

Social Enterprise Meet & Greet event Western region

Context

Social enterprises are not a new concept here in Ireland. Great examples of enterprises with a social mission can be seen across the four corners of the island for many years now, all of whom providing much needed goods or services, training and employment to their local communities.

The launch of the National Social Enterprise Policy 2019 – 2022 earlier this year has undoubtedly brought social enterprise into the limelight. One of the key objectives of the national policy is to build awareness of social enterprise. Following a very successful Meet & Greet event held in Dublin earlier this year, a similar Meet & Greet is being planned for the Western region. This event aims to raise awareness of social enterprises but with a specific focus.

Aim of this Meet & Greet event

Raise awareness of social enterprises in the Western region for Employment Support Professionals, people who are working hard to find avenues to training and/or employment for people who face barriers to the mainstream labour market. People with disabilities, members of the Traveller community, those with mental health issues, experiences of addiction or those who have a criminal record to name but a few.

Working in the area of social enterprise with the Irish Prison Service and Probation Service, my particular interest is in how social enterprises, open to recruiting people with criminal records, provide a much needed first step on the employment ladder for individuals who have been excluded from the labour market as a result of their past convictions. Employment in a social enterprise provides a much needed Employer-to-Employer work reference which is very helpful in moving on to the mainstream labour market. To maximise the impact of this event, however, we are extending the invitation out to social enterprises and employment support professionals who support a number of disadvantaged people.

Anticipated outcomes of the Meet & Greet event

The outcomes of this Meet & Greet event are to:

- Answer any generic queries on what social enterprises are and the role they play in increasing employment opportunities for people with convictions and others who face barriers to the labour market
- Provide an opportunity for Employment Support Professionals (Local employment service mediators, Probation Officers, IASIO Training & Employment Officers, SICAP personnel as well as staff from other support services, to meet with social enterprises from their region who are open to recruiting people who face barriers to the labour market
- Make direct connections with senior/HR staff in these social enterprises
- Gain a greater understanding of the type of social enterprises in their area including the nature of their business (construction, manufacturing, hospitality etc) location and potential jobs available in the social enterprises
- Hear about current and future vacancies in each of the social enterprise as well as their HR policies
- Network with staff from other support services
- Form partnerships or become customers of other social enterprises in your region

Invitation to participate

The more social enterprises showcasing their important work on the day, the better. If you would like to showcase your social enterprise by providing information on your goods or services, please contact Siobhán Cafferty on 087 2026441 or via email at siobhan@bridge.ie

Each social enterprise will be given a stall/space where you can put up a pop-up stand and/or have a small table to display leaflets etc.

Format for the event:

The Meet & Greet event will take place:

Date: Friday, November 15th

Time: **Drop in** between **10.00** and **1p.m**

Location: WestPoint Enterprise Hub
Ballagh Street
Charlestown
Co. Mayo
<https://goo.gl/maps/zaWNCn2N12gJWLYDZ>

Light **refreshments** will be provided.