

The Laois/Offaly Leader



*A monthly newsletter published by Offaly Centre for
Independent Living Ltd/Offaly Personal Assistant Services Ltd.*

This newsletter is available online and in large font

January/February 2014



* A note from the Editor:

* Welcome to the first 2014 edition of
* 'The Laois/Offaly Leader'. I hope you
* enjoy it and that you find some of the
* content entertaining and useful.



* At present it looks as though 2014 will be a very busy
* year for OCIL Ltd and OPAS Ltd. During the month of
* January a number of our Personal Assistants started
* a course in Infection Control, The Offaly Leader
* Forum has already met twice since Christmas to
* discuss an agenda for the coming year. Some ideas
* include an access audit and various fundraising
* initiatives. For more information, please email
* offalyleaderforum@hotmail.com. We are hoping to
* set up a Leader Forum in Laois in the coming months,
* so watch this space!

* As always, I am looking for contributions to future
* editions of the newsletter, so please feel free to email
* your comments and ideas to sarah@ocil.ie.



DFI Launches Report, 'Access to Life'

A new report entitled 'Access to Life: Personal Assistant Services in Ireland and Independent Living by People with Physical and Sensory Disabilities' has been released by the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI). This report highlights Leaders' expectations of the Personal Assistant Service, as well as the fear of the service being withdrawn.. Leaders

also feel that the Personal Assistant Service is becoming too medicalised,

According to the report, Leader identified the distinguishing features of a Personal Assistant as follows:

- (a) Leaders' needs are assessed against their legitimate expectation of Independent Living;
- (b) Leaders choose their PAs with the depth of involvement in recruitment decided by them;
- (c) In selecting PAs, Leaders have access to people who respect the Independent Living ethos and are able and willing to work with them in this way;
- (d) Leaders decide on tasks and times of the PA service to meet their specific needs;
- (e) The Leader's capacity to manage and their right to privacy are respected;
- (f) Leaders have choices about the organisation of the PA service, including the option of Direct Payment.
- (g) Leaders get the preparation and support to fulfil their responsibilities well.





23 Work Placement Opportunities

now available for

Graduates with Disabilities/Specific Learning Difficulties in

The Civil Service

If you are a graduate with a disability/specific learning difficulty seeking valuable work experience, the AHEAD WAM (Willing Able Mentoring) Programme, which offers a six month, paid, mentored work placement, may be the opportunity you have been waiting for.



Applications are currently being sought for a wide variety of positions across the Civil Service based around Ireland.

Applicants must have a **primary honours degree, at least Level 8** on the National Qualification Framework and **must be a citizen of the European Economic Area.**

Candidates interested in applying must go to www.ahead.ie/wam

OCIL Ltd & OPAS Ltd are currently working on a policy on Child Protection in order to be compliant with a HSE Policy entitled 'Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children'. This policy will promote the safety of any child that an employee may encounter in the work environment, as well as stating the role of all concerned in reporting concerns about a child's safety or welfare.

This policy will focus on the relationship between employees, parents and their children, and what steps should be taken to safeguard children from abuse. Implementing this policy will ensure that OCIL Ltd & OPAS Ltd continues to provide a high quality of service to Leaders. Training in the Child Protection Policy for Personal Assistants will take place later in the year. Watch this space for further details..



For information on how to get a Parking Disc, please contact the IWA Driving Section, Clane, Co. Kildare on 045 893094. More information is available from www.iwa.ie. You will need to have a Primary Medical Cert as part of your application—if you are in Offaly you can contact Carol Meacle on 057 9341301.



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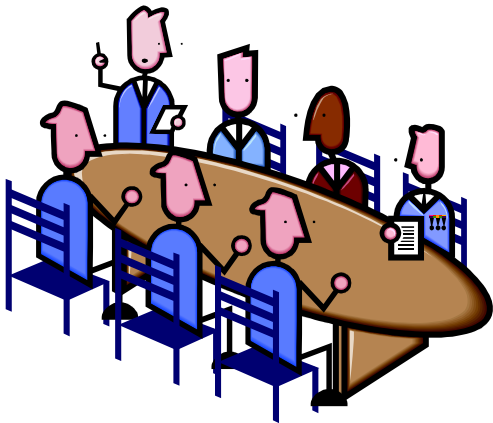
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Update on the Offaly Leader Forum:

The Offaly Leader Forum reconvened after the Christmas break on Friday, 17th January 2014.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the concept of a Leader Forum, the role of the Offaly Leader Forum is to ensure that the Leader has a voice both in OCIL Ltd/OPAS Ltd and the wider community. One of its primary functions is to ensure that Leaders do not become isolated from one another and to organise opportunities for Leaders to meet up with each other.

The Offaly Leader Forum is currently devising a plan for 2014 and would like to invite Leaders from both Laois and Offaly to offer their input into what they would like to do this year. You can email your comments and suggestions to the Forum's new email address, offalyleaderforum@hotmail.com.



Finally, the Offaly Leader Forum would like to sincerely thank all of the shops and businesses who supported their 'Fashion Show With a Difference' in November 2013. The project was very well executed and each and every member of the Forum did outstanding work. Well done to all

involved!

The members of the Offaly Leader Forum are: Catherine Molloy (Chairperson), Emmet Grogan (Vice Chairperson), Sarah Fitzgerald



**.'Somebody to Love'
Documentary on RTE 1
on Monday 17th
February**



Independent Film makers Anna Rodgers and Zlata Filipovic visited the Offaly Centre for Independent Living Ltd last year in search of participants for their upcoming documentary, 'Somebody to Love.' Throughout 2013, the two girls toured the country and gathered different stories about people with disabilities who were looking for love or who had found love and the physical and attitudinal barriers that exist for people with physical and intellectual disabilities in twenty-first century Ireland.

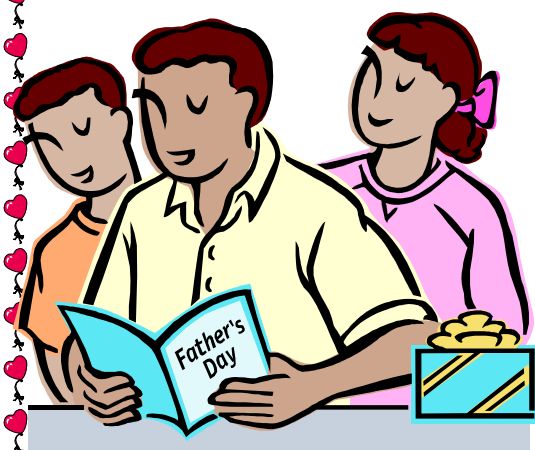
The programme will document the stories behind five completely different scenarios, all of which deal with relationships and sexuality in some way. It particularly highlights the different obstacles to love when disability

becomes a factor in a relationship, and how Irish society needs to be more accepting of everyone's desire to find love,

Leader and OCIL Ltd Researcher and PRO Sarah Fitzgerald will be telling her story about her relationship with her husband JP.

Both JP and Sarah have

Cerebral Palsy and are proud parents of a two-year-old daughter. Central to their story is their struggle to maintain their relationship while trying to prove to the



Attention Laois Leaders!

Sarah Fitzgerald will shortly be contacting Leaders in Laois to try and establish a Laois Leader Forum. If you are interested in becoming involved in the Laois Leader Forum, please contact Sarah at sarah@ocil.ie for more



Offaly Centre for Independent Living Ltd/Offaly Personal Assistant Services Ltd,

Clonminch Road, Tullamore, Co, Offaly.

Phone 057 9322832, Fax 057 936031,

Website www.offalycil.ie

Email: sarah@ocil.ie

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