



NEWS RELEASE

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On-line money management training programme launched for people with intellectual disability

St. John of God Carmona Services and the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) today announced a new on-line money management training programme for people with intellectual disability. The programme was launched today by Mary Hanafin, T.D. Minister for Social and Family Affairs today (*11th February 2010*) in the Stillorgan Park Hotel in Dublin.

The programme, **MoneyCounts** is a free to use web based resource, which was developed by St. John of God Carmona Services & MABS with the support of Benefit - the eInclusion Scheme facilitated by The Knowledge Society Division of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

MoneyCounts was devised in response to an identified gap in financial literacy amongst people with intellectual disabilities and other vulnerable groups. The OECD in 2008 voiced their concern about the possible adverse effects of low levels of financial literacy in a context of increased use of financial products. Training and education in this area is aimed at facilitating learners in making effective informed decisions about their finances.

Launching the new on-line training programme, Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin T.D., said **"this specifically tailored on-line resource is very well presented to give every individual learner a good grounding in budgeting and managing their money. The resource will greatly help people with intellectual disabilities to make informed decisions about their finances, and help them to achieve financial independence. I want to pay tribute to St. John of God Carmona Services and MABS for their commitment in developing this valuable resource which is now available for all to benefit from."**

The present economic situation in Ireland poses significant difficulties for people who are dependent upon Social Welfare payments and both St John of God Services and MABS work to support individuals in managing their financial affairs as effectively as possible. **MoneyCounts** forms part of an overall strategy to provide learners with the knowledge and skills required to achieve this. The



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content of the training programme is objective and neutral and is committed to ensuring that no particular financial institution or product is promoted in any way.

The training programme comprises a step by step guide for the facilitator, together with interactive games and exercises for the learners. Learners now have the opportunity to practice on a virtual ATM machine as well as playing games that will facilitate learning in budgeting and money management. It will focus on exploring spending habits and outline the consequences of 'living beyond one's means'. Video case studies will highlight financial issues relating to entitlements and employment.

Organisations or individuals wishing to find out more about **MoneyCounts** can log onto www.moneycounts.ie or contact at education@mabs.ie or admin.carmona@sjog.ie

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