Irish Wheelchair Association

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)	X	O	O	O	O
Partial Capacity Scheme (on Illness Benefit, Invalidity Pension)	X	O	O	O	O
Retention of Medical Card for 3 years	X LONGER	O	O	O	O
Secondary Benefits: (Rent Supplement/Free Travel/Fuel Allowance)	X	O	O	O	O
Household Benefits Package (Electricity/Gas Allowance/Free TV Licence)	X	O	O	O	O
Family Income Supplement	X	O	O	O	O
Tax Credits and reliefs	X	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	X	O	O	O
Partial Capacity Scheme (on Illness Benefit, Invalidity Pension)	O	O	O	O	X
Retention of Medical Card for 3 years	O	O	O	O	O
Secondary Benefits: (Rent Supplement, Free Travel, Fuel Allowance)	O	O	X	O	O
Household Benefits Package (Electricity/Gas Allowance, Free TV Licence)	O	X	O	O	O
Family Income Supplement	O	X	O	O	O
Tax Credits and reliefs	O	O	O	X	O

Comments

There is an assumption that these benefits are known about but there are so many variables when taking up employment

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)	4	
Perceived difficulty obtaining DSP payment/benefits again (e.g. If work ceases)	5	people do not know about this benefit
Loss of Medical Card after 3 years	2	
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:

Personal assistants is a major issue for many people
General level of education is a problem for many people born with a disability, where their clinical needs were high and education became secondary.
Some people give up looking as there are too many barriers
In some cases people with disabilities are automatically sent to NLN

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

Yes	**No**
	x

Please elaborate:

All the reasons above loss of benefits,
Loss of medical card
Transport costs

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?

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

A lot of people with disabilities have never worked because of all the barriers already mentioned

One to one specialised work
Meaningful, realistic goals
Disability training with appropriate staff with people with disabilities involved

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

Not sure

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	x	O
Intreo office/Local DSP office	O	O	O	x	O
Citizens Information Office	O	x	O	O	O
Citizens Information Website	O	x	O	O	O
Representative groups for PwD	O	x	O	O	O
Friends and family	O	O	x	O	O
Media (TV/Radio/Newspapers)	O	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
x	O

If yes, why?

People are afraid to contact the DSP in case it flags something they have a real fear of looking for information will lead to benefits been withdrawn (if you are looking for information about going back to work you must be able to work)

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:

Many of these people have attended main stream education
Many have acquired disabilities and have a history of work

B) Remain in employment:

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?

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

Accompaniment of family/friend/advocate at Intreo:

	Yes	No
▪ Is this important to PwD?	O	O