Mental Health Ireland

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	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	O	O	x	O	O
Tax Credits and reliefs	O	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	x	O	O	O
Retention of Medical Card for 3 years	O	0	O	x	O
Secondary Benefits: (Rent Supplement, Free Travel, Fuel Allowance)	O	O	O	O	x
Household Benefits Package (Electricity/Gas Allowance, Free TV Licence)	O	O	O	O	x
Family Income Supplement	O	O	x	O	O
Tax Credits and reliefs	O	O	O	O	x

Comments

We are only two service users opinion

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)	1
Loss of Household Benefits Package (Electricity/Gas Allowance, Free TV Licence)	2
Perceived difficulty obtaining DSP payment/benefits again (e.g. If work ceases)	1
Loss of Medical Card after 3 years	1
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:

Applying for a job and going back into employment is very stressful and all these issues even make it more so

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

Yes	**No**
X	O

Please elaborate:

They feel they would be a little but is it worth the stress.

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?

If any of them have life savings and are over £50000 they are penalized or may even loss there disability or benefit.

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

They need to start back doing community employment schemes and get some reward for it like before they took away the double payment.

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

No it is straight across the board

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	x	O	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	O	x	O	O
Friends and family	O	O	x	O	O
Media (TV/Radio/Newspapers)	O	O	x	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?

They feel if they ask, they might be ask questions about themselves and get into trouble a feel they have said to much.

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:

They would be the lucky ones who have heard about a job by friends and have had a lot of family support to coach them into it,

B) Remain in employment:

Doing work in a reasonably stress free environment and where reward is good.

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?

Confidentiality. Their rights and all of their benefits that are affected, reassurance that they don't have to reveal any information about themselves if they don't want to.

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

Write to all the people with PWD and treat them with compassion and respect and a understanding from all their fears about taking up employment.

Accompaniment of family/friend/advocate at Intreo:

	Yes	No
▪ Is this important to PwD?	x	O