



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

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Minister Burton supports National Job Shadow Day

Austin Lynch today (*Wednesday 20th April 2011*) experienced something of what it is to be a Minister when he shadowed Joan Burton, Minister for Social Protection as part of National Job Shadow Day.

Speaking today Minister Burton said: "I am delighted to be participating in National Job Shadow Day. Today, hundreds of people with disabilities throughout Ireland will have the opportunity to shadow a workplace employee as they go through a normal working day in hundreds of employment locations across the country. It gives me great pleasure to be a part of this truly worthwhile initiative and to welcome Austin to work with me in Leinster House today."

Austin, who is shadowing Minister Burton today, works as a general assistant with a major supermarket and he recently won the National Employee of the Year at the Irish Association of Supported Employment Best Practice Awards. Austin has worked in this role for 10 years is noted for being consistently helpful to his colleagues, customers and management. Austin is supported by STEP and City Gate, a Saint John of God community service, which supports people with mild intellectual disabilities.

The Job Shadow Initiative, which is organised by the Irish Association of Supported Employment (IASE) gives people with disabilities the opportunity to Job Shadow in a job of their interest and gain a greater understanding of what is involved in that particular area of work. They also learn about the skills required and employers' expectations from employees in the work place.

Minister Burton went on to say: "A core belief of the IASE is that people with disabilities including those with significant disabilities should have equal opportunity to have a job. This is a belief which I share and in that context, I want to take this opportunity to mention the Partial Capacity Scheme, which I will introduce at the earliest possible date."

This scheme will provide an opportunity for people with disabilities, who are assessed to have an employment capacity which is restricted when compared to the norm, to avail of employment opportunities while continuing to receive an income support payment. The Partial Capacity Scheme will be open to people who are in receipt of Invalidity Pension or who have been in receipt of Illness Benefit for a minimum of six months. Participation in the scheme is voluntary and the scheme will be designed in particular to respond to the



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needs of people who currently seek to avail of 'exemptions' in order to take up employment opportunities.

Minister Burton concluded by commending the work of the IASE and of STEP and City Gate. "I particularly want to thank Austin for his assistance today and to wish him every success in the future.

PRESS RELEASE ENDS

Notes for editors:

Irish Association of Supported Employment (IASE)

The Irish Association of Supported Employment (IASE) is a national voluntary organisation established in 1994 to promote and develop supported employment in Ireland. The IASE is the representative voice of almost 900 members who work with over 5,000 people with disabilities who receive supports from a range of supported employment initiatives.

Partial Capacity Scheme

The Partial Capacity scheme recognises that the current structure of the welfare system, which categorises people as 'fit to work' or 'unfit to work' does not reflect the reality for many existing welfare customers. It will provide an opportunity for people with disabilities, and assessed to have an employment capacity which is restricted when compared to the norm, to avail of employment opportunities while continuing to receive an income support payment.

The legislative basis which provides for the introduction of the Partial Capacity scheme is contained in the Social Welfare (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2010, which was enacted by the Oireachtas in December 2010.

A programme of work in the areas of:

- introducing Regulations, as required by legislation, to cover, amongst other things, the medical protocols which will determine eligibility for the scheme as well as the rates of payment which will apply to those who apply to participate in the scheme,
- developing the necessary medical criteria against which partial employment capacity will be assessed, and
- developing the necessary processes and information technology systems to process, record and pay applicants.



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is currently being developed to cater for the new scheme.

Every effort is being made to complete these necessary steps as soon as possible to allow for the formal introduction of the scheme at the earliest possible date. In the interim, the existing 'exemptions' arrangements under the Invalidity Pension and Illness Benefit schemes will continue to apply.