

Launch of the Ability Programme

Submitted by [paul.meade](#) [1] on 3 October 2017 - 5:30pm

The funding for this programme will amount to some €10 million over a three year period and is co-funded by the Irish Exchequer and the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning operational programme, 2014-2020 (PEIL, 2014 ? 20). The programme will be delivered by national, regional and local organisations that have experience of working with people with a disability.

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[Ability Programme Launch](#) [Ability%20Programme%20launch%20photoB.jpg](#)

The aim of the Ability programme is to bring young people with disabilities who are not work-ready closer to the labour market. The programme will promote employment prospects and meaningful social roles for young people with disabilities and in particular, young people who are distant from the labour market using a range of person-centred supports. The focus of the programme will be on projects aimed at young people with disabilities (aged 15 ? 29) designed to assist in their transition from school to further education and employment.

Speaking at the launch, Minister Doherty said ?the new Ability programme is a response to the evidence that people with disabilities are only half as likely to be in employment as others of working age. These differences are there from the outset, whereby young people with disabilities start out with lower employment rates in their late-teens and early twenties than their peers. Through engagement in training and personal development activities, the Ability programme will bring young people with disabilities closer to the world of work and help to ensure that people with disabilities realise their employment ambitions.?

?My responsibility as Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection is to work with Government to ensure that Ireland is a Republic of Opportunity by breaking down the barriers that stop people getting a fair chance, whether that?s in education, childcare, disability, or excessive taxation and red tape. Today?s launch of the Ability programme is a key ingredient of achieving just that.?

Minister McGrath stated that ?This new pre-activation programme for young people with disabilities responds to the need to improve on the range of programmes for people with disabilities by focusing on ?Ability? rather than disability. The Ability programme shares in the vision of the National Disability Inclusion Strategy, launched last July, of an Irish society in which people with disabilities enjoy equal rights and opportunities to participate in social and cultural life, can work if they want to do so, have choice and control over how they live their lives.?

Minister McGrath invited organisations that have experience of working with people with a disability to submit proposals for funding. The Minister thanked Pobal, for their assistance in developing and managing the programme.

Minister McGrath noted that a formal call for applications will issue on 3rd October through the websites of Pobal www.pobal.ie [2] and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection www.welfare.ie [3] and through the national media.

From 3 October, applicants will be able to download a copy of the [application form and guidelines](#) [4] from the Pobal website on the [Ability Programme page](#) [4].

Applicants will also be able to register on the Pobal website to attend one of four [information events](#) [4] about the application process that are being planned for October.

Submission of online application forms will open on 4 December 2017 and will close at 12 pm on Wednesday 31 January 2018. Pobal will appraise the applications in early 2018 and successful applicants will be notified at the end of Q1 2018.

Minister McGrath concluded: "I am committed to supporting people with a disability to participate more fully in society by providing supports that address the barriers that they may face. The Ability programme is an example of this commitment in action. While much progress is being made in delivering real jobs to people with disabilities, as evidenced in recent Census data, significant numbers of people with disabilities remain outside the workforce. Therefore we need to redouble our efforts to ensure that people with disabilities realise their potential.

"To this end, I encourage interested parties to start planning their proposals and to use the time before the closing date (January 31st 2018) to develop high quality applications that demonstrate a fit with the strategic aims of the programme."

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