



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018**

### **EXTERN LAUNCHES NEW CROSS-BORDER 'POSITIVE LEARNING' PROJECT SUPPORTED BY €1.88M OF PEACE IV PROGRAMME FUNDING**

**Extern, the leading social justice charity, will this week celebrate the launch of its new cross-border 'Positive Learning' project for the North West region.**

Creating 12 new jobs, the project, which is the first of its kind in the North West, is supporting people who find themselves on the margins of society, including people who are disadvantaged, homeless, have an offending history, are long-term unemployed, or who are refugees. The project which aiming to improve good relations and enable reintegration into society, has been awarded €1.88m EU funding from the PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU programmes Body (SEUPB).

Within the project, adults from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds are being brought together to help improve good relations. Areas explored in the project include community, prejudices, identity, and diversity. Skills development will also be on offer to support participants as they reintegrate into their respective community.

Participants in the programme will be offered training activities in new skills to benefit the community and to assist them in gaining employment, including Electrical installation, Carpentry, ICT, Horticulture, Manual Handling and Catering, during a 26-week programme. The Project is being delivered within the Letterkenny, Carndonagh, Buncrana, Limavady and Derry/Londonderry catchment areas. Project partners include The Probation Service Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Prison Service, TIDES Training and Consultancy, The Probation Service Ireland, and the Irish Prison Service.

Commenting ahead of the launch of the project, Charlie Mack, CEO of Extern, said: **"Our belief in Extern is that everyone should be enabled to make a positive contribution to their society, so we are thrilled to have received this EU Funding under the PEACE IV Programme, to deliver the 'Extern Positive Learning' project in the North-West region.**



**Already we have our first tranche of participants and tutors involved, and the programme is providing employment for 12 people in the region.**

**“This year Extern is celebrating 40 years of delivering life-changing support to people. During this time, we have been creating safer communities, allowing vulnerable people and those on the margins of our society to build positive and good relations within their communities. Positive Learning fits perfectly with what we are passionate about and allows us to engage with many people who need support to re-establish their role in the community, enabling them to make a positive difference to good relations in their local areas.**

**“Placing cross-border partnership working at its core, we are delighted to have the support of our partners in the delivery of this new project. It provides a wonderful learning opportunity for us all, with greater sharing of expertise and models of delivery in each of our organisations and will ensure excellent service provision to people who need our support in rural and regional areas of the North West.”**

Welcoming the launch of Positive Learning Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body said: **"This cross-border EU funded project will equip people who feel excluded with the skills and confidence they need to successfully reintegrate back into society. This type of work is essential if we are to build a more inclusive community that everyone has an opportunity to participate within. It also reflects the core ethos of the Building Positive Relations objective of the PEACE IV Programme, which has been specifically designed to support groups marginalised by society,"** she continued.

Match-funding for the project has been provided by the Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland.

Anyone wishing to make a referral or apply for a position within the project as a participant or a tutor can contact t: 028 7147 7980, e: [positivelearning@extern.org](mailto:positivelearning@extern.org).

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## Notes to Editor

### About Extern

Extern is the leading social justice charity operating across the island of Ireland. Operating for 40 years, every day Extern works alongside children, young people, and families, to empower positive change and support family unity. We also support people who are homeless or facing homelessness, refugees, the Traveller community, people living with an offending past, those living with the impact of suicide and those dealing with mental health and drug and alcohol issues to change their lives. As a charity, we strive for an inclusive and fair society; keeping children and their families together where possible; reducing offending and the impact of offending on victims and the community; that people have somewhere to live and that the people we work with are better equipped to live and make a contribution to their community. Last year Extern supported over 18,000 people across the island of Ireland who were in need of support.

### About SEUPB

The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department in Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.

The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.

The PEACE IV Programme has a value of €270 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.

For more information on the SEUPB please visit [www.seupb.eu](http://www.seupb.eu)