

# National Learning Network

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# **Moving Forward: Exploring Education and Employment Opportunities for Adults with Prader-Willi Syndrome**

## **The NLN in Ireland**

### **The NLN Disability Support Service**

Working with the City of Dublin Further Education & Training Colleges



- ➡ The **National Learning Network (NLN)** is the training division of the Rehab Group.
- ➡ NLN student backgrounds are diverse, ranging from those with no formal education, to university educated students, they all share common threads – the need for personalised training and individualised supports.
- ➡ Throughout our 77-year history, we have worked to empower the people who use our services to live lives of their choosing, to participate actively in the workforce, and to take control of their own health and well-being.
- ➡ Each year, we support more than 12,000 people with diverse support needs to achieve their goals and lead fulfilling, self-directed lives.

**There are no formal entry requirements to access any of the courses.**

- Courses are open to people aged 16 and above, welcoming learners of all ages.
- You will hold onto your current financial benefits.



RehabCare Services



National Learning  
Network Centres



Employability and  
Social Enterprise





# What the National Learning Network provides

- Highly flexible system of **continuous intake** throughout the year.
- **Person centred** training and individualised supports by a **multidisciplinary team**.
- **50 training centres** and **70 courses nationwide**. <https://rehab.ie/national-learning-network/our-centres/>
- Every learner progresses at their **own pace**.
- Students achieve **Quality and Qualifications Ireland** awards (QQI 3, 4, 5, ECDL etc.).
- NLN achieves **very high outcomes** with 90% of learners progressing to employment and further / higher education.

**Student Support**



**NOTHING ABOUT ME  
WITHOUT ME**

# Person Centred Planning

All training is within a **Person Centred Planning** approach:

- We have **Monthly Review** meetings with every student
- **Individualised Action Plan** meetings with every student – every 12 weeks
- **Rehabilitative Psychologists** provide Psychological Supports
- **Rehabilitation Officers** support students and act as an advocate
- **Resource Teachers** working to support educational learning needs
- Students take part in work experience and volunteering opportunities
- We identify, involve and strengthen a person's personal support network (Circle of Support)



**Person Centred Planning** can be defined as a way of discovering:

- How a person wants to live their life
- What is required to make that possible

The overall aim of Person Centred Planning is “Good Planning, leading to positive changes in people’s lives and services” (Ritchie et al, 2003).



# The NLN Team involved in the Person Centred Planning Process

## **Within the National Learning Network:**

Centre teams are responsible for implementing Person Centred Plan's in line with the students individual needs.

In partnership with everyone we work with, each staff member supports every student.

## **Examples:**

- **Project Coordinator:** QQI assessment training, personal planning and support.
  - **Rehabilitative Psychologist:** Providing rehabilitative supports as needed.
  - **Rehabilitation Officer:** Acting as an advocate with rehabilitative support.
  - **Learning Support Teachers:** Overseeing individual learning plans as needed.
  - **Community supports:** External support agency support can be built in around a students individual needs.
  - **Training Centre Manager:** For the coordination of all training and supports in line with the students needs.
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# Person Centred Training A Students Journey

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1. **Engagement**
  2. **Personalised assessment, guidance and planning**
  3. **Building personal skills and appetite for work**
  4. **On-going personalised support**
  5. **Supporting the transition to employment or further / higher education**
  6. **Sustaining employment** through employee and employer supports

## RESULTS

- **Improved** personal quality of life
- **Reduced** dependence on state benefits
- **Increased** labour market participation





# Why is a holistic, interdisciplinary training approach important?

- ☞ So all of the service supports the person
- ☞ The person is the expert in their own life
- ☞ It is nothing about me, without me
- ☞ Would you accept anything less?

Person Centred Planning requires a flexible and responsive approach to meet a person's needs and changing circumstances, guided by the principles of good practice, rather than a standard procedure. (Sanderson, 2000)

**NOTHING  
ABOUT ME  
WITHOUT  
ME**

Leading Together,  
Not Alone.

# NLN Course Handout

- ☞ Details of all courses and locations within the Dublin area.
- ☞ Details of all courses/locations nationwide: [www.nln.ie](http://www.nln.ie)  
<https://rehab.ie/national-learning-network/our-centres/>
- ☞ The training meets the needs of the person, not the other way round.
- ☞ The Person Centred Supports are directed by the student with a whole team approach.



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aq0Hj\\_gJNSA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aq0Hj_gJNSA)

EDUCATION

GOALS

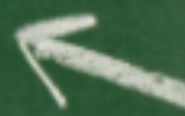
SKILLS

CAREER

VALUES

VISION

INTERESTS



# General Enquiries



01 205 7200



You can also email: [info@nlm.ie](mailto:info@nlm.ie)

**Handout with details of all Dublin NLN Training Centres and DSS business cards is available.**



# NLN Disability Support Service

Working with the City of Dublin Further Education & Training Colleges



# NLN Disability Support Service

- The NLN Disability Support Service originally developed from a European Union Horizon project organised between the National Learning Network Ballyfermot, and Ballyfermot College of Further Education (CFE) in 1995.
- This project supported a group of students with additional support needs to access a Media Studies course in Ballyfermot CFE.
- In response to feedback from the students, the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (now gone) and the National Learning Network decided to pilot a Disability Support Service (DSS) beginning in March 2001.





## **City of Dublin Further Education & Training Colleges**

**April 2025:** The City of Dublin ETB (Education and Training Board) launched its new **City of Dublin FET College**.

The City of Dublin FET College is Ireland's largest Further Education and Training provider, serving over 30,000 learners (approx. 12,000 full-time, 18,000 part-time) across four main campuses and 30+ locations.

The colleges are made up of four main campuses, with learning in more than 30 locations across the city:

- **City of Dublin FET College Northwest Campus**
- **City of Dublin FET College Northeast Campus**
- **City of Dublin FET College Southwest Campus**
- **City of Dublin FET College Central Campus**

MAKING THE SHIFT FROM STUDENT ENGAGEMENT TO  
**EMPOWERMENT**



Students meet the **Disability Support Officer** to register and supports are agreed in line with the students individual needs. Individual Training Plans are developed for every student to support their college journey.

**Colleges supported from 2023:**

City of Dublin FET College Ballyfermot

City of Dublin FET College Cathal Brugha

City of Dublin FET College Dhúlaigh

City of Dublin FET College Íde

City of Dublin FET College Inchicore

City of Dublin FET College Pearse

City of Dublin FET College Plunket

City of Dublin FET College Whitehall

City of Dublin FET College Ballsbridge

City of Dublin FET College Crumlin

City of Dublin FET College Liberties

City of Dublin FET College Rathmines

# Student Support

## Disability Support Officers

Coordinate the support service with students, college and external support staff.

## In the Colleges

NLN Disability Support Officers work with multidisciplinary support teams in the colleges.

We support students who are having either a temporary or ongoing difficulty in their college journey.

Students who register with the service meet with the **Disability Support Officer** to discuss potential supports so that they can get the most out of their education.

The **Recommendations for Educational Support** (Individual Training Plan) form is shared with the college staff.

The relevant supports are put in place based on the recommendations of these training plans:

- Induction, Learning Support Classes, Exam accommodations, Irish Sign Language Interpreters, Academic Personal Assistants and Transport.



# NLN's Disability Support Service: Supporting Student Success



## Open Door Drop-In Service

For **students already registered** with NLN Disability Support Service (DSS), or in the process of registering.

- **No need for an appointment** – Students can drop in anytime for support.
- An 'open door' for **advice and guidance** throughout the term.

# Solution Focused

## **Students start courses with their support needs identified**

Meetings with college staff to highlight the individual supports needed can be arranged.

## **Students taking part in learning support classes**

The DSS team support students and encourage participation or to reorganise supports.

## **Exam accommodations and changing needs**

Exam accommodations are discussed/agreed and then reviewed with students as the academic year progresses.

## **External support staff availability (i.e. Personal Assistants, ISL Interpreters, Transport)**

We organise support staff from an external agency and a Rehab partner company.

This includes taxis (support need dependent) across three transport companies.

## **Retention of students on courses**

We provide ongoing support to help students transition into college and remain engaged throughout their college journey.



# NLN Disability Support Service

- There is a year on year increase in the number of students with additional support needs starting college.
- The Disability Support Officers support the students in line with their individual needs.
- The retention of students on courses throughout the academic year is of the utmost importance.
- One to one (in-person, phone, MS Teams) meetings support students throughout their journey.
- Working with the college staff to enhance the Disability Support Service is essential to the advancement of the service.
- We work in a whole team approach to support students and staff throughout all the colleges.
- We support students at every stage of their journey, from transition over the summer, through induction, exams and towards graduation.



# THANK YOU!

