



**An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection**

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Minister Burton announces expansion of Disability Activation Project to assist people with disabilities to access employment

The Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton, TD, today (25th October, 2012) announced funding of just over €7 million for a range of 14 projects under the Disability Activation Project (DACT). Speaking about the successful projects, Minister Burton said: **“These funds of €7 million will be used to create linkages between employers and people with disabilities – this is crucial to ensuring that the untapped potential of people with disabilities is allowed to flourish and that they are enabled to participate fully in the labour market.”**

The Minister made the announcement at the employer road show event being held in Sligo, where she outlined the extensive range of services and supports available to assist employers in growing their businesses and supporting their workforce through engagement with the Department of Social Protection (DSP). The extensive range of supports embraces specific measures to assist people with disabilities to avail of employment opportunities and includes the Wage Subsidy Scheme and the Workplace Adaptation Grant Scheme.

The DACT Project is jointly funded by the European Social Fund and the Department of Social Protection and it is targeted at the Borders, Midlands and Western regions. There are four strands to the Project as follows:

Strand 1 – Improving Access to Employment

Strand 2 – Progression Programmes for Young People

Strand 3 – Support for Progression and Retention of People with an Acquired Disability

Strand 4 – Innovative Employer Initiatives

Following a call for proposals inviting organisations that have experience of working with people with a disability to submit projects for funding, 35 applications underwent a rigorous appraisal process carried out by Pobal who are managing the DACT project on behalf of the Department of Social Protection. Ultimately, 14 proposals were selected for funding.

Referring to Strand 4 of the DACT, the Minister stated: **“Three of the selected projects - to be run by the National Learning Network, the Irish Association of Supported Employment and Monaghan Integrated Development Ltd. - will focus specifically on how best to establish links between employers and people with disabilities. The projects will continue until early 2015 and will be most helpful in learning how best to ensure that people with disabilities can avail of progression, education and development opportunities.”**

Under Strand 3, the University of Limerick and Arthritis Ireland will seek to develop individualised occupational therapy programmes to enable people with arthritis to overcome the barriers they face in accessing, remaining in or returning to work. Similarly, the Peter Bradley Foundation and Acquired Brain Injury Ireland will use vocational assessment teams to support people with acquired brain injuries to remain in or re-enter the workforce.

Minister Burton continued: **“My Department is committed to supporting people with disability to participate more fully in society and to become more self-sufficient by providing supports that address barriers that they may face. The range of innovative projects which we are financing with the support of the European Social Fund will enable us to learn how best to address these barriers.”**

The Minister concluded by thanking all of the applicants for their efforts and wished the selected applicants every success with the projects.

Notes for Editors

The list of projects selected for funding are set out below.

| Applicant & Project Title | Project Summary | Strand | Location | Cost Up to.. |
|--|--|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| ICTU – Options programme | Individual progression plan mentoring – FETAC training and work placement | 1,2 & 3 | BMW region | 684k |
| National Learning Network | Comprehensive Transition Plan for adolescents with autism/learning disabilities | 2 | Donegal | 759k |
| Walkinstown Assoc for people with an Intellectual Disability – Providing Equal Progression routes (PEER) | Building capacity, competence and potential through person centred planning for 16-24 year olds, using local community networks and trained volunteers (buddy system). | 2 | Louth | 672k |
| Monaghan Integrated Development Ltd. – Ability Activation North East | Awareness raising with employers (training w/shops, engagement with local authorities, business sector identification etc.) | 4 | Cavan, Monaghan, Louth | 336k |
| Peter Bradley Foundation/Acquired Brain Injury Ireland – Work4You | Establish 3 vocational assessment to support people with acquired brain injuries to remain in or re-enter the workforce | 3 | BMW region | 1.09 m |
| University of Limerick/Arthritis Ireland – Working with Arthritis – Solutions & Strategies | Developing individualised occupational therapy programmes to overcome barriers faced by people with arthritis in accessing, remaining in or returning to work. | 3 | BMW region | 432k |
| National Learning Network – Linking In | Developing early supportive interventions for people on Illness Benefit to promote reintegration specifically in the SME sector | 4 | Galway, Mayo & Roscommon | 463k |
| Brothers of Charity Roscommon – Open | Building relationships between (rural) employers and people with disabilities to | 1 | Roscommon | 182k |

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| to Work Opportunities | ensure appropriate job placements which match needs of both | | | |
| National Learning Network – Personal Employment Pathway | Develop personalised integration strategy for participants below FETAC 3 level – case managed, community based, job tasters etc. | 1, 2 & 3 | Laois, Offaly, Westmeath | 700k |
| Irish Association of Supported Employment – Open Door | Awareness raising with employers – targeted employer events, supports to ‘new’ employers, develop online support materials etc. | 4 | BMW region | 334k |
| Drumlin House - Step Right to Work | Providing enhanced personalised service to people with disability who currently receive personal development and work-skills training in Drumlin House & develop relationships with local employers | 1,2 & 4 | Cavan & Monaghan | 208k |
| Sligo LEADER partnership – SEED | Community based mentoring and employment supports service (personalised progression plans and case management) for and by people with disability. | 1 | Sligo | 447k |
| Brothers of Charity Galway – Access to Work, Let’s Get to Work, Supported Employment Intensive | Targeting people with disability with very high support needs with person-centred planning, securing employment or developing business enterprise with local business people as mentors. | 1,2 | Galway | 620k |
| Co. Roscommon Disability Support group - Disability Activation for Work Nutrition (DAWN) | One-stop shop for training and business incubation – case managed approach with groups of 15, personal development plans, education, work-placement, self-employment supports | 1,2,3 | Roscommon | 405k |

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