



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Minister Says Opening Access To Jobs, Education & Training Is Key To Helping People With Disabilities Reach Full Potential

The Minister for Social Affairs, Mr Seamus Brennan T.D., speaking today in Scotland, said that people with disabilities continue to face significant challenges in accessing employment, education and training opportunities.

Minister Brennan said: "Opening up access to these opportunities helps people with disabilities reach their fullest potential and ensures that the talents and contributions of no one individual is ignored or overlooked. For those with disabilities who are able to work, paid employment offers the best means of combating poverty and promoting social inclusion. Furthermore, employment gives people self respect and opens the way for them to participate fully in society.'

Minister Brennan was speaking at a meeting of the British-Irish Council on Social Inclusion in Edinburgh. The meeting was hosted by Malcolm Chisholm MSP, Scottish Executive Minister for Communities.

The British-Irish Council was established under the Good Friday Agreement as a forum to exchange information and best practice and take forward joint action. The Members of the Council are the Irish and British Governments together with the devolved institutions in Scotland and Wales and representatives of the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey.

At the Edinburgh meeting, Ministers reviewed progress made under the second work programme of the Social Inclusion sector, which dealt with disability and access to employment, education and training.

The Minister added: 'I am delighted that the Council's work in the areas of disability and exclusion has looked at examples of best practice in this area at both national and local levels and the important role that employers play in promoting the employment of people with disabilities. Today's meeting has shown that the people of these islands face many similar challenges in the social and economic issues that affect their daily lives and we all have much to learn from each other's experiences in addressing these challenges.'



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The official communiqué from today's meeting is available on the British-Irish Council website at www.british-irishcouncil.org

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