Daughters of Charity – Dublin

1. Financial In-work supports

We want to know what works best and is attractive for people with disabilities when considering a return to or taking up work in terms of financial supports

How important are the following when considering taking up or returning to employment?

	Very Important	Moderate Importance	Neutral	Slightly Important	Low
Disability Allowance Earnings Disregards (up to €120, €120-350)	■	O	O	O	O
Partial Capacity Scheme (on Illness Benefit, Invalidity Pension)	O	■	O	O	O
Retention of Medical Card for 3 years	■	O	O	O	O
Secondary Benefits: (Rent Supplement/Free Travel/Fuel Allowance)	■	O	O	O	O
Household Benefits Package (Electricity/Gas Allowance/Free TV Licence)	■	O	O	O	O
Family Income Supplement	■	O	O	O	O
Tax Credits and reliefs	O	■	O	O	O

How well do you think the following are understood by people with a disability or their advocates?

	Well Understood	Moderately Understood	Neutral	Slightly Understood	Not
Disability Allowance Earnings Disregards (up to €120, €120-350)	■	O	O	O	O
Partial Capacity Scheme (on Illness Benefit, Invalidity Pension)	O	■	O	O	O
Retention of Medical Card for 3 years	■	O	O	O	O
Secondary Benefits: (Rent Supplement, Free Travel, Fuel Allowance)	■	O	O	O	O
Household Benefits Package (Electricity/Gas Allowance, Free TV Licence)	■	O	O	O	O
Family Income Supplement	■	O	O	O	O
Tax Credits and reliefs	O	O	O	■	O

Comments

2. Financial Barriers

Please rank the following in importance 1 – 6 (according to the scale of barrier) when considering taking up or returning to work: (1 = most important)

Loss of DSP Payment	1
Loss of Secondary Benefits (Rent Supplement, Free Travel, Fuel Allowance)	3
Loss of Household Benefits Package (Electricity/Gas Allowance, Free TV Licence)	5
Perceived difficulty obtaining DSP payment/benefits again (e.g. If work ceases)	2
Loss of Medical Card after 3 years	4
Other (please specify) _____	O

It is recognised that the needs and issues arising for people with disabilities vary, and that different circumstances arise for different people at different times. If there are circumstances that are particularly relevant, please indicate:

In general, do people with a disability feel that they would be better off financially by taking up work?

Yes	**No**
O	■

Please elaborate:

Very many people with disabilities believe that they would be less well off being in paid employment taking into consideration secondary benefits i.e. medical card etc

3. Length of time out of workforce

Are there particular financial barriers to resumption of work for PWD if out longer term, i.e. 2 yrs or more?

The immediate loss of benefits is a frightening prospect. Also the difficulties PWD experience when attempting to get payments reinstated is well known. If the job doesn't work out it can take months to access payments again.

What suggestions would you have to overcome barriers for PWD who have been out of the workforce long term?

Greater access to information on what employment opportunities are available to PWD.
Greater/ equal access to appropriate training programmes
Reassurance and commitment that payments will not cease immediately.

Do you feel there are particular financial barriers that apply more to men than women, or to women than men?

4. Communication

Please rank the following sources of information people with disabilities use to research the financial aspects of taking up or returning to work:

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Department of Social Protection website	O	O	■	O	O
Intreo office/Local DSP office	■	O	O	O	O
Citizens Information Office	O	■	O	O	O
Citizens Information Website	O	O	■	O	O
Representative groups for PwD	O	■	O	O	O
Friends and family	O	O	■	O	O
Media (TV/Radio/Newspapers)	O	■	O	O	O
Other (please specify)	O	O	O	O	O

Do you think people worry about asking for information from the Department of Social Protection when considering returning to work – e.g. applying for Partial Capacity Benefit, or the Disability Allowance Earnings Disregard?

Yes ■ **No** O

If yes, why?

People with disabilities have a reluctance to interfere in any way with their disability allowance. Any enquiries result in significant paper work that is very off putting for some PWD. Contact with social welfare departments can be a very time consuming and confusing experience

5. Experience of PWD who ARE working

Approximately 21% ***of PWD are in the workforce; in your view what are the financial and other factors which have supported these people to:***

A) Transition successfully from education/training to employment:

A supportive family can impact positively on a PWD transitioning to work. The PWD needs to want to work. Having a desire to have paid work is essential. Accommodation – Living in the family home and not having a reliance on rent supplement influences the transition to work. A tailored training programme specific to a work area (hospitality, retail) supports a successful transition to employment. Self believe and confidence, both from the PWD and the employer's perspective are the soft skills required to transition to work. For the PWD, that they have the self confidence in their ability to fulfil their role and responsibilities. For the employer, that they believe and are confident that they can support the transition for the PWD. Access to a jobs coach is critical when transitioning from training to work. Access to transport The promotion of a positive perception of PWD and the potential they have to offer the work force.

B) Remain in employment:

Ongoing possible out-reach access to a jobs coach. A PWD needs to be committed and motivatied in terms of their job. An employer who is supportive and flexible in relation to working hours.

6. How do you see the role of the Intreo centre evolving to meet the needs of PwD?

The Department of Social Protection is expanding the role of the Intreo centres as an employment and recruitment service for pwd who wish to take up work.

What do you think PwD need from their Intreo centre in terms of assisting them to search for work?

Information that is accessible. Increased engagement with PWD. A supportive approach recognising that each individual will need a tailored plan to assist them in finding work.

How do you think the Intreo centre can best engage with PwD? e.g.

- Communication – social media, email/letters from intreo, telephone?
- Promotion of services via disability representative bodies/media?
- Named case worker

A named person is a good start when looking for support in finding work.

Accompaniment of family/friend/advocate at Intreo:

	Yes	No
▪ Is this important to PwD?	■	O