

Offering individualised support and sharing lessons learned

Ireland / National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Providing Services to People with Intellectual Disabilities

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Members of the Next Steps project provide individualized support to people with intellectual disabilities so that they can live a life of their choosing. Notably, the project supports people to move from congregated settings into community-based settings.

“I have found the Next Steps meetings excellent for learning and reflection, and I look forward to 2015.”

—Project participant, November 2014

FACTS & FIGURES

- Currently, 23 organizations are participating in the project.
- 242 individuals with intellectual disabilities have participated to date.
- The project works across all four health-service regions in the Republic of Ireland.

PROBLEMS TARGETED

National policy recommends that people with intellectual disabilities are fully included in their communities, and individualised support enables such people to live full lives as equal citizens. However, this requires the provision of a flexible range of support services that are tailored to the needs of the individual, and that are primarily determined by the disabled person him/herself.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

Next steps aims to identify both supports and barriers to the progress as service providers move to offer more individualised assistance so that the people they support can live a life of their choosing. Through the project the National Federation has developed a community of learning, connecting the member organizations and key stakeholders with each other and enabling cooperation as they develop more innovative community-based support. One of the first actions of the Next Steps project was for the

participating organizations to agree on a vision for individualised support, and [this vision](#) remains at the centre of the initiatives that the members are continually working towards.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

Each of the participating organizations is working with one or more persons on an individual basis, developing new types of support in line with the agreed vision. Initiatives are monitored regularly, and every two months the participants come together to share the lessons learned with all key stakeholders. The Next Steps Community of Learning is currently reviewing progress to date in order to inform the work plan for 2015 and to continue developing and sharing what is learned. Organizations have shared information through study visits, case study presentations, and two major national conferences. The findings of the project may be relevant for other countries, and the National Federation already collaborates at a European level on shared learning through the European Association for Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (www.EASPD.eu).

Photo:

Photo caption: Members of the Next Steps project take part in an exercise on inclusive recruitment.

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