



# Workability Update



## What is 'Workability'?

**Workability** is a new initiative from New Horizons Partnership, which has been funded under the Interreg IIIA Community Initiatives Programme, under their Human Resource Development and Skilling Measure. This funding is administered by ICBAN.

The **Project Aim** is to provide individuals with a learning disability with accredited training opportunities that will have a long-term focus on Employment.

The project team is now developing accredited training programmes which will provide learning disabled participants with the

necessary knowledge and basic skills to attain employment, and more importantly to sustain this employment long term.



This accredited training will be delivered by a number of participating organisations throughout Northern Ireland

and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland.

The project aims to be innovative in its **Method of Delivery** to end users, in that it will be highly pictorial and will be supported by multimedia elements to demonstrate important concepts and ensure that learning is fun and easy to understand.

The project spans three years and encompasses resource development, dissemination of accredited training programmes and the establishment of Supported Employment Opportunities for individuals with learning disabilities.

## Project Plan & Progress to Date

The timeframe for the Workability project is 3 years, resulting in the development and dissemination of training programmes for trainers and end users.

**Year 1 (2004-2005)** of the project will result in the development of eight modules for end users. These will focus on the basic employment skills required by all.

The modules have been chosen through direct consultation with participating organisations which took place during the first 6 months of the project. These 8 units which focus on general work skills are:

- \* Work, Jobs & Skills
- \* Getting a Job & Preparing for Work
- \* Being a Good Worker
- \* Communication
- \* Appropriate Work Behaviour
- \* Assertiveness, Respect & Rights
- \* Health & Safety at Work
- \* Personal Hygiene and Self-Presentation

The training resources will be supplied on CD-Roms that will include comprehensive pictorial workbooks.

These will be supported by multimedia elements that include animations, video

clips, interactive exercises and additional teaching tools, such as flash cards, posters, badges, etc. The workbook text has now been written and the multimedia aspect of the programme is currently in development.



## Project Plan & Progress to Date.... Continue

**Year 2** At present an accompanying Training of Trainers (TOT) Programme is being developed.

This programme is designed to provide participating organisations with an accredited training programme that will support their staff as they deliver training to their service users.

This programme will be delivered in August and September through 3 training events being held in Letterkenney, Armagh & Ballyconnell (Co. Cavan).

Following the Training of Trainers programme staff from participating organisations will begin to deliver the 8 core work skill units to their service users.

Meanwhile as our participating organisations are busy working with the 8 core units our attention turns to the development of a further 6 training units that will

see the project into **year 3**. These additional units will focus on popular vocational areas. As before, these units will be determined by consultation with selected organisations. They will also be cross referenced with existing national qualifications, ensuring that end users receive relevant training that will also meet employer needs. Likely titles include:

- \* Horticulture
- \* Catering
- \* Retail
- \* Administration
- \* Indoor Work Skills
- \* Grounds Maintenance (including forecourt and garage work)



## EMPLOYERS - What's in it for you?

While the workability training programme and associated resources are designed to enhance the potential of individuals with learning disabilities — helping them gain the necessary skills and confidence to enter the labour market — it is recognised that ongoing support is required in order to retain and develop employment opportunities.

The workability programme is designed to be used as part of a much broader **Supported Employment** model. Core to this approach is the involvement of the business community in providing opportunities for people with learning disabilities to do real work, whether paid or voluntary, in a real work setting.

The supported employment model aims to improve the quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities by providing them with:

- *an access route to employment*
- *relevant coaching and training in job-related skills, both on and off the job site*
- *ongoing support and mentoring in their work placement*
- *a career path and wider outlook on their opportunities for work*

A key component of the model is the fostering of close links with the business community, with a sensitivity to their needs and expectations.

Services based on the supported employment model take account of the needs of the individuals, their interests and aptitudes.

Supported employment practitioners facilitate any necessary training — such as that encompassed within the workability programme — and help clients to find a suitable job in their area of interest, ensuring it is mutually beneficial to both client and employer.

### Ability in Business

*"We know employers have a willingness to accelerate the employment of people with a disability. With your crucial directive and understanding, we need you to become role models and catalysts for other organisations, to begin first steps and demonstrate the importance of employment for all."*

*The private sector needs to lead in this area. As leaders of organisations you have the capability to change. ...We want you to be inspired by the strengths of this community. By removing some of the myths and concerns that surround disability, through showcasing capability, you can now look at the individual first and not see disability, see tangible business benefits and see Ability".*

**- Caroline Casey, Founder  
(The Aisling Project)**



---

## **PARENTS & CARERS - What's in it for you?**

---

In the past, real work opportunities for people with learning disabilities have regrettably been regarded as an unachievable goal for many individuals. In practice, individuals with learning disabilities are often disadvantaged in relation to training and entering the workforce, owing to the traditional emphasis on academic achievement and work experience as a means of accessing employment.

This project aims to go some way to addressing these issues. Workability is focused on addressing the inequalities and barriers experienced by the learning disabled population.

The programme will cater to the lower levels of literacy experienced within this group by using suitable training resources to make learning possible and employment viable. This training programmes (using multimedia resources) will promote equality of opportunity by addressing some of the barriers to both learning and achieving accreditation in a vocational area. Consequently, the workability programme seeks to make employment opportunities more accessible, by ensuring that learning disabled individuals attempting to access work have the necessary skills, and some level of qualification, putting them on

a more equal footing with non-disabled individuals.

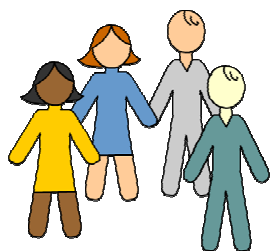
It is well recognised within the field of learning disability that many employment opportunities and placements fall down, not due to the lack of skills of this client group or the level of support given by relevant agencies, but as a result of the basic underlying employment skills that non disabled individuals take for granted, which are usually underdeveloped in this client group, through lack of quality opportunities. The Workability project is focused on addressing these inequalities.

---

## **SERVICE USERS - What's in it for you?**

---

The Workability project is about developing a training programme that will help you get involved in work. You will be trained by the support staff that you already work with. The training will use



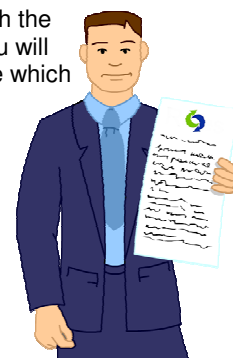
pictures, video clips and other exciting and interesting exercises. Then you will get a chance to try out your new skills when you are in work.



The programme will be enjoyable and it will be practical. All the skills you learn will be useful to you and help you be a good worker.

When you finish the programme you will get a certificate which employers will recognise.

This certificate will help you with your job.



---

## **DELIVERY ORGANISATIONS - What's in it for you?**

---

At the start of this project when we consulted a wide range of organisations across the border region, it came as no surprise to find that the difficulties and barriers that our own service users were experiencing were common to those of all individuals with learning disabilities who had a desire to enter the labour market. Appropriate training in relevant skills using proven methods seemed to provide part of the solution to help service users to find and maintain meaningful employment opportunities in their communities.

The 8 core work skill units that have been developed thus far offer participating organisations a framework which will provide the basis for essential skills acquisition. The additional 6 vocational units, that will be developed later this year and early next year, will provide further useful resources that will extend the capacity and range of services that organisations like yours can offer.

The programme will provide you with the capability to offer service users accredited training which is designed

to complement other existing supported employment and transition initiatives.

Sharing experiences through networking with other organisations within the sector is often of considerable value to practitioners and this will be facilitated within the project.

All organisations who get involved with the project will benefit from accredited training for their staff and ongoing support as they deliver training to their own service users.



**A New Horizons Partnership  
Initiative**

**45c Derry Road  
Strabane, Co. Tyrone  
BT82 8DY**

**Tel (NI): 028 7188 3114  
Tel (ROI): 048 7188 3114  
Fax: 028 7188 5273**

**Email: [mail@tandttwo.co.uk](mailto:mail@tandttwo.co.uk)**

**[www.tandttwo.co.uk](http://www.tandttwo.co.uk)**

## ***Participating Organisations***

Originally the project intended to recruit 20 organisations within the sector who would be interested in delivering an accredited training programme to their service users. However demand for the programme has grown considerably since the project was launched, and the number of organisations who have committed to the project currently stands at over 30. The map below gives an overview of the geographic spread of the participants.



Arvalee Special School – Omagh  
Ballyraine Training Centre – Letterkenny  
Belmont Special School – Derry  
Challenge Cookie Company – Derry  
Stepping Stones – Lisburn  
Sperrinview Special School – Dungannon  
St. Brigid's Special School – Dundalk  
Glenveagh Special School – Belfast  
James Connolly Memorial Hospital – Carndonagh  
Killadeas Day Centre – Enniskillen  
Mencap – Derry, Belfast  
New Haven Enterprise Centre/Cregg House – Sligo  
New Horizons Partnership – Strabane

Newry & Mourne Health & Social Services Trust – Newry  
NWIFHE Dawn Group – Derry  
RehabCare – Dundalk, Cavan, Sligo, Monaghan, Lifford  
Sperrin/Lakeland Health & Social Services Trust – Omagh  
Coleraine Health & Social Services Trust – Coleraine  
Donegal Cheese – Buncrana  
Drumlin House – Cootehill  
The Appleby Trust – Armagh  
The Cleary Centre – Donegal  
The Orchardville Society – Belfast  
The Share Centre – Lisnaskea  
Triangle Housing Association – Ballymoney