



Cork Services - CDNT 14

Autumn Newsletter October 2025



Walk and Talk: A Parent-Led Initiative That's Still Going Strong

Back in **June 2024**, a parent asked a simple but powerful question:

"What is out there for parents—to chat and share our experiences with each other in a non-judgemental manner?"

Rebecca

That question sparked an idea: a weekly meet-up where parents could **walk, talk and share a cup of coffee**. We decided to meet on **Thursday mornings in Ballyphehane from 10-12pm**, planning to try it for six weeks... and we're **still going strong 8 months**



Rebecca's Story

"Walk and talk has changed my life. I've met some inspirational people and members of the team who are now friends to me. The greatest part is that I have found a village here and no longer navigate my son's autism alone. We genuinely uplift and support each other. Here your voice always matters."

Some of the walk and talkers, dads were too shy for a photo opportunity!!



Call or text **085-8825419** for more information or to let us know if you are coming. Just so we know to expect you and can contact you if needed.

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How It Works

It's simple:

- We head to the park, walk together, and then head to the community centre for a cuppa.
- There's no pressure – come every week or just when you can (we only do the walk wether permitting)
- Parents can use this time to take a well-deserved break – coming along on their own, with a support person if needed, or bringing their children, whether that's babies in buggies, toddlers or teens off school – all are welcome.
- Members of the CDNT14 team are there each week, happy to chat or bring questions backs to the wider team.
- Conversations in the group are confidential and what is said in the group stays in the group.

What Our Parents are Saying

"I had lost myself as a person and this group made me realise that I am important and doing a good job."

Linda

"It helped me emotionally with going through the process. We have friends and a feeling of belonging and being supported"

Jenny

"I might to to the group feeling depressed and isolated but always come away Feeling better about life."

Jennifer

"It's been a great emotional support. On hard days you talk, cry, laugh. On good days, we laugh harder."

Amanda

"It's a place I can feel relaxed and not judged. It's a pleasure and a privilege to share some of my experiences, good and bad, in the hope that it will help another parent.:

Gillian

"I felt listened to, validated and not judged, especially when I brought my children. It was comforting to meet other parents further along on their journey and get recommendations."

Olivia



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Shaping Future Support Together

Our **Walk and Talk** Group continues to build **strong community connections**, with parents supporting one another and sharing first hand recommendations about local resources. The friendships that have been formed are truly special - one parent even arranged with a teen from our caseload to babysit and others have shared birthday party invitations!

Some parents have also shared their surprise and delight that their children now look forward to mid-term breaks and school holidays because it means they can come to *Walk and Talk*! One of our teens who came along over the Summer also supported a parent who was exploring secondary school options for her child, sharing her own positive experience attending the very school that parent was considering.

Over the summer, we had two *Walk and Talk* meet ups for children Transitioning to Secondary School who wanted to meet up informally and chat about starting secondary school. A young person from the group joined as a mentor, offering advice and encouragement to those heading into first year.

A summer to remember..

Over the summer, we enjoyed a wonderful day out together in Fota, strengthening friendships and constructing lasting memories.



What's Next

As we move into the winter months, Walk and Talk will continue—rain or shine. Parents can choose to walk, chat indoors, or simply enjoy a hot cuppa, biscuits and good company. We're planning more fun activities and inviting guest speakers based on families suggestions. **We look forward to welcoming new families** and continuing to grow this supportive community.

A Heartfelt Thank You

To all the parents who have walked, talked and shared—thank you! You've helped create something truly special: a space where everyone belongs, where support grows naturally and where simple conversations can make a real difference.

THANK YOU

