



PRESS RELEASE

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EXTERN TO ROLL OUT NEW 'POSITIVE LEARNING' CROSS-BORDER PROJECT IN NORTH-WEST REGION

A first of its kind project for the North-West region has been awarded €1.88m of EU funding under the PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU programmes Body (SEUPB). The project, known as Extern Positive Learning, is working with people who often find themselves on the margins of society, including people who are disadvantaged, who are homeless, who have an offending history, are long-term unemployed, or who are refugees. It aims to improve good relations and enable participants to reintegrate into society.

Adults from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds are being brought together in the programme with a view to improving good relations. Areas explored will include community, prejudices, identity, and diversity. Skills development will also be on offer in order to support participants as they aim to reintegrate into their community.

The Project is being delivered within the Letterkenny, Carndonagh, Buncrana, Limavady and Londonderry/Derry catchment areas. Partners in delivering the new service are The Probation Service Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Prison Service, TIDES Training and Consultancy, The Probation Service Ireland, and the Irish Prison Service.

The project aims to help people explore and change their current perceptions at various stages on their personal journeys. Core areas covered include good relations, citizenship, mentoring, and personal development. Participants will also be offered training activities in new skills to benefit the community, including Electrical, Carpentry, ICT, Horticulture, Manual Handling and Catering, during a 26-week programme.

Commenting on the 'Extern Positive Learning' announcement, Charlie Mack, CEO, said: **"Our belief in Extern is that everyone should be enabled to make a 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.**



“In 2018 Extern will have been developing and delivering support services for 40 years, creating safer communities, and allowing vulnerable people and those on the margins of our society to build positive and good relations within their communities. This project will allow us to engage with many people who need support to re-establish their role in the community, including people with an offending history, people who are homeless, people who are disadvantaged, and refugees, and to enable them to make a positive difference to good relations in the Derry/Londonderry and Donegal border 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 to ensure excellent service provision to people who need our support in rural and regional areas of the North West.”

Welcoming the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body said: **“The activities funded will encourage greater levels of cross-community and cross-border engagement, and understanding between people from diverse groups, including those who may feel most marginalised within our society. This goes to the heart of the PEACE IV Programme by promoting greater levels of trust and understanding, between communities and on either side of the border, with the objective of making a real difference to peoples’ lives.”**

The project, which will be based in the North of Derry/Londonderry, will commence in spring 2018.

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.

- ENDS

Notes to Editor:

For more information about the project please contact John McCandless, Communications Manager with the SEUPB via email: john.mccandless@seupb.eu



About Extern

- Extern is the largest social justice charity across the island of Ireland, working in 22 counties. Annually Extern provides support to some of the most vulnerable people in our society. Last year Extern supported over 15,000 people to change their lives. We work with people who are homeless, who are living with addiction, who are refugees, who have an offending background, with the Traveller community, and with children and young people, and their families, who are experiencing challenges in their lives.
- In Northern Ireland, Extern is funded to deliver projects by Government Departments including the Executive Office, Departments for Health, Justice, Communities, Economy and Education.
- In the Republic of Ireland, Extern delivers funded projects for the Departments of Children and Youth Affairs and Justice and Equality. We receive support from Ireland's European Investment and Structural Funds Programme, as well as delivering significant funded services for An Tusla, Irish Youth Justice Service, Health Service Executive and Limerick Regeneration Agencies. Extern leads on 4 Garda Diversion projects, and the Irish Youth Justice Service's Bail Support Scheme for Dublin.

SEUPB

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of 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