

# Crossing the Line

**I**N THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF TODAY'S BUSY world, thinking about goals and dreams is not something that we often have time for. Yet, as a group of people with learning disabilities from the border region will tell you, giving some thought to what you want to achieve from life can reap huge rewards.

And so it has been for a group of 56 adults who participated in the innovative "Crossing the Line" project that supported people with learning disabilities to develop their own person-centred plans and to achieve their individual goals in areas that included training, employment, education, recreation and leisure.

Delivered by RehabCare's north-west and north-east regions, the year-long project was sponsored by Cooperation and Working Together (CAWT) and funded by the European Union INTERREG IIIA programme. It focused on three specific geographical areas within the border region: Clones, Co. Monaghan and Roslea, Co. Fermanagh; Blacklion, Co. Cavan and Garrison, Co. Fermanagh; and Castlefinn, Co. Donegal and Castlederg, Co. Tyrone.

An event held last August in Enniskillen and attended by people with disabilities, their families and professionals from the disability sector, not only marked the completion of the "Crossing the Line" project, but also saw the launch of a DVD and booklet specifically designed to introduce families, friends and carers to the ideas and concepts that underpin person-centred planning and the benefits to people's lives.

Speaking at the event, Anne Marie Ward, Manager for Training and Occupational Support Services, Health Service Executive West and Chairperson of the "Crossing the Line" project board, said, "With person-centred planning, people with disabilities are offered the opportunity to make choices and decisions in areas that are important to them and to live their life the way that they want."



*Pictured:* Guests at the "Crossing the Line" project event, which was delivered by RehabCare and sponsored by CAWT through the European Union INTERREG IIIA funding programme are (left to right) Peter McKeivitt, RehabCare, Arlette Howell, Health Service Executive, Dermot Ryan, Department of Health and Children, Margaret McDonnell, Department of Health and Children, Leo Kinsella, Health Service Executive, and Margaret Dolan, Western Health Social Care Trust.

Peter McKeivitt, General Manager North East/Midlands, RehabCare, commented, "For the person-centred planning process to succeed, it is vital that a person's wider support circle – their families, friends, support staff and members of the wider community – support them in achieving their goals."

Brigid McGinty, Programme Manager, CAWT, added, "Person-centred planning is a process of continual listening, learning and focusing on what is important to people with disabilities, both now and in the future. By working together, we can all support and provide an opportunity for every individual to achieve real and lasting positive changes in their life. The support a person receives should always be active and flexible and never set any limits on a person's dreams."

A subsequent independent evaluation concluded that the project was extremely well-managed both by RehabCare and the project board, and that the objectives were met to a significant extent. ■

If you would like to get a copy of the "Crossing the Line" DVD and booklet, please contact Jacqui Browne on 042 933 7418 or email [jacqui.browne@rehabcare.ie](mailto:jacqui.browne@rehabcare.ie).