

Trading as

EmployAbility Midlands

COMPANY MISSION

“Supporting people with disabilities into paid employment while providing effective solutions to employers’ staffing needs”



Supermac's



ANNUAL REPORT 2018



An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta agus Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection

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Chairperson's Foreword 2018

On behalf of the Board of Directors of *EmployAbility* Midlands it is my pleasure to present our Annual Report for 2018. I was elected Chairperson of the company in a year which saw some key changes taking affect and requiring significant preparation during 2018. I would like first of all to acknowledge the support of the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection in providing the core funding to deliver the service. Our Employment Officers continue to enjoy good working relationships with local Intreo personnel throughout the Midlands, enabling us to provide the best possible service to our job seekers.



Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge the funding and support provided by DEASP in 2018 in response to our proposal to employ an extra full time Employment Officer which enables the company to respond to the increased demand for the service.

While commitment was made by the Department to resource a dedicated secretariat/development worker, the establishment of this position has progressed slowly. The National *EmployAbility* Service Directors Forum did formulate a company limited by guarantee in summer 2018 and hope to commence recruitment for this position in early 2019.

As part of preparations for GDPR changes scheduled for May 25th, 2018, *EmployAbility* Midlands hosted a 1-day training event in collaboration with *EmployAbility* Kildare and *EmployAbility* Dublin West. This bespoke training workshop for *EmployAbility* staff was delivered in Tullamore, by Gerry Egan Consultants. The training consultant designed and delivered the training based on our own GDPR policies, procedures, data logs and contracts which the trainer had previously supported the national *EmployAbility* service in developing.

Another highlight of 2018 included the securing once again of the NSAI Excellence through People quality award by the *EmployAbility* service. Excellence through People is Ireland's national standard for Human Resource Development which *EmployAbility* secured through aligning best practice Human Resource Management systems with Business Development. *EmployAbility* Midlands continues to hold the ETP Award.

In October 2018, *EmployAbility* Midland's completed its work to become compliant with the new Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in Ireland and was added to the Governance Code registry of organisations that are compliant with the Code. *EmployAbility* Midlands along with all others is committed to implementation of a standardised governance code to enhance and improve the effectiveness of the current governance structures.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the time, support and expertise given freely by my fellow voluntary Directors, in guiding the company toward achieving its, mission and objectives and the staff for implementing the company's vision. I would like to make particular mention here of our Co-ordinator, Mr. Tony Reilly, for his commitment and dedication in his management of the service.

Tony McCormack

Chairperson



Introduction

2018 was another very successful year for *EmployAbility* Midlands during which we supported 78 job seekers with disabilities into mainstream employment. We received 146 new referrals from DEASP and a grand total of 311 individuals received support from the service throughout the year. At 31st December there were 177 active participants receiving a service and of these 88 (49.7%) were in employment with support. There were 123 individuals who exited the service after the job search phase and of these a total of 56 (46%) exited the service while in employment. I would like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of the entire team who achieve success by constantly striving to establish and develop good long- term relationships with many willing employers throughout the midlands.

Demand for the service has remained strong over the past year and was at a manageable level by year end following the appointment of 1 fulltime Employment Officer in July 2018. I would like to acknowledge the funding and support provided by DEASP in 2018 in response to our proposal to employ an extra full time Employment Officer.

EmployAbility Midlands exists to provide the critical supports need by Job seekers with a disability/illness wishing to join the labour market while also providing the supports an employer may require in order to employ, such individuals.

EmployAbility Midlands was invited, along with other professional bodies to a private meeting with senior management with Center Parcs Longford Forrest resort. The purpose of this meeting was to explore the scope for *EmployAbility* to assist with recruitment for the Center Parcs resort. Personnel were on hand to provide information on types of roles that will be available and to explain the recruitment process.

In summer 2018, *EmployAbility* Midlands met with HSE personnel who were proposing that they would fund the company to employ two Employment Specialists in the midlands region to deliver an IPS (Individual Placement and Support) model of supported employment to individuals with long term, enduring mental health issues. The Board requested further information and clarification before making a decision.

Finally, a special word of thanks to our voluntary Board of Directors who continue to freely give their time, knowledge and expertise in governing the company and guiding the future development of the service.

Tony Reilly

Co-ordinator

Administrator's Update – Head Office

2018 has been a particularly busy year in my role as Administrator due to the introduction of new staff members and PAYE Modernisation. While PAYE Modernisation will not be implemented until January 2019 the preparation and training, with Midland Micro Systems and Revenue, had to be undertaken in 2018. As the Administrator, I provide administrative support to our Co-ordinator and Employment Officers.



I am responsible for the completion of our Monthly claim to our funders, Computerised Wages, Management Accounts and Annual Budgets. I manage the internal and external communications necessary for the efficient running of our head office here in Tullamore.

Regina Delaney

Administrator

EmployAbility Service

“Supporting people with disabilities to secure and maintain employment.”

While initially based on the *Supported Employment* model which was developed for people with learning difficulties, the National EmployAbility Service demonstrates that the service can successfully be applied to all disability groups.

As a strategy for enabling people with disabilities to access open employment, EmployAbility Service is based on the following key principles:

- ✓ Placements in the open labour market
- ✓ Support throughout the entire process
- ✓ Paid employment
- ✓ Integration

EmployAbility supports Job Seekers:

- ✓ To identify skills and abilities
- ✓ By facilitating work experience placements
- ✓ To find a suitable job
- ✓ With ongoing support during and after work

EmployAbility supports Employers by:

- ✓ Providing advice and assistance on grants and financial supports

- ✓ Helping to recruit the right person
- ✓ Providing jobseekers on a short trial basis, free of charge
- ✓ Providing on-site support with induction and training
- ✓ Providing jobseekers to fill positions with short or irregular hours

Achievements

Delivered service to 311 Participants

Sourced 146 new referrals in 2018

A total of 131 job seekers exited our service in 2018

A total of 185 individuals achieved a positive outcome as follows

➤ New jobs secured in the open labour market	78
➤ Formal work experience	94
➤ Community Employment	03
➤ Referred for further vocational skills training	10

Regional Update – Longford

The demand for the *EmployAbility* service here in Longford is still as strong as ever but the waiting list is a lot easier to manage thanks to DEASP granting additional funding to recruit extra staff.

Longford employers never fail to support us here in *EmployAbility* Midlands with a high percentage of our clients being retained in employment after a brief work experience period. A big thank you must go to Longford Chamber of Commerce for giving us the opportunity to network at their Longford Business Expo 2018 (September) where we spend two days networking with over 100 businesses,



many of them potential employers.

We enjoy a great working relationship with our Intreo service in the DEASP. The staff, as always, are accommodating with appointments for clients, following up on queries and so on.



We continue to be represented on the committee of the Services to the Unemployed in Co Longford and meet regularly throughout the year to work together on finding solutions to the unemployment situation in the county, with *EmployAbility's* focus being that of unemployed people with disabilities.

Thanks to the committee and staff of Granard Area Action Group for the use of their offices where we provide an Outreach service once a month.

Regional Update – Laois

Once again referrals for the Laois area in 2018 were strong and steady and came from the Intreo Office in Portlaoise. Referrals came from a variety of agencies, such as National Learning Network (NLN), mental health services, occupational therapists, self-referrals, etc.



Our service here in Laois has a very good relationship with the Intreo Office in Portlaoise, who are most helpful in dealing with queries that we or our clients may have. We are indebted to the CE Scheme Supervisor and HSE offices who accommodate us very well by allowing us the use of office space in which to meet our clients, on an outreach basis, around different towns and villages of Co. Laois and Offaly. The library in Portarlington also proved to be invaluable in providing meeting spaces for us to meet clients.

Sincere thanks to the employers of Co. Laois and Offaly for their time and their continued support they show to our service. A lot of employers were very accommodating in 2018 and gave work experience where they could and at times this work experience turned into paid employment. Overall, 2018 was a productive year for the Laois/Offaly area.

Regional Update – Westmeath

Mullingar

2018 was a successful year for EmployAbility Midlands in the Mullingar area. We continued to have a constant flow of referrals, bolstered by our successful relationship with Intreo, NLN, The Mental Team, CE Schemes and The Jobs Club. We worked with people who had a range of abilities and found many willing employers who offered an opportunity to our clients to prove themselves.



We have a very strong relationship with Intreo Service in Mullingar. The staff work hard to accommodate our clients, process applications and deal with requests and their professionalism is second to none.

We continue to raise awareness of our service in the Mullingar area. In 2018, we attended the Westmeath Enterprise Information Day and received a lot of positive feedback from employers that we met there. We also attended the Westmeath Disability Information Day where we met several potential new clients and developed contacts with other services who may refer people to us in the future.

We continue to promote the service through Media.

We have a large number of Facebook followers who track vacancies that are regularly linked on our page. We promote our website to employers on a regular basis and we also list current skill sets of clients which is available for employers to view.

Overall, 2018 was a very productive year for EmployAbility Midlands in Mullingar.

Athlone

The Athlone office of EmployAbility Midlands reported another successful year for 2018 with an increase in the number of referrals to the service as well as the number of successful placements into employment. The skills and abilities of the individuals were varied with some requiring a higher level of support than others. In 2018, a large portion of the jobs secured were specifically in the motor trade area followed closely by positions of a clerical nature. The introduction of new business ventures throughout the year in Athlone attributed to these successful placements. Businesses like Mersus Technologies, Mr. Price Distribution Centre, and Cloud Nine Café just to name a few.

Working in collaboration with local organisations and DEASP proved to be very beneficial and helped our clients avail of information, extra supports and in the case of the local Jobs Club gain invaluable preparation training for employment. Our local Business Network continued to provide essential work experience placements which usually resulted in employment.

The Athlone office looks forward to the challenges of 2019, a current client waiting list coupled with the announcement of more new local enterprises like, Center Parcs Ireland and Dead Centre Brewing we expect a busy year ahead.

Offaly

It was a busy year in Tullamore. In August a new part time staff member joined the team to work alongside the full time Employment Officer. This allowed us to address an increase in demand for the service. There was a steady number of work placements secured in the area over the year, many of which transferred in to paid employment. The Tullamore based Employment Officers continued to link with other services in the community, including the newly relaunched Edenderry Chamber of Commerce and the Local Enterprise Office.



Presentations on the service were made to participants of the Job Workshop which Tullamore Job Club ran in Edenderry, and the EmployAbility Midlands Service was promoted to many of the Accountancy Services in the area. Towards the end of 2018 an invitation was accepted to give a presentation on the EmployAbility Midlands service to the BNI Tullamore at one of their 7am weekly meetings where over forty local employers meet to network and support each other in business.

2018 also saw the Tullamore staff undertake training and further professional development. This training included Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons Training, ASSIST Suicide Intervention Training, GDPR Training and Certificate in Supported Employment amongst others.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the employers in Offaly for their time and the continued support they show to our service.

Excellence Through People

Excellence through People is Ireland's national standard for Human Resource Development which *EmployAbility* secured through aligning best practice Human Resource Management systems with Business Development. *EmployAbility* Midlands continues to hold the ETP Award.

As people are one of *EmployAbility*'s core assets, the twenty-three centers had a desire to maintain an industry recognised Human Resource Standard to effectively benchmark themselves against best in class and this was their rationale for their application to NSAI for Re-Assessment to Excellence Through People Certification.



The *EmployAbility* Centres that were audited for the Re-Assessment were, in general, compliant across the six sections of the ETP Scheme with strengths in Effective Communications, Business Planning, Learning & Development, Leadership and Employee Wellbeing. The areas for improvement identified in this report are intended to add value to the National *EmployAbility* Service as part of its continuous improvement process.

In conclusion, it is recommended that the National *EmployAbility* Service continue to be certified to Excellence Through People Scheme 1000:2012.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT 2018

Our policy on staff development is to provide quality and relevant training for staff to support them in providing the best possible service for our service users. Staff training needs are identified through:

- Annual performance appraisal meetings
- Team meetings
- One to one meeting with the Coordinator
- Statutory requirements

During 2018, *EmployAbility* Midlands provided the following staff training:

- ❖ Customer Service for Business
- ❖ GDPR Training
- ❖ Assisted Decision Making
- ❖ SVpra
- ❖ Manual Handling
- ❖ NCBI – Demo on aids and adaptations
- ❖ ASSIST



L-R Aimee, Tony, Gerry Egan (Gerry Egan Consulting) and Trish at *EmployAbility* Midlands GDPR Training.

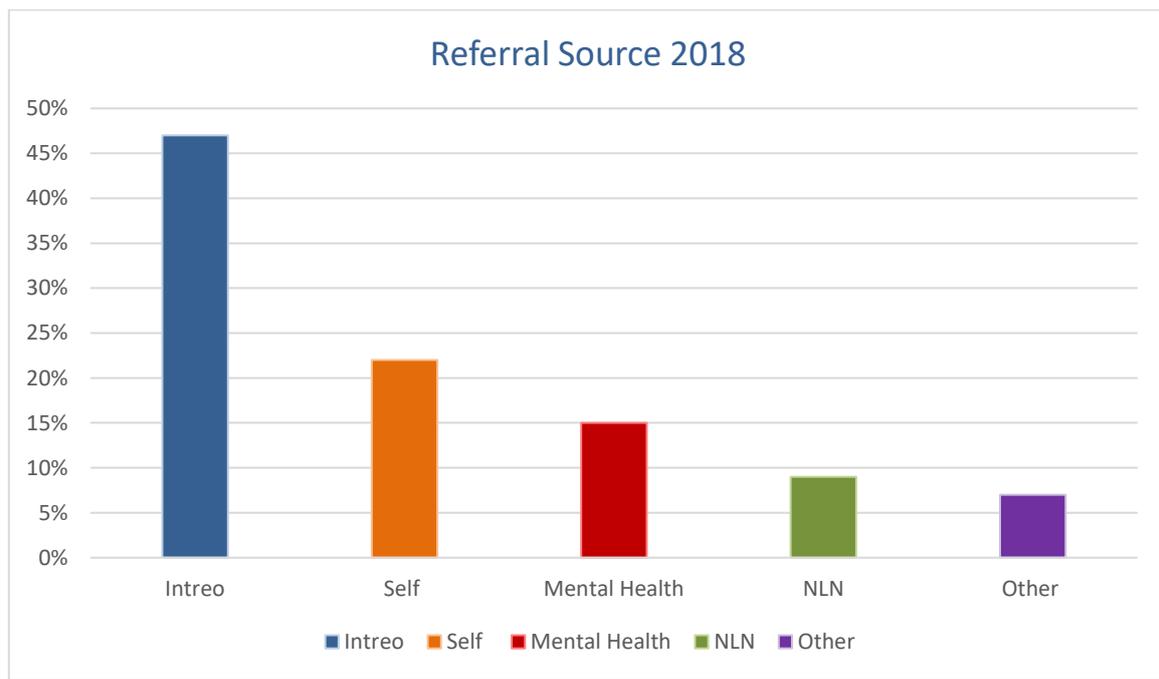
Two of our Employment Officers commenced the Certificate in Supported Employment course through the Open Training College.

Referrals

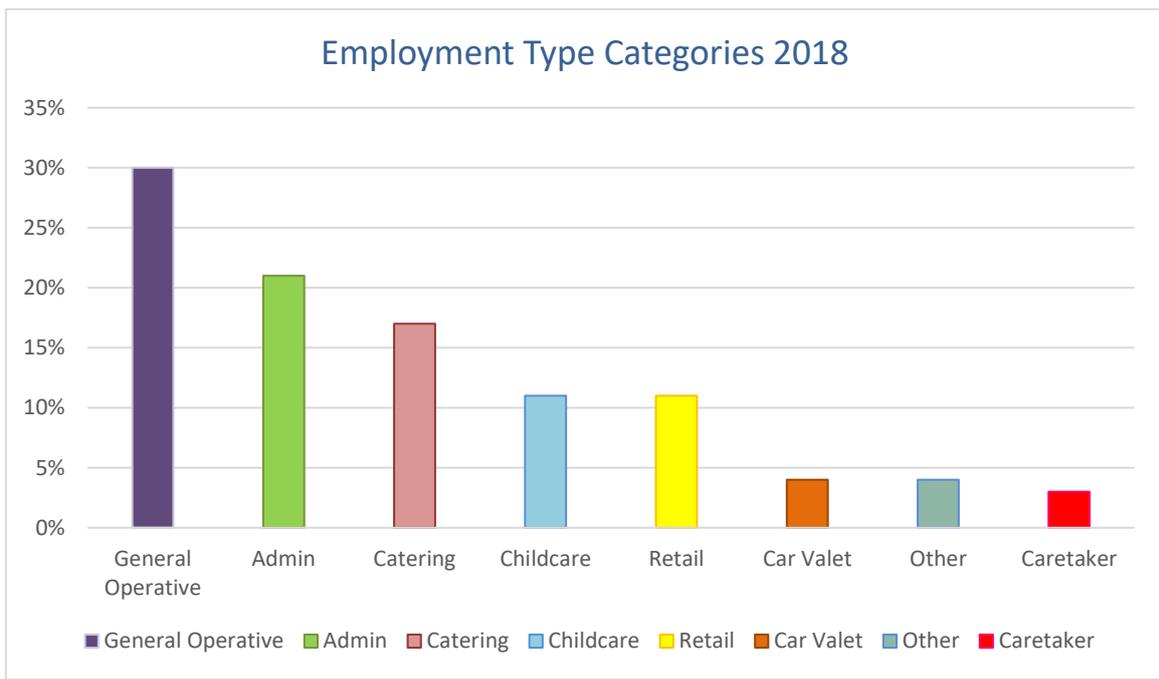
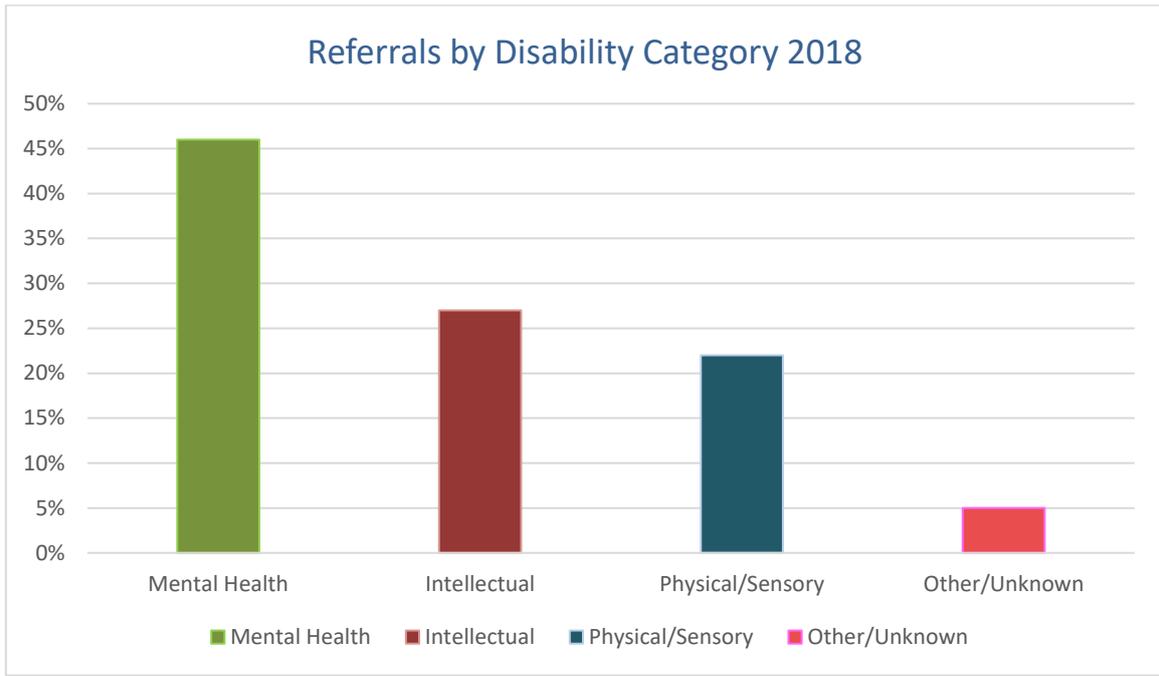
Referrals of job ready clients to *EmployAbility* Midlands through the Intreo/DEASP gateway system is crucial to the operation and success of the service. Our sources of referrals are many including Intreo, National Learning Network, Mental Health organisations, Community Employment and not forgetting self-referrals, to name but a few. Ultimately, all referrals must be approved by Intreo with whom we have an excellent working relationship here in the midlands. Good communication, sharing of information and the expertise available within this network ensures a smooth and seamless professional service to all our jobseekers.

The waiting times for jobseekers to avail of our services has been greatly reduced thanks to the recruitment of extra staff to address the issue.

The graphs below will indicate our referral sources, disability categories presenting to *EmployAbility* Midlands for support in job seeking and the employment areas where our clients are working.



Other Categories include: Jobs Clubs, Offaly Local Development, LCRL, IWA, CE Supervisors



Other Categories include – Care Worker, Security, Driver, Gym Instructor

Wage Subsidy Scheme

The Wage Subsidy Scheme is a DESAP/Intreo workplace support which provides financial support to employers to encourage them to employ people with disabilities where a shortfall in productivity exists. Where appropriate, we have supported employers in applying for this scheme and we firmly believe that the combination of support from WSS and *EmployAbility* were crucial to securing an increased number of employment placements.

Marketing and Promotion

The marketing and promotion of our service is ongoing through our website, Facebook and our continuous networking with other groups, organisations and individuals. The traffic to our website is consistent and Facebook proves to be a constant source of information on recent job advertisements and events of interest that are taking place in the midlands region.

As part of our marketing strategy, *EmployAbility* Midlands has put significant effort and time into developing effective networks to promote a quality service.

We are represented on:

- The National Co-ordinators' Forum
- The National *EmployAbility* Service Directors' Forum
- Westmeath Disability Working Group
- Longford Services to the Unemployed
- Athlone Mental Health Association
- Midland Business Network

Participation in the above has enabled *EmployAbility* Midlands to contribute to the development of best practice in the service and to address issues to remove the barriers to employment for people with disabilities. Establishing and developing effective networks encourages, promotes and supports *EmployAbility* Midlands in delivering a quality service to our customers. A good inter-agency working relationship has assisted us in:

- Identifying potential referrals
- Identifying employment opportunities
- Sharing of information
- Identifying areas of best practice (nationally and internationally)
- Providing the best possible service for the end user.

Board of Directors

Mr Tony McCormack - Chairperson

Business Representative

Mr Adrian Stewart

National Learning Network

Mr Hugh Farrell

Regional Manager

(I.W.A)

Mr Sean Ryan

Training & Business Consultant

Ms Joan O' Toole

Chime

Mr David Whelan

HSE

There were 5 Board meetings held in 2018 along with company AGM. Details as follows:

19th April – Adrian Stewart, Hugh Farrell, Sean Ryan and Tony McCormack

26th June – Susan Ryan, Adrian Stewart and Sean Ryan

25th July – AGM & Board Meeting Susan Ryan, Adrian Stewart, Tony McCormack and Sean Ryan

18th September – Sean Ryan, Adrian Stewart and Tony McCormack

3rd December – Tony McCormack, Adrian Stewart, David Whelan and Joan O'Toole

Sub-Groups/Other Roles

Governance Code sub-group: Tony Reilly, David Whelan and Adrian Stewart

HR Sub-Group – Hugh Farrell and Sean Ryan

Finance Sub-Group – All Directors

Company Secretary – Tony Reilly

EmployAbility Midlands - Locations

In 2018, EmployAbility Midlands provided a service in the counties of Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath. Details of current office locations and Employment Officer contact details are as follows:

<u>TOWN</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
TULLAMORE <i>(Central Office)</i>	Unit 53, 1 st Floor, Bridge Centre, Tullamore, Co. Offaly Tel: 057 93 23901 / 086 145 1074 (Trish) / 086 3873 047 (Aimee)
MULLINGAR	C/o Friary House, Friars Mill Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath Tel: 086 8338 027 (Daniel) / 086 014 0135 (Breeda)
MOUNTMELICK	C/o Mountmellick Development Association, Irishtown, Mountmellick, Co. Laois Tel: 086 3873 056 (Peter) / 086 014 0133 (Catherine)
LONGFORD	Unit 25, Redleaf House, Townspark Industrial Estate, Longford, Co. Longford Tel: 086 3872 855 (Brenda)
ATHLONE	C/o Parish Centre, Chapel Street, Athlone, Co. Westmeath Tel: 086 3872 496 (Joan) / 086 8337 946 (Rosemarie)