



**KWCD  
EMPLOYER  
EXCHANGE**

# **Ability on Your Doorstep**

**an employer's guide  
to services in D12**

**DUBLIN 12  
DISABILITY  
MAINSTREAM  
ACCESS  
PROJECT**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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We hope that you find this publication useful and would welcome feedback from you as we continue in our work to increase the employment rate of people with disabilities and improve the communities of Kimmage, Walkinstown, Crumlin and Drimnagh.

Finally, we would like to thank the people with disability who contacted our services and inspired this publication.



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A Chara,

Having a job is one of the most important ways people with disabilities can achieve independence and equality in society. The subject of employment of this marginalised group is most topical at the moment with the recent publication of research carried out by the National Disability Authority. It calls for a comprehensive strategy to be built with a view to addressing the substantial and persistent labour market inequality experienced by people with disabilities.



It can be difficult for employers who already have heavy workloads to devote time to examine these issues. However, it is important to remember that anyone of us, our families, or employees can acquire a disability at any time of our lives. I am sure you will agree that if this was the case your ambitions and desire to work would not change. However, how you would go about realising these ambitions and desires to work would.

People with disabilities have the ability to work. In 2004, 37% of people of working age with a disability were in work, compared to 67% of other working-age adults.

There are local services in your area that can provide you with all the information you require should you hire a person with a disability. This handbook will provide you with the most up to date information on services in the Dublin 12 area and how they can be of assistance to you. It outlines the benefits, grants available and terminology explained in plain English. Please keep this handbook as you never know when you might need it to refer to. All the contact numbers of local services are easily accessible if you have any queries, that's what they are there for.

Ireland is a diverse nation and this is reflected in our employees – consider ability and not disability.

*Patricia Callan*

**Director**  
**Small Firms Association**

### **Accessibility Audit**

An Accessibility Audit is a survey of the areas about your workplace and in your workplace. A full audit would also include a survey of how disability-friendly your services and structures within the workplace are.

### **Acquired Disability**

An acquired disability is an ongoing or permanent condition a person has received as a result of illness or accident. The National Disability Authority reported that 85% of disabled people of a working age have acquired their disability over their life.

### **Assistive technology**

Assistive Technology is any item, whether purchased off the shelf, or customised, which enhances an individual's independence, quality of life or ability to carry out the job.

### **Equality/disability awareness**

This refers to awareness among the staff in an organisation about issues of equality. There are 9 groups of people covered by Irish equality legislation, including people with disabilities. Funding is available from FAS for disability awareness training for a company. Other organisations which work for and on behalf of people with disabilities provide disability awareness training.

### **Exemption scheme**

This scheme means that an employer does not have to pay the PRSI for a qualified worker for the first two years of their employment.

### **Grants**

There are a number of grants available to employers seeking to employ or retain a person with a disability. These include interpreter grants; personal reader grants; workplace adaptation grants; employee retention grants.

**Job Coach**

A job coach is a person who assists a person with a disability to identify their skills, match these skills to a suitable job and facilitate the employee's integration in their new place of work. Each job coach will tailor their activity to suit the person they are working with. A funded job coach is part of the Supported Employment Programme. The job coach will work as part of a consortium of organisations, called sponsors, in an area.

**Sectoral plans**

Under the Disability Act several Government Departments have drawn up Sectoral plans which outline the measures taken by that Department in relation to disabled people in services provided by that Department. The Sectoral plan covering the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment details a comprehensive employment strategy relating to disability.

**What is disability, a definition**

Disability occurs when economic, environmental and cultural barriers are encountered by people who are viewed by others as having some form of impairment – whether physical, sensory or intellectual. The barriers disabled people encounter include inaccessible education systems, working environments, inadequate disability benefits, discriminatory health and social support services, inaccessible transport, houses and public buildings and amenities and the devaluing of disabled people through negative images in the media – films, television and newspapers. These barriers make it more difficult for disabled people to secure employment



Work gives us all the opportunity to participate in the community and is a high priority for people with a disability. Positive attitudes from employers can make an enormous difference and so it is vitally important for employers to get the information they need quickly and easily.

This booklet has been designed for companies who employ or want to employ someone with a disability, and draws together all the relevant local information that they will need. It explains how employers in the Dublin 12 area can get help to recruit, train and support employees with a disability. It provides links to free support services available to employees with disability, as well as to interested employers.

This booklet also aims to dispel the many misconceptions about employing someone with a disability.

### **Many employers are not aware that:**

- Productivity rates, attendance records, job retention rates and safety records are as good or better for people with disability compared to other workers
- Most people with disability do not require special work arrangements or workplace modifications
- People with disability have a broad range of skills and qualifications and work successfully in a wide range of industries and professions at all levels

### **Section 1**

Outlines the business case for employing people with a disability and the following section answers some of the questions most frequently asked by employers.

### **Section 2**

Focuses on some of the questions most frequently asked by employers in relation to people with disability.

If you are looking for a potential employee, go to **Section 3** which lists the relevant service providers in the area. The providers will give you an overview of the people that they are in contact with who are seeking employment and their profile in terms of skills, training and experience.

If you have recruited an employee and are seeking to learn about the numerous supports available to you, go to **Section 4** of the booklet which deals with available funds, grants, and schemes.

If one of your employees has a disability and would like to find out about what supports are available to him or her, this information is available in Section 4 too.

### **Section 5**

Outlines a number of testimonials detailing the positive experiences of both employers and employees, and **Section 6** features a profile of a job coach working in the local area.

**Section 7**

Focuses on recruitment as many employers have sought guidelines on interviewing people with a disability.

If you are interested in learning more about the proposed national employment strategy for people with disabilities, a summary is available as Appendix 1.

Appendix 2 contains a useful contact list of national organisations who offer services to people with disabilities.

There are about 6000 disabled people in Dublin 12. It is hoped that this handbook will help to maximise the potential of people with a disability who are currently part of our workforce and those who wish to join it.



### 1. What are the Benefits to Your Company in hiring / retaining a person with a disability?

- **Increased Productivity**

International studies have shown that employees with disabilities have attendance, punctuality and productivity levels equal to, if not better than, their workplace colleagues. According to a survey conducted by the DuPont Corporation, employees with disabilities have lower turnover and absenteeism rates and high productivity. They found that 90% of employees with disabilities were rated average or better in job performance by their managers. (Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities, October 2000)

- **Increased Diversity in the Workplace**

By recruiting and retaining staff with a disability employers clearly demonstrate their commitment to diversity and that their company has an open door approach to all types of people.

- **Accumulated Skill Sets**

By retaining staff who acquire a disability you hold on to accumulated skill-sets you invested in, as well as retaining the experience and commitment of that individual.

- **Reduced Staff Turnover**

People with a disability are generally reliable and are likely to stay with one employer for a long time. This can reduce advertising and recruitment costs.

- **Good Business Practice**

Many of your actual and potential customers are people with a disability. Benefits are noticed at a customer level because customers respond favourably towards organisations that are positive toward disability and reflect the diversity of the community. In the 2006 Census 323,707 people in Ireland registered as having a disability – this is very significant number of potential customers and does not include families and friends!

- **Enhanced Staff Morale**

Staff morale and commitment has been known to increase when an organisation makes a visible commitment to employing a person with a disability.

- **Enhanced Corporate Image**

Employing and involving people with a disability offers opportunities for positive publicity and an enhanced image with your workforce, trade unions, other organisations and the general public.

## 2. Frequently Asked Questions

Some of the questions most frequently asked by employers in relation to people with disability are answered below:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>What types of jobs are suitable for people with disability?</p>                           | <p>People with disability work in a wide range of jobs, industries, and professions. Just like people without disability, it depends on the skills training and qualification of each individual.</p>  |
| <p>Will it cost more for insurance and compensation to employ someone with a disability?</p> | <p>No. For the reason that a person's disability is recognised when they start work with you, it should have no effect on insurance costs.<br/>As for compensation costs, international studies have shown that people with disability are much less likely to be involved in accidents and make claims than workers without disability.</p> |
| <p>If special equipment or modifications are needed, who will pay for them?</p>              | <p>Most people with disability do not need expensive equipment or modifications. For those that do, there are Government grants available.</p>   |
| <p>Will people with disability take more sick days because of their disability?</p>          | <p>If anything, people with disability have been shown to have higher attendance records.</p>  |
| <p>Will I have to spend more time training and supervising a person with disability?</p>     | <p>Not if the person has the appropriate skills for the job. If they do need extra training or support, it can be provided free of charge by Employ Ability Ltd., or other employment services.</p>  |
| <p>What if a person is less productive due to their disability?</p>                          | <p>Most employees with disability work just as productively as their co-workers and receive a full salary. However, the Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS) allows an employer make up the shortfall in productivity through grant assistance.</p>   |



## Frequently Asked Questions

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|---|--|
| <p>What questions can/can't I ask about a person's disability?</p>      | <p>The employment services listed in this document will be able to answer your questions before you interview their client. You can ask questions relating to the applicant's disability only to identify whether you will need to make any adjustments so that they can do the job.</p> |
| <p>How can I be sure that the person with a disability will fit in?</p> | <p>A specialist employment service can visit the work-site and liaise closely with management and co-workers to ensure any concerns are met before the person starts work. Training in disability awareness can also be provided to co-workers.</p>                                      |
| <p>How should a person with disability be treated at work?</p>          | <p>With dignity and respect – just like any other employee.</p>  |
| <p>What happens if it doesn't work out?</p>                             | <p>Based on research into retention rates, the odds are high that it will work out. However, if it doesn't, your normal procedure for dealing with performance problems applies.</p>   |
|   |  |

### 3. Local organisations that will assist your company and members of your workforce

Alphabetical list of area-based partnerships, disability and employment organisations that provide services in Dublin 12.

Canals Communities Partnership,  
197 Tyrconnell Road,  
Inchicore,  
Dublin 8

Tel: 01 4732196

Fax: 01 4534857

Email: [info@canalpartnership.com](mailto:info@canalpartnership.com)

The Partnership was set up in 1997 under the Irish government's Local Development Social Inclusion Programme. The focus of this programme is on areas that are characterised by high unemployment and other attending problems. Since set-up the Partnership has worked to improve the quality of life of people living in the Partnership Area, which covers Bluebell, Inchicore, Kilmainham, Rialto and Islandbridge. To achieve its goals the Partnership aims to create a "partnership approach" between the community, business, trade union organisations, and state bodies. At the same time, it provides support to individuals, to community groups and organisations to stimulate growth and development in the areas of Childcare, Adult Education, Enterprise, Employment, Education and Community Development.

Cherryfield Resource Centre,  
Cherryfield Drive,  
Walkinstown,  
Dublin 12.

Tel: 01 4504034 / 4500029

Fax: 01 409 7880

Email: [ecfrc@eircom.net](mailto:ecfrc@eircom.net)

An Eastern Vocational Enterprises company, EVE is a subsidiary company of the Eastern Regional Health Authority and provides a network of training and employment services for people who experience mental health difficulties in Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare.

CIC (Citizens Information Centre),  
146 Sundrive Road,  
Crumlin, Dublin 12.

Tel: 01 4546070/4540680  
Fax: 01 4731749

Contact: Anne McCloskey  
Email: [Crumlin.cic@comhairle.ie](mailto:Crumlin.cic@comhairle.ie)

DMAP (Dublin 12 Disability  
Mainstream Access Project),  
c/o 1 Long Mile Road,  
Walkinstown,  
Dublin 12.

Mob: 085 1240470  
Contact: Damian Nolan

Email: [dmap@dublin.ie](mailto:dmap@dublin.ie)

Crumlin Citizens Information Services (CIS) can provide you with information, advice and advocacy on all your rights and entitlements. This free, confidential, impartial and independent service covers a range of subjects:

- Social Welfare
- Employment Rights
- Health Services
- Education Opportunities
- Housing
- Consumer Affairs
- Pensions
- Family Issues
- Disability Information
- Taxation
- Local Information

Take-away leaflets and brochures are available on most of these topics.

Additional specialist advice services are available at Crumlin CIS.

- Free Legal Advice every Wednesday
- Free Financial Advice on the first Tuesday of each month by appointment
- Outreach Services – Telephone Centre (4546070/80) for details.

Dublin 12 Disability Mainstream Access Project (DMAP) was founded at the end of 2004 to work with disabled people linked to the areas of Kimmage, Crumlin, Walkinstown and Drimnagh. Funded by the KWCD Partnership, it brings together disabled people and the disability services of Enable Ireland and the Walkinstown Association with the mainstream services of Crumlin Citizen's Information Centre, Dublin City Council, FAS, and the KWCD Partnership. DMAP has concentrated on getting mainstream transportation access, developing voting education, community development and awareness of rights and entitlements. DMAP has been assisting disabled people in making representations in gaining access to mainstream social, economic and educational services.

Dublin 12 Centre for the Unemployed,  
155a Drimnagh Road,  
Drimnagh,  
Dublin 12.

Tel: 01 405 9377  
Fax: 01 405 9198

Contact: Margaret Fitzpatrick  
Email: [d12@gofree.indigo.ie](mailto:d12@gofree.indigo.ie)

Dublin 12 Centre for the Unemployed provides an information and referral service for unemployed people in Dublin 12.

The Centre is a community-based response to the issues of unemployment and low-paid work in the Dublin 12 area.

We are now offering Safe Pass Training for the Building industry, twice weekly costing €95 (if unemployed Social Welfare will pay for the training Course).

We also offer confidential help with issues such as:

- Entitlements
- Welfare to Work
- Education & Training
- Workers Rights
- Homelessness
- Labour Law
- PRSI/Tax
- CV Service
- Faxing & e-mailing

Employ Ability,  
Unit 15, Bluebell Business Park,  
Old Naas Road,  
Dublin 12.

Tel: 01 4603081

Employ Ability aims to integrate people with disabilities into mainstream employment through the provision of appropriate supports. An Employment Facilitator / Job Coach support employers and employees in this process – the aim being to meet the labour requirements of employers, and the employment needs of people of varying abilities.



Enable Ireland Adult Services,  
Unit 5, Block B,  
Cashel Business Center,  
Cashel Road,  
Dublin 12.

Tel: 01 4992354  
Fax: 01 4992308

Contact: Maire Winters  
Email: [m.winters@enableireland.ie](mailto:m.winters@enableireland.ie)

Enable Ireland Dublin Adult Services is committed to providing opportunities for people primarily with a physical disability to develop a range of options in the area of personal development, training, employment and greater inclusion in the community generally.

The service is one that is based on partnership, dignity, respect and the development of choice for those who use it. In consultation with service users this service aims to facilitate people to participate in their own community in the areas of vocational, educational, social and cultural activities.

FÁS (Foras Áiseanna Saothair),  
45 Crumlin Road,  
Dublin 12.

Tel: 01 4201300  
Fax: 01 4201066

FÁS The national training and employment authority provides a wide range of employment services to a number of groups including people with disabilities. These services include:

- Training and re-training;
- Designated apprenticeships;
- Recruitment service;
- Employment schemes;
- Placement and guidance services;
- Assistance to community groups;
- Advice for people returning to Ireland and those seeking employment elsewhere in the EU.

Jobs Club,  
1A St. Agnes Road,  
Crumlin Village,  
Dublin 12.

Tel: 01 4059883

The Dublin 12 Jobs Club is part of the integrated service provided by the KWCD Area Partnership to the unemployed in the area. It is funded through FAS.

The Jobs Club provides a free drop-in service to everyone in the Dublin 12 area who is unemployed or seeking to improve their job opportunities. You do not have to be in receipt of a Social Welfare benefit to avail of this service. We offer help to all people between the ages of 18–65 interested in developing their skills in job seeking activities.

Jobs Club provide a Job Seekers Course which consists of:

- Training on C.V. preparation
- Interview skills

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|--|--|
| Jobs Club...   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application forms</li> <li>• Letter writing</li> <li>• Confidence building</li> <li>• Help with job searching</li> </ul>  |
| <p>KWCD Area Partnership,<br/>Ashleaf Centre,<br/>Crumlin Cross,<br/>Dublin 12.</p> <p>Tel: 01 4059300</p>   | <p>The KWCD Partnership is committed to working together with the local communities in order to seek and provide a range of supports, enhance the capacity of local groups, lobby for greater recognition for the area, facilitate co-operation between the locations and promote the co-ordination of local services, with the ultimate aim of reducing social and economic inequality in the area.</p> <p>The Partnership conducts an inclusive process and under its equality policy ensures those minority groups such as disabled people, travellers and ethnic minorities are fully represented throughout the planning and implementation of the programme.</p> |
| <p>KWCD Employer Exchange,<br/>17A St. Agnes Road,<br/>Crumlin,<br/>Dublin 12.</p> <p>Tel: 01 4059082<br/>Fax: 01 4651095</p> <p>Contact: Carol French<br/>Email: <a href="mailto:carolfrench@kwcdles.ie">carolfrench@kwcdles.ie</a></p> | <p>The KWCD Employer Exchange is a network of leading employers from the locality who want to promote best practice in the recruitment of the long-term unemployed.</p> <p>The network is partnered by employers and service organisations who want to change people's lives and have a positive influence on their local community. Employers will benefit from training, workshops, issues of interest to them and support in organising work placements for local long-term unemployed.</p>   |
| <p>KWCD Local Employment Service,<br/>17A St. Agnes Road,<br/>Crumlin,<br/>Dublin 12.</p> <p>Tel: 01 4059082<br/>Fax: 01 4651095</p>   | <p>The KWCD Local Employment Service (LES) offers a free and confidential one-to-one mediation service to clients who have been unemployed for six months or more. Mediators assist clients through career-path planning, and provide information and advice relating to employment, education, training and other options. The service also runs on-going and ad hoc training and development programmes.</p>   |



### KWCD Local Employment Service...

Other Contact Points  
St. John Bosco Service,  
Davitt Road,  
Dublin 12.

Tel: 01 4550042.

Lower Crumlin CDP,  
Goldstone Court,  
Clogher Road,  
Dublin 12

Tel: 01 4150983

E-mail: [info@kwcdles.ie](mailto:info@kwcdles.ie)

In addition, our employment team will work to identify local job / work placement opportunities for clients and liaise with employers to efficiently match clients' needs with company vacancies and requirements.

What are the benefits to employers?

- Free direct access to KWCD LES jobseekers in the Dublin 12 area;
- Immediate advertisement of vacancies through the KWCD LES Employer Liaison Officer;
- Liaison with a skilled employment service team;
- Post-placement support;
- Advice on back-to-work employment incentives;
- Investing in the community.

National Learning Network,  
77 Broomhill Road,  
Tallaght,  
Dublin 24

Tel: 01 4525777

Fax: 01 4526412

National Learning Network is Ireland's largest non-Government training organisation with more than 50 purpose built training and employment units nationwide catering for over 4,500 students each year. Its objective is to assist people at a disadvantage in the labour market to learn the skills they need to build lasting careers in jobs that reflect their interests and abilities.

This is achieved through a brand of training, education, employment access and enterprise development that is respected and often replicated across Europe.

Walkinstown Association,  
1 Long Mile Road,  
Walkinstown,  
Dublin 12.

Tel: 01 4650388

Fax: 01 4607899

Contact: John Farrelly

Email: [johnf@walk.ie](mailto:johnf@walk.ie)

Walkinstown Association is a community based voluntary organisation providing services to adults with a learning disability. The Association offer a full range of services, including Rehabilitative Training and Supported Employment.

## 4. Key information on funds, grants and schemes

### WAGE SUBSIDY SCHEME

The Wage Subsidy Scheme (replaced the Employment Support Scheme) is operated by FAS and offers financial support for employers who employ people with disabilities for more than 20 hours a week. Sometimes the nature of a disability can restrict an employee's productivity in comparison with other staff, irrespective of his or her ability to do a job. In situations where this restriction results in a loss of productivity for the employer, the Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS) allows the employer make up the shortfall through grant assistance.

The subsidy works at two different levels depending on the productivity of the employee. If an employee has a productivity of between 50% and 80% a grant of up to €7,650 per annum applies. If an employee has an agreed productivity of below 50% a grant of up to €9,500 per annum applies.

Based on the total number of employees with a disability, the employer can apply for a grant to cover additional costs ranging from an additional 10% for 3 to 6 employees to a maximum of 50% of wage subsidy for 23 or more people with a disability.

People who have previously been employed under the Employment Support Scheme will remain under that scheme. An agreed percentage top-up is paid to employers to compensate them for any reduced productivity associated with a particular employee. This scheme is also administered by FAS.

Number of hours allowed: *Full time employment required (minimum of 20 hours per week). Contact FAS or the CIC for further information about this scheme.*

### WORKPLACE / EQUIPMENT ADAPTATION GRANT

This grant scheme is operated by FAS and is designed to assist in workplace adaptations, if needed. The maximum amount of grant aid is €6,350 towards the cost of adapting or purchasing equipment, or making minor building modifications. This grant can also be used to upgrade adapted equipment that was funded previously.

Companies need to identify the equipment and/or adaptation required, justify why it is needed and supply quotations. If the equipment or adaptation costs over €635, you are required to obtain 2 price quotations from different suppliers. If the equipment or adaptation costs over €1,270, then you are required to obtain 3 price quotations from different suppliers.

Note: *This scheme does not apply to state companies.*



### EXEMPTION SCHEME

This scheme benefits employers who recruit a person with a disability who are participating for the first time in the Back to Work Allowance scheme. Employers are exempted from their portion of the PRSI contribution for a maximum period of two years in respect of each first-time participant in the Back to Work Allowance scheme, provided the person continues in their employment. There is no need for employers to apply separately for this exemption, as it is processed automatically with the employee's application for the allowance.

### EMPLOYEE RETENTION GRANT (ERGS)

This grant is available to private-sector employers when an employee develops a disability whether occupational or not. It provides funding to identify accommodation or training to enable the employee to remain in their current position or to re-train them to take up another position within the organisation. There are two stages to the scheme: (1) Assessment – Up to 90% of the costs of developing a strategy can be funded to a maximum of €2,500 and (2) Implementation – Up to 90% of eligible programme costs are funded to a maximum of €12,500 for each application.

### JOB INTERVIEW INTERPRETER GRANT

If you are attending an interview and you are deaf or hard of hearing or have a speech impairment, you and your prospective employer may benefit from having the services of an interpreter at the interview. FÁS provides a grant that allows anyone who is deaf, hard of hearing or has a significant speech impairment to have a professional interpreter provide services for him or her at a job interview.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing communicate in a variety of ways. In an interview setting, the use of an interpreter can help express thoughts clearly and concisely. Nothing is added or deleted from any interaction between you and the interview board that takes place.

If you will be attending more than one interview, you can apply to have an interpreter present for each interview. The number of interviews at which you can attend with an interpreter is unlimited.

### DISABILITY AWARENESS TRAINING SUPPORT SCHEME

The scheme assists the integration of people with a disability into the workplace and helps to eliminate mistaken perceptions about them. It is available to all companies in the private sector who are interested in employing, retaining, or relating to people with disabilities. Funding of up to 90% of training costs is available in the first year and up to 80% of costs in subsequent years with an annual limit of €20,000 payable to the organisation. To avail of this funding, however, training must be carried out by a FÁS-approved training organisation.

### PERSONAL READER GRANT – CONTACT FÁS

If you have a visual impairment or are blind and need some extra assistance with reading at work, you may be eligible to apply for a Personal Reader Grant. This grant aid is provided by FÁS and allows you to employ someone on a part-time or ad-hoc basis for a maximum of 640 hours a year to help you with reading at work.

You do not have to be a registered blind person or someone with a specified level of visual acuity to apply for a Personal Reader Grant. If you are experiencing

difficulty with reading at work for reasons of visual impairment, then you are entitled to apply for this grant. In addition, there is no means test associated with a Personal Reader Grant and you do not need to have a certain level of income to apply.

### **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME**

The Supported Employment Programme is an open labour market initiative. It provides supports to people with disabilities, who traditionally have had difficulty getting into paid employment. The programme is carried out by sponsor organisations on behalf of FÁS. The sponsor organisations employ Job Coaches who provide a range of supports tailored to the individual needs of the jobseeker with a disability. These may include:

- Helping the job seeker to identify his/her skills and interests;
- Assisting the job seeker to find a suitable job;
- Analysing the tasks involved in the job and using this to plan the supports to be provided;
- Providing on-the-job training and support when the person commences in employment;
- Providing on-going support to employee and employer for an agreed time period;
- The ultimate outcome of Supported Employment is that the employee with a disability becomes independent of the Job Coach support.

Notes: *This programme is operated by FAS and matches people with disability seeking work with employers who are seeking employees.*

### **BACK TO WORK SCHEME**

The Back to Work Allowance Scheme encourages unemployed people (among others) in Ireland to take up employment. The Scheme is aimed at lone parents, people getting Disability Benefit (Illness benefit) and people getting a number of other social welfare benefits, e.g., Disability Allowance, Blind Person's Pension, Farm Assist, Invalidity Pension, Unemployability Supplement, Pre-Retirement Allowance Widow(er)'s (Non-Contributory) Pension, Deserted Wife's Allowance/Benefit and Prisoner's Wife's Allowance.

People participating in this Back to Work scheme retain a percentage of their social welfare payment along with "secondary benefits" for a period of up to three years. The Back to Work Allowance is not subject to taxation or social insurance (PRSI).

Number of hours allowed: *A minimum of 20 hours per week. The scheme lasts for 3 years with 75% of disability allowance being paid in the first year of the scheme, 50% in the second and 25% in the third and final year.*

Employment Notes: *The employee must have been on disability allowance for 15 months, 12 months if over 55. The new position must last for at least 1 year. Secondary benefits are maintained. For further information contact the Citizen's Information Centre.*



### SECONDARY BENEFITS

The term secondary benefit normally refers to those additional payments or benefits available primarily to social welfare recipients who need extra help such as to meet their rent, heating or medical expenses. Also included in secondary benefits are free travel pass and medical card entitlements.

The three main sources of State-funded secondary benefits are: Department of Social and Family Affairs, Health Service Executive, and the Local Authorities.

*Notes: These are a range of social welfare supports designed to reduce the cost of living of people on social welfare payments. These include (in certain circumstances) rent allowance, the medical card, free travel and the household benefits package of free electricity or gas units, telephone and television licence. Full details on how an individual's entitlements might be effected are available from the Citizen's Information Centre.*

*Loss of these entitlements can be a barrier to employment for disabled people. A number of schemes have been adapted to lessen the impact that taking up employment might have on the loss of these, for example allowing secondary benefits continue for three years.*

### COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT (CE) SCHEMES

The Community Employment scheme is managed by FÁS and is designed to help people who are long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged people to get back to work by offering part-time and temporary placements in jobs based within local communities. It is possible for participants to seek other part-time work during their placement. After the placement, participants are encouraged to seek permanent part-time and full-time jobs elsewhere based on the experience and new skills they have gained while in the Community Employment scheme.

Number of hours work allowed: *Basic of 19 hours per week or 39 hours per fortnight.*  
Employment Notes: *Must be over 18. Secondary benefits are maintained.*

### PART-TIME INTEGRATION OPTION (COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SCHEME)

The Part-time Integration Option allows you to work under the Community Employment scheme for a maximum of one year. Sponsors of the programme – local organisations or groups – will plan and manage your placement. The sponsor may also offer you training or skills development opportunities that you can take up during your placement. The average number of working hours for placements is 39 hours per fortnight. Participants are paid weekly by their sponsor and tax and social insurance (PRSI) may be deducted from their pay if applicable.

### PART-TIME JOB OPTION (COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SCHEME)

This Community Employment option provides participants with part-time work placements of up to six years for participants over 55 and up to three years for participants under 55. This option is designed to give extended access to employment to older people who may have been unable to secure regular employment for some time. The pay, tax and social insurance (PRSI) arrangements are the same as those

offered under the Part-Time Integration Option and participants under the Part-Time Job Option are also free to pursue other job opportunities.

### **DISABILITY ALLOWANCE**

Disability Allowance is a weekly allowance paid to people with a disability in Ireland that are aged 16 or over and under age 66. The disability must be expected to last for at least one year and the allowance is subject to both medical suitability and a means test.

Notes: *Recipients of Disability Allowance may engage in rehabilitative employment and earn up to €120 per week without their payment being effected.*

Employment Notes: *From 7 June 2006, if a person is in rehabilitative employment, 50% of earnings between €120 and €350 will be deducted from your payment and all money over €350 will be deducted from your payment. Medical card entitlement may be effected.*

### **DISABILITY BENEFIT (ILLNESS BENEFIT)**

Disability Benefit is a payment made by the Department of Social and Family Affairs to those in Ireland who are aged under 66 and incapable of work because of illness and have enough social insurance contributions. In general in Ireland, there is no existing employment legislation on the issue of sick pay or sick leave. This means that if you are on sick leave from employment (either with a medical certificate or not) you are not automatically entitled to pay from employment. Instead, it is at the discretion of the employer to decide his/her own policy on sick pay and sick leave, subject to your contract or terms of employment.

Number of hours allowed: *Possible to do rehabilitative work up to 20 hours per week. Disability benefit is intended to be a short term payment.*

Employment Notes: *Disability benefit is a payment from the Department of Social and Family Affairs and is available to people with a sufficient number of paid contributions (stamps).*

### **FAMILY INCOME SUPPLEMENT**

Number of hours allowed: *To be eligible for FIS a person must be working at least 19 hours per week. Income from FIS is not taken into account when calculating the income for medical card entitlement.*

Employment Notes: *FIS is a payment designed to increase the income of a family who are on low pay. It works by setting family income thresholds by family size (based on the number of dependent children). The difference between a family's total income and this threshold is calculated. 60% of this difference is then paid to the family.*

**HSE – (HEALTH SERVICE EXECUTIVE) PAYMENTS**

The Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme is administered by the Health Service Executive (HSE). This scheme is funded and legislated for by the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The types of payments made under this scheme include: weekly Supplementary Welfare Allowance, rent supplement, Mortgage Interest Supplement, Diet and Heating Supplements, Back to School Clothing and Footwear Scheme and exceptional needs payments for items such as buggies, clothing, etc.

The HSE also administer the Mobility allowance which is a means-tested payment for people with a disability who have limited mobility.

Employment Notes: *These include Supplementary welfare administered by the Community Welfare Officer. These payments tend to be means tested.*

**INVALIDITY PENSION**

Invalidity Pension is a social insurance payment made to people in Ireland who have been incapable of work and receiving Disability Benefit for at least twelve months before the date of their claim. (This applies to those who will continue to be incapable of work for at least a further twelve months). It may be possible to go onto Invalidity Pension after a shorter period if the illness or disability is of such a nature that you are unlikely to be able to work for the rest of your life.

Number of hours allowed: *Invalidity payment may be taxable if there is another income source. A person on Invalidity pension may work for a maximum of 20 hours per week but must get prior approval from the Department of Family and Social Affairs.*

Employment Notes: *Invalidity pension is designed to be a longer term payment than Disability Benefit. Under certain conditions there is entitlement to secondary benefits.*

## 5. Testimonials

### LYDIA LAWLOR

Lydia Lawlor has worked in Dunnes Stores in The Ashleaf Centre for 4 years. She is a local lady with Cerebral Palsy and works there part time as a bag packer. When applying for positions in 2002, Lydia found it very difficult to get called for interview and she felt this was as a result of her disability. She says employers were 'put off' by her disability and, although she was applying for many jobs, she was not getting called to interview. Dunnes Stores were approached by the KWCD Local Employment Service on Lydia's behalf and, although they had concerns, Lydia was called for interview and impressed them so much they gave her a trial. This was 4 years ago and she has never looked back.

Lydia believes that the best thing about her job is meeting people and the new friends she has made. It has made considerable changes to her life on both a social and financial level.

Lydia has ambitions and recently approached the HR Manager about moving into another department in Dunnes. This is presently being considered.

When asked if she had a message for employers who had concerns about hiring someone with a disability she says:

"Give people a chance; it will be worth it in the end."

Sandra Renick is the Check Out supervisor in Dunnes Store in the Ashleaf. Sandra is Lydia's direct line manager.

She says:

"Lydia is a valuable member of the team, a great team player who gets on with her work quietly and efficiently. She gets on brilliantly with the other staff and the customers love her, she has the full ability to do the job and has engaged in all training as required."

### HALFWAY HOUSE, WALKINSTOWN, DUBLIN 12

The Halfway House was approached by John Farrelly (Day Service Manager) in the Walkinstown Association with a view to taking part in a work experience programme.

The work experience proved to be a very positive experience for all parties. The participants (8 in total) were introduced by John and their Job Coach. Their work was mainly kitchen and salad preparation and the setting up of the lounge area.

The majority of work experience participants from the Walkinstown Association worked on their own initiative and handled the tasks assigned to them. Only one or two felt they needed the support of the JJ (the job coach). The Halfway House found that having the JJ on site was no problem and did not hinder the work assigned.

The work experience participants that took part got on very well in the working environment and integrated with all members of staff and customers. Overall, The Halfway House found the experience to be a very positive one. They found that those who took part worked very hard and enjoyed being part of the workforce. It was a success for both them and everyone involved.

### **Experiences of people involved in the work experience**

Andy describes his time in the Halfway as being great:

“I had many different jobs assigned to me from cleaning to working in the kitchen. The staff were very nice. I hope to join the workforce soon.”

Naomi received a certificate for her participation. She too found the experience to be a rewarding one.

The Walkinstown Association would like to take this opportunity to thank the Halfway House for their support.

## 6. Recruitment Focus: Interviewing a person with a disability

Some tips are available in this section for employers interested in interviewing an applicant with a disability for a position in their company. These tips are divided into three headings: (1) General guidelines (2) Arrangements and (3) Interview techniques/questions

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Treat the person with the disability the same as you would treat any applicant, while being mindful of their disability, without over emphasising it.

#### Common mistakes made when interviewing people with a disability are:

- Avoiding essential questions;
- Openly admiring the applicant's courage or expressing sympathy;
- Staring or avoiding eye contact;
- Assuming help is needed.

#### When interviewing a person using mobility aids:

- Ensure crutches, canes or wheelchairs are kept within reach of the interviewee;
- Be aware that some wheelchair users may prefer to transfer themselves into an office chair for the duration of the interview.

#### When interviewing a person with vision impairment:

- Always identify yourself and introduce anyone else who may be present. If the person does not extend their hand to shake hands, verbally extend a welcome;
- Indicate in advance when you will be moving from one place to another, and let the interviewee know when the conversation is coming to an end.

#### When interviewing a person with speech impairments:

- Give the interviewee your complete attention when talking to them;
- Ask short questions that require short answers or a nod of the head;
- Resist the temptation to speak for the person if they are having difficulty expressing what they want to say.

#### When interviewing a person who is deaf or hearing impaired:

- If you need to attract their attention, touch the person lightly on the shoulder;
- If the interviewee lip-reads, look directly at them when you speak;
- Speak clearly at a normal pace;
- Ensure the room has adequate lighting;
- If an interpreter is present, speak to the interviewee, not the interpreter and maintain eye contact with the interviewee.

#### When interviewing a person with a disclosed learning disability:

People with a learning disability are individuals just like everyone else. However, in



general, they are slower in processing information and responding to questions. The following guidelines may assist you in conducting a more satisfactory interview for all parties:

- If you're in a busy place with many distractions consider moving to a quieter place;
- Offer assistance in completing forms or understanding written instructions and provide extra time for decision making. Wait for the individual to accept the offer and don't over-assist;
- Take time to understand the individual and make sure that he/she understands you;
- Use precise language and simple sentences;
- If the applicant is accompanied by an advocate, their role is to help the applicant to put forward their case and to support the applicant. In all cases, questions should be addressed to the interviewee not their advocate.

Further information is available at [www.workway.ie](http://www.workway.ie).

### Arrangements

Before scheduling an interview with a person with a disability, the interview site should be reviewed. Some important things to consider:

- Are there disabled parking spaces available or nearby?
- Is there a ramp or step-free entrance?
- Are the toilets accessible?
- If the interview is not on the ground floor, is there an accessible lift?
- Are your organisation's premises clearly identifiable from the outside?

If any of the above is inadequate and alterations cannot be readily made to accommodate a person with a disability, inform the person of the barriers or obstacles. The company could also offer to make arrangements for an alternate interview site.

### Interviewing techniques

As well as following the previous guidelines, remember to consider the following:

- Concentrate on the individual's ability and not disability;
- Avoid questions that may be discriminatory such as:
  - Asking how they acquired their disability;
  - Asking for information about their disability when the information you need can be obtained by asking them about any adjustments they may need;
  - Asking questions that are not necessary;
- Key questions to ask during the interview include:
  - If they were successful in getting this job, is there any special equipment or reasonable adjustments that may need to be made.

## 7. Feature:

**A day in the life of a Job Coach: Lilian Bryant, Job Coach with Employ Ability Ltd. based in the Dublin South West area.**



### **The process**

Our clients are referred to us by their local FAS office. My co-ordinator Miriam Tighe would assign them a job coach. We would do an assessment on the person to ascertain what support requirements that they had and what kind of work they want to do.

### **We would then start to look for suitable employers**

Once a job is found we would assist in the training process & provide support throughout, depending on the needs of the individual and the employer. We would follow up with regular support visits, re-training when required, as well as organising grants where needed. We can facilitate Disability Awareness Training.

### **What would be a typical day for a job coach?**

During the course of my day I meet with clients & employers. Each of my clients would be at a different stage of the 'Employ Ability' process, these stages are 'assessment', 'job search' and, last but not least, 'on the job'! Whatever stage my client is at would determine what course of action we would take at each meeting that we have.

### **How would you go about finding a job for your clients?**

There are many ways that I would 'job search'. I would look at all of the newspapers, search the Internet, looking at various employment websites, including the 'FAS' website. I would also cold-call companies & do mail drives.

### **What are the biggest barriers that you face as a job coach?**

The clients that I work with are more than capable of working and, with a little bit of extra support from a job coach, they are loyal, hard-working people that will usually stay in the job for a long time. This is a great thing for an employer, as it reduces high turnover and gives them a great worker. We just need employers to give them a go!

### **What's the best thing about being a job coach?**

Once someone is in a job you can see the changes in them, from self-esteem, to community awareness – basically, a much better quality of life. Breda Cahill who owns Centra in Crumlin employs one of our clients and this is what she has had to say, 'Neil has made a positive impact on my store and the customers know him and like him, he is always full of the joys of spring and is a breath of fresh air to my store.'

It gives customers and staff a positive impression of my store and straight away they feel we are a company that cares'. Breda has also just taken on another of our clients in her Ballinteer store. At the launch of Employ Ability Ltd., Breda Cahill was presented with the Employ Ability Ltd. 'Employer Award' Spring 2006 by the then Lord Mayor, Catherine Byrne.

**If you were not a job coach what do you think you would be doing?**

I have worked with people that have specific support needs for the last 17 years and, to be honest, I couldn't imagine doing anything else!

**Employ Ability Ltd is a FAS funded service.**

**It is free to clients and employers.**

**For further information please call our office on 01 4603081**



## 8. Appendix 1

### A Strategy for Engagement Towards a Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities

The necessary pillars and specific elements of a comprehensive employment strategy for people with disabilities include:

- i. removing disincentives and benefit traps arising from the operation of the welfare system and ensuring that transitions to employment are possible, financially rewarding and sustainable.
- ii. enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of the education, training and employment system – active labour market policy – to ensure that people with disabilities are equipped to compete for employment in the contemporary labour market and to benefit from future patterns of occupational growth.
- iii. ensuring that both the public and private sectors are aware of the capabilities of people with disabilities and, on that basis, implement policies to support the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities.
- iv. devising and implementing a preventative strategy aimed at reducing:  
(a) the current level of early school-leaving among young people with disabilities; and, (b) the rate of existing from employment in adult life following the onset of a disability; and,
- v. developing a systematic process of engagement with people with disabilities in order to assist them articulate and realise their employment aspirations.

**Cross-cutting the above is the need to:**

- vi. ensure that the volume and overall pattern of provision in the area of education, training and employment programming is sufficiently diverse to meet the needs of all people with disabilities, particularly people experiencing severe disabilities.

It must be emphasised that all of the components of the proposed strategy identified must be implemented on a parallel and integrated basis if progress is to be achieved.

Pages 34-35 of

***“A Strategy of Engagement – Towards a Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities”*** National Disability Authority, 2006.



## CONTACTS AND OTHER RESOURCES OUTSIDE THE DUBLIN 12 AREA

The Aisling Foundation,  
Rear of Number  
1 Mount Street Crescent,  
Dublin 2.

Tel: 01 6340018  
Email: [info@theaislingfoundation.org](mailto:info@theaislingfoundation.org)  
Website:  
[www.theaislingfoundation.org](http://www.theaislingfoundation.org)

The Ashling Foundation has developed a number of resources around employing people with disabilities. The Foundation also organise the O2 Ability Awards and are involved with mentoring disabled people in a project with AHEAD.

### EQUAL

National Support Structure:  
WRC – Social & Economic  
Consultants,  
Strand House,  
22 Great Strand Street,  
Dublin 1.

Tel: 8723100  
Email: [info@equal-ci.ie](mailto:info@equal-ci.ie)  
Website: [www.equal-ci.ie](http://www.equal-ci.ie)

EQUAL is one of four Community Initiatives co-financed by the European Union (2000–2007).

The programme is co-funded through the European Social Fund (ESF) and will operate between 2001–2007, with a total ESF budget for Ireland of 34 million euro.

EQUAL seeks to identify and address fundamental forms of discrimination and inequality in the labour market through the development of new and innovative policies and practices initiated by EQUAL Development Partnerships.

Equality Authority,  
Clonmel Street,  
Dublin 2.

Tel: 01 4173333  
Fax: 01 4173366

Email: [info@equality.ie](mailto:info@equality.ie)

Website: [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)

The Equality Authority replaced the Employment Equality Agency, and has a greatly expanded role and functions. The Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000 outlaw discrimination in employment, vocational training, advertising, collective agreements, the provision of goods and services and other opportunities to which the public generally have access on nine distinct grounds.

These are:

- gender;
- marital status;
- family status;
- age;
- disability;
- race;

Equality Authority...

- sexual orientation;
- religious belief; and
- membership of the Traveller Community.

Discrimination is described in the Act as the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated on any of the above grounds. The Equality Authority has a series of publications and resources dealing with disability.

Department of Social and Family Affairs, Dublin  
2 & 4, Apollo House, Tara Street,  
Dublin 2, Co. Dublin  
Tel: 01 636 9300  
Fax: 01 671 3826  
Website: [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)

Opening Hours: Mon–Fri  
9.15–12.00am & 2.00–4.00pm

#### **The Department's Mission Statement**

"Our mission is to promote a caring society through ensuring access to income support and other services, enabling active participation, promoting social inclusion and supporting families."

[www.oasis.ie](http://www.oasis.ie)

Oasis (Online Access to Services, Information and Support) is an Irish eGovernment website developed by Comhairle and provides Citizens Information online. The site provides information on the social and civil rights of everyone in Ireland. Oasis provides you with information you may need at various stages in your life. Citizens Information is also provided by the Citizens Information Phone Service on Lo-Call 1890 777 121 or at a Citizens Information Centre in your locality. Find your nearest centre by using the Service Finder.



National Disability Authority,  
25 Clyde Road,  
Dublin 4.

Tel: 01 6080400  
Fax: 01 6609935  
Email: [nda@nda.ie](mailto:nda@nda.ie)

Workway  
[www.workway.ie](http://www.workway.ie)

The National Disability Authority is an independent public body whose work focuses on promoting and securing the rights of People with Disabilities. It was set up in 1999 by an Act of the Oireachtas.

The work of the NDA includes:

- Helping the Minister to develop policy on issues concerning people with disabilities;
- Advising on standards and quality of services for people with disabilities;
- Acknowledging when services have achieved high standards and good quality;
- Working with those who provide services to people with disabilities and helping them in establishing quality standards.

The Workway project was an IBEC/ICTU initiative set up under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness to increase awareness and promote the employment of people with disabilities in the private sector.

Funded by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment in Phase 1 and by FAS in Phase 2, Workway was the first project in Europe to adopt a partnership approach to the ongoing issue of high unemployment among people with disabilities. Private sector employers, people with disabilities, trade union representatives, service providers and Government agencies came together on four regional networks in Cork, Kerry, Donegal and Galway from 2002 to 2005, to jointly address some of the complex and challenging local barriers people with disabilities experience accessing, and in employment around the country. Guided by a National Steering Committee, the regional networks developed a wide range of practical materials for people with disabilities, employers and trade union representatives which are available to view or download from this website.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (2006)  
Sectoral Plan under the Disability Act.  
<http://www.entemp.ie/labour/strategy/sectoralplan.htm>

National Disability Authority (2002) Buildings for Everyone.  
NDA, Dublin.

NDA (2006)  
“A Strategy of Engagement – Towards a Comprehensive Employment  
Strategy for People with Disabilities”  
National Disability Authority, Dublin.

[www.FAS.ie](http://www.FAS.ie)

[www.NDA.ie](http://www.NDA.ie)

[www.OASIS.ie](http://www.OASIS.ie)

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# Ability on Your Doorstep



NOTES

# Ability on Your Doorstep

NOTES





The KWCD Employer Exchange is a network of leading employers from the locality who want to promote best practice in the recruitment of the long-term unemployed.

The network is partnered by employers and service organisations who want to change people's lives and have a positive influence on their local community.

Employers will benefit from training, work-shops on issues of interest to them and support in organising work placements for local long-term unemployed.

The KWCD Employer Exchange is partnered by  
**John Sisk & Sons, Contract People,  
PEI, Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children, Enable Ireland,  
Johnson & Johnson, The Linkage Programme,  
Department of Social & Family Affairs,  
KWCD Local Employment Service,  
KWCD Area Partnership Ltd.**

**17A, St. Agnes Road, Crumlin Village, Dublin 12.  
Phone: 01 4095082 Fax: 01 4651095  
[www.employerexchange.ie](http://www.employerexchange.ie)**