



#InThisTogether

Please see below for a list of current and upcoming resources to help you mind your mental health, stay active and stay connected. Be sure to check in with [gov.ie/together](https://www.gov.ie/together) for more detail

### **Minding your mental health**

The [gov.ie/together](https://www.gov.ie/together) campaign has advice on Mental wellbeing, parenting, relationships, coping and creating daily routines, keeping active, eating well, cocooning, helping in your community, play for kids and a link to the work local authorities are doing across the country.

### **YourMentalHealth.ie**

The HSE's [YourMentalHealth.ie](https://www.yourmentalhealth.ie) provides a one stop shop portal for people seeking information, supports and services - including information on accessing urgent help. A mental health text messaging service is available 24/7 to connect people with trained volunteers.

### **Local Authority Initiatives:**

Local Authorities around the country are moving services online, producing mental health materials and reaching out to local communities to help maintain positive mental health. Initiatives include: -

- Limerick City and County Library service is partnering with Mid-West Mental Health Services and HSE Mid-West Community Healthcare to provide books to patients in acute units at hospitals in Limerick and to care facilities for vulnerable people, to support positive mental health during isolation.
- South Dublin County Council's Heads Up Programme offers online/phone supports to people with mild mental health issues, and this service is being extended to include supports to recently bereaved persons, utilising experienced and qualified councillors.
- Cork City Council Sports Partnership has linked with the HSE to produce and provide a Digital Partner Park which includes brochures and videos on how to look after your mental health during Covid 19.
- Cork County Council Teen Talks are continuing online while venues are closed, providing a platform for transition year students to discuss issues affecting their health and wellbeing with each other, and to hear from an excellent lineup of speakers.

### **Parents Centre ([gov.ie/parents](https://www.gov.ie/parents))**

A new online resource containing information for parents and links to a wide range of trusted and high quality online resources including learning, parenting and information on supports for parents.

### **Bloom at Home:**

This year, Bord Bia is running a “Bloom At Home” campaign to encourage the Irish public to come together (apart), stay connected and celebrate Bloom at home. Bord Bia Bloom staff, well-known gardeners and Show Garden designers will share their gardening advice and tips throughout the month of May, encouraging people to prepare their own plants and gardens, balconies and window boxes for a national celebration of Bloom.

Bloom at Home will culminate on one day, in a moment for all to come together online when the Irish public’s plants and gardens will be on display, and a schedule of virtual events will take place on Bloom social media channels and [BordBiaBloom.com](https://www.bordbia.com/bloom).

### **Support for Leaving Certificate students:**

In the best of times it is normal to feel some stress and worry when preparing for State Exams. With the public health requirement to close schools and to change arrangements for the exams this is the case for many students.

To support the wellbeing and mental health of our students at this time, a dedicated webpage is under development by the Department of Education and Skills’ and the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) in collaboration with the Department of Health and the HSE.

This webpage will provide a range of information and resources to support students to manage and cope at this time. It will also include links to more individualised support for students to access, should these be needed.

This webpage will also provide updates in relation to the Leaving Certificate examination as they become available, and practical advice for students on preparing for their exams during this time. The webpage will be available in the coming days.

### **#CreateAtHome**

Over April and May Creative Ireland will be promoting creating at home on social media (incorporating mental health benefits messaging). A selection of free creative online resources across Ireland to help people #CreateAtHome. The Design & Crafts Council is part of this with their #GetIrelandMaking.

### **National Parks and Reserves:**

While our National Parks and Reserves remain accessible to locals (within 2km) most of our heritage sites are closed. Much work is underway to provide virtual access through digital tours, drone footage, online history guides, puzzles, drawing competitions including:

#### **National Parks and Wildlife Service Podcasts and video blogs**

- Bog of the Week initiative
- Historic Environment Viewer (people can find online local heritage sites and monuments within their 2km walking zone)
- Historical images
- Local history toolkit

### **Sona sa Bhaile**

TG4’s campaign to promote positive well-being for people at home during the Covid-19 crisis. TG4 through its social platforms is encouraging viewers and followers to focus on positive experiences by using the #sonasabhaile to share their own positive experiences of being at home.

### **Staying connected - Local Authorities:**

Many Local Authority Community Call helplines are maintaining contact with those who have phoned, or are buddying them up with volunteers who can check in with them and have a chat over the phone or online.

Other local initiatives include:-

- Tipperary County Council is piloting an initiative in the Roscrea area where the Roscrea Age Friendly group have made more than 200 calls to residents since the restrictions came into force to ensure that as many as possible are engaged and have a support network during this period.
- Sligo County Council has a number of initiatives running to support those living in social housing including partnership to supply iPads a mentor project for adults and for school students, supports for mental wellbeing, fitness challenges and telephone check-ins.
- Monaghan County Museum is collecting stories and accounts of the Covid-19 Pandemic to add to its collection. They're asking people to submit photographs, drawings, stories, audio or video interviews and all material submitted will be added to the museum collection and form part of an exhibition in the near future.
- Louth County Council is asking people to keep a daily diary of their everyday experiences during COVID-19. These diaries will be held permanently in the County Archives, for future generations to understand what life is like for us during this extraordinary period in history.
- Leitrim Library Service is working on a mini oral history project in conjunction with Leitrim County Council's Heritage Office which involves children engaging with their grandparents.
- Roscommon County Council is asking those who are cocooned to write a letter or poem
- While libraries are closed, many library services are delivering books to those in isolation – and many more plan to start offering the service. Some of those currently doing so include Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, Cork County, Kilkenny, Longford, Cavan and Clare. Wicklow Libraries is also delivering books to nursing homes.
- Libraries are also bringing clubs and activities online during this time. Louth Libraries are hosting online bookclubs for example, while Waterford is inviting local authors and historians to read from their work for online and local radio.
- Leitrim Library Service are working in partnership with the Leitrim County Council's Arts office on a series of online book discussions via Zoom which will engage reading groups/book clubs and other groups in the community e.g. Men's Sheds etc around the county.
- 'Holding It Together Apart' is a Dublin City Council Community Development project aimed at helping people to maintain their physical, spiritual and mental wellbeing while isolated and at home with Covid 19. It provides online classes in dance, meditation, movement and creative practice to help engage all members of families and households in staying active and calm.

**Gov.ie/together: Cocooning** <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d56870-cocooning/>

Cocooning can feel unnatural and a little unsettling, so we've put together some advice to try to make it a little easier.

1. Advice on How to cocoon – Links to HSE and Alone
2. How to keep well
3. Minding your long-term health conditions & Cancer Care – Hse and NCCP and Together for Cancer Helpline
4. Feeling safe – link to Alone, Gardai and Local Authorities
5. Caring for others who are cocooning – Link to Volunteer Ireland

### **First Online Irish Youth Chat Service:**

Four leading Irish youth organisations have launched a new unique online youth chat system called the Digital Youth Information Chat Service. The Youth Information Online has been expedited by Crosscare, SpunOut, YMCA and Youth Work Ireland to support young people during Covid 19 lockdown. The Youth Information online chat service builds on a long standing partnership of professional Youth Information providers in Ireland and relies on the development of commitment to joined up working on communications, safeguarding, data protection, and youth information practice. The service is staffed by professional Youth Information Workers. The service will be available to young people from 4pm to 8pm and is aimed at young people aged between 16 and 25, it is impartial, non-judgemental, reliable, and accurate.

**The Heritage Council** has launched five new online tutorials for primary school children now staying at home. These include classes in wildlife drawing; what to notice in your local park and localities (within 2k); learning to sing a newly composed Irish song and how to find out about stories from your grandparents using UCD's Schools' Folklore Collection. Please see: <http://www.heritageinschools.ie/online-tutorials>

**Waterways Ireland** has developed much practical educational content for primary school children (<https://learning.waterwaysireland.org/>) for activity at home or in nature. They share links and inspirational content for families to use over the coming weeks of social distancing and isolation. Activities planned include colouring, making a barge out of household items, going on a biodiversity walk.

### **The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht**

Ealaín na Gaeltachta is collaborating with Molscéal (TG4's online video story hub) to showcase Gaeltacht-based artists who are working from home and who are #SonaSaBhaile (Happy at Home).

### **Stay Active [Gov.ie/together](https://www.gov.ie/together)**

Our routines are affected by the COVID-19 outbreak in different ways. During difficult times like this, it's more important than ever to look after our general health and eating well and staying active are huge parts of that. We have advice on: -

- Activity at home: tips on how to from lots of organisations and exercise videos
- Keeping kids active: Tips and links to START, GAA, parkrun, active school flag
- Activity for older people: links to Siel Bleu, Age and Opportunity
- Outdoor activity: advice on getting out and UV skin advice

For Healthy Eating we have advice on: -

1. Healthy eating routine tips
2. Quick meals
3. Snacks
4. Takeaways
5. Older people
6. Cooking with children
7. Food safety

**Sport Ireland** has created a number of resources to promote responsible physical activity, and is supporting the Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs), National Governing Bodies, Athletes and the general public to get and stay active, following government guidelines, and is also working with Age & Opportunity for older adults and CARA for people with a disability.

### Local Authorities:

A number of local authorities have been working with their local Sports Partnerships to post home exercise and keep fit videos for all ages, including those cocooning or in self-isolation. Examples include: -

- The Longford Sports Partnership uses creative videos and video conferencing tools to run classes and help people to stay active at home.
- Fingal Digifit is a home workout video series encouraging citizens of all abilities to keep moving and get fit during the Covid-19 crisis.
- The South Dublin County Sports Partnership is working with primary schools to provide Home PE classes for their students, including dance, home workout, Pilates and athletics
- Galway Sports Partnership are hosting a number and range of free weekly online exercise programmes, including Buggy Buddies, Men / Women on the Move, HIIT.
- Cork City Council is doing daily online coaching session with a series of tips coordinated by FAI Development Officers.
- Sligo Sport & Recreation Partnership (SSRP) are developing a 'Sligo 21 Day Physical Activity Home Challenge Workbook for Children', including a workbook in hard copy for distribution in disadvantaged communities, an on-line version and insert in local press promoting children and families to be active from home.
- Longford County Council Sports Partnership is setting challenges including a 2km walk and photo challenge and members of the public and families can register for a completion medal.
- Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Sports Partnership is running a number of online workouts and challenges including the 'Grandparents 15 Minute Challenge', 'Scrambled Leg Challenge', 'Fighting Fit Challenge', 'Move to the Rhythm Dance Challenge'.
- Wicklow County Council Sports Partnership have developed a short exercise and activity list entitled 'Get Active At Home'. These information sheets will also be distributed to pharmacies, Meals on Wheels groups, through the PPN and the Community Call initiative for those who do not have internet access. The sports partnership are sharing daily at home exercises classes on our Facebook page, specifically from Siel Bleu which are suited to the older population.

Other ways to stay active: -

- Fingal County Council has posted content on healthy cooking on a budget, art and photography classes, Irish language challenge.
- Longford County Council has healthy eating advice and springtime flower arranging classes
- Tipperary County Museum has developed a set of downloadable games and puzzles available on the Tipperary County Council website.
- Meath County Council through its Arts Office is providing a number of initiatives online each week to engage people's creative and cultural interests. On Theatre Tuesday, local playwright Deirdre Kinahan reads extracts from her plays. On Wednesdays 'Ceol Comfort' is a series of music performances or videos featuring local musicians/artists supported by the Council.
- Roscommon County Council is developing a number of virtual tours of heritage sites including a virtual tour video of King House for groups or individual curious about Roscommon's fine historic houses and built heritage.

As well as posting their own content, many local authorities have been using their online channels to share information from others on recipes, games, culture, mindfulness, competitions, art activities.

#### Activities for children: -

- Fingal County Council is posting craft activity videos delivered by Children from age 5-10 & 10 upwards along with coding classes Viking fables storytelling and Storytelling as Gaeilge
- Longford County Council Library service has a Programme of online events for children including being creative in your garden, creative mindfulness for young families, coding classes and lots of arts and crafts competitions.
- Roscommon County Council create a “Home Schooler Alert” daily online alerts providing arts related links to parents home-schooling for arts and crafts, dance, theatre, visual art and museum activities to either access online or to print and try at home.
- South Dublin Libraries is running coding classes and challenges, careers information and Project Sums maths grinds online.
- Dun Laoghaire Rathdown writer in residence Sadhbh Devlin has been producing crafting videos, creative writing and crafting videos to help keep children busy and creative at home.
- First 5 – play and learning resource: Online resources under First 5, the Government’s strategy for babies, young children and their families, which includes play and learning resources for children under 6. These online also part of the Lets Play Ireland campaign will be hosted on the First 5 website, [www.first5.gov.ie](http://www.first5.gov.ie), with ideas and activities under the themes of Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. As well as activities for parents to enjoy with their children, the online resources also give tips on supporting children with their feelings, and ideas and activities for learning through play. Early Childhood Ireland has prepared a number of videos on behalf of the Department which include early learning and care providers and specialists. These videos, which will be available over the coming days in the “Preschool at Home” section of the First 5 website, aim to inspire families to discover the learning and play that can take place at home.

#### Cultural activities and artistic performances in your home:

- Through its “Ireland Performs” series and new “Other Voices – Courage” programme, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is also supporting creatives and artists to perform live for families in homes all over Ireland - using digital and broadcast platforms.
- The Creative Ireland Programme has gathered a wide range of engaging and interesting free creative activities for people of all ages to try in their own homes under the #createathome and #getirelandmaking hashtags.
- Ireland's National Cultural Institutions, theatres and cinemas are currently closed to the public, however, they have since moved to develop really engaging and immersive online activities and content, including:
  - Virtual tours of galleries and museums
  - Digitised browsable collections and manuscripts
  - Podcasts on collections and works
  - Interactive material and activities
  - Online training programmes
  - Performance recordings – both from archives and newly commissioned
  - Genealogy Online, to explore family history

Learning Irish online: There are many platforms for interacting with and learning the Irish language online: -

- Online tutorials for traditional singing and musical language learning
- Literature competitions, for all ages, crosswords, challenges
- Schools and curriculum resources
- Recordings of singing and performances
- Conversation circle on the phone (Gael Linn)
- Working with TG4 and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí na hÉireann – a reimagined Fleadh Ceoil
- Working with TG4 Molscéal / Ealaín na Gaeltachta/ Teicspás – showcasing language-based arts and stories from Gaeltacht Communities
- Meitheal Dúchas – calling on people to volunteer to transcribe collected stories
- Meitheal Logainn – calling on people to upload details on minor place names to the website

Need information and advice on COVID-19? Go to [www.hse.ie/coronavirus](http://www.hse.ie/coronavirus)