

SICAP Case Study: Rural and Social Isolation

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Galway Rural Development (GRD) is a Local Development Company (LDC) in Galway delivering a range of EU and national programmes. One of these programmes is the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018 – 2022, which provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.

Case Study: Liam

Liam contacted the offices of Galway Rural Development (GRD) in Tuam to meet an Employment Officer with a view to seeking support in possibly returning to work. Liam, in his 50's, lived in a rural area and had been the primary carer for both of his elderly parents since his return from the UK.

Liam also had developed a medical condition which restricted him in working in certain sectors. He was in receipt of a Disability Allowance payment.

Liam saw a notice in his local parish newsletter about SICAP supports available to people who may wish to upskill and/or seek employment. He decided it might be just what he needed. Prior to this he really was unsure of where to turn to, or how to take the first step forward. He had no formal skills or qualifications, but was eager to find work.

During his meeting with a GRD Employment Officer, he spoke about his role as carer for his parents, how he enjoyed being able to offer them help at that stage of their lives. He also spoke, however, about his own isolation in the community as a result of not having a chance to fully participate locally, engage in employment and now also, the challenges he faces due to the deterioration in his health. The GRD Employment Officer informed him of the Wage Subsidy Scheme which would allow Liam to work part time, but also retain his medical card which was much needed for his medical condition. GRD contacted and referred him to EmployAbility Galway and together both agencies collaborated to greatly enhance Liam's employment opportunities.

GRD offered Liam a place on their Safe Pass and Manual Handling courses, which he successfully completed. With the help of GRD's Employment Officer, Liam was also furnished with an updated CV and cover letter.

Seeking a part time role, Liam regularly viewed GRD's jobs bulletin and applied for a role in a local optician as a retail assistant and stock manager. He was delighted to learn he had got the role.

Liam now works three days a week assisting customers and other staff. His confidence has grown. His sense of achievement is high and he relishes the new positive routine in his life. Consequently, his overall general sense of well-being and health has improved. Liam credits this fortunate turn of events in his life to when he first saw that notice in his local parish notes; and by availing of the SICAP supports offered to him by Galway Rural Development and having the direct guidance and information sharing service of EmployAbility.