St Joseph's Training Centre

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

Comments

I THINK IN A LOT OF CASES GIVEN THE LACK OF WORK OPPURTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES THEY HAVE NOT BEEN EXPOSED TO MANY OF THE ABOVE SCHEMES.

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)	4
Loss of Household Benefits Package (Electricity/Gas Allowance, Free TV Licence)	5
Perceived difficulty obtaining DSP payment/benefits again (e.g. If work ceases)	3
Loss of Medical Card after 3 years	2

Other (please specify) The benefit trap created by a system that reduces benefits to those who need it most in trying to maintain employment. The lack of 'reasonable accommodations' as set out in the NDA Strategy. 6

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	X

Please elaborate:

THERE IS VERY LITTLE FINANCIAL GAIN TO BE HAD FOR MANY PEOPLE WITH DIABILITIES, TAKING UP EMPLOYMENT. MANY OF THOSE WHO DO AVAIL OF WORK OPPURTUNITIES WOULD BE IN LOW PAID JOBS WITH LIMITED HOURS. THE GREATEST GAIN IS FROM A SOCIAL GAIN STANDPOINT AND BEING VIEWED AS A VALUED CONTRIBUTOR TO SOCIETY.

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?

UNFORTUNATELY DUE TO THE EXTREME LACK OF WORK OPPURTUNITIES OUT THERE FOR MANY INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, WE HAVE NEVER BEEN EXPOSED TO THIS SITUATION. IT IS WORTH NOTING THIS ANSWER IS GIVEN IN RELATION TO PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES.

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

Legislative directives from government in how to transition people into the workforce.
Meaningful engagement by companies in terms of reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities across the board.
There should be a directive from government whereby there is an onus on employers to retain a percentage of their vacancies for people with disabilities.
All organisations should have a legal requirement to complete disability awareness training.

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

I don't believe there is a specific barrier to either sex, but rather a lack of disability awareness, engagement and the lack foresight from employers to recognise the abilities of people with disabilities.

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	x	O	O	O	O
Intreo office/Local DSP office	O	x	O	O	O
Citizens Information Office	O	O	x	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	x	O
Other (please specify)	O	x	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?

Absolutely due to the fear of jeopardising the benefits they have at present which help to create a level playing field with the rest of society.

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:

From previous experience in this area we can safely say that for the number of students that have made the successful transition from education to work was as a result of the support of family and staff in the services that they attended. Also we have found that the support form organisations such as Employability were very helpful and important.

B) Remain in employment:

For PWD to remain successfully and happily in employment it is down to the support that they receive and the relationships that they develop in their place of work that allows them to grow and develop 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?

In order for people working in Intreo to be able to provide a successful service to people with disabilities, they need to be trained in disability awareness. Sometimes you may find that people who have never worked with or interacted with PWD have a fear of doing or saying the wrong thing which can make it very difficult for them to communicate with PWD.

Training is vital to develop good working relationships.

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

All of the above

Accompaniment of family/friend/advocate at Intreo:

	Yes	No
▪ Is this important to PwD?	x	O