



Knockanrawley Resource Centre
"It is better to light one candle than
curse the dark."

KNOCKANRAWLEY RESOURCE CENTRE CLG



Ag tacú le daoine óga
atá faoi mhíchumas barr
a gcumais a bhaint amach

Supporting young people
with disabilities
reach their potential

Ability

ABILITY PROJECT SOUTH TIPPERARY

*Supporting young people with disabilities
reach their potential*

Employer Information Pack



Ireland's European Structural and
Investment Funds Programmes
2014-2020

Co-funded by the Irish Government
and the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION

Investing in your future

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An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta
agus Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Employment Affairs
and Social Protection



pobal

government supporting communities



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

ABILITY

The Ability Programme is delivered through 27 distinct projects in different parts of the country. The Ability Project South Tipperary is one of three such projects that community and voluntary organisations in County Tipperary were fortunate to secure funding for. The aim of the national programme is to bring **young people with disabilities** who are not work-ready closer to the labour market using a range of **person-centred supports**.

The **Ability Project South Tipperary** is a partnership initiative led by *Knockanrawley Resource Centre* with partners *Scoil Chormaic* in Cashel, *Rehab Care* in Clonmel and the *Irish Wheelchair Association (South Tipperary Services)* and the *Moorehaven Centre* in Tipperary Town.

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Knockanrawley Resource Centre CLG Ability Project: Employer Information Pack

This Ability Project Employer Information Pack provides information to you, our local employers, about the Ability Project being implemented in South Tipperary; our desire to seek your engagement with the project through our Work Experience Placement Initiative, and; information about the range of Workplace Supports on offer to Employers when hiring Employees with Disabilities.

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Ability Project South Tipperary

Our aim for the project here in South Tipperary is to support young people between the ages of 16 – 29 with physical, sensory or intellectual disabilities to confidently achieve their education and employment aspirations.

What can Ability do?

Putting the young person at the centre of the project we will work in partnership with their child/adult service to provide:

- One-to-one supports around setting goals and plans to achieve them;
- Assist young people and their family through key transition points between education, training and employment;
- Personal development training in areas such as communications, interpersonal skill, time-management, personal presentation and care, etc.;
- Work-Ready accredited training such as HACCP (food safety), First Aid, Manual Handling, Safe Pass, etc.;
- Assist young people's engagement in their community through a supported volunteering initiative;
- Facilitate Work Experience placements and provide with on-going mentoring and support to both the young person and employer;
- Employer and staff Disability Awareness Training but build capacity and awareness of the benefits to recruit and retain young people with disabilities within their workforce.
- Facilitate linkages between young people with disabilities and specialist / mainstream employment services in preparation for when they are work-ready.

Local Employers / Businesses

A central objective of the Ability Project ST is to assist our young participants to gain the confidence and self-belief to successfully enter the labour market and contribute in a meaningful way to the local economy. In addition to the provision of training and mentoring, our aim is to facilitate links between each young participant with interests and skills in specific business areas and sectors with **employers such as you** through a supported work experience placement.

How can you benefit from Ability?

Diversity ~ Economic value ~ A more positive workplace

These are just a few of the **positive results employers will gain** when introducing people with disabilities to the workforce. So what has experience elsewhere shown?

- **Increased market share:** Reflecting diversity in your workplace will appeal to your customers. Plus, people with disabilities and their families make up a huge section of the market. They enjoy doing business with supportive companies.
- **Improved productivity:** Effective job matching fits the employee's abilities to the employers' needs. The right person in the right job makes everyone more productive.
- **Reduced turnover:** Having trouble finding good employees? Many repetitive or entry-level positions are well suited to people with disabilities.
- **Improved morale:** People with disabilities want to work and contribute. They are motivated and reliable co-workers who add value to any team. Their enthusiasm and positive attitudes are contagious – and great for morale.
- **Higher retention:** People with disabilities are reliable and dependable workers, with some of the highest rates of retention of any employee group.
- **Low investment, high return:** There is no additional cost to you. All Ability supports are free to employers.
- **Win-win situation for all:** Hiring people with disabilities benefits the workers, the community and your company.

Work Experience Placements

Our project participants have had little experience of employment and in many cases have never allowed themselves to believe that employment could be attainable. They are unsure of their own job preferences, strengths and weaknesses. A work experience placement can be an excellent tool to

- identify a job seeker's support needs;
- give them a taste of real work / insight into real employment;
- provide a stepping stone and progression route towards paid employment;
- gives the job seeker content for application forms, CVs and discussion points during interviews;
- assists them to build new skills and hone existing ones;
- boost confidence, self-esteem and motivation

The work experience placements are not paid positions but will be **time-limited** and based on EU recommendations, 8 – 12 weeks is sufficient time to meet the objectives of a placement. For younger participants the time-limit may be set as low as 3 – 5 weeks so as to allow for other elements of the Ability project and for school requirements. Each placement will be designed around the ability of the participant and the need of the employer. All work experience placements will be **part-time** but the number of hours per week will be worked out on an individual basis.

Each placement will be **risk assessed** by the Ability team. An agreement will be drawn up between the Ability project/participant and the employer and will cover:

- the terms and conditions of the work experience;
- the duties to be undertaken on the job;
- support to be provided by the Ability team to both the employer and participant;
- incident and accident procedures;
- Insurance cover

The Ability Project ST will **support the employers** throughout the work experience placement. **Disability Awareness Training** will be procured for all employers willing to support the project and provide space for participants to gain this vital experience. Employers will also benefit from **media coverage** through social media platforms, print media and radio broadcasts – ensure a wide awareness of their participation in the Ability Project.

Work Experience Placements Procedure

Step 1

- Raise Awareness of Ability among Employers
- Engage Employers in Work Experience Initiative

Step 2

- Match job seeker to work placement based on interest, capacity and logistics

Step 3

- Meet with employer and conduct on-site Risk Assessment.
- Draw up Work Experience Placement Agreement.

Step 4

- Deliver Disability Awareness Training to Employer and Staff

Step 5

- Introduce the young person with disability to the employer and team

Step 6

- Ability Participant begins Work Experience Placement
- Ability Job Coach provides on-going mentoring support

Step 7

- Ongoing monitoring and feedback between employer, participant and Ability team

Step 8

- Conclude Work Experience Placement and Evaluate experience by both participant and employer.

Working Supports for Employees with Disabilities

A More Inclusive Approach to Employment

Being an inclusive and disability-friendly employer has many benefits. An employer gets access to a wider pool of employees and you are more likely to hold on to experienced staff if they acquire a disability. There are schemes available to support you to employ someone with a disability or to assist you to retain a staff member who has acquired a disability.

The following supports for employers are available:

- The EmployAbility Service
- The Disability Awareness Training Support Scheme
- The Willing Able Mentoring (WAM) Scheme
- The Wage Subsidy Scheme
- The Reasonable Accommodation Fund for the Employment of people with disabilities, comprising of the Workplace Equipment & Adaptation Grant, the Personal Reader Grant, the Job Interpreter Grant and the Employee Retention Grant.

EmployAbility Service

The nationwide EmployAbility Service provides an employment support service for people with a health condition, injury, illness or disability and a recruitment service for the business community.

Your local Employability service will:

- Provide you with employment assistance and access to a pool of potential employees with varying levels of skills, abilities and training;
- Provide ongoing support for both the employer and employee throughout employment;
- Provide a professional job matching service to help ensure successful recruitment; and
- Provide advice and information on additional employment supports.

You can find more information and links to your local EmployAbility service on www.welfare.ie

The Disability Awareness Training Support Scheme

Disability Awareness Training Support Scheme provides funding so that employers can buy in Disability Awareness training for their staff. The purpose of the training is to deliver clear and accurate information about disability and to address questions or concerns that employers and employees may have about working with people with disabilities.

The training is aimed at providing participants with an understanding and awareness of the issues surrounding disability, including:

- An overview of relevant anti-discrimination and equal opportunities legislation.
- General and specific information on disabilities, perceptual awareness exercises and disability etiquette.

Grants of 90% of eligible training costs, up to a maximum of €20,000 are available to private companies in the first year and 80% in the second and subsequent years.

Eligible costs include actual fees paid in respect of external programmes trainer's fees for in-house staff training, open learning/ computer/web based training programme fees and learning materials e.g. manuals and books clearly associated with the relevant training programme to a maximum of €650.

If you are looking for further information on the Disability Awareness Training Support Scheme, log onto www.welfare.ie

There is also a free e-learning training module on Disability Equality available from the National Disability Authority which can be downloaded at <http://elearning.nda.ie>

Willing Able Mentoring Scheme

Willing Able Mentoring (WAM) is a work placement programme which aims to promote access to the labour market for graduates with disabilities and build the capacity of employers to integrate disability into the mainstream workplace. Participating employers (WAM Leaders) collaborate with WAM to offer mentored, paid work placements for graduates with disabilities. This partnership brings graduates with disabilities and WAM's network of employers together so that both can benefit from each other – ensuring genuine learning opportunities for all.

See www.ahead.ie for further details

Wage Subsidy Scheme

The Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS) provides financial incentives to employers, outside the public sector, to employ disabled people who work more than 20 hours per 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 WSS allows the employer to make up the shortfall through grant assistance.

A person on the Wage Subsidy Scheme is subject to the same conditions of employment as other employees. These conditions include PRSI contributions, annual leave, tax deductions and the going rate for the job.

Subsidies available through this scheme are structured under 3 separate strands and employers can benefit under one or all of these strands simultaneously.

Strand 1: subsidy is a general subsidy for any perceived productivity shortfall in excess of 20% for a disabled person, in comparison to a non-disabled peer. An employee must work a

minimum of 21 hours per week up to a maximum of 39 hours per week. The rate of subsidy is €5.30 per hour and is based on the number of hours worked, giving a total annual subsidy available of €10,748 per annum based on 39 hour week.

Strand 2: applies where a company employs more than 2 disabled people. The company can avail of a grant to cover the additional supervisory, management and other work based costs. This top-up is based on the overall number of disabled employees employed and will range on a sliding scale from an additional 10% of wage subsidy for 3 to 6 disabled employees to a maximum of 50% of wage subsidy for 23+ disabled employees.

Strand 3: is where an employer employs 30 or more disabled workers. The employer can avail of a grant of €30,000 per annum towards the expense of employing and Employment Assistance Officer.

Information on these 3 strands and how to apply for the scheme is available from your local Employment Services Office www.welfare.ie

The Reasonable Accommodation Fund for the Employment of People with Disabilities

The DEASP has the responsibility for providing labour market services for disabled people, assisting them with finding paid employment or preparing them for employment through a training or employment programme.

Under the Reasonable Accommodation Fund, the DEASP can also help you – as an employer – to take appropriate measures to enable a person with a disability/impairment to have access to employment by providing the following grants and schemes; the Workplace Equipment/Adaptation Grant, the Personal Reader Grant, the Job Interview Interpreter Grant and the Employee Retention Grant.

Workplace Equipment/Adaptation Grant

If you are a person with a disability who has been offered employment, or who is in employment and about to change job as a result of re-deployment or promotion, or who is about to become self-employed, and if you require a more accessible workplace or adapted equipment to do your job, you or your employer may be able to get a grant towards the costs of adapting premises or equipment.

Examples of adaptations for which a grant may be given are:

- Minor building modifications such as ramps or modified toilets;
- Alarm systems with flashing lights;
- Equipment adaptation such as voice synthesizers for computers or amplifiers for telephones.

A maximum grant of **€6,350** is available towards the cost of adaptations to premises or equipment. This grant can also be used to upgrade adapted equipment funded previously.

Information on the Work Equipment Adaptation Grant and how to apply for it is available on www.welfare.ie. Alternatively you can contact your local Employment Service Office or Intreo Centre.

Personal Reader Grant

If you employ a person who is blind or visually impaired and who needs assistance with job-related reading, they may be entitled to a grant to allow them employ a Personal Reader.

Examples of situations for which the grant may be given are where:

- The individual is employed in the private sector and needs assistance with work-related reading.
- Their prospects for promotion are restricted because of reading difficulties due to visual impairment.

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) will pay a fee per hour, in line with the minimum wage. It will be paid up to a maximum of 640 hours per annum.

As an employer, you can apply for a Personal Reader Grant on behalf of an employee or the staff member can apply themselves.

Information on the Personal Reader Grant and how to apply for it by contacting www.welfare.ie

Job Interview Interpreter Grant

Under the Job Interview Interpreter Grant Scheme, the DEASP will normally pay a set fee for a three hour period to provide for the services of an interpreter to support speech or hearing impaired persons who wish to attend job interviews. Travel costs for the interpreter are paid at a fixed rate. Funding can also be provided to cover the costs of an interpreter during an induction period when starting work.

Information on the Job Interview Interpreter Grant and how to apply for it is available on www.welfare.ie

Employee Retention Grant Scheme

The purpose of the Employee Retention Grant Scheme is to assist employers to retain employees who acquire an illness, condition or impairment which impacts on their ability to carry out their job. It helps to explore an employee's continuing capacity to operate as a productive member of the workforce.

This scheme assists in maintaining the employability of an employee when he/she acquires an illness, condition or impairment (occupational or otherwise) by providing funding to:

- Identify accommodation and/or training to enable the employee to remain in his/her current position; or
- Re-train the employee so that he/she can take up another position within the company.

The scheme is structured in 2 stages, according to the development and implementation of a retention strategy:

- **Stage 1** facilitates employers by enabling them to buy in external specialist skills and knowledge needed to develop an individualised 'written retention strategy' for an employee who acquires a disability.
- **Stage 2** provides funding to the employer towards the implementation of the written retention strategy, including re-training, job coaching and/or hiring of an external co-ordinator to oversee and manage its implementation.

The Employee Retention Grant Scheme is open to all companies in the private sector. Funding is available to support the retention of any existing employee, at any level and occupation within the company, who acquires an illness, condition or impairment which impacts on his/her current ability to do his/her job.

Further Guidance

The National Disability Authority has a useful guidance booklet on managing safety issues for employees with disability. Search www.nda.ie

The health and safety Authority has a useful guidance booklet on managing safety issues for employees with disability. Search www.has.ie

Ability Project South Tipperary Partnership

