

MONAGHAN AND CAVAN SPORTS INCLUSION DISABILITY OFFICER Programme



Report 2008-2010



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Foreword



As coordinator of Cavan Sports Partnership it gives me great pleasure to present this review document of the sports inclusion disability programme 2008 - 2010.

Since its inception in 2008, the programme has been a huge success with now over 240 people regularly participating in sporting initiatives in County Cavan. The success of the programme stems from its ability to not only impact on the physical health of the participants but also on the social and well being aspect in their daily lives. This project is unique in the fact that it is a cross county venture between our counties, Cavan and Monaghan. This in turn means limited resources for both counties but increased opportunities for people with a disability in both counties to develop new relationships through the medium of sport.

I would like to commend the National Governing Bodies of sport, local sports clubs, disability service providers, schools and community groups who have come together to work with us on our journey to create a County that makes sport accessible for all people.

The funding provided by Pobal, the Irish Sports Council, Health Service Executive and Cavan and Monaghan County Councils makes it possible for us to continually develop and grow our sports inclusion programme across the county.

I would like to thank our sports inclusion disability officer for the enthusiastic and tireless work dedicated to both counties. Our Sport Inclusion inter-county committee who support and guide the work of the programme and our colleagues in Monaghan Sports Partnership with whom this project is a joint venture.

Nadine Mc Cormilla
Sports Coordinator, Cavan Sports Partnership



On behalf of Monaghan Sports Partnership I am delighted to be involved with the delivery and review of the Sports Inclusion Development Programme for disability.

Local Sports Partnerships strive to make a difference in their local communities and priorities are given to targeted groups of people who are traditionally less likely to participate in sports and physical activity.

While we can record numerous successes with our various sports programme, the Sports Inclusion Programme has undoubtedly unearthed and explored some life changing experiences by those who can benefit from it most.

We have developed a positive relationship with our neighbouring Sports Partnership in Cavan and have worked hard together to use the resources we have to best effect. The shared programme has enlightened us to learn from each other and to become more educated on the opportunities for disability, the need for improved accessibility and for the simple recognition of people who deserve equal inclusion.

I would especially like to thank; Monaghan County Council for its support, the Sports Partnership board members for supporting the introduction of this programme , the Inter-county committee members who harmoniously oversee the programme, our colleagues in Cavan Sports Partnership and of course to the Sports Inclusion Development Officers, past and present for their infectious appetite for their work.

While the efforts of all those involved have been commendable, it is the efforts of the participants of the Sports Inclusion Development Programme which have been truly inspirational. Anything is possible.

Michelle Murphy
Sports Coordinator, Monaghan Sports Partnership



As Chairperson of the Inter County Sports Inclusion Committee I would like to acknowledge the work that has gone into the preparation of this Review document.

The review takes a glance back at the last two years. Applying to the Dormant Accounts Fund through the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltach affairs grant scheme accessed through Pobal to support a Sports Inclusion Disability Officer to work in the Monaghan and Cavan area was time and effort well spent.

The advances made in a short time will have a long lasting effect on the population that has come into contact with the programme. Clubs and sports organisations are now better aware of their role into the future and the duty to integrate and provide opportunities for everybody in sport.

It is important to recognize the work of those involved in this inter-county programme. Nadine McCormilla, coordinator Cavan Sports Partnership, Michelle Murphy, coordinator Monaghan Sports Partnership, the respective County Councils and the Health Service Executive.

Finally, I welcome Stephen Flynn to the post of Sports Inclusion Officer for Cavan/ Monaghan and acknowledge the skilful, ground building work of his predecessors Jennifer Hill and Lisa Kelly.

Malachy Marron
Chairperson of the Inter County Sports Inclusion Board

Introduction

In 2008, Pobal (through the Department of Health and Children) made funding available through the Dormant Accounts Fund for the provision of a Sports Inclusion Disability Officer (SIDO) to work in conjunction with Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs). Monaghan Sports Partnership joined forces with Cavan County Council in making a joint submission for this funding and was successful in being awarded significant funding towards a two year contract for the delivery of a wide ranging programme of sports activities. The main aim of this funding was to assist in helping to address the imbalance in opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sport and physical activity, which has become an important national goal.

The funding awarded was to support the employment of a network of Sports Inclusion Development Officers (SIDO). It was intended that these SIDO's will be actively involved on the ground in the development and implementation of accessible sporting opportunities for people with a disability. The SIDO programme is co-ordinated on a national basis by the CARA Adapted Physical Activity Centre based in the Tralee IT.

Key elements of the work of the Development Officer in the two years was outlined as the following:

- Setting up of activity clubs for people with disabilities;
- Promotion of participation of people with disabilities in sport and physical activity;
- Promotion of inclusion in mainstream activities;
- Development and implementation of education programmes for teachers, coaches, fitness instructors, etc.;
- Partnership working among all local and national disability organisations.
- The SIDO programme was overseen by an inter-county committee comprising of members from the disability sector in Monaghan and Cavan.



“The training we have been able to do with the staff since the programme started is really great.”

(Service Provider, Cavan)

“The sports make me feel relaxed and confident.”

(Participant, Monaghan)

- Co-operation and collaboration with other LSPs on strategy for inclusion, forum for people with disabilities to express opinions, assessment of current club/activity, setting up of clubs, etc.;
- Assist the LSP Coordinator in the development of a Sports Inclusion Policy as part of the Development Strategy for Sport & Recreation in Cos. Cavan and Monaghan

This is the first report to be published on the SIDO programme since its inception and will summarise the events and initiatives that have taken place in the counties of Monaghan and Cavan. This review will not only have been beneficial in showcasing the work of the SIDO programme but has formed the basis of the Disability Sports Strategic Plan 2010 - 2013.



Members of the Inter County Sports Inclusion Board	
Name	Group Represented
Malachy Marron (Chairperson)	Service Provider
Michelle Murphy	Monaghan Sports Partnership
Nadine McCormilla	Cavan Sports Partnership
Bernie Brennan	Service Provider
Bridget Boyle	Service provider
Francis McCarron	Monaghan County Council
Emma Breidan	Cavan County Council
Orla Brady	Cavan County Council
Shane Loughlin	Service User
Stephen Flynn	Monaghan and Cavan Sports Partnership

Disability in Monaghan and Cavan

In the last Census (2006) the national percentage of people with a disability in the Republic of Ireland was found to be 9.3% which translates to about 393,800 people. In the Monaghan and Cavan border region the combined figures show that there are 10,356 (8.7%) persons that fit the definition of having a disability. Disability is defined as:

“A substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the state or to participate in social or cultural life in the state by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment.”

(Disability Act 2005)

Types of disabilities include various physical and mental impairments that can hamper or reduce a person's ability to carry out his day to day activities. "Disability" can be broken down into a number of broad sub-categories, which include the following:

Physical Disability:

A physical disability is any physiological disorder or condition affecting any of the bodies systems. Physical disability can arise from early disorders of the nervous, skeletal or muscular systems such as Cerebral Palsy and Spina Bifida. People who become disabled in later life may have experienced brain or spinal chord injury usually as a result of an accident.

Sensory Disability:

Sensory disability is where a person has any of the long lasting conditions such as blindness, deafness or a severe vision or hearing impairment. A sensory impairment is an individuals inability to accurately interpret an outside source of stimuli whether it be visual, auditory, verbal, sense of touch or sense of taste.

Learning Disability:

This is a general term used to describe specific kinds of learning disabilities. A learning disability can cause a person to have trouble learning and using skills such as writing, reading, listening, speaking, reasoning and maths.

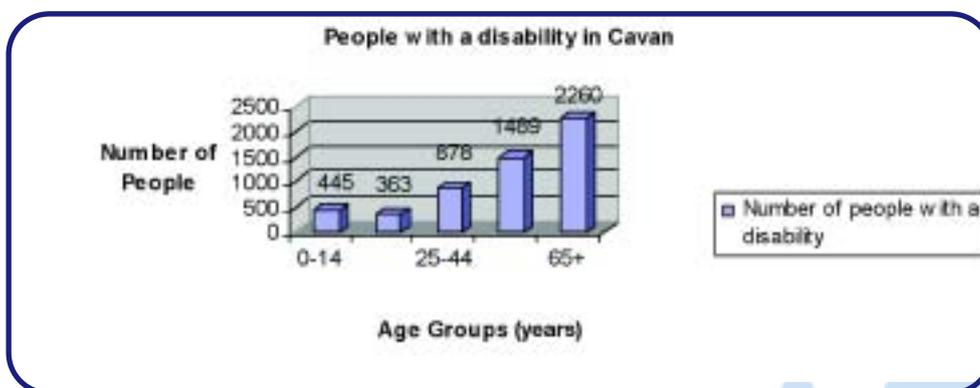
Emotional/ Psychological Disability:

An emotional disability is a condition that over a long period of time can consistently interfere with a person's day to day life. An emotional disability may arise from a number of different causes such as a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears, a general mood of unhappiness or depressions, an inability to learn and to build and maintain interpersonal relationships.

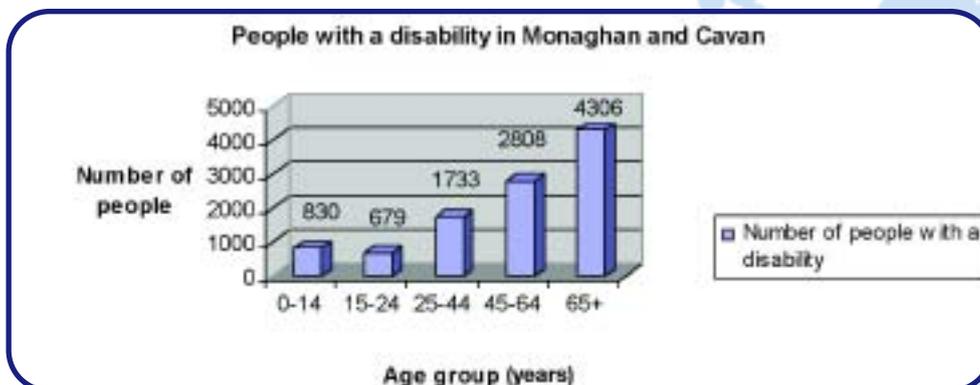




Graph 1.0 shows the breakdown of disability against age for Monaghan. Census data 2006.



Graph 1.1 shows the breakdown of disability against age for Cavan. Census data 2006.



Graph 1.2 shows the breakdown of disability against age in the Monaghan and Cavan Area. Census data 2006.

The Graphs 1.0 and 1.1 show the age breakdown of people with disabilities in counties Monaghan and Cavan respectively. There are 4,921 people in Monaghan and 5,435 people in Cavan with a disability. In the graph 1.2 this shows the combined age breakdown figures for both counties.

The trends on all three graphs show that the 15-24 years group have the lowest incidence of disability across the two counties. The age group with the highest incidence of disability is the 65+ year's group. All figures and data were taken from the National Disability Survey, Census 2006.

Programmes

Come and Try It Days

The Come and Try It Days were designed to give people a positive introduction to new activities in a non-competitive environment. The sessions were delivered by qualified sports/exercise instructors who demonstrated the basic skills of the sport in an easy to understand way so that participants could gain the confidence to take up the activity on a more regular basis. The sports showcased were New Age Kurling, Aerobics, Badminton, Archery, Wheelchair Basketball, Wheelchair Rugby, Soccer and Gaelic. In total there were five days organised in counties Monaghan and Cavan catering for over 225 people. These sessions were supported by local transition year students who had just completed the disability awareness training.



“Prior to the Sports inclusion programme there would have been little or no participation in sport.”
(Service Provider, Monaghan)



Soccer Skills Programme

A soccer skills programme was set up in partnership with the Football Association of Ireland development officers for Monaghan and Cavan. The soccer skills programme was organised in 2008, 2009 and 2010 over a ten week period with over 100 participants taking part each year. This initiative proved to be very successful and offered an opportunity for people with a disability a chance to receive expert coaching and develop their soccer skills. The programme ended with a showcase Blitz day between teams from Monaghan and Cavan. The 2009 showcase coincided with the FAI’s “Festival of Football” and AGM which was held in Monaghan in 2009. The highlight of the day was the chance for all participants to meet former Irish Internationals Ray Houghton, Paul McGrath and Packie Bonner. The groups also got the chance to meet John Delaney the Chief Executive Officer of the FAI, David Blood President of the FAI and Marco Tardelli former Italian International and current assistant manager with the Irish International men’s team.

GAA “Come and Play for your County”

This programme was rolled out in partnership with the Monaghan and Cavan GAA Coaching and Games Development staff. The programme gave an opportunity for people with a learning disability a chance to try out a number of GAA sports facilitated by qualified GAA coaches. This exciting new sporting initiative involved over 110 participants. The highlight of these events was meeting and playing with the local Inter-county players who visited the sessions. The Cavan participants received the chance to play in Casement Park during the 2010 Ulster Semi Final where they played a team from Armagh. This was a great experience for everyone involved and a day enjoyed by all.

Since the programme was first initiated with the Monaghan and Cavan GAA along with the Ulster Development Officers have been very proactive in their approach to disability sport and have organised two, 6 week programmes doing GAA skills with people with an intellectual and learning disability and also with people with a physical disability.



The U Club

The U club is a sports club set up between the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer, the Irish Wheelchair Association in Cavan and the Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus family support worker. The club was set up in March 2009 and has a base of 12-14 active members. The members are made up of people with a physical or sensory disability and are aged between 18-30 years. The U



Club gives its members the opportunity to participate in pursuits such as Archery, Table Tennis, New Age Kurling, Boccia, Bowling, Wheelchair Ice Skating, Canoeing and Outdoor Pursuits. The U Club is up and running successfully with the aid of volunteers within the community. The club provides a chance for its members to participate in recreational activities and also has a very strong social element. The club meet every second Saturday and are always welcoming to new members who may wish to participate in recreational activities or to meet with their peers in a relaxed and fulfilled environment.



Boccia and New Age Kurling

Both these games have proved very popular with many groups in the Monaghan and Cavan area as both games can be played by people of all abilities and ages. Boccia is a target based game which requires skill and accuracy as opposed to power and strength and can be used to develop hand eye coordination. The game can be played from a sitting or standing position and can be adapted for people with severe physical disabilities. The Boccia league is ongoing within the two counties with 6-8 teams regularly playing in each league. In 2010 ten teams from Monaghan and Cavan participated in a border region inter county competition hosted in Carrickmacross and all performed extremely well.

New Age Kurling is a target based game which also requires skills and accuracy also and can be played by all ages and groups. The New Age Kurling is played





on a court bigger than that of Boccia and is played using kurling stones with wheels that simulate ice. The aim of the game is to get the stones as close to the bull's eye on the target at the other end of the court as possible. There are 4 players per team. The development of these new sports has involved a training workshop in which local group leaders have been trained on how to implement these new sports into their service user's daily activities. These games have proved popular among service users and service providers and carers. Many service providers use Boccia and New Age Kurling in their recreational activities.

Riding for the Disabled

In 2009 the organisers of the Castleblayney Agricultural Show incorporated a riding for the disabled Class into their event to highlight the talent for horse riding in the Monaghan and Cavan Region.



This was a national landmark as Castleblayney show became the first agricultural show to host a riding for the disabled class. On the day 6 young adults with a disability participated in the event. All participants were presented with an award for their efforts and to mark the occasion. The class is now sponsored and is a permanent fixture on the schedule.

As a result of this initiative horse riding has proven very popular among different groups who have participated in the activity. A number of stables in the Monaghan and Cavan region are now offering riding lessons for people with disabilities as a result of this initiative. The centres themselves have made themselves more disability friendly and have incorporated 10 week riding programmes for people with a disability into their schedules.



Adapted Aerobics

The Adapted Aerobics courses commenced in April 2009 and were 6 weeks in duration. There was a high uptake in both counties with over 120 participants registered. The Adapted Aerobics programme utilizes the entire range of motion of each working muscle. The programmes can be tailored according to the needs or the participant to maximise the potential health gains from the activity.

Power Soccer

Power soccer is a wheelchair based football game that has become very popular in the last number of years. Power soccer is played by people who use a electrically powered wheelchair and also by people who use a manual wheelchair. Two teams of four power chair users each attack, defend, and manoeuvre an oversized soccer ball in an attempt to score points on a goal.



The members of the Power Soccer club took part in a blitz day with teams from Louth and Meath to celebrate the FAI "Festival of Football" which was held in Monaghan in 2009. The highlight of the day was the chance for all participants to meet former Irish Internationals Ray Houghton, Paul McGrath and Packie Bonner.



The ball, which is 18 inches in diameter, is manipulated by plastic formed soccer guards mounted on the front of each player's wheelchair. In February 2009 the first meeting of the regional power soccer club took place and all of those that participated found the game challenging but enjoyable. The programme was rolled out in counties Monaghan, Cavan and Louth with the help of the Sports Inclusion Disability Officers and the FAI Development Officers from each county.



Training and Education

Disability Awareness Training

The Disability Awareness programme provides participants with an understanding of what the term disability means. The main aim of the programme is to provide participants with an understanding of the difficulties faced by individuals with a disability. It is hoped that this experience will help them develop a more positive, respectful and understanding attitude towards the issues faced by individuals with a disability. There are three strands to the Disability Awareness Training:

- Disability Awareness Training for Sports Clubs.
- Disability Awareness Training for Transition Year Students.
- Disability Awareness Training for Leisure Facilities.

All courses have the same core principles and learning outcomes. The only difference is that course is tailored to the audience it is being delivered to. The transition year course was heavily subsidised by the Sports Partnerships and was organised in conjunction with the Irish Wheelchair Association Sports Project.

The course consists of a one and half hour theory session including disability awareness practical's, followed by a two hour wheelchair practical session, where the participants take part in games and activities aimed at individuals in wheelchairs. The Session can be split in two or run over one day.

Over the last two years the workshop has ran in 6 post primary schools covering nearly 400 students, 27 different sports clubs with 37 participants and two public leisure centres with 26 staff. The feedback received from the training courses has been extremely positive from all who have attended the workshops. There is already a demand for the workshops for the upcoming term 2010/11.

Some feedback comments included *"Best talk of the year"* and *"I liked the way the people telling us about disabilities had disabilities, worked really well."*

As a result of Disability Awareness Training, two members of Emyvale Cycling Club were inspired to work with local group, Errigal Truagh Special Needs on cycling activities.



Activity Workshops

Activity workshops have taken place all over the country and were rolled out in the Monaghan and Cavan Region in 2009. These workshops aimed to highlight the importance of physical activity to people with a disability. The workshops involved fun interactive presentations on the importance of physical activity and practical sessions of aerobics to reinforce the theory. The workshops were delivered to RehabCare and the National Learning Network in Monaghan and Cavan. A total of 72 participants took part across the four centres.

ASA Swimming Helpers Course

The ASA Swimming Helpers Course is a Swim/Ireland accredited course which is designed to raise awareness of disability issues and educate participants and give them a basic knowledge of water safety skills, safe methods for entry and exit of pool, ethical issues and supporting techniques. The course comprised of a theory module and a one hour practical module. It was delivered in Monaghan and Cavan Leisure Complex's in 2009. The course proved very popular with over 28 participants completing the course representing eighteen different clubs and organisations in the area.

“They really look forward to doing the skills and I get a great fulfilment out of doing the coaching with them.”
(Coach)

Swim A Song

Swim-a-Song is a specially designed for babies from 4 months to approximately 36 months of age and gives parent and child enormous enjoyment while introducing an important life-skill. Swim-a-Song is step one in Swim Ireland's development pathway and provides an excellent foundation for a lifetime of swimming. The course was delivered in both Cavan and Monaghan and overall there were 23+ participants who completed the course.



“Sport has enabled our service users to interact with other groups, locally and nationally. These events have got them out of there comfort zone and helped improve their confidence and self esteem.
(Service Provider, Cavan)

Case Studies

Case Study 1

Name: Margret Doonan
Service: Rehab Care Cavan
Position: Programme Facilitator



What disabilities does your service cater for?

The service deals with all disabilities most of the service users have a physical or intellectual disability.

What was the group's activity level before the SIDO programme began?

Their level was at a moderate level before the programme began. Since the programme came on line the group's activity level is at an all time high. Now regularly do different activities a couple of times a week.

What sports or activities have your group been able to participate in because of the SIDO Programme?

The group have taken part in lots of different events such as Soccer Skills, GAA Skills, Come and Try It Days, Boccia and New Age Kurling. The different activities and games cater for all the different levels of abilities that use our service. The programme has sparked their interest in sport and games and we now try and do indoor soccer and swimming also.

What were the activities that the groups enjoyed the most?

The group has really enjoyed all the events and programmes that they have being involved in and have gained from them. They really enjoy the games themselves and the chance to get out and meet different service users and interact socially. They really look forward to going on the programmes and they take a lot from the days that they go out.

How has the role of the SIDO affected your organisation?

It has being very beneficial to our organisation because we have received extra training and new skills from being involved in the programme. The programme really benefits the group because it keeps them fit and they enjoy it. They learn more about staying active and health through sport.

Is the SIDO important for providing opportunities for disability groups to interact socially as well as participate in physical activity?

They really enjoy the games themselves and the chance to get out and meet different service users and interact socially. It really helps their overall health. It is good for them to mix with different people and do things with different coaches. They really respond to the drills and games that they do at these events.

Case Study 2

Name: Martha Smith



Have you always had a disability?

Yes.

What type of disability do you have?

Childhood Meningitis, Single Amputee.

Were you involved in sport before the SIDO programme started?

Yes.

What sports have you participated in?

Boccia, New Age Kurling ,Power soccer and Swimming.

What sports or activities did you most enjoy?

Boccia and Swimming.

What did you like most about participating in the programme?

I found it relaxing and enjoy doing all the stretches.

Is there anything else you would like to say about the programme?

The Tutor (Dervla) is really very good at carrying out this programme.

Case study 3

Name: Stephen Boylan

From: Monaghan



Were you involved in sport before the SIDO programme started?

Yes a small bit but not as much.

What kind of sports or activities do you participate in?

GAA Skills, Soccer Skills and Horse Riding.

What activities do you like the most?

I like all the activities but I really enjoy the Horse Riding.

How does it make you feel when you are doing the horse riding?

I get a great buzz when I am doing it and I am relaxed and confident after doing the horse riding.

Is there anything else you would like to say about the programme?

I enjoy it and like playing with my friends and making new friends. The coaches and teachers are all very nice and help a lot.

Case Study 4

Name: David McGeough
Service: Monaghan Training Workshop
Position: Manager



What disabilities does your service cater for?

Adults with learning disabilities, they may also have physical or sensory disabilities.

What was the group's activity level before the SIDO programme began?

There was a limited sports activities, swimming on a weekly basis.

What sports or activities have your group been able to participate in because of the SIDO Programme?

The group have had the chance to participate in Aerobics, FAI Soccer Skills, GAA Skills, Horse Riding and Outdoor Pursuits. Which they would not of had a chance to participate in without the help of the Sports Inclusion Officer.

How has the role of the SIDO affected your organisation?

There is greater awareness of the value of sport in promoting health and wellbeing. The programme has been a great way of exercising and promoting health. It has also being good for the group to develop skills such as teamwork, sportsmanship, social skills and also gave them a chance to develop their personality and learn more about themselves and the world around them.

Is the SIDO important for providing opportunities for disability groups to interact socially as well as participate in physical activity?

Yes, it has being really important for them to develop and form new friendships and practice new social skills.

Did you find the participating in the programme was worthwhile and beneficial?

The programme was definitely worthwhile. It opened up opportunities for people to engage in sporting activities that may have never being able to get involved before.

**"I like taking part in sport
and enjoy playing games
with my friends"**
(Participant, Cavan)

**"The reward for work
well done is the
opportunity to do more"**
(Jonas Salk)

Conclusion

The evidence emanating from this report suggests that the SIDO programme has had a strong positive impact with people with a disability in the Monaghan and Cavan region. The SIDO programme has enabled people with a disability to engage and participate in physical activity. The programme has also helped overcome and eliminate many barriers and has built working relationships with many different organisations for the benefit of people with a disability. There has been a direct influence on many groups within the target population and in the future

the programme hopes to come into contact and include individuals that may not be involved with an affiliated group. An indirect approach through the Disability Awareness Training has also helped educate and inform people about the issues surrounding disability.

It is hoped that this programme can continue to grow and evolve in the Monaghan and Cavan region, to facilitate and to support people with a disability to partake in physical activity and sports.

Recommendations

- That national funding is secured and ring fenced for the continuation of disability sports.
- The SIDO programme is sustained and allowed expand and continue promoting physical activity initiatives for people with a disability.
- To create and develop a database of trained and committed volunteers to help support and sustain the SIDO programmes.
- The continued role out of Disability Awareness Training in sports clubs, schools and leisure facilities, to highlight the issues surrounding disability.
- To develop a framework to guide and direct the continued work of the Sports Inclusion and Disability Officer.
- Maintain and strengthen existing partnerships and to develop new links with agencies and organisations to overcome barriers to promoting physical activity and Health.
- To encourage sports clubs and facility providers to create and maintain programmes for people with a disability.
- Evaluate facility accessibility and provision of practical recommendations for improving the same.

“What would life be like if we had no courage to attempt anything?”
(Vincent van Gogh)

“Occasionally in life there are those moments of unutterable fulfilment which cannot be completely explained by those symbols called words. Their meanings can only be articulated by the inaudible language of the heart.”
(Martin Luther King, Jr.)

“It has created a can do attitude”
(Service Provider, Monaghan)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the people and organisations who have linked in with the Sports Inclusion and Disability Officer (SIDO) programme over the last two years. To all the National Governing Bodies and local development officers that have been involved in the organising of events and coaching. To the CARA centre for its continuous support and guidance. I would also like to commend the Monaghan and Cavan County Councils who have supported the programme. To the services and

service users who participated in the programme's with great enthusiasm. I would like to thank Eilish Markey and Blaithe O Reilly, the administrators of the Monaghan and Cavan Sports Partnerships for their role in supporting the SIDO. A special thanks to inter county committee for their support and guidance and their help in compiling this report.

Stephen Flynn
Sports Inclusion and Disability Officer

the
dormant
accounts board

