.I.L.I.T.Y. Coaching Programme breaks down barriers, celebrates diversity, and nurtures leadership. Each new coach, each new session, and each new inclusive club brings us closer to a world where sport truly is for everyone.

*Together,
we make it possible.*

LAMA ALL IRELAND WINNER 2026



Longford County Council & Longford Sports Partnership were delighted to win the Best Inclusive Wellbeing Initiative at the LAMA All Ireland Community & Councils Awards 2026 in February for the SIDO A.B.I.L.I.T.Y Coaching Programme.



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