

FÁS is responsible for job placement and vocational training services. People with disabilities are entitled to the same services as others. There is a Disability Policy and Development Unit which was set up to assist in the integration of people with disabilities into the open labour market, maintain the focus on disability within the organisation and expand FÁS services and programmes in this area. This unit is involved in designing and developing new programmes for people with disabilities, helping to implement training and development initiatives and developing guidelines and resource material.

FÁS established a National Advisory Committee on Disability in June 2002, to assist and advice on matters relating to the development and provision of effective vocational training and employment services for people with disabilities. Its membership includes representatives of organisations of people with disabilities, unions, employers and government departments.

"Ready, Willing and Able" is an employers' guide to hiring people with a disability and "Able to Work" (FÁS) is intended to support the full inclusion of people with disabilities in the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (under the National Development Plan).

Training

People with disabilities can access two types of training: rehabilitative training which is provided by health boards or by specialist agencies on their behalf and vocational training which is provided by FÁS or by specialist agencies under contract with FÁS.

Vocational Training

This is designed to equip trainees with specific skills which will enhance their prospect of getting a job. People with disabilities who are training with FÁS receive the same training allowances and training bonus and are entitled to the same benefits as other trainees. Contact your local FÁS office.

Rehabilitative Training

This is mainly concerned with the development of an individual's core life skills, social skills and basic work skills with the objective of enhancing quality of life and general work capacity. People in rehabilitative training retain their social welfare or health board payment and get a training bonus. Contact the Office of the Director of Disability Services in your local Health Board.

Employment

There are some schemes to encourage people on welfare, including people with disabilities, to go back to work. Relevant schemes include:

Back to Work Allowance (Department of Social and Family Affairs)

This is a scheme which allows people who have been receiving certain disability payments for 15 months (or 3 years in the case of Disability Benefit) to take up employment and retain a percentage of their social welfare payment for three years. Apply to your local Social Welfare Office.

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Community Employment

This provides up to 3 years part-time employment to people aged 18 or over on disability payments. In the case of Disability Benefit, you must have been receiving payment for 6 months. Participants receive a Community Employment Allowance and may be able to retain disability payments and secondary benefits, such as a medical card, depending on their means and prior approval by the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The numbers on Community Employment are being reduced and some schemes which were supported are now being mainstreamed. Apply to your local FÁS office.

Rehabilitative Employment

People with disabilities who are receiving a social welfare or health board payment may, in some circumstances, take up what is regarded as rehabilitative employment without affecting their entitlement. People on Disability Allowance or Blind Pension may be allowed earn up to €120 per week provided it has been approved by the Department of Social and Family Affairs. However your Medical Card may be affected and earnings over €120 may affect other benefits. Disability Benefit and Invalidity Pension recipients may do up to 20 hours rehabilitative work per week with prior approval. Your Medical Card, Rent Supplement and Fuel Allowance may be affected.

Public Service Quota

3% of jobs in the public sector (civil service, local authorities, health boards) are reserved for people with a disability.

FÁS Employment Supports

FÁS provides the following employment related supports for people with disabilities. Contact your local FÁS office.

Employment Support Scheme

This provides financial support to employers to encourage them to employ people with disabilities, who have productivity levels between 50 % to 80% of normal performance, for a minimum of 20 hours per week.

Job Interview Interpreter Grant

A grant of €106.68 for a three-hour period is available to pay for an interpreter to accompany a person with a speech/hearing impairment to a job interview. There is a set rate for the interpreter's travel costs.

Personal Reader Grant

This grant provides funding at €6.35 an hour (maximum of 640 hours a year) to employ a personal reader to assist someone who is blind or visually impaired in their work.

Workplace / Equipment Adaptation Grant

Funding (€6,348.70 maximum) is available to a person with a disability who is starting or already in employment in order to make their workplace more accessible or equipment easier to use.

Disability Awareness Training Grant

Grants are provided to employers to assist in the integration of people with disabilities and to address the concerns that employers and employees may have about working with people with disabilities.

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Grant to Retrain Workers

This funding is available to help employers retain at work employees who become disabled. Such employees can be offered retraining so that they can undertake alternative duties or continue to work at their existing duties, using modified techniques.

Supported Employment Programme

This programme helps people with disabilities to get and retain employment by providing for Job Coaches who assist in the employment of people with disabilities.

Contacts and Further Information

FÁS – Training and Employment Authority

27-33 Upper Baggot St., Dublin 4.
Tel: 353-1-6070500,

Health Boards

East Coast Area Health Board,
Southern Cross House, Southern Cross Business Park, Boghall Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.

Tel: (01) 201 4200

Director of Disability Services: Mr. John O'Sullivan

Northern Area Health Board,
Swords Business Campus, Balheary Road, Swords, Co. Dublin.

Tel: (01) 813 1800

Director of Disability Services: Ms. Violet Harford

South Western Area Health Board,
Oak House, Limetree Avenue, Millennium Park, Naas, Co Kildare

Tel: (045) 880 400

Locall: 1890 737 343

Director of Disability Services: Paudie Galvin

Mid-Western Health Board,
31/33 Catherine Street, Limerick.

Tel: (061) 316 655

A/Director of Disability Services: Ms. Patricia McLarty

Midland Health Board,
Arden Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

Tel: (0506) 21868

Director of Disability Services: Ms. Breda Crehan-Roche

North Eastern Health Board,
Navan Rd, Kells, Co. Meath.

Tel: (046) 928 0500

Director of Disability Services: Mr. Leo Kinsella

North Western Health Board,
Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim.

Tel: (071) 982 0400

LoCall: 1850 636 313

Regional Disabilities Manager: Mr. Dermot Monaghan

Tel: (071) 985 2900

South Eastern Health Board,
Dublin Road, Lacken, Kilkenny.

Tel: (056) 778 4100

Regional Co-ordinator for Disability Services: Ms. Ann Kennelly

Western Health Board,
Merlin Park Regional Hospital, Galway.

Tel: (091) 751 131

Regional Co-ordinator for Disability Services: Ms. Patricia Tully

Southern Health Board,
Áras Sláinte, Dennehy's Cross, Wilton Rd Cork.

Tel: (021) 454 5011

Intellectual Disability Services: Ms. Gabrielle O'Keeffe

Physical/Sensory Disability Services: Ms. Deirdre Scully

Citizens Information Centres (CIC)

For further information on rights and entitlements, contact your local Citizens Information Centre – listed in the Golden Pages

