

Ministers Doherty and McGrath announce funding of €16 million for 27 Projects under 'Ability' Programme for young people with disabilities

The Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty, T.D., together with the Minister of State with special responsibility for Disabilities, Finian McGrath, T.D., today (1st of June 2018) announced funding of €16 million for 27 projects¹ to deliver a new pre-activation Programme for young people with disabilities, called "Ability".

The Ability Programme will provide supports to over 2,600 young people with disabilities aged between 15 to 29 years old.

The focus of the Programme is on projects aimed at young people with disabilities and is designed to assist in their transition from school to further education, training and employment. The Programme will promote employment prospects and meaningful social roles for young people with disabilities and in particular, young people who are distant from the labour market, using a range of person-centered supports.

This announcement brings to fruition the results of a long-period of planning, consultation and assessment for the Department and its partner Pobal.

Initially it was expected that funding for the programme would amount to some €10 million over a three year period. However, given the quality of the proposals received by Pobal, funding has been put in place of €16 million to support all 27 projects recommended by Pobal.

Speaking at the announcement, Minister Doherty said, **"The funding being made available, through the Ability programme, seeks to directly address the barriers faced by young people with disabilities. The programme seeks to support young people with disabilities, who are able to, and want to work, to navigate their individual transition period into employment and I welcome the roll out of the services to be provided by the various organisations over the next three years."**

Also speaking at the announcement, Minister McGrath said, **"In announcing the funding of these 27 projects the Government is delivering on commitments within the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities (2015 – 2024), particularly under action point 5.1 which seeks to provide a comprehensive programme of employment supports to assist people with disabilities to find and retain work, regardless of the level of their support need."**

¹ A list of Organisations/projects to be funded is provided in the 'notes for the editor' section attached.

“For all of us a key period in life is that transition period between school and education or employment, as we seek to follow our own individual career paths. This transition period, as we know, can be difficult for people with disabilities. In putting in place this new ‘Ability’ programme, through these 27 projects, the Government is providing a pre-activation structure that is designed to support young people with disabilities through their own individual transition period, in order to achieve their own employment ambitions.”

The Ability Programme is co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020.

ENDS.

Note for Editors

Background:

Census 2016 figures show that the employment rate for people with disabilities of working age is 36.5% compared to a rate of 72.8% for people of working age without a disability.

In addition to the Ability Programme, the Department provides a wide range of supports for people with a disability, these include:

- Services provided through all of the Department’s Intreo centres.
- The EmployAbility Service which is delivered, under contract arrangement, on behalf of the Department by 23 companies operating across the country.
- The Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS) which has been designed to increase the likelihood of people with disabilities participating in the open labour market by providing financial incentives to private sector employers.
- The Reasonable Accommodation Fund that assists employers to take appropriate measures to enable a person with a disability/impairment to have access to employment by providing a range of grants. These grants and supports include a Workplace Equipment Adaptation Grant, a Personal Reader Grant, a Job Interview Interpreter Grant and a Employee Retention Grant.

Who are the target groups?

The focus of the programme is on projects aimed at young people with disabilities (aged 15 – 29) designed to assist in their transition from school to further education and employment.

What are the objectives of the programme?

- To bring young people with disabilities who are not work-ready closer to the labour market using a range of person-centred supports.
- To assist young people with disabilities to develop life-skills required to participate in education, training and employment.
- To assist young people with disabilities at key transition points between education, training and employment.

- To support young people with disabilities who are not in education, employment or training to access and participate in education, training and employment.
- To build the capacity of mainstream employment services, education and training providers to support the progression of young people with disabilities.
- To build the capacity of employers to recruit and retain young people with disabilities within their workforce.

How much funding is being made available to projects?

The minimum grant is €200,000 while the maximum grant will be for €750,000 over the funding period.

What Organisations/Projects are to be funded?

Organisation	County
Ak Inspired Ability Company.	Kerry
Blossom Ireland Community Inclusion.	Dublin
Central Remedial Clinic.	Dublin
Cill Dara Ar Aghaidh Cuideachta Faoi Theorainn Rathaiochta	Kildare
Co Wexford Community Workshop (New Ross)	Wexford
Cope Foundation.	Cork
Down Syndrome Ireland.	Dublin
Dublin City University.	Dublin
Dublin South City Partnership.	Dublin
Fingal Leader Partnership.	Dublin
Forum Connemara.	Galway

I.W.A.	Dublin
Ird Duhallow.	Cork
Knockanrawley Resource Centre.	Tipperary
Limerick Youth Service.	Limerick
Northside Partnership Company.	Dublin
Offaly Integrated Local Development Company.	Offaly
Peter Bradley Foundation.	Dublin
Roscommon Integrated Development Company.	Roscommon
Specialisterne Ireland.	Dublin
St. Cronans Association Company.	Tipperary
The Blanchardstown Area Partnership Company.	Dublin
Tipperary Regional Youth Service.	Tipperary
Walkinstown Association for People with an Intellectual Disability.	Dublin
Walkinstown Green Social Enterprises.	Dublin
West Cork Development Partnership Company.	Cork
Wexford Local Development Company.	Wexford

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