



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

www.welfare.ie

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 (*23 March 2012*) announced an expansion of the Disability Activation Project. The European Social Fund/Department of Social Protection funded Disability Activation Project with a fund of €7m will be expanded across the Borders, Midlands and West region in 2012.

Speaking in Sligo town today, Minister Burton said: **"The Project is being expanded through the issue of a Call for Proposals inviting organisations that have experience of working with people with disability to submit projects for funding. Interested parties are being asked to develop innovative projects designed to provide people with disability with the appropriate progression, education and development opportunities to enhance their access to employment. The project will also be aimed at promoting and supporting, amongst employers, the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities."**

The aim of the Disability Activation Project is to increase the capacity and potential of people on Department of Social Protection disability/illness welfare payments to participate in the labour market, based on a case management approach.

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

The closing date for receipt of applications is Friday 13th April 2012.

Information, guidance notes and application forms are available now on www.pobal.ie and www.welfare.ie .

Minister Burton concluded: **“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 initiative outlined is an example of this commitment in action.”**

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Note for Editors

1. Is further information currently available?

The Application Form, an Information and Guidance Note, and Application Form Explanatory notes and Helpful Hints on the Disability Activation Project is available at www.welfare.ie and at www.pobal.ie.

2. Who is funding the Disability Activation Project?

The Disability Activation Project is jointly funded by the European Social Fund and the Department of Social Protection.

3. Who is eligible to apply?

Applications for funding are invited from organisations who have a National or Regional remit and which are based in, or work with, the target group in the Borders Midlands West (BMW) region.

4. Who are the target groups?

The target groups for each strand are people, 16 years to 65 years of age, in receipt of **disability/illness welfare payments** who reside in the Border Midlands West (BMW) region.

5. What kind of projects are suitable?

The Disability Activation Project is organised around four separate project strands, all with similar eligibility and selection criteria but each having its own key focus.

The four project strands are:

Strand 1 Improving Access to Employment

Aim: To provide people with disability with the appropriate progression, education and development opportunities to enhance their access to employment.

Strand 2 Progression Programmes for Young People

Aim: To support the development and delivery of customised progression programmes for young people with disability.

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

Aim: To support the progression and retention of people with an acquired disability.

Strand 4 Innovative Employer Initiatives

Aim: To support employers in the recruitment and retention of people with disability in employment.

6. What is the amount of the fund?

The total budget available across the four individual strands is €7 million.

7. What is the funding timeframe?

Funding is available for a maximum of 32 months up to the 30th April 2015.

8. What is the Eligible Area?

The project activity must be within the eligible area of the Borders Midlands West which comprises thirteen counties, the six border counties of Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth; the three western counties of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon and the four midland counties of Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath.

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