

Press Release

12th September 2024

WorkAbility Cork

Paving the Way for Inclusive Employment in Cork

SECAD Partnership and Cork Chamber are today launching an exciting new partnership to support a more inclusive and diverse workforce. WorkAbility Cork: Inclusive Pathways to Employment Programme is an ambitious five-year initiative, running from 2024 to 2028, designed to enhance employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities in Cork.

The WorkAbility Cork Programme is designed with three core objectives:

1. **Enhancing Employment Prospects:** Improving the employment opportunities of individuals with disabilities who are distant from the labour market.
2. **Employer Capacity Building:** Supporting employers in recruiting, retaining, and advancing employees with disabilities.
3. **Fostering Collaboration:** Building strong partnerships among key stakeholders to create a unified approach to inclusive employment.

“Cork Chamber is dedicated to making Cork the best place for business, and inclusivity is a key part of that vision. The WorkAbility Cork Programme represents a significant step forward in creating an inclusive and supportive employment landscape for people with disabilities. We are excited to partner with SECAD on this initiative, which will not only benefit individuals but also enrich our entire business community,” said Conor Healy of Cork Chamber.

Naoimh Frawley, Director of People, Operations & Governance, Cork Chamber added “This is an exciting programme and is in line with our commitment to inclusivity and economic development, and in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Through proactive engagement with employers across Cork, we aim to raise awareness of the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. The programme will also promote various state supports available to employers, helping them to build and sustain inclusive workplaces.”

Vicki Kelly, Employer Engagement with Workability, SECAD noted, “The WorkAbility Programme is about creating opportunities for people with disabilities and providing them with the tools and support needed to achieve their employment goals. We look forward to working closely with Cork Chamber and local employers to foster an environment where everyone has the chance to thrive and succeed in the workplace.”

Through the programme, Cork Chamber and SECAD aim to create a more inclusive workforce in Cork, ensuring that people with disabilities are fully supported in their employment journeys, and that employers are equipped to create and sustain inclusive workplaces. The WorkAbility Programme is set to transform the employment landscape in Cork, making it a model of inclusivity and opportunity.

Toni McCaul, Social Inclusion Programme Manager with SECAD asserted “SECAD has worked with people with a wide range of disabilities over many years and with the relevant referral

and support organisations. We look forward to working closely with the business community in Cork to by providing progressive pathways to employment for people with disabilities."

Get Involved

If you are interested in learning more about the WorkAbility Cork Programme, please contact: Naomh Frawley, Director of People, Operations & Governance, Cork Chamber at naoimh@corkchamber.ie

Vicki Kelly, Employer Engagement with Workability, SECAD Partnership at vkelly@secad.ie

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Media enquiries: contact Communications and Marketing Manager Bo Browne on 086 3757326 or bo@corkchamber.ie

About Cork Chamber

Cork Chamber is committed to making Cork the best place for business. As the leading business organisation in the south of Ireland, it supports and represents the interests of almost 1,200 businesses employing over 120,000 people across the region. Founded in 1819, Cork Chamber is one of Ireland's largest and longest established Chambers and is the nation's No.1 regional lobby group. Supporting sustainable development in the region, Cork Chamber is championing the UN Sustainable Development Goals, through which the Chamber priorities and activities are framed.

WorkAbility Cork: Inclusive Pathways to Employment Programme is in line with our commitment to inclusivity and economic development, and in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

About SECAD

SECAD Partnership provides a range of innovative and effective rural development and social inclusion supports to motivate and empower local communities to create a more vibrant, sustainable and inclusive society.

The **WorkAbility Cork: Inclusive Pathways to Employment** programme is co-financed by the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) under the Employment, Inclusion, Skills, and Training (EIST) Programme 2021-2027, and administered by Pobal with support from the Department of Social Protection (DSP).



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