

Kickstart Programme



In 2020, IRD Duhallow was approved funding from the Department of Justice to deliver a Kick Start Programme for 15 months. Kickstart aims to support social enterprises like Duhallow REVAMP to create and sustain employment opportunities for people with criminal convictions who find it difficult to access the labour market. Many people with previous convictions in the Duhallow and wider area find themselves facing a difficult rural job market. In some instances, they cannot return to the same workplace they left or were unemployed for a long period of time in advance of entering prison. In the absence of sustainable employment opportunities, there is a serious danger that the efforts of somebody trying to make a fresh start will unravel.

The National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022 has highlighted the valuable role Local Development Companies like IRD Duhallow play in supporting enterprises. The approach is flexible where possible in that we respond to diversity, the varying capacities and interests of employees. A Coordinator has been employed to support Duhallow REVAMP in creating opportunities. The Coordinator provides mentoring to encourage uptake and access to services/supports and promotes a

"Can Do" attitude amongst these people whilst encouraging families to empower them to take self-responsibility where appropriate. All available supports including health & well-being, educational, labour market training and occupational specific skills, career advice and guidance support are outlined and explained in a supportive manner to assist individuals.

Social connections are encouraged including social/recreational/sporting/activities and opportunities as well as taster opportunities within their own communities through the various clubs and organisations e.g. Macra na Feirme, Boxing Club, GAA. This holistic approach adopted by IRD Duhallow ensures that the individual is supported in every way possible to obtain and sustain real employment and break the cycle of offending to ensure a better life for themselves and their families.

This project supports a positive media campaign to ensure encouraging messages resulting from the Kickstart project regularly filter out to the general public through social media, the Discover Duhallow community magazine. It is envisaged that this will promote improved perceptions and support in the community.

In line with the Working For Change Strategy 2021-2023 a wraparound technique underpins IRD Duhallow's *Kickstart* approach. The project acts as a gateway for participants and their families by improving their access to numerous supports/services through the integrated suite of programmes operated within the IRD Duhallow company structure. People with previous convictions are offered placements through RSS/Tus/CE (depending on their eligibility). It allows the person to move forward at a pace which is appropriate for them thus reducing the risk of setbacks which can be significantly detrimental to motivation for a person with a criminal conviction. Meaningful work placements help to increase the aspirations of these people, enhance their CV, get 'job ready' or 'further education ready' and they will have a possible reference for future industry recognised employment, apprenticeships or entry to educational institutes.

We are now actively recruiting participants for our Kickstart project and would appreciate all the help we can get from your organisation and referrals from you. All referrals and queries can be sent to colm.oconnor@irdduhallow.com or contact Colm at 029/60633



The James O'Keeffe Institute



Wall installation by Warmer Homes Staff



Revamp staff carrying out furniture restoration

As a local development Company with many social enterprises we can offer placement in any of our projects, which we feel offers a unique training experience in such a wide range of work opportunities' Our social Enterprises are wide ranging and we feel that there is a lot we can offer through these

- Furniture Revamp section where skills like Upholstery and furniture restoration can be given.
- Duhallow Community Foods where participants can get experience in our Kitchens and Bakery.
- Warmer Homes where construction and home insulation skills can be gained
- We also have a Pitch and putt course where we can offer people experience in the outdoor work and green keeping
- In our offices we are always looking for people who can help in admin
- Community Gardens where full horticultural training can be given



DCFS staff on kitchen duties



The community gardens



Green keeping by Pitch and Putt staff



Induction training for admin staff