

GRADUATE PROGRAMME TO MENTOR THOSE WITH DISABILITIES

The Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) has partnered with the Willing Able Mentoring (WAM) Programme to recruit graduates with disabilities across Ireland for a variety of roles within several participating local authorities – Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Kerry and Waterford – in areas such as Human Resources, Climate and Environment, Community and Sport, Communications and ICT.

According to Census data from 2016, the employment rate of disabled people was about half of the rate for those without disabilities (36.5 per cent versus 72.8 per cent). Disabled people in Ireland continue to face significant gaps in employment, compared to people who do not have a disability.

The WAM work placement programme works to close the gap by supporting graduates with disabilities in the transition to the workforce, and by working with employers to ensure their recruitment practices are accessible and inclusive.

The partnership was co-ordinated by Jane Brophy, LGMA's Local Government Organisational Support Manager, who said, "Equality, diversity and inclusion are core values of the local government sector. The LGMA and local authorities are delighted to participate in the WAM scheme and to offer opportunities for graduates with a disability to gain valuable experience at the heart of local government while developing their careers and making a real difference for their communities and country."

RANGE OF AREAS AND DISCIPLINES
She added that the

positions available demonstrate the breadth of roles available in the local government sector. "These roles span a whole range of areas and disciplines, including emerging and exciting areas such as climate action, communications, active travel, sport and community development."

Caroline McGrotty, AHEAD's Employment Manager, said: "AHEAD is delighted to be working with various local authorities across Ireland to offer fixed term, fully paid, graduate level work placements for people with disabilities.

"This partnership will hopefully lead to greater inclusion and awareness as to the

recruitment and retention of people with disabilities in addition to enabling local authorities to meet their commitments, as set out in the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities.

Graduates with a qualification of NFQ Level 6 and above and who meet the eligibility criteria should visit www.ahead.ie/ for information on all the roles available and details on how to apply.

HOW THE WAM PROGRAMME WORKS
AHEAD, founded in 1988, is an independent non-profit organisation working to create inclusive environments



Companies become WAM Leaders when they offer paid placements or internships for graduates with disabilities.

in education and employment for people with disabilities. It established the Willing Able Mentoring (WAM) in 2005 and is currently funded by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP).

The Willing Able Mentoring (WAM) work placement programme aims to promote access to the labour market for graduates with disabilities and to build the capacity of employers to integrate disability into the mainstream workplace.

There are two aspects to WAM – the Employer Network and the WAM Placement:



At the start of the placement process, employers meet with WAM to discuss the potential role available, which must be ring-fenced for graduates with disabilities through the programme.

*** The Employer Network**

is made up of WAM Leaders and the WAM Community. WAM Leaders are companies which offer placements for graduates with disabilities while the WAM Community is for employers who want to keep in touch with WAM by attending events and training.

offline training programmes which form part of the placement process.

Since 2005 the WAM programme has provided over 550 placements for graduates with disabilities in some of Ireland’s largest

companies. It worked with a wide network of employers in 2020-2021, such as Bank of Ireland, Irish Life, Dell, Public Jobs, Salesforce, Central Bank of Ireland, Bank of America, ESB, Enterprise, NTMA, UCD, PepsiCo, Diageo, VMWare and GSK.

*** WAM Placements:** These full-time roles, which must be for a minimum of six months, are mainstream graduate level placements. They offer an opportunity for the employer to gain from an enthusiastic, skilled employee while the graduate gains work experience relevant to their qualification. This is underpinned by the support of WAM’s online and

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF WAM PLACEMENT PROCESS

- Employers meet with WAM to discuss the potential role available, which must be ring-fenced for graduates with disabilities through the programme.
- WAM undertakes all advertising on the WAMWorks Database. Graduates must apply for the role via this database. For details visit www.ahead.ie/wamworks
- Employers conduct all CV screening and interviewing in line with their mainstream practices ensuring reasonable accommodation is put in place for graduates who have specified them. AHEAD can provide disability equality or pre-interview training if required.
- When successful candidates are identified by the employer, WAM undertakes a Needs Assessment process to identify any workplace supports required by the graduate in line with the Employment Equality Act.
- WAM provides pre-placement training both face-to-face and online with the graduate, manager and mentors prior to the commencement of all placements.
- WAM supports all parties involved in the placement process from the beginning of the placement until its completion.

For further details visit <https://www.ahead.ie/wam> and for current WAM opportunities visit <https://www.ahead.ie/currentopportunities>.



Since 2005, the programme has provided over 550 work placements for graduates with disabilities in some of Ireland’s largest companies.

Join the World of Work with #WAMWorks
Mentored, paid work for graduates with disabilities