Parkinson's Ireland

www.parkinsons.ie

Summer 2026

PD-Life Research Project Kicks Off

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO - **SHANE O'BRIEN**

Dear friends,

As we move into the summer months, it is a good opportunity to reflect on what has already been a very positive and productive year for Parkinson's Ireland.

Strengthening Our Services

A key development in recent months has been the early operation of our national counselling service. Since opening earlier this year, the service has begun accepting clients and is already responding to a clear demand for specialist support addressing the emotional and psychological impact of living with Parkinson's. This marks an important step forward in how we support people with Parkinson's and their families.

Across the country, it has also been encouraging to see continued growth and engagement in local services and activities, including the establishment of a new group in the Athlone area for the first time, further expanding our reach and ensuring that people can access supports in their own communities.

Awareness, Fundraising and Education

April was once again a landmark month for the organisation. Our "Every Minute Matters – Meds on Time" campaign received strong engagement and helped to highlight an issue that remains critically important to people with Parkinson's and their families.

We would like to sincerely thank our ambassadors for their courage in sharing their personal stories, helping to bring lived experience to the forefront and raise awareness in a meaningful way.

Our flagship fundraising event, "A Walk in the Park for Parkinson's", continued to grow this year with increased venues across the country. This event is only made possible by the dedication of our branches and volunteers, and we thank everyone involved.

A WALK IN THE PARK FOR PARKINSON'S

Our annual Education Conference also took place in April, bringing together people with Parkinson's, family members, and professionals for a valuable day of learning. We are pleased that the conference recording is now available on our website, so you can still benefit from the content.

Advocacy

Advocacy remains a core priority. In recent months, we have continued engagement with government and the HSE to highlight the need for investment in Parkinson's services.

Our Pre-Budget Submission has been launched, focusing on the growing demand for services and the need for more neurologists and nurse specialists in addition to funding for mental health supports.

We also contributed to joint advocacy work with Parkinson's Europe in advance of Ireland's EU Presidency, ensuring that Parkinson's and neurological conditions are part of wider European-level discussions on health and disability policy.

Research

Research continues to be an important area of focus. In recent months, we participated in the PD Life Research Hub kick-off meeting, marking a significant step forward for this all-island research initiative. This exciting new project will take place over the next 4 years.

We have also seen progress through the HRB/HRCI Joint Funding Scheme, with the process now

concluded and outcomes informing the next phase of supported research activity. These developments highlight the important role Parkinson's Ireland is playing in shaping research priorities and supporting innovation in the sector.

Innovation and Digital Support

Alongside our core services, we are continuing to develop new approaches to supporting people with Parkinson's. Our Digital Assistive Technology project is progressing well, and we are pleased that Module 1 is now available on our website, providing practical guidance to help people make use of technology in their daily lives.

International Engagement

In May, I had the opportunity to attend the World Parkinson Congress, which brings together researchers, clinicians, and patient organisations from across the world. This was an important opportunity to ensure that Parkinson's Ireland remains connected to global developments and best practice, and to bring these learnings back to inform our work at a national level.

Looking Ahead

While it has been a busy and productive period, there is much more to do. Demand for services continues to grow, and we remain focused on ensuring that we can respond in a sustainable and impactful way.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Take care,

Shane

Final Zoom Sessions Before Summer Break

29 May	**Exercise with Gráinne McKeown**
24 June	**Nurse Zoom Session**
24 June	**Yoga with Theresa**
14 July	**Singalong with Dara**

Parkinson's Ireland will produce a series of pre recorded videos based on our online classes, which will be made available on our website over the summer.

Zoom sessions will resume in September and members will be notified of all upcoming dates and details closer to the time.

FREEWILL.IE

FreeWill Charity Partnership

Did you know only 27% of Irish adults have a Will? Parkinson's Ireland is a charity partner of FreeWill Ireland, which means you can create an online Will for free.

Having an up-to-date Will gives peace of mind for you and your family.

As a proud charity partner of FreeWill.ie, you can now make your online Will for FREE.

When doing so, please consider leaving a gift in your Will to Parkinson's Ireland – helping us support people living with Parkinson's and their families into the future.

Write your Will online

To help you get started with writing a Will from the comfort of your own home, we've teamed up with FreeWill Ireland, and their online partner Last Will to provide you with a free online Will writing service.

1. When you have decided you would like to use this service, please contact us to receive your unique weblink for your free Will. E: fundraising@parkinsons.ie or call 01 8722234. You will also receive a simple Will Guidance document by return email.
2. Review the guidance material before completing your online Will. Plan your will, taking account of your various assets, liabilities and wishes for the future.
3. When you're ready to start drafting your Will, click on the link sent to you to start your free online will.
4. There are a number of sections and you can review and edit these as you progress.
5. Once the system has generated your Will (it will be sent to your email), simply print it out and follow the instructions to sign it and have it witnessed.
6. Store your Will in a safe place. It is recommended to make other relevant people aware of its location.

There is no charge for a standard Will, which is suitable for most people.

If you find your Will is more complicated and you want to take legal advice, you can ask FreeWill to refer you to their partner solicitor (but there is as a fee for this). The will can be reviewed either in person or via Zoom. Please visit www.parkinsons.ie for more information.

To discuss leaving a gift in your will with one of our team, please call 01 8722234 or email fundraising@parkinsons.ie

FUNDRAISING

The Midwest branch was honored to be chosen as the recipients of the funds raised at the Limerick Mayor's Ball on April 17th.

Shannon took on an unforgettable skydive on April 25th to raise funds for Parkinson's Ireland, raising over €3,500 in the process.

Shauna Carey and her friends Ava, Brigid and Philly took on the Westport Marathon on April 18th. Together they raised €4,300 for Parkinson's Ireland Tipperary Branch.

Mark and Sam Breen ran 170km over the course of 4 days, covering the distance from Dublin to Dunmore East.

Their Dad was diagnosed over 2 years ago with Parkinson's and they completed this challenge to support him and raise awareness and funds for Parkinson's. They raised a huge amount of money by participating in this challenge. Well done Lads.

Matthew White ran the Paris Marathon on April 12th for Parkinson's Ireland.

PARKINSON'S IRELAND SUMMER RAFFLE 2026

Please support our Parkinson's Summer Raffle.

DID YOU KNOW?

Every ticket you buy gives you a chance to win one of our super prizes.

- **1 ticket (€5) would help pay the cost of sending out an information pack to a newly diagnosed person with Parkinson's Disease.**
- **Every ticket you buy will make a positive difference to the lives of people with Parkinson's Disease.**
- **Draw takes place on Wednesday 29th July 2026 at 12 noon in Carmichael House.**
- **If you would like to buy extra tickets please call Freephone 1800 359 359 or email nationaloffice@parkinsons.ie**

To order Raffle tickets scan the QR code

PRIZES INCLUDE:

- **€500 Cash Prize**
- **1 night B&B for 2, including a 3 course meal at the Clayton Hotel Silver Springs Cork**
- **1 night B&B for 2 at the Hodson Bay Hotel or Galway Bay Hotel**
- **1 night B&B for 2 at the Talbot Hotel Cork**
- **Dinner for 2 including wine at The Marine Hotel, Sutton**

Plus Many More Prizes

Parkinson's Ireland

RCN 20028237
CHY REVENUE NO 10816

SUMMER RAFFLE 2026

Name _____

Address _____

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Phone No _____

Email _____

Sold by _____

Ticket No.:

SUMMER RAFFLE 2026

Parkinson's Ireland

Top Prizes Include

- €500 Cash Prize
- 1 night B&B for 2, including a 3 course meal at the Clayton Hotel Silver Springs Cork
- 1 night B&B for 2 at the Hodson Bay Hotel or Galway Bay Hotel
- 1 night B&B for 2 at the Talbot Hotel Cork
- Dinner for 2 including wine at The Marine Hotel, Sutton
- 2 Tickets to EPIC- Irish Emigration Museum
- 2 Tickets to the Guinness Factory
- 2 Tickets to Waterford Treasures Medieval Museum
- Pair of shoes from Skechers (€100 voucher)
- Family Pass to the Treetop Walk at Beyond the Trees Avondale

★★★ *and many more prizes* ★★★

€5 EACH OR €20 FOR A BOOK OF 5

Draw will take place on 29/07/26 @ 12 Noon in Carmichael Centre, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7.
Permission Granted - RCN 20028237 and CHY Revenue no 10816.

Ticket No.:

THE CARING ROLE

When a loved one is living with Parkinson's, it's natural to experience a mix of emotions and some uncertainty along the way.

Over time, you may find yourself taking on more of a caring role than you expected. As things change, it's normal to feel moments of worry or frustration as you adjust.

Everyone comes to terms with Parkinson's in their own way and at their own pace. At times, you and your loved one may feel differently about things, which can occasionally lead to challenges or misunderstandings.

Learning more about Parkinson's and staying informed can help you feel more confident and prepared and may make day-to-day life a little easier to manage. As you support your loved one, it's just as important to look after your own wellbeing. Staying connected with supportive people and taking time for yourself can make a real difference.

Accepting help from others can help you re-charge your batteries. Family Carers Ireland offer wonderful support to all people on their journey as a Carer. Please visit www.familycarers.ie

If you require any information relevant to carers, please visit parkinsons.ie or to speak with our Parkinson's Nurse Specialists please contact Freephone 1800 359 35.

Tips for Carers

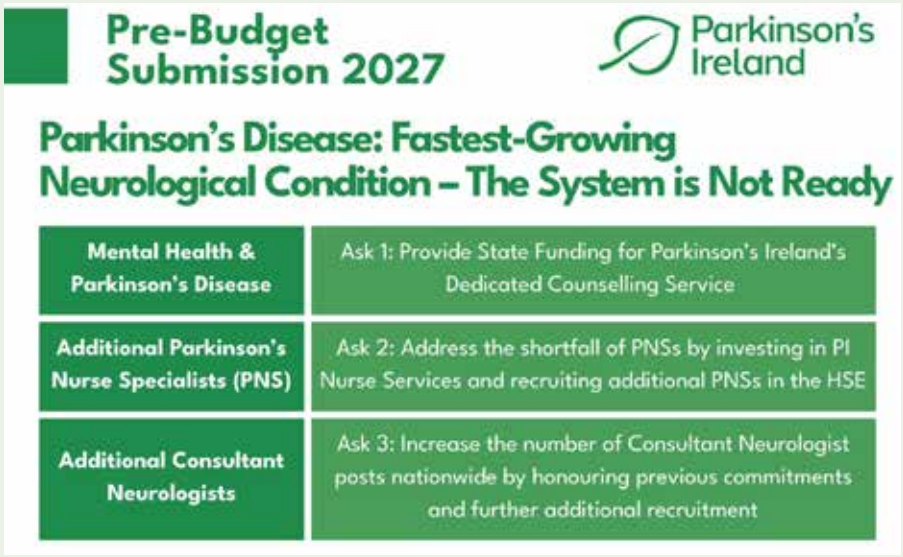
- Take care of your own physical & psychological health, so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.
- Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.
- Prioritise sleep as it can help you cope with everyday challenges.
- Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.
- Providing care can be challenging at times. Consider chatting with your public health nurse about respite options and the home care support available to you.
- Be open to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.
- Organize medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.
- Make sure legal documents are in order.
- Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is!

Parkinson's Disease: Fastest-Growing Neurological Condition – The System is Not Ready

Parkinson's Ireland is pleased to present our Pre-Budget 2027 Submission. Parkinson's disease is the fastest-growing neurological condition in the world and the second most common neurodegenerative disease after Alzheimer's.

There are now over 18,000 people living with Parkinson's in Ireland, and this number is expected to double by 2050. Despite this, services have not kept pace with demand.

People with Parkinson's experience the longest average hospital stays of any neurological condition, placing enormous strain on both individuals and the health system. Without urgent investment, this pressure will continue to grow.



Mental Health & Parkinson's Disease

Ask 1: Provide State Funding for Parkinson's Ireland's Dedicated Counselling Service

Mental health is one of the most significant unmet needs for people living with Parkinson's. Symptoms such as anxiety and depression are often invisible and remain chronically under-recognised and under-resourced. Research shows that 75% of people with Parkinson's say the condition affects their mental health, yet 78% report they have been unable to access mental health services.

Around one in two people with Parkinson's experiences anxiety or depression during their illness. In response, Parkinson's Ireland launched a dedicated counselling service in 2026 for people with Parkinson's and their care partners. This service supports people at critical stages such as diagnosis, disease progression, and caregiver burnout. We are now calling for core State funding from 2027 to ensure this vital service can continue, reduce waiting times, and provide consistent, long-term support.

Additional Parkinson's Nurse Specialists

Ask 2: Address the national shortfall of PNSs by investing in PI Nursing Services and increasing provision of PNSs in the HSE

Parkinson's Nurse Specialists (PNSs) are central to effective Parkinson's care. They help manage symptoms, prevent hospital admissions, and act as a vital link between people with Parkinson's and their neurologists. Under 2016 NICE Guidelines, there should be 1 PNS for every 300 PwPD. Given the 2025 population, there should be 60 PNS. Currently, there are 25, and PI provide 2 of these. Large parts of the country have no access at all, forcing people to travel long distances or go without specialist care.

Investment in both HSE recruitment and Parkinson's Ireland's nurse services is urgently needed to address blackspot

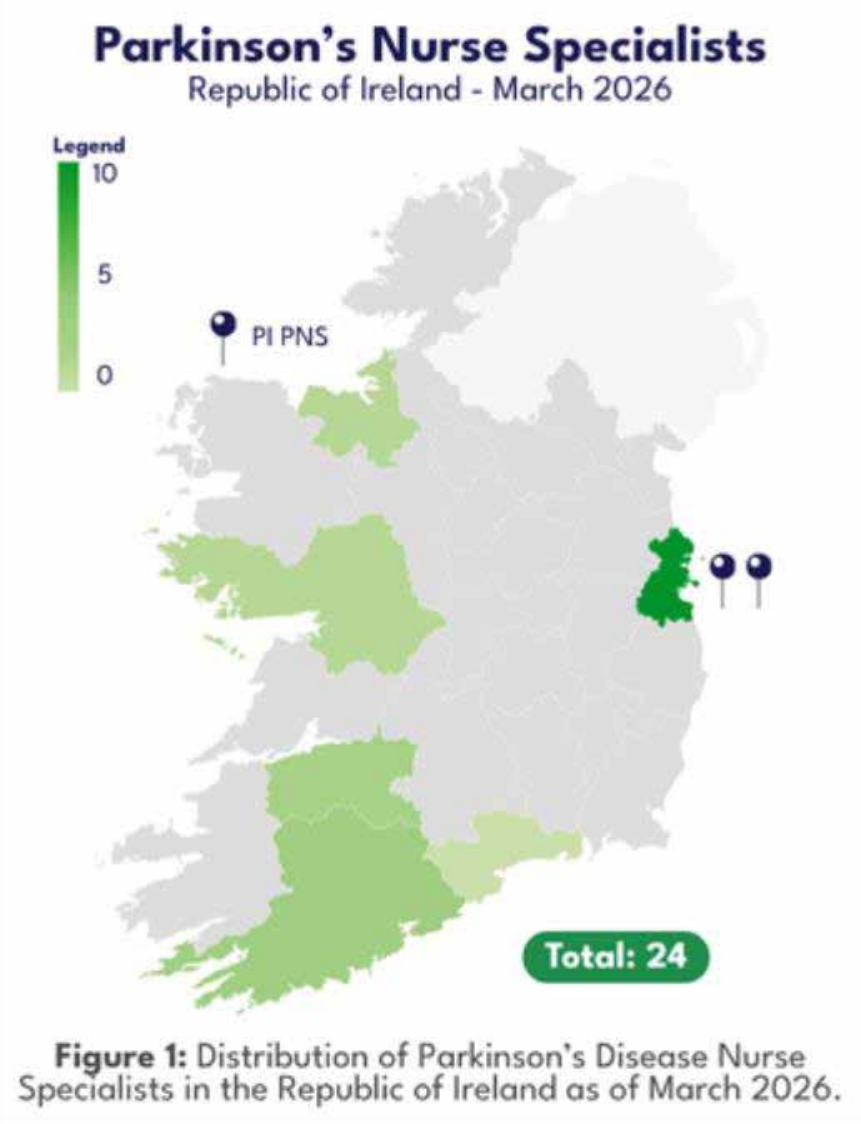


Figure 1: Distribution of Parkinson's Disease Nurse Specialists in the Republic of Ireland as of March 2026.

areas, reduce travel burdens, and keep people well in their communities.

Additional Consultant Neurologists

Ask 3: Increase the number of Consultant Neurologist posts nationwide by honouring previous commitments and further additional recruitment

Ireland has the lowest number of consultant neurologists per capita in Europe, with approximately one neurologist for every 76,500 people. This shortage results in diagnostic delays of up to four years in some hospitals, leaving people without answers or appropriate treatment.

While commitments have been made to recruit additional neurologists in regional hospitals, these must now be fully delivered and expanded. Without sustained workforce planning, Ireland will remain far behind comparable European countries and people with Parkinson's will continue to experience avoidable deterioration and distress.

PARKINSON'S NURSE/ DIETITIAN

Parkinson's Nurse Specialists/ Dietitian Callback Service

To request a callback from our Parkinson's Nurse Specialists or Dietitian please call our freephone

1800 359 359.

PARKINSON'S AND WARM WEATHER:
STAYING WELL IN THE HEAT

Article by Lisa Wynne PD Nurse Specialist

People with Parkinson's (PD) can still get dehydration, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke like anyone else. Some people find their symptoms worsen in higher temperatures. Not everyone notices sensitivity to heat, but even small increases in temperature can affect how you feel.

Can heat worsen Parkinson's symptoms or increase the risk of general heat-related problems?

PD can affect the autonomic nervous system (the body's temperature control), so you may find that you may heat up faster, sweat more and cool down more slowly than others. Heat and sun exposure can worsen fatigue and increase dehydration. This can impact movement or motor symptoms and some people may experience dizziness or headaches due to dehydration. Hot weather at night can disrupt sleep, which may lead to increased fatigue and worsening of symptoms the next day.

Can heat affect your Parkinson's medication, or make your skin more sensitive to the sun?

Most Parkinson's medications do not directly increase sensitivity to the sun. However, some people may still be more vulnerable to heat and sun due to side effects like low blood pressure, dizziness or dehydration. Other medications can increase sun sensitivity, so it's important to be aware. Regardless, sun protection is important for everyone — use sunscreen, wear a hat, and limit direct sun exposure where possible. It's also important to check your skin regularly and be aware of any new or changing moles or spots, and to seek medical advice if you have any concerns.

Is there anything to add about adjusting exercise routine?

Exercise remains important, but you may need to adjust your routine in hot weather. Aim to exercise in the early morning or evening, reduce intensity, and take more frequent breaks. Listen to your body and avoid pushing through fatigue or dizziness. If you are sweating more

or doing higher-intensity activity, make sure to increase your fluid intake.

Why is hydration important in Parkinson's?

Hydration is one of the biggest factors in how you feel. Your body needs fluids for blood pressure, bowel function, and brain health. If you have bladder symptoms, you may be tempted to drink less, but this can make symptoms worse overall. It's about balance. Warmer temperatures increase sweating and the risk of dehydration, so it's important to replace fluids regularly. It's also worth being aware that both air travel and alcohol can increase the risk of dehydration.

Tips:

Drink regularly, not just when you feel thirsty. Aim for small, frequent sips, and keep a drink with you to have throughout the day.

Include:

- ❑ Water
- ❑ Diluted juice
- ❑ Oral rehydration drinks in very hot weather (speak with your pharmacist for further advice)

Watch out for:

- ❑ Dark urine
- ❑ Headaches
- ❑ Dizziness
- ❑ Increased confusion
- ❑ Constipation- Water is a great laxative, and we know the effect constipation can have on the absorption of your medication!

How can people with Parkinson's stay cool?

- ❑ Stay hydrated!
- ❑ Wear light, loose clothing
- ❑ Stay in the shade or indoors during peak heat
- ❑ Use fans, cool showers, or damp cloths
- ❑ Keep your environment as cool as possible, both day and night

Are there any other changes/ precautions people with Parkinson's should make/take in the heat?

- ❑ Be sun aware! Sunscreen helps protect the skin from harmful UV rays, reducing the risk of sun damage. Choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen and remember to reapply throughout the day, especially if sweating or spending time outdoors. It's important for everyone to be sun safe, even on cloudy days, UV rays can still cause damage.
- ❑ Avoid the hottest part of the day by planning indoor activities, and stay in the shade where possible.
- ❑ Enjoy an afternoon rest if possible, to rejuvenate & reset.

Other helpful steps include

- ❑ standing up slowly to reduce dizziness
- ❑ choosing smaller, lighter meals or more frequent snacks, if your appetite is low.

Parkinson's Ireland

Motor Fluctuations in Parkinson's Disease (ON/ OFF, Wearing Off, Dyskinesia and Freezing)

M2 September 2024

What are Motor Fluctuations?

The term "motor fluctuations" means that after a number of years of Levodopa treatment, people may find that the smooth and even control of symptoms that their medications once gave them is no longer dependable. The most common motor fluctuations experienced in Parkinson's are "ON/OFF", Dyskinesia and Freezing.

What does "ON/OFF" mean?

The "ON/OFF" Phenomenon in Parkinson's Disease (PD is related to fluctuating benefit of the medications used to treat PD.

Being "ON" describes the time when the Person with Parkinson's (PwP feels that their medication is beneficial and that their symptoms are well controlled.

Being "OFF" describes the time when the Person with Parkinson's (PwP) feels that their medication is not working as well as usual, and some of their symptoms may have returned (either motor: stiffness, slowness or tremor; or non- motor: anxiety, nausea, depression).

The "ON/OFF" phenomenon can be best described as a quick, unpredictable reappearance of PD symptoms, Likewise, switching from "OFF" to "ON" can occur just as suddenly. The speed of this shift can be so dramatic that some people have compared this effect to a light switch being turned on and off.

How is the "ON/OFF" Phenomenon Treated?

Many of the strategies that can be used to treat "Wearing -off" effects can also be tried when someone is experiencing "ON/OFF" fluctuations such as ensuring that you are taking your medication correctly, taking them with plenty of fluid and avoiding food at tablet time.

What can people with PD do to help themselves?

Documenting "ON "and "OFF" time in a 24-hour diary, where they can indicate the times and frequency of their symptoms and fluctuations, Along with the times and frequency of their dosage, can be useful, it may begin to show a pattern which will allow the specialist or PDNS devise a new regime.

What are Dyskinesias?

Some people may experience involuntary dance like movements in their arms, trunk, and legs. These involuntary movements are known as "dyskinesias" and can include twitches, jerks, twisting movements or simple restlessness. They occur initially when the level of levodopa is at its peak but may appear any time later. Dyskinesias are associated with long-term use of levodopa and the progression of Parkinson's Disease. They usually occur in people who have Parkinson's Disease for some time.

How can Dyskinesia be Treated?

Dyskinesia can be difficult to treat, as it appears as a result of the buildup of an increased sensitivity to dopamine levels in the brain, an option would be to reduce the amount of levodopa treatment. However, this may lead to the return of PD symptoms such as tremor rigidity or slowness of movement and could mean more "Wearing OFF" or "ON/OFF" effects. Usually, if people

PARKINSON'S PASSPORT

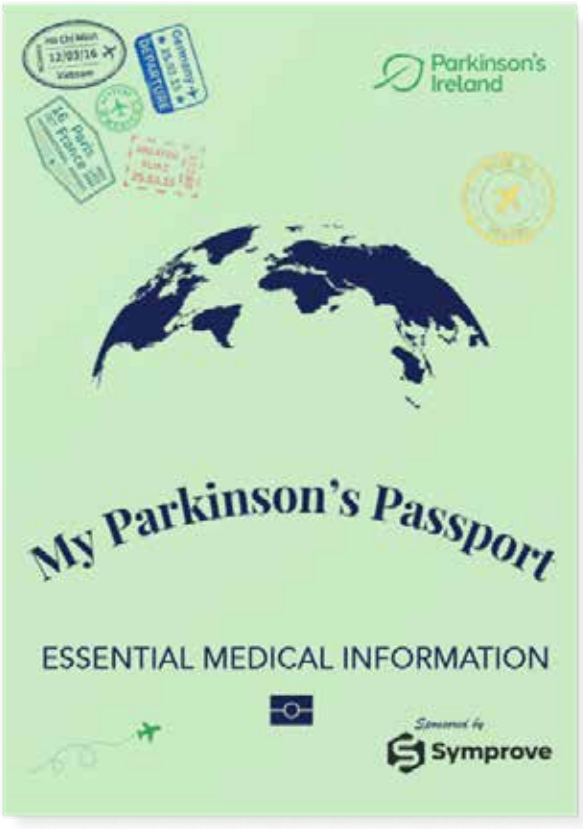
Hospital admissions can be especially difficult for people with Parkinson's and for family members. While medication timing is vital, many problems in hospital arise because staff do not fully understand the individual needs of the person on admission.

Preparation can make a real difference. Having clear information available helps staff understand how Parkinson's affects the person day to day, what support they need and how best to communicate with them, particularly in busy or stressful settings.

Alongside the Parkinson's Ireland Parkinson's Passport, the HSE also has a Health Passport, available on their website. This is designed to support people with disabilities and can be very useful for people with Parkinson's who experience cognitive changes or communication difficulties. There is limited awareness of this resource, but it can help ensure a person's needs and preferences are understood throughout their hospital stay.

Families and carers play an important advocacy role by bringing passport documents to hospital, asking staff to refer to them and checking that key information is shared between teams. Small actions like this can improve communication, continuity of care and the overall hospital experience.

To request a Parkinson's Ireland Parkinson's Passport, please call 1 800 359 359 and we will be happy to send one in the post.



PARKINSON'S IRELAND
WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON....

PARKINSON'S AWARENESS 2026

Parkinson's Ireland

A Walk in the Park for Parkinson's

On April 11th, Parkinson's Awareness Day, communities across the country came together for A Walk in the Park for Parkinson's, with events taking place in 21 locations nationwide. The day was a powerful show of solidarity, raising awareness and vital funds to support those living with Parkinson's and their families.

Participants of all ages stepped out to walk, connect and show their support. From local parks to community spaces, each location was filled with a shared sense of purpose, positivity and encouragement. The event highlighted not only the strength of the Parkinson's community, but also the impact that collective action can have.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who registered, attended and donated. Your support plays a crucial role in helping us continue our work and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those affected by Parkinson's.

Lighting up of Buildings

Across Ireland, buildings were lit up red on Apil 11th to mark Parkinson's Awareness Day, creating a powerful symbol of solidarity and support.

Why red? It represents love, strength, and support for everyone living with Parkinson's, as well as their families and carers. These illuminated landmarks are a reminder that no one is alone, and that communities across the country stand together in awareness and understanding.

Each red light helps spark conversation, build compassion, and highlight the importance of continued support for all those affected by Parkinson's.

Education Conference

Parkinson's Ireland recently hosted an Education Conference on 25th April 2026.

The conference featured presentations from Niamh O'Hanlon, Dr. Deborah McIntyre, Catriona Kinnevey, Cathy O'Shea, Dr. Niamh Connolly and Professor Eilís Dowd.

The conference was expertly chaired by Annmarie O'Connor, who helped guide a clear and engaging discussion.

We sincerely thank our speakers and everyone who joined us. Your participation made the event a valuable occasion for the Parkinson's community. We would also like to thank AbbVie for sponsoring the conference.

For those who could not attend the conference on the day you can still watch online by visiting our website www.parkinsons.ie

Every Minute Matters – Meds on Time

We also ran our awareness campaign on Meds on Time during Parkinson's Awareness Month. You can read more about this campaign on page 19.

Leinster House on Parkinson's Awareness Day.

PARTNERSHIP IN PARKINSON'S:

Connection is Key': SLT-led Multidisciplinary Parkinson's Group Programme: Bank of Digital Resources Created as a Team

Written by Senior SLT Emily O'Connor and edited by Senior SLT Joanne Reilly

The seeds were sown for our Speech & Language Therapy-led multidisciplinary group programme in January 2022 after connecting with local people with Parkinson's in a community focus group.

They shared confusion, anxiety, and barriers to care that called for coordinated, multidisciplinary support. Recognising that Parkinson's can present with over 40 symptoms—beyond the scope of any single discipline—we brought together key professionals to deliver holistic, evidence-based support, while keeping people with Parkinson's central as experts in their own condition and to all our care improvement efforts. We aimed to join hearts, minds and resources to improve access, empower our clients and deliver holistic interventions. In May 2022, Mullingar Primary Care Adult Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) Team launched our first multidisciplinary group for People with Parkinson's. Since then we have continually refined our group programme based on feedback from people with Parkinson's and their families and have delivered six groups by July 2025. Through tea, chat and laughter, people connect through sharing their lived experiences. We include activities like singing, chair yoga & mindfulness. We also link people with Parkinson's to Parkinson's friendly activities and events that are available within the local community.

Why Speech & Language Therapy?

89% of people with Parkinson's experience speech and voice disorders (Dashtipour et al., 2018) and more than 80 % will have swallowing difficulties (Patel et al., 2020). In the group programme, we focus on voice strengthening exercises so that people with Parkinson's can maintain their communication skills for as long as possible. We also gave information on their eating, drinking and swallowing. Speech & Language Therapy is core in a multi-disciplinary team approach to Parkinson's and Early Intervention is crucial as voice changes indicate the motor impairment (Ma et al., 2020). Furthermore social connectedness is key to healthy aging (Suragarn et al., 2021).

Our 6 week x 2.5 hours SLT-led multidisciplinary programme is for service users with Parkinson's: to strengthen their voice and swallow and is embedded within a biopsychosocial framework improving symptom management knowledge. We ensure each individual that attends the group has a comprehensive assessment prior to it and an individual review afterwards. Using co-design and self-management focus, we are continually refining and improving this programme. It has been a collaboration between people with Parkinson's, their families, HSE Primary care and non-HSE bodies

e.g. Parkinson's Ireland and local county councils. Our focus has been on providing wraparound supports for our clients at an individual, group and community level. The group bolsters wellbeing, establishes connections, supports carers and shares evidence-based information to people with Parkinson's.

SLT-led Multidisciplinary group focuses on voice exercises weekly in the group and emphasizes daily practise with the following additional Parkinson's specific multidisciplinary educational talks:

- ❑ Parkinson's Nurse Specialist (Parkinson's Ireland)
- ❑ Continence Nurse Specialist (HSE)
- ❑ Eating, Drinking and Swallowing by Speech & Language Therapist (HSE)
- ❑ Dietitian (HSE)
- ❑ Occupational Therapist (HSE)
- ❑ Mindfulness (PHN: HSE)
- ❑ Carer session (separate but in parallel to group)

A Problem Arose

The impending retirement of the Continence Nurse Specialist – integral to our group since the start-exposed sustainability risks to our group programme arising

from a reliance on key individual expertise, and highlighted service vulnerability to workforce changes.

What did we do?

In response, we focused on preserving specialist knowledge by digitally capturing educational talks delivered by the Continence Nurse and Parkinson's Ireland Nurse Specialist. Parkinson's is a complex multifaceted condition requiring an adaptive innovative approach to care. HSE SPARK seed funding enabled the co-design and development of Parkinson's-specific digital resources through multi-stakeholder collaboration involving:

- People with Parkinson's and their families,
- Adult Speech and Language Therapy team,
- HSE Primary Care Professionals including Continence Nurse Specialist, PHN trained in Mindfulness and Physiotherapists,
- Parkinson's Nurse Specialist with Parkinson's Ireland,
- Age Friendly Ireland Coordinator,
- Videographer,
- HSE managers and Communications department.

Outcome

The key outcome is a digital resource bank that empowers People with Parkinson's and carers with accessible high-quality information, enhances service efficiency for health professionals, and secures long-term sustainability of our Parkinson's groups and they can be used and accessible nationwide. While enhancing sustainability, they are designed to complement—not replace—the vital face-to-face connection central to our groups.

A co-leadership approach strengthened shared decision-making, accountability and continuity. Following final sign-off of the carer video, a coordinated dissemination strategy will ensure wide reach across primary care and community settings including Parkinson's Ireland, GPs, Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists, Age Friendly Ireland, Family Carers Ireland, Allied Health Professionals, advocacy bodies, and support groups.

This initiative, aligns with Sláintecare and the National Digital Strategy (Department of Health, 2024) and delivers improvements in patient empowerment, experience and equity while driving measurable gains in provider efficiency and service sustainability.

More on the Talks Captured

With our funding, we captured a talk called 'Parkinson's Jigsaw' presented by Lisa Wynne, Parkinson's Nurse Specialist with Parkinson's Ireland. It gives a brief overview of what Parkinson's Ireland can offer to people with Parkinson's. Knowledge of Parkinson's, the supports available, and medication and symptom management are outlined. Parkinson's Jigsaw comprises Knowledge, Exercise, Team, Medication and Supports. It highlights how Parkinson's medication is time-critical and "Meds on Time, Every Time" is crucial. The top 10 causes of sudden deterioration in Parkinson's disease are outlined. Sleep issues are explained and tips on managing fatigue are provided. Lisa discusses the potential causes of anxiety in Parkinson's and ways to address it and support yourself. The importance of exercise in Parkinson's is also emphasized.

The Continence talk presented by Continence Nurse Specialist Patricia Finnerty discusses the effects of Parkinson's on the bladder including difficulties with storing and emptying. A medical assessment from your GP is highlighted as crucial in managing any bladder or bowel issue. Strategies for managing bladder problems are discussed. Bladder investigations are explained. Management options are outlined for bladder issues. Constipation is the number-one cause of changes in Parkinson's symptoms Therefore, in relation to the bowel, constipation is examined, along with emptying tips and how to establish a regular bowel habit. Making the Continence Nurse and Parkinson's Nurse Specialist talks available nationally will extend scarce expertise to areas with limited access, amplifying impact.

Continued on page 18

Action shot of Mullingar Parkinson's group (consent given by participants for shot)

Parkinson's doesn't affect individuals but families and their social circles as well. Parallel to the group, we supported carers by assisting family members to meet others supporting people with Parkinson's and giving useful information on supports. We wanted to capture this hence The Carer Support Video came to life. Presented by my SLT colleague Elaine Geoghegan, it gives information on the following Family Carers Ireland; Age Friendly Ireland; Alone; Age Action Ireland; Care and repair service; Primary Care Services; Living Well Programme; Irish Hospice Foundation; Emergency Care Booklet & Parkinson's Visit booklet; Sunflower Lanyard & JAM cards; Parkinson's Ireland & their Care Partner Webinar; Supports for other Long term health conditions and General Advice for Care Partners. The aim of this video is to help carers better understand what support is available, how to access it, and where to turn for information, advice, and ongoing help.

The promotional group video aims to encourage individuals within our catchment who are not currently linked with services to come forward early in their Parkinson's journey, while also demonstrating to other regions what is achievable locally. We are happy to share our learning with others of the programme. It shares the powerful stories of people with Parkinson's that actively contributed and attended the group and the Speech and Language Therapists that led the initiative: myself and my colleague Joanne Reilly as well as capturing our PHN colleague Michelle Kilmurray's mindfulness exercise.

A word of Thanks

Joanne and I wish to acknowledge and thank all contributing members of the Primary Care Multidisciplinary East Westmeath team in particular SLTs Eadaoin Dolan, Elaine Geoghegan and Caoilinn Behan, Continence Nurse Specialist Patricia Finnerty, Physiotherapy, Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, Parkinson's Ireland especially Lisa Wynne and Kathy Foley Parkinson's Nurse Specialists, Michelle Kilmurray Public Health Nurse, Sam Hogan Age Friendly Ireland Coordinator and the Living Well Programme who provided their expertise and time. Big thank you to the People with Parkinson's, their families and those that participated in and facilitated the project in the community. Penultimately, a thank you to HSE SPARK innovation programme who recognised and provided funding towards this initiative. Finally, the Mullingar adult Speech and Language Therapy team are grateful and encouraged to be nationally recognised for this project with an Irish Healthcare Centre Award in Best Patient Education Healthcare Initiative in 2026.

We urge you to connect with your local Primary Care Team for support on your Parkinson's journey. Furthermore, Check out HSE Dublin Midlands YouTube Channel for the videos and specialist talks and show your support and appreciation by leaving a 'like' or 'thumbs up'! Alternatively, you can find these videos on the Parkinson's Ireland website under Supports.

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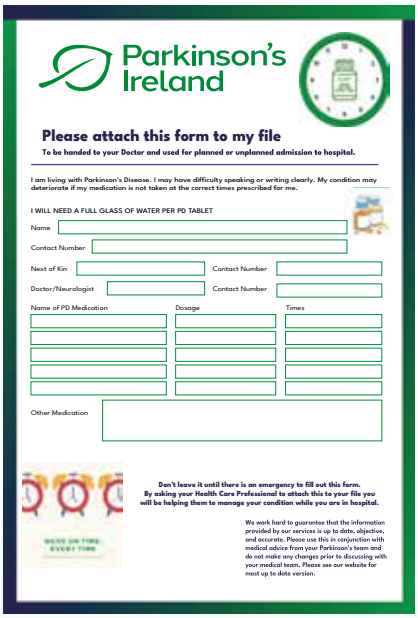
PARKINSON'S AWARENESS—MEDS ON TIME EVERY TIME


Parkinson's Ireland

Please attach this form to my file

To be handed to your Doctor and used for planned or unplanned admission to hospital.

I am living with Parkinson's Disease. I may have difficulty speaking or writing clearly. My condition may deteriorate if my medication is not taken at the correct times prescribed for me.

I WILL NEED A FULL GLASS OF WATER PER PD TABLET

Name

Contact Number

Next of Kin | Contact Number

Doctor/Neurologist | Contact Number

Name of PD Medication | Dosage | Times

Other Medication

Don't leave it until there is an emergency to fill out this form. By asking your Health Care Professional to attach this to your file you will be helping them to manage your condition while you are in hospital.

We work hard to guarantee that the information provided by our services is up to date, objective, and accurate. Please use this in conjunction with medical advice from your Parkinson's team and do not make any changes prior to discussing with your medical team. Please see our website for most up to date version.

Parkinson's Awareness Month 2026 saw Parkinson's Ireland launch its "Meds on Time, Every Time" campaign, highlighting the critical importance of taking Parkinson's medication exactly as prescribed. Timely medication plays a vital role in managing symptoms such as tremor, stiffness and slowed movement, while even short delays can significantly impact symptom control and daily functioning.

The campaign also recognises the challenges people face in maintaining strict medication routines, particularly within busy or unpredictable daily lives. Through a series of ambassador videos, individuals living with Parkinson's shared their lived experiences, offering insight into the practical strategies they use to stay on track and advocating for greater understanding and support in all care settings. Alongside raising awareness, Parkinson's Ireland provided practical resources to help support medication adherence. The campaign emphasised that ensuring medications are taken on time is a shared responsibility, calling on healthcare professionals, caregivers and the wider community to play their part in improving outcomes and quality of life for people living with Parkinson's.

Scan QR code for more information

Parkinson's Ireland is pleased to offer new "Meds on Time" alert cards for members. These handy cards can be filled out with your personal and medication information and carried with you for use in the event of an emergency, helping others understand your medication needs quickly and clearly.

To request your free card, please call 1800 359 359 or email nationaloffice@parkinsons.ie.


Parkinson's Ireland

MEDS ON TIME, EVERY TIME

Name:

Emergency Contact/Tel:

PD Consultant:

www.parkinsons.ie 1800 359359

NATURE AS A TOOL TO REGULATE OUR NERVOUS SYSTEMS

I believe nature to be one of our very first regulators, well it was mine, growing up in a small busy house with 4 siblings. I was often searching for space. I became increasingly aware that I felt better when I had spent significant time outside. It comes so natural to us as children. Rolling down hills, making daisy chains, intuitively tuning in to the smell of the earth (life).

I have a distinct memory of really seeing the cracks in the earth and imaging what worms and bugs were doing in between them. Naturally present. Naturally mindful. However, as we grow older and with our overstimulating environments, our systems are increasing becoming locked in "fight or flight" response, this contributes to anxiety, burnout, and other chronic conditions. Nature can offer a powerful antidote.

There is an ever-growing body of scientific research (but let's face it we already know this from our centuries of lived experience) revealing that regular exposure to natural environments supports nervous system regulation and well-being. Walking in the forest, walking by the water, bird songs, and green views act as neurobiological cues of safety this reduces cortisol levels, slows heart rate, and encourages deep breathing.

Below is part of an article from Psychiatry Research Communications 4 (2024) 100191 specific to Parkinsons and nature. Journal homepage: www.sciencedirect.com/journal/Psychiatry-Research-Communication

People with Parkinson's are at an increased risk of developing depression than the general population: it has been estimated that up to 84% of people with Parkinson's suffer from mental health problems such as depression (Hermanowicz et al., 2019). Depression is a significant determinant of quality of life (Brenes, 2007; Herrera et al., 2021).

Nature interventions are therapy interventions which include nature and greenery. Nature interventions include Nordic Walking; gardening groups; flower arranging; and nature walking (Shanahan et al., 2019). Nature-based interventions have been found to reduce depression, anxiety and stress (Coventry et al., 2021).

In addition, they have been found to offer a plethora of benefits that traditional treatments, such as CBT, for depression do not offer such as benefits to cardiovascular health and balance; social benefits; and cognitive stimulation (Astell-Burt et al., 2022; Mochizuki-Kawai et al., 2018; Nagyova et al., 2020).

Despite the benefits of nature interventions, they are not routinely offered as part of clinical practice to people with Parkinson's suffering from depression. Nature interventions can be expensive to implement, and the evidence base for their use in people with Parkinson's is small (Salse-Bat´an et al., 2022). As people with

Article by Kathleen Moore Avila

Parkinson's are more likely to develop depression than the general population and additionally have their own experiences of depression it may be advantageous to develop a nature intervention designed specifically for this client group (Hsu et al., 2015). Whilst nature interventions have been recognised by the government as beneficial for mental health, nature interventions are not routinely offered as part of treatment packages for depression in primary care (NHS England, 2022).

Additionally, there is no nature intervention designed specifically for people with Parkinson's suffering from depression. According to the Psychiatry Research Communications 4 (2024) 100191a pilot study for intervention development was carried out titled "Service user experiences of a 4-week self-guided nature intervention for people with Parkinson's disease displaying depressive symptoms"

The aim of this project was to evaluate the feasibility, acceptability, and service user

experiences of a pilot guided self-help nature intervention for people with Parkinson's disease experiencing symptoms of depression. The nature intervention consisted of a 4-week self-guided nature-based intervention based on the CBT technique 'behavioural activation'. To improve the relevance, accountability and quality of the intervention, the intervention was developed through consultation with two service-users who had a clinical diagnosis of Parkinson's disease (Beresford, 2003). Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee at Royal Holloway, University of London. Between June 2023 and October 2023, people with Parkinson's disease who were experiencing some symptoms of low mood, were recruited to the nature intervention. Participants were recruited from Parkinson's UK, The Brain Charity, local Parkinson's support and exercise groups and via word of mouth. The sample size was set to 10 to 12 participants which was deemed sufficient by the current literature for feasibility and acceptability studies (Hertzog, 2008). All interested participants were called or emailed to determine whether they met inclusion criteria. For a participant to be included they needed to have a clinical diagnosis of Parkinson's disease, and they needed to be experiencing some symptoms of low mood.

The self-guided nature intervention compromised of four 30-min intervention sessions delivered by a trained clinical psychologist. Intervention sessions took places online via Microsoft Teams or via the telephone depending on participant preference. Sessions were facilitated by a trainee psychologist and focused on encouraging the participant to spend time in nature in their own time. The nature-based self-help intervention was created based on existing self-help CBT material on behavioural activation (BA) and existing CBT material on mindfulness (Dimidjian et al., 2006; Williams et al., 2008). In the nature-based intervention participants were introduced to the concept of the CBT cycle of low mood followed by a collaborative discussion of how to break out of the low mood cycle by targeting behaviour, as is explained in BA (Aaron T. Beck, A. John Rush, Brian F. Shaw, 1987). Once the cycle of low mood was understood, a discussion about the benefits of increasing positive activities into their routines, with a focus on the benefits of nature and increasing time spent in nature was facilitated. Activity scheduling was used to encourage participants to increase their activity levels. Participants were encouraged to schedule nature visits into their diaries. Nature was defined as a space that involved greenery, plants or nature vegetation such as grass, plants, trees and flowers. This included parks, woodlands and forests and gardens with greenery. Nature visits scheduled into participants diaries included: time relaxing in a garden; walks in the parks; time gardening, Once the concept of activity scheduling was understood, participants were introduced to the concept of mindfulness as a technique to use when in nature, to aid becoming fully immersed in the experience of being in nature and aware of the nature environment in which they were in. Previous research has shown that using mindfulness in nature-based interventions can lead to positive cognitive and affective states, increased awareness and can improve some aspects of mental wellbeing (Djernis et al., 2023; Lymeus et al., 2018; White, 2012). In the current study, participants were specifically introduced to the 5,4,321-grounding exercise, which focuses on using 5 senses to aid present-moment focus and aid the participant to notice the nature around them. The participants were asked to practice mindfulness whenever they went out in nature. Latter sessions focused on reviewing participant diaries, reviewing mood, and problem solving any barriers to spending time in nature. After having received the nature intervention participants were invited to take part in an exit interview.

Participants said that they were satisfied with the techniques taught in the sessions such as mindfulness, BA and grounding exercises. Participants commented that the intervention and techniques were easy to follow and understand. Some participants commented that the intervention taught them techniques that they already knew but did not use. When asked about the perfect intervention, some participants commented that they wouldn't make any changes to the session and participants comments are noted on page 22.

Continued on page 22

✤ The resources were simple and engaging	"Most of the information is helpful" (Participant 8) "Mindfulness is a really good one." (Participant 1) "Not only has it giving me tools, but you've also shown me how to use those tools" (Participant 10) "It's been really useful in terms of ideas". (Participant 1)
b) I enjoyed talking to you	"I've really enjoyed the sessions" (Participant 4) "Our talks have been very helpful I must admit" (Participant 5) "I've enjoyed it [talking]" (Participant 10)
c) The therapeutic setting gave me motivation	"It's refreshed some techniques that I've used before like bits of mindfulness. and its made me cope a bit more by you know making a bit more time for myself" (Participant 2) "It's put into focus when I'm not motivated" (Participant 10) "She [wife] asked me to see to do 2 jobs last night and they were done within 10 min" (Participant 10)
d) Suitability	"Yes it's suitable" (Participant 4) "I think it is suitable" (Participant 3)
The intervention helped my mental health	"I've been a bit more positive" (Participant 3) "I think [participant] is trying to be more positive" (participant's spouse) (Participant 7) "I used to mull over things, and this helped me to get out." (Participant 5) "It's made me cope a bit more" (Participant 2) "Sometimes I do [feel more relaxed]" (Participant 11)
The perfect intervention would look like 	a) I would like a longer intervention "I don't think it needs to be much longer, maybe six weeks" (Participant 10) "you might push it [session] to 45 min" (Participant 10) "I think possibly if people are responding and you have a dialogue going on you might find that the sessions need to last longer" (Participant 7) "I think it is suitable but should be longer though" (Participant 3) "That was [long] enough." (Participant 4)
	b) More time to talk about my Parkinson's "Parkinson's is a thing in itself if that makes sense so having an understanding that is part of problem I suppose really" (Participant 1) "Yes [more time to chat about Parkinson's]" (Participant 11) "I think a lot of Parkinson's people have quite a lot to say. I don't think I had enough time to sort of say what I wanted to say." (Participant 3)

Considering this research and everything we already know from our own experiences. One feels nature immersion is an important tool that can be utilised and promoted in counselling. Having completed some extra training in Ecotherapy it is something that can be brought into our work during counselling sessions at Parkinson's Ireland. If it feels NATURAL for the person of course!

PD-LIFE PROJECT KICKS OFF: A STRONG START WITH PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE

Author: Abhisweta Bhattacharjee (Project officer) / Suzanne Timmons

PD-Life Leadership. From left, back row: Dr. James Connolly (Ulster University), Prof. Ioana Latu (Queen's University Belfast), Dr. Mihalis Doumas (Queen's University Belfast), Prof. Iracema Leroi (Trinity College Dublin), Dr. Salvatore Tedesco (Tyndall National Institute), Dr. Matthew Rodgers (Queen's University Belfast)
From left, front row: Dr. Emma O'Shea (University College Cork), Prof. Amanda Clifford (University of Limerick), Prof. Suzanne Timmons (University College Cork), Dr. Ruth McCullagh (University College Cork)

The PD-Life project officially began with a two-day Kick-Off meeting in University College Cork (UCC) in early May, bringing together researchers, clinicians, technology experts, and – importantly – people living with Parkinson's and their representatives.

PD-Life is an all-island research project that aims to better understand how Parkinson's affects the quality of daily life. It is led by Prof. Suzanne Timmons – Head of Centre of Gerontology and Rehabilitation in the UCC School of Medicine. What makes this project unique is its strong focus on real-life experiences and its commitment to involving people with Parkinson's at every stage of the research.

The Kick-Off meeting marked an important first step in building this collaboration. While much of the discussion focused on planning the research, there was a clear and shared understanding across the room: this project will only succeed if it truly reflects the lived experiences of people with Parkinson's.

The Value of PPI: Voices That Shape the Research

A major highlight of the meeting was the contribution of Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) partners, including representatives from the Parkinson's Ireland and Parkinson's UK (Northern Ireland), who also

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PD-Life Team at the Western Gateway Building

are a part of the project steering committee.

Their input was not just welcomed – it was essential.

Discussions throughout the two days showed how PPI partners are helping to shape key decisions. They will also guide what information is collected and how it is asked, helping researchers avoid unnecessary burden for participants. For example, they will play a central role in designing surveys and interviews, ensuring that questions are relevant, respectful, and meaningful. Just as importantly, they will shape the key messages that are shared throughout the project

There was also valuable input on practical aspects of the project, such as how best to reach people beyond existing Parkinson's networks. Suggestions included using community events, radio, and more accessible outreach methods to ensure a wider range of voices are heard.

This level of involvement reflects a clear commitment: research should not be done on or for people with Parkinson's Disease, but with them.

PPI Panels: Building a Structure for Ongoing Involvement

To support this, the project is now setting up a dedicated PPI panel across the island of Ireland.

The plan is to establish a main panel of 10 members (from both the South and North of Ireland), who will help guide all aspects of the project, ensuring the focus and direction aligns with people's needs. The panel will also be part of the project's governance, meaning they will have a voice in how the project is run, not just what it studies. In-person meetings are being planned alongside online engagement to make participation as accessible as possible. Training and support will also be provided to ensure that everyone involved feels confident contributing.

This all-Ireland panel is supported by small local panels, who will be involved in individual PhD student projects, representing local people with Parkinson's, and helping these junior researchers to better understand the lived experience of Parkinson's.

Growing the Team: More Researchers Join PD-Life

A key piece of good news shared at the meeting was that the PD-Life team has grown. Thanks to additional funding secured by the consortium, two more PhD researchers will join the project – increasing the number from nine to eleven. This joins the 7 postdoctoral researchers (more experienced) funded through the project, and the 20+senior researchers within the project.

People with lived experiences at the centre of PD-Life. From left: Jerome Maume (Parkinson's Ireland), Prof Aideen Sullivan (University College Cork), Shane O'Brien (Parkinson's Ireland), Emma McKeown (Parkinson's UK Northern Ireland), Lisa Wynne (Parkinson's Ireland), Prof Suzanne Timmons (University College Cork), Dr. Mihalis Doumas (Queen's University Belfast), Dr. Matthew Rodger (Queen's University Belfast), Prof. Amanda Clifford (University of Limerick), Dr. James Connolly (Ulster University), Dr. Salvatore Tedesco (Tyndall National Institute)

This expansion strengthens the project's ability to explore Parkinson's from multiple perspectives and reflects the strong momentum behind PD-Life so early in its journey.

Looking Ahead: Research, Technology, and Real Life

The PD-Life project will explore a wide range of areas, including physical activity, mental health, and stigma, and how different personal factors (such as age, gender, and background) shape the experience of Parkinson's.

Some parts of the research will involve the use of wearable devices to better understand movement and physical activity in everyday life. Others will focus on surveys and conversations to capture personal experiences. Throughout all of this, there is a strong emphasis on making participation manageable and meaningful for those involved.

A Promising Start

The energy at the kick-off meeting was one of collaboration, openness, and shared purpose. Researchers and PPI partners worked side by side, laying the foundation for a project that aims not just to generate knowledge, but to make a real difference.

As PD-Life moves forward, the continued involvement of the Parkinson's community will remain at its heart.

BRANCH NEWS

CAVAN BRANCH

We were delighted to hold our first Walk in the Park in Con Smith Park, Cavan Town. Thankfully, the rain held off as everyone set out for the walk, and afterwards participants enjoyed a lovely chat and a cup of tea together in the Orchard Bar. It was a wonderful opportunity for members to connect and enjoy some gentle exercise in good company. Many thanks to everyone who took part and volunteered on the day.

The Cavan/Monaghan Physio Department recently organised a very successful patient conference in the Errigal Hotel, Cootehill, in partnership with ourselves and the Monaghan Branch. Those in attendance enjoyed a wide range of informative and educational talks focused on living well with Parkinson's. One of the highlights of the day was an inspiring talk by Ian O'Brien, who shared his personal experience of being diagnosed with early-onset Parkinson's and spoke about his remarkable Eur-Up-Ian challenge.

We would also like to extend a special word of thanks to Cavan Physiotherapist Michelle Hall, who has recently moved on to a new role. Michelle has gone above and beyond in supporting our members over the past number of years, and her dedication, kindness and commitment will be greatly missed.

A huge thank you to the Knockbride Variety Show, who very generously donated €6,000 to the branch from the proceeds of their ticket sales. Vice-Chair Harry McCabe attended the presentation event and accepted the cheque on behalf of the branch. We are extremely grateful for this wonderful support from the local community.

Our weekly chair yoga classes continue every Friday at 11am in the Community Centre at Castlemanor Nursing Home. These sessions remain a great source of enjoyment and wellbeing, and new participants are always very welcome.

Contact Eimear 086-3793128

Knockbride Variety Show cheque presentation.

LONGFORD BRANCH

The Monday morning exercise programme has continued since January and will finish for the summer in late June. There has been a constant attendance which shows how members find the class very beneficial and enjoyable. Needless to say, the meeting up and the banter is another advantage.

The monthly Meet and Greet meetings commenced in February and take place in the same centre after the exercise classes on the last Monday of the month. There has been a good turnout and they will continue until the summer break.

The Longford branch had its first Walk in the Park event on Saturday, 11 April in The Mall Community Park Longford. It was a bracing morning in Longford with sharp wind and cold showers so it was brilliant to see people brave the inclement weather to support the

occasion. The staff from Dovida were very helpful and distributed lots of goodies to members and the public. After a walk around the park, attendees and friends were happy to retire to the sports hall for warm refreshments and a chat. It was a very pleasant morning. We must thank the staff of the Sports Centre who were so welcoming and accommodated us at short notice, as well as helping with the setup and clearup. We also have to thank the volunteers from Aughnacliffe Vintage Club and Killoe Men's Shed who helped as stewards, promotion, fundraising etc. We had a lot of learnings from this first event which will be used for future occasions.

Unfortunately, our Sing for Parkinson's Speech and Language course has been postponed til the autumn.

Contact: Al 087 7640 409

NORTHWEST BRANCH

Fitness 4 All Strandhill has been running Parkinson's exercise classes for the past few years in a friendly, welcoming and supportive environment.

Classes focus on improving mobility, balance, strength, confidence, falls prevention and overall wellbeing in a fun and social setting.

Sessions may include mobility exercises, chair exercises, balance training, strength work, cardiovascular exercise, adaptive boxing, voice exercises, pole walking and functional movement activities tailored to people living with Parkinson's.

For further information please contact:

Miriam Cunningham

087 910 4713

fitnessforallstrandhill@gmail.com

http://www.fitness4allsligo.com/

The branch is hoping to organise some trips over the summer months. More information will be provided later.

The Social Gathering is being held in Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone from 5th to 7th October. Please book with the hotel to avoid disappointment.

Lifetime membership of €50 is due. If you have not already paid please do so as soon as possible. Membership Fees cover the cost of services,which are vital and also the cost of the Social Gathering.

Contact Ann 086-1605847

WEXFORD BRANCH

The Summer is coming and we have some great plans on the way.

Our Singing for Health Parkinson's Choir will be performing in the National Opera House Wexford on the 5th of July 2026 tickets on sale now on the opera house website.

We have our classes running weekly and our coffee mornings every month we would love to see you at some point.

Membership is now €50 for lifetime membership and if you haven't already we would appreciate it if you could sign up on www.Parkinsons.ie.

What we've been up too

Great fun was had at the Walk In The Park for Parkinson's in April

Great coffee morning in the Loch Gorman Arms in Gorey.

Attending a horticultural therapy workshop at our allotment in Enniscorthy Community Allotments

We attended the play SIVE in Camross Hall which was a great night.

If you would like to attend any of our classes or outings in the future please contact us on the numbers overleaf.

Continued on page 28

Wexford branch members


Wexford branch members

Wexford branch members


Wexford branch members

Pat Lacey - Chairman
087 258 5992

Breda Kennedy- Secretary
087 095 8984

DUBLIN BRANCH

New Exercise Classes in Loughlinstown and Tallaght

We are delighted to announce the introduction of new exercise classes in Loughlinstown and Tallaght, commencing in May. Due to the high demand for our existing programmes—many of which are now at full capacity—we have expanded our offering to accommodate more participants. The Loughlinstown class takes place on Tuesdays at 3:00pm in Loughlinstown Leisure Centre, while the Tallaght class is scheduled for Fridays at 10:15am in Rua Red Arts Centre. Anyone interested in joining, or who knows someone who would benefit, is encouraged to contact Dublin Chairperson Phil Twomey, who is coordinating with Siel Bleu regarding enrolment. We are also seeking a small number of volunteers to act as class coordinators, helping to track attendance and collect the suggested €5 fee per session.

New Committee Members

Following our recent call for additional support, we are pleased to welcome Eddie Breen and Jim McDonnell to the Dublin Branch committee. Their willingness to contribute their time and skills is greatly appreciated. We extend our sincere thanks to them, as well as to all current committee members, for their ongoing dedication and hard work on behalf of the branch.

Educational Talk: Advanced Therapies for Parkinson's

On Saturday, May 23rd at 3:00pm, we were pleased to host an informative session at the Royal Marine Hotel in Dún Laoghaire. The speaker, Dr. Owen Killian, Movement Fellow at St. Vincent's Hospital, delivered a detailed overview of advanced and device-based therapies for Parkinson's disease. His presentation focused on treatments targeting motor symptoms, comparing current

Wexford branch members

options with both earlier therapies and those emerging on the horizon. The event concluded with refreshments and provided a valuable opportunity for attendees to connect and share experiences in an informal setting.

Coffee Meet and Chat

Our Coffee Meet and Chat events continue to provide a welcoming space for members to gather socially. On Thursday, June 25th, both Northside and Southside meetings will take place simultaneously at 11:00am. The Southside group will meet in the Atrium Lounge of the Royal Marine Hotel in Dún Laoghaire, while the Northside gathering will be held in the lounge of The Bonnington Hotel on Swords Road. These informal meet-ups are a great opportunity to relax, enjoy a coffee, and connect with others in the Parkinson's community.

Save the Date: September Meeting and AGM

Members are encouraged to save the date for our upcoming September meeting and Annual General Meeting, which will take place on Saturday, September 26th at 3:00pm in The Bonnington Hotel, Whitehall. Further details, including the keynote speaker, will be confirmed closer to the time. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

Contact Phil 087-7802414

CARLOW BRANCH

Carlow Photographic Society Event

The Carlow Photographic Society are contributing some of their sales profits from their art and photography exhibition which took place in Fair Green Shopping Centre on May 29th 2026.

Carlow Parkinson's support group are represented by Bernadette Myler Driscoll who was one of the speakerswho took part in the opening event.

Any funding will be used to support the local Parkinson's group and their weekly support group and the activities they provide.

Contact Bernadette 087-144 3114

Wexford branch members

Wexford branch members

MID WEST BRANCH

Spring has flown by, despite some very challenging weather for our events.

Margaret O'Sullivan and Geraldine Mulvihill got their group walking through the Demesne in Newcastle West for the first Walk in the Park event. It turned into a wonderful family outing, with three and even

Continued on page 30

Mid West branch members

Offaly branch members

four generations coming together for the day. At the same time, Mary Meaney and Marrianne Cronin led the Clare group in Ennis, where the weather was thankfully a little kinder than in Newcastle West.

We were especially delighted to welcome the Mayor of Limerick, John Moran, who has a personal connection to Parkinson's, having lost his father to the condition ten years ago after many years of living with it. His father was also one of our earliest members, joining back in 1998.

The Mayor was delighted to launch the Seven Bridges Walk in the Park, leading the group alongside his dog after a lively send off from Pat O'Dea's set dancers. Everyone clapped their hands and tapped their feet to warm up before setting off from King John's Castle. The atmosphere was fantastic throughout the day. At the halfway point, walkers were greeted by a piper whose music gave everyone a boost for the final stretch home. The bright sunshine made our Parkinson's Ireland t shirts stand out beautifully and highlighted the wonderful turnout on the day.

Another event we thoroughly enjoyed was the Mayor's Ball. It was a glamorous and lively evening, and our members who attended were very impressed by the support shown by so many people joining the Mayor in raising funds for Parkinson's Ireland.

Our information afternoons continue to attract great crowds. The May meeting was both fascinating and eye opening, as a Detective Sergeant from the Limerick force spoke to us about scams and personal security. It was a timely reminder of how easily scams can happen unless we stay aware and informed about protecting ourselves. We hope to include her full report in our Autumn edition.

Finally, we would like to thank all the family members and supporters who continue to help our members and support fundraising events throughout the year. Your encouragement and dedication mean so much to us all. We wish everyone a wonderful summer and look forward to seeing you again on the second Tuesday in September.

OFFALY BRANCH

The Offaly Branch recently received a generous cheque from Sean Cotter following a fundraising initiative organised by his St. Flannan's Past Pupils Union group. A donation was also made to the Mid West (Clare group). Chairperson Stephanie Connor expressed sincere thanks to Sean and all the past pupils for their valued support.

Pictured (above) are Morgan Lane, Nuala Jones, Sean Cotter, Stephanie Connor, Loretto Flynn and Larry Bane.

The branch continues to host weekly gym and boxercise classes, along with a social gathering on the first Wednesday of each month. Members also recently completed a technology course delivered by Transition Year students from Killina Secondary School.

The Offaly Branch annual outing will take place at Strokestown House on Wednesday, 20th June

Contact Stephanie 085-1481187

MONAGHAN BRANCH

The Monaghan branch meet every Monday in St Joseph's in Monaghan from 1.30pm-2.15 for Tai Chi classes. This class is in sponsored by Monaghan Sports Partnership.

The branch also meet every Tuesday in Peak Fitness in Carrickmacross from 2.30pm-3.30pm We include Boxercise, Gym activities and Tai Chi.

We hope to re-commence the classes in Doohamlet Community Centre in the next few weeks.

The branch hope to train up Frick and Christina McMahon and two members of the Monaghan branch in activated pole walking classes.

A quiz night was held in Raferagh Community Centre Corduff in March and was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

We had a very successful Walk in the Park in April which was well supported.

We wish to send on our condolences to the family of the late Fr. Anthony Fagan who passed on recently.

Contact Seamus ph 087-2482292

PARKINSON'S A—Z DICTIONARY

At Parkinson's Ireland, we understand that living with Parkinson's—or supporting someone who is—can bring many new and unfamiliar terms into everyday life. This A–Z Parkinson's Dictionary has been created to help make those words easier to understand.

This guide provides clear, simple explanations of common terms used to describe Parkinson's symptoms, treatments, and experiences. It is designed to support people with Parkinson's, their families, carers, and anyone seeking to learn more about the condition.

Whether you are newly diagnosed or have been living with Parkinson's for some time, we hope this resource will help you feel more informed, confident, and supported. You can explore it at your own pace—dipping in whenever you come across a term; you'd like to understand better.

As always, Parkinson's Ireland is here to support you every step of the way.

A
- **Akinesia** Difficulty starting movement or feeling "stuck"

B
- **Bradykinesia** Slowness of movement

C
- **Constipation** Slower bowel movements or difficulty passing stool

D
- **Dyskinesia** Extra, involuntary movements

E
- **End of dose** When medication is starting to wear off before the next dose

F
- **Freezing** Feeling stuck when walking or turning
- **Festination** Walking becomes faster with short steps, sometimes hard to stop
- **Fluctuations** Symptoms changing throughout the day

G
- **Gait** The way you walk

H
- **Hypotension (Orthostatic)** Feeling dizzy or light-headed when standing up

I
- **Impulse control** Strong urges (e.g. gambling, shopping, overeating)

K
- **"Kick in"** When medication starts to work

M
- **MoCA** A short test used to check memory and thinking
- **MDT (Multidisciplinary Team)**

N
- **Nocturia** Getting up at night to pass urine

O
- **ON** – when medication is working and symptoms are controlled
  OFF – when medication wears off and symptoms return

P
- **Peak dose** When medication is at its strongest
- **PRN (as required)** Medication taken only when needed

R
- **REM sleep disorder** Acting out dreams during sleep

S
- **Shuffling** Taking small, short steps when walking

T
- **Tremor** Shaking, often in one hand

W
- **Wearing-off** Medication does not last as long

Parkinson's Ireland

Please attach this form to my file

To be handed to your Doctor and used for planned or unplanned admission to hospital.

I am living with Parkinson's Disease. I may have difficulty speaking or writing clearly. My condition may deteriorate if my medication is not taken at the correct times prescribed for me.

I WILL NEED A FULL GLASS OF WATER PER PD TABLET

Name

Contact Number

Next of Kin | Contact Number

Doctor/Neurologist | Contact Number

Name of PD Medication	Dosage	Times

Other Medication

Don't leave it until there is an emergency to fill out this form.
By asking your Health Care Professional to attach this to your file you will be helping them to manage your condition while you are in hospital.

We work hard to guarantee that the information provided by our services is up to date, objective, and accurate. Please use this in conjunction with medical advice from your Parkinson's team and do not make any changes prior to discussing with your medical team. Please see our website for most up to date version.