

# New Directions, February 2026 Newsletter



Aileen from Windmill Day Service in Crumlin recently received a certificate and badge from her employers, for her 10 years of service at the Hilton Hotel. A huge congrats to Aileen, such an amazing milestone to reach, well done from all in Liffey Region.



Cuinn and Hans showcased their Trumpet skills for a recent Valentines event...



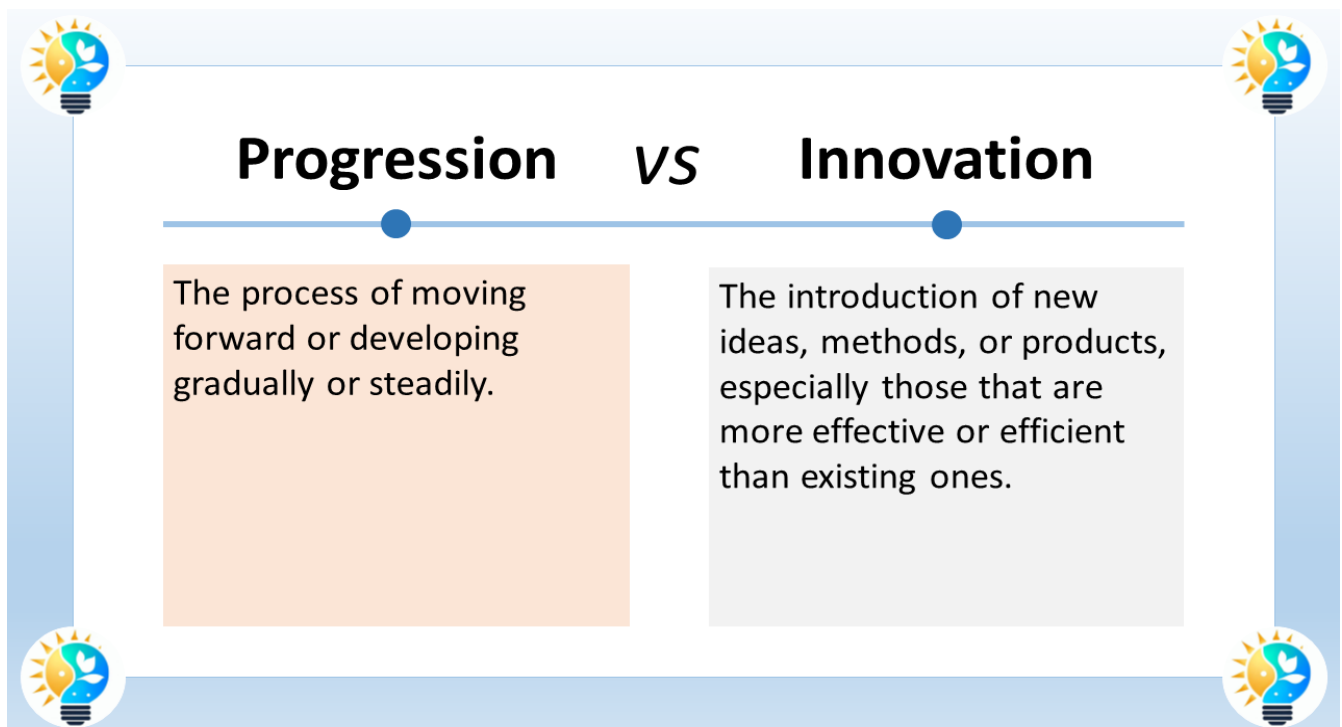
Mr Napkin head made an appearance with the Las Granadas crew!



Service Users from Horizons had a pint at the Dail, turn to page 15 to read more!

# For the month of February, we explore the following pillar which underpins New Directions, **'Support for Making Transitions and Progression'**.

A transition is a change from one thing to the next, either in action or state of being, as in a job transition or as in the much more dramatic example of a caterpillar making a transition into a butterfly. Transition is something that is positive and reassuring but it takes bravery and support to face a transition.



The process of advancement and the way things move in the positive direction of improvement is called progress. If you got a fail on your last test and a pass on this one, that's progress. If you're moving towards a goal, you're making progress too.



# Meet the Staff Member

## Lindsay Knott



Hi my name is Lindsay Knott and I am the Supervisor in Avila Day Service in Cookstown. My journey in St John of Gods began in May 2025, when I joined the wonderful team in Elvira. I worked there for six months and really enjoyed my time there. I moved to Avila Day Service in December and I'm really enjoying my role here, getting to know all the wonderful Service Users and staff team. Everybody has made me feel very welcome here and I look forward to the year ahead!

Outside of SJOG, I have two lovely children; Bobby and Lily, who like to keep me busy when I'm not in work! I spend a lot of time at the Soccer and Gaelic pitches cheering my children on from the sideline (Yes, I'm that embarrassing Mam at matches) I'm a very active person and love to go on long walks and enjoy the outdoors, when the weather cooperates of course!

I'm really enjoying working as part of the wonderful team here in St John of Gods and look forward to the exciting years ahead!

# Las Granadas Day Service



Galaxy S24



Galaxy S24



Friday 13<sup>th</sup> of February kicked off with a triple dinner date for the Las Granadas crew at Arcadia in Tallaght. The group had a lovely dinner, great conversation in a fun atmosphere and then headed off to the Valentine's disco at the Plaza Hotel, Tallaght. Everyone had their dancing shoes on, socialising, drinking, meeting new people and forming connections. It was a night full of joy and rhythm and there was definitely love in the air.

# Brush My Teeth

BrushMyTeeth is an accessible website designed to support better mouth care for everyone. It was created to help people who may find brushing their teeth difficult. Whether you brush your own teeth, need a little help, or need a lot of support, the website provides clear videos and easy-to-follow activity sheets.

Users can choose the type of toothbrush they use: normal, electric, or special brush and receive guidance that matches their level of support. There are also downloadable mouth care plans and workbooks to help build routines.

BrushMyTeeth supports independence and progression by helping people develop daily living skills and plan for better oral health, building confidence through practical, accessible guidance.

The screenshot displays three distinct user interface panels for different levels of support:

- Panel 1 (Yellow background):** Titled "1 I brush my own teeth". It features a video player showing a man brushing his teeth. Below the video is a "Downloads" button, a "Mouthcare Plan" button, and a "My Mouthcare Workbook" button.
- Panel 2 (Blue background):** Titled "2 I need a little help". It features a video player showing a woman being assisted with brushing. Below the video is a "Downloads" button, a "Mouthcare Plan" button, and a "My Mouthcare Workbook" button.
- Panel 3 (Pink background):** Titled "3 I need a lot of help". It features a video player showing a woman being assisted with brushing. Below the video is a "Downloads" button, a "Mouthcare Plan" button, and a "My Mouthcare Workbook" button.

<https://brushmyteeth.ie>



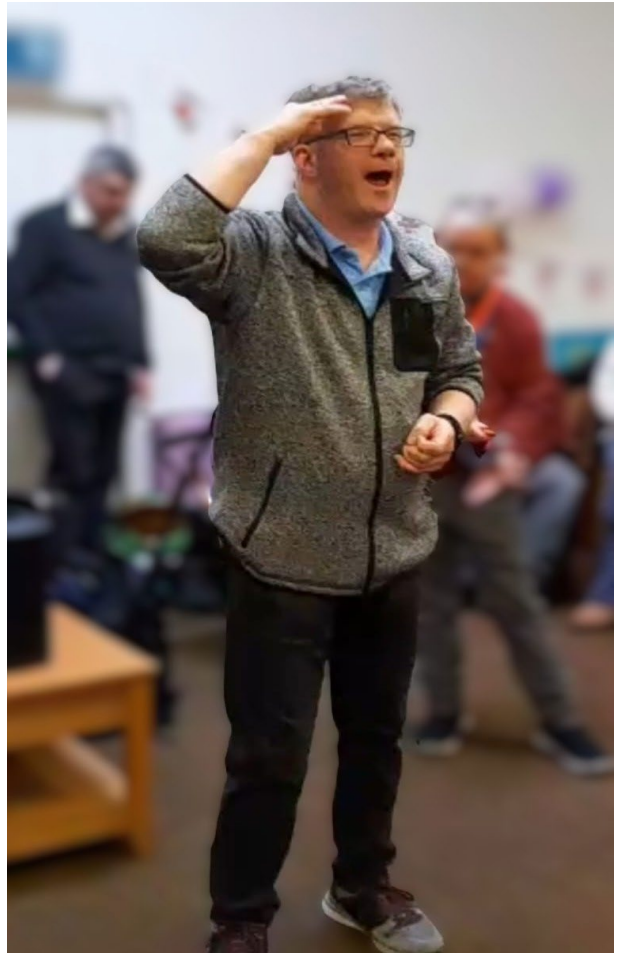
# Valentines Event, Celbridge

On the eve of Valentine's Day, Shelly Breslin hosted the Valentine's singing competition at the Coachmans in Celbridge, to raise money for our athletes heading to the Special Olympics' Ireland Games.

It turned out to be such a lovely morning with some brilliant performances, there were even had a few Lamh signed songs! A big thank you to everyone who took part, and to Hans, Martin, and all the musicians for supporting the singers. We hope everyone enjoyed themselves.

Congrats to the winner, Cuinn Stephens from Reach, who sang *Dancing Queen* and even played the trumpet! Second place went to Denis O'Brien for his great version of *I Should Be So Lucky*, and third place to Simon Darragh, who signed *Ireland's Call*. Thank you so much for all the support, Shelly appreciates it!





# Uaisle Day Service



With it being the month to celebrate love and romance, Uaisle Day Service in Ballyfermot, hosted a wonderful Valentine's Afternoon Tea Party. The ladies and gentlemen dressed to impress, and a few people from other centres joined in as well. A huge thank you to Susan Staunton for the fantastic photo collages, this looks like such a lovely event!

COME JOIN US FOR A

# ST. PATRICK'S DAY CELL



MUSIC, DANCING AND  
REFRESHMENTS



**MARCH 13, 2026**



**11:00 AM – 12:30PM**

**MAIN HALL, ST RAPHAELS CAMPUS**  
**ENTRY €5**

in aid of our athletes going to Ireland Games.

Raffle Draw will take place, tickets  
available beforehand

# Bingo in Avoca



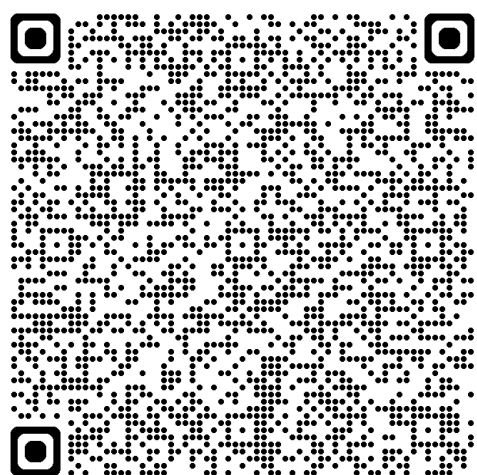
Thank you to Louise Gavin for sending in these pictures from the very successful Bingo session in Avoca Day Service on 30<sup>th</sup> January. Can we just send everyone a gentle reminder that Bingo starts every month at 11am sharp. There was a 30 minute delay in starting due to latecomers at the last event. Thank you for your understanding and see you at the next one!



# Solas Day Service

On 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026, Solas proudly hosted an Open Day celebrating the achievements of our QQI Level 1 Craft Programme. Parents, families, and friends were welcomed into the centre to share in a vibrant showcase of creativity, learning, and personal expression. The atmosphere was filled with excitement as visitors explored the beautiful selection of crafts produced over recent weeks.

Our talented service users; Sam Saibu, Daniel Williams, Chanel Hartzberg and Daniel Murphy, displayed an inspiring body of work that reflected their dedication, imagination, and newly developed skills.



Please scan the QR code or click the link below to see a video about a recent Craft Day at Solas Day Service.

[craft day 28.01.26.mp4](#)

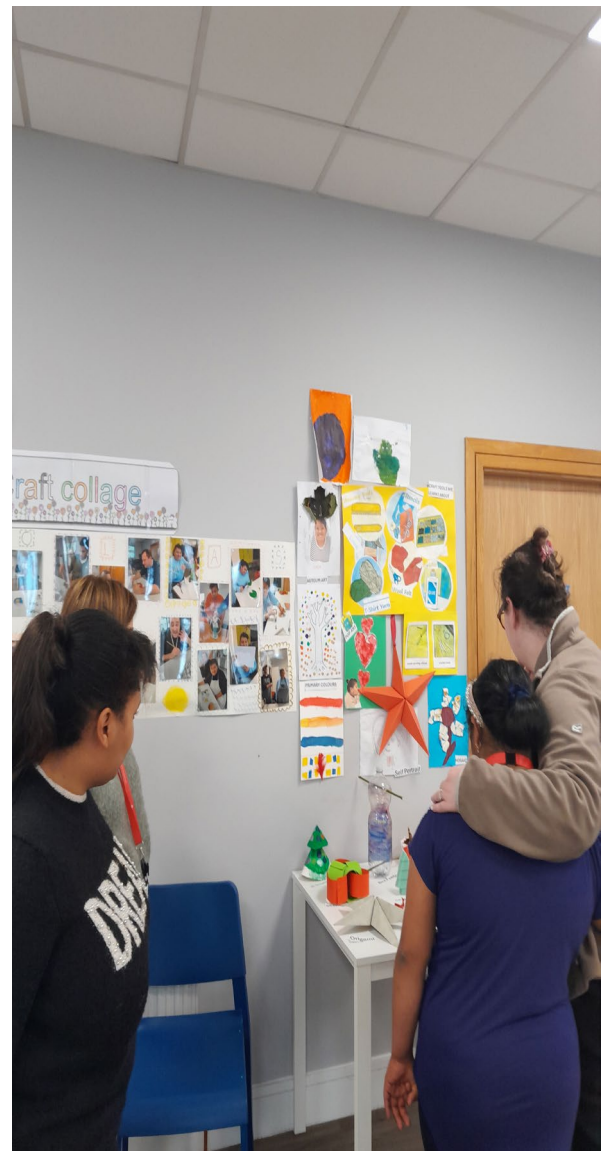
St John  
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Community Services

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From colourful decorative pieces to carefully constructed craft projects, each item demonstrated the confidence and progress made by the learners throughout the programme. Their pride in presenting their work was matched by the enthusiasm and admiration of those who came to support them.

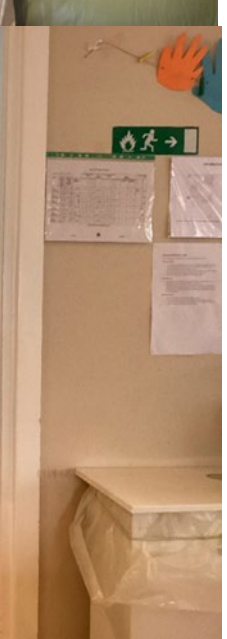
This successful event was delivered by the committed Solas staff team of Celine Troy, Stephanie Hannon, and Eoin Reardon Rush. Their guidance, encouragement, and hands-on teaching created a supportive environment where each participant could grow and succeed. The Open Day not only highlighted the learners' achievements but also showcased the collaborative spirit at the heart of Solas. It was a joyful and meaningful celebration of inclusion, creativity and community.

Thank you so much to staff member Eoin Reardon for the video, beautiful write-up and photos.



# Aistear Nua Day Service

Aistear Nua in Celbridge have been busy with Jaymie's 35<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration and Valentine's Day activities amongst staff and friends. A huge Happy Birthday to Jaymie, looks like you all had fun.

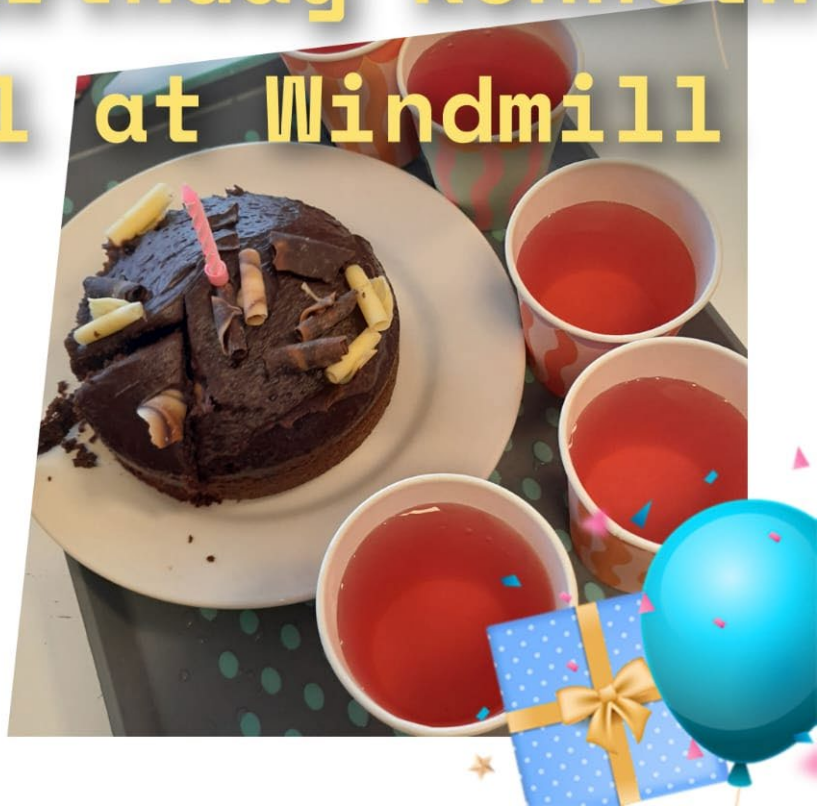


# Windmill Day Service



Happy Birthday Kenneth

From all at Windmill



Kenneth Galima recently had a birthday party in Windmill Day centre, Kenneth had a wonderful time with his friends. They all enjoyed sampling some birthday cake, there was music playing and a karaoke session with friends. Those in attendance had a great time. A massive Happy Birthday to you Ken 😊

The whole team at Windmill are super proud to celebrate Aileen Higgins, who has been honoured with a 10-year recognition award at the Hilton Hotel.

This milestone reflects her dedication, commitment, and the exceptional contribution she has made over the past decade. Aileen's achievement is truly inspiring, and we congratulate her on this well-deserved honour.

This ties in so well with our theme for the February newsletter around transition and progression. Aileen will no doubt progress within her workplace environment having learned all the ropes over the last 10 years and we all want to wish you the biggest congratulations, we hope you celebrated in style.



# Our Place, Cross-Sector Discussion: Strengthening Inclusion for Artists with Intellectual Disability

*Our Place, Carlow Arts Festival*

Online  
Panel Discussion



## **Disrupt Festival**

Preparations are underway for participation in the upcoming Disrupt Festival. The festival celebrates creativity, inclusion, and innovation in the arts. Being involved provides opportunities to showcase projects, share experiences, and connect with wider communities. Participation in creative events supports progression by building confidence, skills, and visibility of inclusive work. It also supports transition by encouraging people to engage in new environments and audiences. The Disrupt Festival represents an exciting opportunity to celebrate creativity and inclusion while supporting people in expressing themselves and taking part in meaningful cultural experiences.

Tony Davis and Patrick Fitzgerald invite you to register and join the Online Discussion to discuss making the arts more inclusive for everyone.

**<https://www.disruptfestival.ie/event/cross-sector-event-strengthening-inclusion-for-artists-with-intellectual-disability/>**

# An invite from Daniel Moses

Below please see an invitation from Daniel Moses, who attends Ash Tree Day Service. Daniel has been in college studying illustration and would like to invite everyone to his Art Exhibition on April 1<sup>st</sup> where some of his work will be available for purchase.



# Horizons Day Service



On Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> Jan, a group from Horizons Day Service visited Dail Eireann as guests of Deputy Mark Ward. Martin Weafer had said he would love to have 'free pints' in the Dail Bar and Brian Malone loves history and politics so this was a great match.

Deputy Ward treated the group to pints and coffee. They had a tour of the Dail, got to sit in the public gallery and visit Seanad Eireann. While in the Seanad the speaker praised the work of the service which was really kind.



# Avila Day Service

On Tuesday the 17<sup>th</sup> of February, the Team at Avila, supported the lads on site for pancake Tuesday. Ian, Brian, David, Eddie and Joe took part in making the Pancakes.

The guys seemed to really enjoy the activity and chose from a wealth of toppings, including banana, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, lemon juice, were the healthy options or plain.



Nutella, marshmallows, caster sugar or maple syrup were other options. Most of the guys chose fruit. With Lent just started, Avila are trying to encourage healthy choices, walking and mindful activities with Spring coming. Here is to 2026 and fresh starts !



# Our Place



Tony and Patrick continue to grow and progress in their paid roles with **Carlow Arts Festival**, where they work alongside people supported by Delta Services. As part of this work, Patrick and Tony invited the original Our Place artists from Ash Tree to travel to **VISUAL**, Ireland's largest contemporary arts centre. They also welcomed men and women from Delta who have been co-designing their own Our Place project, co-facilitated by Patrick and Tony. These experiences supported leadership, collaboration, and creativity. Being in work and leading activities helps Tony and Patrick build confidence, develop skills, and explore future goals while supporting others to participate and connect.

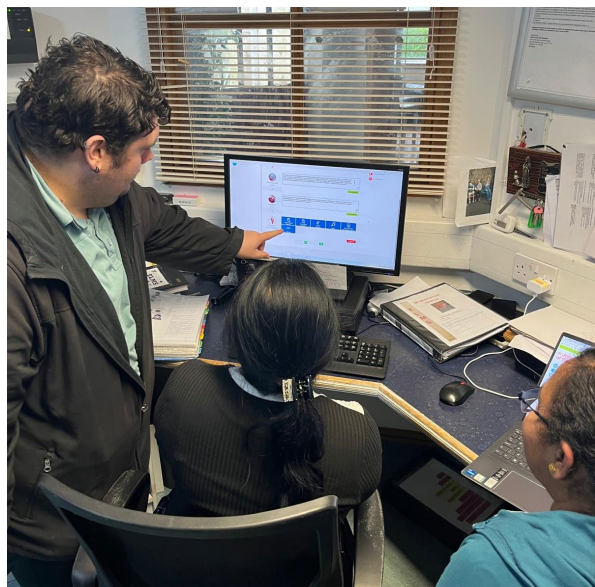
# Co-Design



The Co-Design partnership with TU Dublin is continuing this year with several new digital projects. Co-designers are working with computer science students to create apps including My Money, FriendSnap, an accessible music app, and Brian's Travel Stuff. This work supports people to share ideas, make design choices, and solve everyday challenges using technology. Co-design helps build confidence, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. It also supports progression by developing new abilities and exploring future pathways in technology and creativity. The projects show how learning and collaboration can support transition into new roles and opportunities.



# DigiCoach supporting Staff



As a paid DigiCoach, Patrick recently supported staff to learn more about using iplanit in everyday practice. He demonstrated key features, shared practical tips, and showed how digital planning tools can support communication, choice, and participation. Staff valued learning directly from Patrick's lived experience and exploring ways to make plans more meaningful for the people they support.

Through this work, Patrick continues to build confidence in supporting others to embrace digital tools. He is developing his skills in coaching both staff and peers, offering encouragement, sharing knowledge, and helping others feel comfortable using technology. His DigiCoach role reflects progression into paid employment and leadership, highlighting how lived experience can strengthen practice while supporting transition into new responsibilities and opportunities.

# CHAT Rights to Reality



Assistive Technology users and supporters from across Ireland travelled to Stillorgan to attend **CHAT AT in Action: From Rights to Reality**, hosted by St John of God Community Services and FreedomTech. The event explored how Assistive Technology (AT) supports people during transitions and life changes, such as starting work, learning new skills, building relationships, and increasing independence.

Through lived experience talks, panel discussions, and interactive demonstration areas, participants experienced how AT can support communication, decision-making, and participation in everyday life. The event also provided opportunities for people to connect, share ideas, and learn from one another.

Jackie, a DigiCoach who attended, online shared: *“Using technology has helped me try new things and feel more confident when changes happen in my life.”*

The day highlighted how access to AT can support confidence, progression, and meaningful inclusion during times of transition.



# Understanding AI

An AI Survey was shared this month to understand how people are using Artificial Intelligence and what supports may be needed. The survey invited people to share their views, experiences, and interests in AI. This feedback will help plan future learning opportunities and resources. Taking part in surveys supports progression by encouraging people to express opinions and influence future developments. It also supports transition by helping services understand emerging technologies and how people want to engage with them. The survey reflects the importance of listening, choice, and shared decision-making in shaping future digital supports.

## Understanding AI



**<https://www.rixeasysurvey.org/kiosk/aeg5>**

# Healthy Together

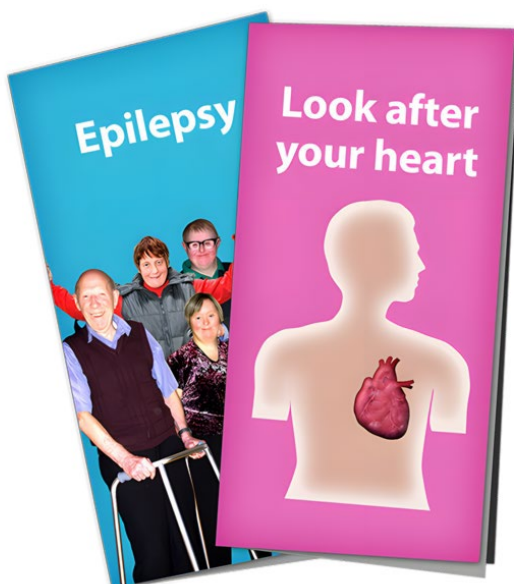
Healthy Together continues to promote wellbeing across services by supporting people to explore healthy routines, physical activity, nutrition, and emotional wellbeing. As part of this work, a new opportunity is being developed for co-designers to take on **paid roles** supporting the creation of accessible health resources.

Co-designers will help shape guides that are easy to understand and useful in everyday life. This supports progression by building skills in sharing ideas, reviewing information, and creating accessible content, while also supporting transition into meaningful paid roles.

**We need your input.** Please complete this short survey to help guide this work:

<https://www.rixeasysurvey.org/kiosk/P8IM>

For more information, contact Rebecca Lynch, Clinical Governance Auditor & Trainer.



# Thank You for Reading...

One last note, I would like to remind you all that the monthly 'What is New Directions?' Online Engage sessions are now pre-recorded and the link to watch the February edition, recorded at the recent Altogether Social Event, is here; <https://vimeo.com/1167343243>



Could everyone please continue to send all your good news stories into me, we love to celebrate all the successes happening across Liffey Region's Day Services.

## Get in touch

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This easy read booklet about New Directions information was made by Donna Hughes.