

Since 1977, Community Training Centres have been involved in innovative training for marginalised groups in Irish Society. FÁS has been closely associated with this development and acknowledges the central role that Community Training Centres have in the delivery of services to marginalised unemployed job seekers, who would otherwise have been excluded from active participation in both the workforce and in society.

Since the introduction of the Social Guarantee in 1985, and of YOUTHREACH in 1988, the main focus of Community Training Centres has been on Early School Leavers. It is intended that Community Training Centres should continue to adapt to meet the ongoing needs of the disadvantaged, including young people under 21 years of age at risk, especially early school leavers. Other young people under the age of 25 who are similarly at risk form the second priority group. This is to enable them compete for jobs, further education and specific skills training.

In the above context, and as agreed locally, Community Training Centres will provide progression type training for such disadvantaged groups and job seekers who have not yet obtained a secure foothold in the labour market. Also, and uniquely, it is accepted that Community Training Centres will work with each learner to help him/her identify and develop to their maximum potential and at their own pace, including the opportunity to have access to and transfer to FÁS mainline courses.

These Operating Standards have been developed by a Working Group representative of the Boards, General Managers, and staff of Community Training Centres, of FÁS Community Services, Employment Services, and Financial Services, and is intended to be used as a working document which forms a common reference point for the operation of Community Training Centres. It attempts to ensure the implementation of best practice and the terms agreed in "Working for Change" in 2003, and the maximum utilisation of resources for the benefit of the Learner.

Where any of the procedures in these Standards require clarification, the Centre Management should in the first instance contact local FÁS management who may then consult others, should it be necessary or useful.

It is proposed to formally review the document in the future, and your experience of implementing the Standards that follow will be invaluable in this exercise.

FÁS acknowledges the significant contribution and assistance given by the following in developing these Standards.

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