

## **Sickness, Disability & Work: Breaking the Barriers- Dublin 26-27<sup>t</sup> June 2008**

**“Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities”**

*Don Watts – Department of Social and Family Affairs*

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## **Social and Economic Participation Programme – SEPP**

**Two separate strands of activation –**

- **National Development Plan 2007-13  
Social and Economic Participation**

➤ *programme aimed at all people of working age on social welfare payments, including people with disabilities.*

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## Social and Economic Participation Programme – SEPP

- Additional 30 facilitators to be assigned to complement existing 40.
- Targeted caseload
- Engagement with the individual
- Active case management
- Personal progression plan.

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## Social and Economic Participation Programme – SEPP

### European Social Fund – Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007-13

- Supporting Economic Participation
- *programme aimed specifically at people with disabilities.*

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## Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

Aim:

To develop and test a comprehensive employment strategy based on individual case management that will have the capacity to increase the employment rate of people with disabilities.

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## Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

Influences for change -

➤ labour market interventions **focused and concentrated almost exclusively on live register management** with an emphasis on those in receipt of unemployment payments

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## Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

Influences for change -

- policy research environment informed and influenced by publications and research studies advocating **a restructuring in engaging with citizens with disabilities** in terms of their capacity to participate, their income support needs and training and employment opportunities.

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## Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

**Influences for Change :**

- National Disability Strategy
- Disability Act 2005
- Social Partnership Agreement Towards 2016
- NDA (2006) Comprehensive Employment Strategy for people with disabilities

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## Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

### Key Messages :

- considerable time and effort ensuring that people fit into the right contingency or category (i.e. Lone Parent, Disability, Unemployment etc).
- A consequence is that people treated according to the rules governing the category which they are placed in rather than according to their needs, capabilities and circumstances.

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## Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

- Sizeable and persistent gap in employment rates between people with a disability and those without
- Current supports to assist people with disabilities in accessing labour market limited in effectiveness
- Need to enhance connectedness of existing services for people with a disability

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## Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

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**Sectoral Plan** response to Disability Act 2005

*Cooperation between Department of Social and Family  
Affairs and Department of Enterprise Trade and  
Employment in relation to the development and  
coordination of services for persons with disabilities*

## Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

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**Sectoral Plan:**

Protocol recognised commitment of both  
Departments to work closely together to  
harmonise their endeavours and to increase  
the effectiveness of the delivery of services  
for people with disabilities

## Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

### Basis for Proposal to ESF:

- Dept committed to development of systematic programme of engagement for all people of working age (SEPP) including those with disabilities.
- Employment a major contributor to people exiting poverty.
- Need to influence quality of life and social well being.

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## Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

### Cross Dept/Agency Approach

- Department of Education and Science
- Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment
- FAS
- VECs
- HSE
- NDA

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## Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

Issues going forward:

- Participation by invitation (no conditionality)
- Local cross Dept/Agency cooperation and commitment.
- Employer response.
- Participation and progression with ongoing support

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## Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

**Existing participation by people  
with disabilities on DSFA schemes:**

- Disability Allowance – **9,268 (10%)** availing of rehabilitative earnings disregards.
- Illness Benefit – **2,273(3%)** availing of employment /training exemptions
- Invalidity Pension – **4,163 (7.5%)** availing of employment/training exemptions

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## Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

### ■ Back to Work Allowance/Enterprise \*

Scheme	Employees	Self Employed	
Disability All.	451	244	(0.8%)
Invalidity Pension	221	77	(0.6%)
Illness Benefit	283	221	(0.7%)
Blind persons Pension	7	1	---

(\* as at 27 June 2008)

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## Supporting Economic Participation by People with Disabilities

### Back to Education Allowance Scheme\*

Scheme	Second Level	Third Level	
<b>Disability Allowance</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>( 0.8%)</b>
<b>Invalidity Pension</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>(0.02%)</b>
<b>Illness Benefit</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>(0.3%)</b>

(\* 2007/08 academic year)

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