

Physical Activity & Sport for the Unemployed

Community coaching has been the primary programme delivered under the physical activity and sport for the unemployed banner in the period 2011 – 2015.

2015

Following the securing of funding from Sport Ireland and the Dormant Accounts Fund, two community coaching courses (Birr and Edenderry) were delivered in 2015. 20 trainees commenced the programme across the two locations.

Of the 20 that commenced the course, 15 completed (11 from Birr and four from Edenderry) the course. On the Birr course, some trainees expressed an interest in joining the defence forces; however when fitness testing was undertaken with the group, there was a realisation that trainees would struggle to pass the fitness test, particularly in respect of the 2.4k timed run that applicants are required to complete. A meet and train programme to address this need was established; and as a result of this intervention, one of the participants, following the completion of the programme, has been recruited for the Defence Forces cadet programme.

A further aspect of the course was a field trip to the Athlone Institute of Technology to discuss further education options, and review the sporting facilities available onsite. A number of trainees expressed interest in further education in the sector following the field trip.

In conjunction with Laois Sports Partnership, and with support from Sport Ireland and the Dormant Accounts Fund, an advanced cross county community coaching programme with a specific focus on employment skills for the leisure industry has been planned for 2016; and seven people have expressed an interest in participating on same.

2013

The 2013 programme was established to address two identified needs, that of: -

1. Constructively engaging with job seekers and equipping them with a skill set that would allow them to pursue a pathway into the sport and recreation sector, or to use these new skills to the benefit of their community; and
2. Increasing the impact of the various participation programmes of Offaly Sports Partnership across the county through the work of these trained leaders working at community level.

12 trainees signed up for the programme, all of whom were out of work. A further six people associated with the sports sector undertook some of the specific modules.

Of the 12 trainees who signed up to the programme, eight completed the full programme. Four of these eight trainees went on to secure an internship with Offaly Sports Partnership under Jobsbridge, and delivered a range of schools based work, and out of school activities (such as futsal, badminton

and spike ball; and a soccer training programme in conjunction with Offaly Traveller Movement) throughout the county. Interns also gained experience in the delivery of programmes for older people.

A further three trainees were offered internships with the sports partnership in 2014 subject to Garda vetting.

Two of the eight trainees who completed the coaching programme are now engaged in further third level studies.

In total the eight trainees who completed the programme through their voluntary work and their links with the programmes of the sports partnership have reached over 2,000 persons in the county.