

Tallaght EQUAL Assists

Promoting the status of caring in Irish Society



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Review of the projects work 2005 - 2007

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This *Review of the work between 2005 to 2007 of Tallaght EQUAL Assists* provides a comprehensive picture of the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project which was funded through the second phase of the EU Equal Programme. The Review provides information about the work of the Project and presents an important perspective in relation to its effectiveness and impact.

Around the start of the new century a number of statutory, community and voluntary organisations working in Tallaght became increasingly interested to find ways to respond to the growing demand for care services in Tallaght. Their interest was linked to an awareness of the growing need for quality care to support or substitute for family carers, both at home and in care settings. They were also aware that the provision of quality services is linked to the skills, competence and professionalism of the people providing the services.

The Equal Programme provided a focus and, crucially, the financial support to enable them to progress this interest and to make an important practical contribution to the developing an understanding of caring as a valuable career. The challenge, as in all short term projects, was to be sufficiently focused to achieve measurable outcomes while being innovative, creative and optimising the contribution of partners at the project, national and transnational level.

The Review provides important evidence that the project made significant progress in relation to its key objectives. This would not have been possible without the vision, enthusiasm and commitment of the members of the Development Partnership. Their contribution to the project made the job of coordination easy. The project gained substantially from its transnational partnership. Here also a commitment to partnership working and a commitment to contribute to achieving social change made the transnational work challenging and productive.

Successful projects need skilled and enthusiastic managers. Everyone involved with Tallaght Equal Assists is really appreciative of the work of Eleanor O'Brien the Project Coordinator and of June Finn the Project Administrator. I would like to record my personal thanks to them both and to other colleagues in Tallaght Partnership, particularly Anne Biddulph, for their contribution to the Project.

Finally I wish to thank Finbar McDonnell of Hibernian Consulting, the author of this Review, for his work as the Project Evaluator. He, and his colleagues, managed with grace the complex role of encouraging, questioning and clarifying the process and outcomes of a project which I consider was timely and relevant.

Anna Lee

Chairperson of Tallaght EQUAL Assist

Executive Summary



Pictured: Minister for Innovation Policy, Michael Aherm TD with Eleanor O'Brien Tallaght EQUAL Assists Co-ordinator

The Tallaght EQUAL Assists Project

Tallaght EQUAL Assists is one of 22 projects that were funded in Ireland between 2005 and 2007 under the EU EQUAL programme. This relatively small programme aimed to fund new ideas and innovations in areas linked to the European Social Fund. The aim was to disseminate learning arising from the projects so that this would benefit mainstream policies and practices in Ireland.

The Tallaght EQUAL Assists project had a budget of €0.8m and involved 21 organisations working together, led by Tallaght Partnership. The organisations involved included the HSE, Tallaght Hospital, FÁS, the County Dublin VEC and SIPTU, as well as a wide range of community organisations and care-related organisations from Tallaght.

Changing Policy Framework in relation to Care

The project was put together in 2005 in the context of a rapidly changing policy context in relation to care. Trends affecting care policy not just in Ireland but across the OECD include falling fertility rates, an ageing population, more emphasis on care for people with disabilities, an increase in female labour force participation and changing family structures. These trends combine to generate (a) a growing number of people in need of care and (b) a falling number of people providing unpaid care.

Given these trends, care has become a major issue of public policy. Previously, the role of caring was seen as largely a family responsibility. Carers are now important in maintaining a sustainable, long-term health care system.

In Ireland, census data shows that the number of paid carers ('care assistants and attendants') increased from 7,500 in 1996 to 20,200 in 2002, to 33,700 in 2006. This represents an increase of 450% in ten years. In addition, there is a large number of unpaid carers in Ireland, some 160,000 in 2006. Most carers in Ireland are women, who constitute 90% of paid carers and 62% of unpaid carers.

In the past decade, there have been attempts to put in place a 'new infrastructure of care' in Ireland, to use a phrase of the NESC. While this work is continuing under the *Towards 2016* national agreement, elements of the new infrastructure that have emerged are:

- An increase in social welfare benefits for carers, in recognition of the importance of their role;
- More flexible benefits, to allow carers work part-time in the (paid) labour market;
- Attempts to provide greater respite support and improved information for carers;
- Greater involvement by FÁS, FETAC and others in providing accredited training for people wishing to develop a career in care;

- More flexible supply of care, drawing on public, private and community service providers;
- Emphasis on seeing care in a context of work life balance and interventions to support people in balancing their work and home commitments;
- Moves by the HSE to have fewer people receiving institutional care with more people receiving community-based care;
- More HSE employed carers – as Home Helps; Family Support Carers;
- Health Care Assistants and Personal Assistants.

The June 2007 Programme for Government contained a commitment to develop a National Carers' Strategy. There is also an ongoing effort to integrate cross-departmental interventions in relation to care and to provide carers with an input into the policy making process.

This context meant that the pilot actions of the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project in relation to the care sector were timely.

Work of Tallaght EQUAL Assists

Work undertaken by the project fell into four areas.

1. Increasing the Status of Care Work as a Career Option.

Despite the explosion of employment in Ireland in relation to care work, there is little information available to people considering a career in the care sector. To address this gap, the project developed a DVD and associated pack on working in the care sector, supported by a dedicated website. The DVD was distributed in early 2007 to seven secondary schools in the Tallaght area. It was also used with young people outside of school contexts, e.g. on Youthreach courses and in youth clubs. Due to positive feedback being received from teachers and the young people who watched and discussed the DVD, the pack was distributed to all second-level schools in the County Dublin VEC area in September 2007.

2. Modified Training Courses for People taking up Care Work.

Many people working in the care sector have no formal qualifications. However, as the sector grows and becomes more formal, there is an increased requirement for accredited carers. For example, draft national quality guidelines for residential care settings for older people (August 2007) state: "All newly recruited care staff (should) commit to undertake appropriate training to FETAC Level 5 or equivalent within one year of taking up employment", and experienced staff should also be encouraged to obtain such qualifications.

Tallaght EQUAL Assists organised and delivered two FETAC Level 5 Community Care courses in 2006 and 2007. One was organised on a full-time and one on a part-time basis. While this course had already

been developed, the innovations of the project were in relation to the people attracted to the course and the extra supports provided to them. There were significant efforts to attract people already working as carers, without qualifications, as well as to attract people from groups under-represented in care work. Extra practical supports, e.g. in relation to childcare or transport, as well as learning supports around assignments, literacy issues, language issues etc. were provided to participants. Some 25 people completed the courses and graduated in November 2007, of whom 13 had taken the extra supports provided.

3. Attracting People from Under-represented Groups into Care Work.

In relation to the groups targeted, the project was most successful in relation to non-Irish people, where there was considerable interest in care work. There was limited success in relation both to men and to members of the Traveller community, with non-Irish men being more enthusiastic than Irish men, and Traveller women showing a good degree of interest but facing 'welfare to work' traps in taking up part-time training courses. Least interest was expressed by young people who had left school early, where there was a low interest expressed in returning to a formal education or training course at this point in their lives.

4. Exploring Idea of a Social Care Agency or Brokerage.

A substantial feasibility study was undertaken by the project in 2007, which asked if the demand existed in the Tallaght/Dublin South West area for a social care agency and, if so, how such an agency should be organised. In relation to the potential demand, the answer was positive. In relation to organisation of the agency, three models were reviewed and the preferred option was identified as being a social enterprise one, where the agency would link to an existing provider of similar services, with a similar philosophy, to reduce start-up costs and benefit from existing learning. This idea was being explored further in late-2007.

Organisation and Transnational Work of Project

The organisations involved in the project (the 'Development Partnership') worked well as a unit, with good involvement by most of the 21 organisations throughout the life of the project, including through different sub-committees established to manage day-to-day project actions.

The project was about 10% under-spent at the end of its lifetime. This appeared to arise from good management of resources (in particular savings in relation to overseas travel) and the late appointment of a coordinator, rather than from non-delivery of expected outputs.

The project had partner projects, as do all EQUAL projects, in a number of other parts of the EU: Italy, Spain and Northern Ireland. There was some useful exchange of information and comparison of models with the Italian and Spanish partners but their contexts were seen as quite different to that in Tallaght so the projects did not move to developing joint actions. There was deeper

cooperation with the Belfast partner, where there was perceived to have been very useful two-way learning, supplemented by an exchange visit by young people engaged in care work during 2007.

Taking Forward the Project Learning

Tallaght EQUAL Assists met its different obligations as an EQUAL project and incorporated the different EQUAL principles into its work. It also delivered on its specific project objectives, as set out in its Action Plan of 2005.

Outputs arising from the work of the project, potential learning points, and mainstream organisations to which they may be of interest, are shown below.

Table 1: Potential Learning and Possible Target Organisations for Mainstreaming with Possible Learning Opportunity	
<i>Outputs and Potential Learning Points</i>	<i>Mainstream Organisations with Possible Learning Opportunity</i>
Objective 1: Increasing the Status and Profile of Caring as a Career	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVD in relation to pursuing a career in care work developed and used in schools in Tallaght and in the wider South Dublin VEC area, and with young people outside of school settings • Information available on the views of teachers and young people to the DVD and pack • Information on associated website as a tool to provide information to young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept. of Education and Science – for possible distribution to all second level schools, to courses for early school leavers and to other lifelong learning courses (perhaps having revised the DVD to reflect the national picture) • VECs • Organisations working with young people • FÁS, to provide information for people seeking work or re-skilling • Local Employment Services • Health Services Executive • Carer organisations or organisations representing people who require care
Objective 2: Developing qualification routes for people working as carers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to deliver the FETAC Level 5 Healthcare Support Certificate on a full-time and part-time basis, with extra supports for participants • Information on setting up work placement modules as part of course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VECs and colleges which offer FETAC Level 5 certificate courses • Dept. of Education and Science • Health Services Executive • FÁS and Local Employment Services • Carer organisations or organisations representing people who require care • Dept. of Health and Children • FETAC

Table 1 (Cont'):**Potential Learning and Possible Target Organisations for Mainstreaming with Possible Learning Opportunity****Objective 3: Attracting a diverse group of people into care work**

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Techniques and approaches to reach under-represented groups in relation to care-related training, especially non-Irish workers; men; and members of the Traveller community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FÁS and Local Employment Services • Groups working with immigrants and with Travellers • VECs and colleges funded to run FETAC Level 5 courses • Organisations running courses that aim to train people to become carers • Health Services Executive |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Objective 4: Setting up a social care brokerage

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues in establishing a social care agency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept. of Health and Children • Health Services Executive • Dept. of Social and Family Affairs • Carer organisations or organisations representing people who require care • Politicians/political parties |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

As well as these outputs, the project's work identified a number of policy and practice issues to be addressed. These include: the need for improved career information in Irish secondary schools in relation to care work; the need for ways to include extra personalised 'flanking' supports for people undertaking training courses to ensure these people complete the course successfully; a need to challenge the heavily gendered nature of paid care work in Ireland; an opportunity to engage the Traveller community in care work, for the benefit of that community and to create sustainable Traveller employment; the need for guidelines as to how to challenge racist attitudes on the part of a minority of care recipients; a requirement for more care-related courses at FETAC Levels 3 and 4; and a need for more progression options in terms of education courses for people who have completed Level 5 certificate courses.

The project's work in relation a possible social care agency for Tallaght raises wider issues as regards the desired framework for the future provision of care in Ireland.

Further information in relation to all aspects of the work of the project is available from Tallaght Partnership.

Chapter 01: Introduction



EQUAL is an EU-wide labour market programme that runs from 2000 to 2008. The EQUAL Programme is described as follows by the European Commission¹:

“EQUAL forms part of the European Union strategy to create more and better jobs and to make sure that no one is denied access to these jobs. As the Community Initiative of the European Social Fund, EQUAL is the learning platform that finds new ways of achieving the policy objectives of the European Employment Strategy and Social Inclusion Process.

EQUAL differs from the mainstream European Social Fund programmes in that it is a laboratory to develop new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality in the labour market. EQUAL presents evidence of good practice for these innovative approaches... thus ensuring that the most positive results are adopted and shared across Europe”.

EQUAL funded two rounds of projects to generate these new and innovative ideas and approaches – the first ran from 2002-2005 and the second (under which the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project operates) ran from 2005-2007. EQUAL in Ireland had a budget of €47mn for both rounds, of which €33.9mn was contributed by the ESF, €11mn by national public funding and €2.1mn by the private sector. In the second round of the EQUAL programme in Ireland, some 22 projects were funded. These were chosen for funding, in line with the wider EU EQUAL objectives, because of their potential to generate innovative ideas for Irish policy and practice, which could then be disseminated and mainstreamed.

EQUAL projects in Ireland were required to adhere to a number of principles – they should:

- Emphasise local **partnership** through being organised as ‘Development Partnerships’;
- Link to one ‘pillar’ of the **European Employment Strategy** – these are employability; entrepreneurship; Adaptability: Equal Opportunities and Asylum Seekers;
- Support the **empowerment** and participation of all those involved in the project;

¹ Communication from the European Commission on Round 2 of EQUAL – 31/12/2003 – further information on EQUAL is available at www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal

- Develop or pilot a new or **innovative** idea relating to issues of equality and discrimination in the labour market;
- Have a clear strategy for documenting, **disseminating and mainstreaming** the outputs of the project;
- Form links to, and work as part of, a **transnational** partnership.

1.2 Tallaght EQUAL Assists Project

Tallaght EQUAL Assists is a Development Partnership (DP) that came together to operate an EQUAL project under the Employability pillar, i.e. to “facilitate access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market that must be open to all”. The project focused on care workers and the care sector in Ireland.

The DP for the Tallaght EQUAL Assists Project contained 21 partners, listed in Table 1.1. The project brought together groups with an understanding of employment in the care services from employer and user perspectives; statutory education and training organisations active in the development of career progression paths and vocational education; groups with expertise in assisting people distant from the labour market to access open employment; and with expertise in developing social enterprises. The Designate Partner (Tallaght Partnership) was administratively responsible for project implementation.

Table 1.1**Members of the DP for the Tallaght EQUAL Assists Project**

Designate Partner: Tallaght Partnership

(including Partnership projects, Tallaght LES and the Migrant Women's Network)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co. Dublin VEC • Adelaide & Meath Hospital Dublin incorporating the National Children's Hospital (Tallaght Hospital) • Firhouse Day Activity Centre (CRC) • National Training and Development Institute (NTDI) • Partas (Get Tallaght Working Co-op) • HSE – Dublin South West Community Care Area • Tallaght Citizens Information Centre • Tallaght Volunteer Bureau • Tallaght Intercultural Action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tallaght Travellers Community Development Project • Tallaght Welfare Society • Centre for Independent Living • St Brigid's Home • EVE Holdings Ltd • Irish Wheelchair Association • Cheeverstown House Ltd • Enable Ireland • FAS • Hospitaller Order of St John of God • IMPACT • SIPTU
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In mid-2005, the project prepared a detailed Action Plan for submission to the National Support Structure for EQUAL. This set out four objectives for its project actions:

1. Increase the status and profile of caring as a career, including for school leavers.
2. Develop occupational qualification routes for people working as carers e.g. CE participants working as personal assistants; home helps.
3. Develop entry routes into employment in caring occupations for under-represented groups, specifically men, non-Irish people, members of the Traveller community and early school leavers; Increase the participation of men in caring work; Increase participation routes for ethnic minorities (Traveller community and immigrant population).
4. Explore the potential for a social enterprise brokerage in relation to care services.

In addition to undertaking innovative work in relation to the above areas, the Action Plan said that the project would:

5. Utilise its transnational partnership to transfer learning and best practice.

² Hibernian Consulting would like to thank Eleanor O'Brien, Project Coordinator; June Finn, Project Administrator; and Anna Lee, Chair of the DP, for their help in preparing this review

6. Facilitate the identification of key policy issues and promote the main streaming of the piloted actions.

1.3 Objective and Structure of Review

While an Action Plan was prepared by the project in mid-2005, further planning was necessary in the second half of that year, as well as putting in place the required project personnel. As such, it was early-2006 before actions began to be delivered on the ground.

This review is based on research undertaken during 2006 and 2007 under a formative evaluation process, i.e. a process which has operated in parallel with the life of the project. The review provides an independent report on the work of the project. Section 2 sets out the policy context in which the project operated. Section 3 reviews the idea and structure of the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project; its budget and the work undertaken through its transnational and cross-border partnerships. Section 4 describes and comments on the work of the project vis-à-vis the four core areas where pilot actions were undertaken. Section 5 draws a number of conclusions.

The following inputs supported preparation of this review²:

- Various project documentation, including minutes of DP meetings, minutes of the meetings of the DP Sub-groups and project outputs produced to date;
- Detailed meetings with the Project Co-ordinator on a regular basis during the life of the project;
- Attendance at six DP meetings during 2006 and 2007
- Meetings and discussions with individual DP members who are active in project implementation, including representatives of the Health Services Executive; FÁS; Tallaght Welfare Society; and SIPTU. An opportunity was provided to all DP members to feed into the evaluation;
- Specific survey of DP members in early-2007 as regards the working of the DP and the operation of the EQUAL 'partnership' principle;
- Meeting with the project's transnational partners as part of their visit to Ireland in November 2006;

- Discussions with a number of the instructors involved in delivering the project's training courses;
- Focus groups with participants from both the full-time (8 people) and part-time (13 people) training courses implemented by the project.
- The report is based on information available about the project and its work up to end-October 2007. A draft version of the report was submitted to the DP for comment.

Chapter 02:
Changing Policy Context for Carers



2.1 Elements in Changing Policy Context

Discussion on care work has become increasingly prevalent in the public domain. This has happened for several reasons, including changing demographics, with more older people and (relatively) fewer younger people to care for them; gradually improved services for people with disabilities; changes in the organisation and delivery of health care; changes in labour force participation (especially the growth in female participation) and changes in family structures and relations.

As a result, issues relating to care and carers have moved from being primarily 'private' issues within families to being issues of growing importance in public policy. They have moved from being unpaid, non-market services to increasingly being provided either by the state or indeed by the private sector on a paid basis. These trends have been evident for some years and it was to meet a number of challenges generated by this emerging context for care provision that the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project was developed.

This chapter sets out the background to the changing role of carers in Ireland and some of the policy implications arising³. Sections 2.2 and 2.3 present information on trends affecting care provision both internationally and in Ireland. Section 2.4 presents facts relating to paid and unpaid carers in Ireland and Section 2.5 describes key elements of current Irish policy and of the institutional context. Section 2.6 presents aspects of the current Irish policy debate.

2.2 Changing International Policy Framework

A 1998 OECD report, *A Caring World*, sets out some of the key trends underlying change in OECD countries:

"The demographic challenge to social policy arises from declining fertility and greater longevity ... Ageing has led to an increased demand for care services, compounded to some extent by the growth of independent living among the elderly. Increased labour force participation by women reduces the number of those who traditionally have been the main providers of care".

The focus of the OECD is primarily on economic development issues. In this context, it views care systems in society as important social support systems which need to be maintained in times of change.

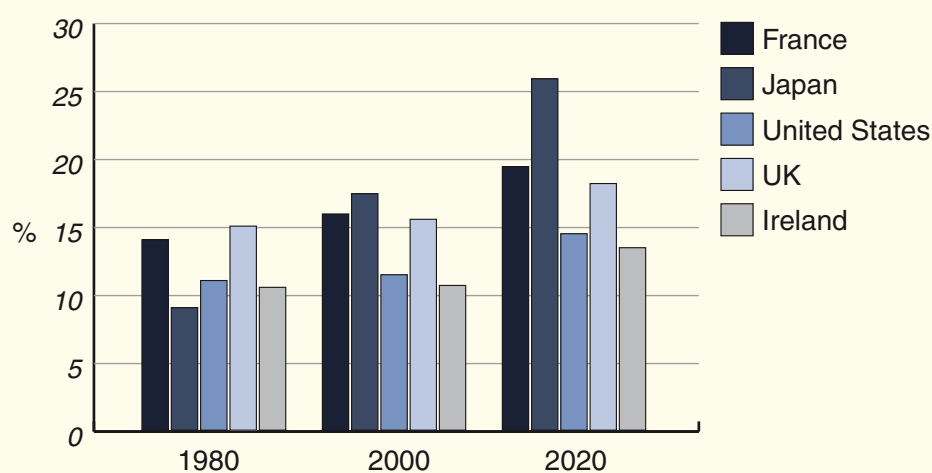
"... the social protection system is an *asset of society*, which needs to be nurtured through adequate investments and by sharing the costs of this investment collectively when benefits accrue to society at large. Achieving sustainable development within each OECD society requires assuring the sustainability of these institutions, *i.e.* preserving their capacity to respond to the needs of citizens, today and in the future, by adapting to changes in the conditions under which these institutions were first established. This requires

³ An extended version of this chapter was published during 2007 by the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project under the title: *Care Works – A Discussion Paper on New Approaches to Train Carers and Provide Care in the Community*

not only assuring the financial sustainability of existing programmes, but also adapting programmes to new constraints, responding to new aspirations of individuals, and balancing new and old demands on social protection systems” (OECD, 2003).

Changing demographics, combined with greater female labour force participation, means that there are older people, illnesses associated with ageing are more common and there are fewer available informal caregivers. Figure 2.1 shows the rise in the proportion of people aged 65 years and over.

Figure 2.1:
Proportion of Population aged 65 Years or More, Selected Countries



Source: OECD, 2006

Figure 2.1 shows that the proportion of the populations of the countries shown that is aged over 65 will rise from between 9-15% in 1980 up to between 13-26% by 2020. This trend is being experienced somewhat more slowly in Ireland (although the trend is present), due to a younger population, reinforced by the inward migration of people of a younger age cohort.

OECD studies show that most caregivers are female. For example, one study on informal caregivers for the elderly (Moise et al, 2004) found that 72% of Australian caregivers were female; with 75% of German caregivers being female. A separate study (by Jenson et al, 2000) on those receiving care allowances found that, in Australia, 60% of such carers were female; the figure was 80% in Austria, with the figures rising to over 95% in France and Germany.

In response to these challenges, OECD countries acknowledge the need for greater recognition of forms of informal and long term care with spending on health and long-term care of prime importance. The OECD also projects that men will become more involved in the delivery of care, citing how over one

third of primary carers in Australia are male. Greater participation in the caring domain by retired people will occur and, in light of an increased need for carers, 'more flexible distribution of work, leisure and care-giving over the life cycle' will be encouraged (OECD, 1999).

Wider OECD trends are reflected in the European Union. Forecasts for the EU population indicate a gradual ageing process. In the UK, for example, this has led to a number of policy developments in recent years:

- The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995 recognised the statutory rights of carers in the UK.
- A National Strategy for Carers, *Caring for Carers*, 1999, identified the growing importance of carers in public policy and attempted to acknowledge the role of carers, by focusing on young carers, the role of employment, provision of information, support (financial and otherwise) and care for carers;
- Carers and Disabled and Disabled Children Act 2000 encompassed greater needs assessment by relevant local authority agencies, enabling them to deliver provision following assessment, provide financial support for carers to assess their own needs, support carers in their roles and support their health and well-being. This provision covered carers aged 16 and above, including non-relatives and those not residing with the person for whom they care.
- Carers Act (Equal Opportunities) 2004 recognised the duty of local authorities to inform carers, and in particular 'hidden' carers, of available services. It stated that carers should have opportunities to participate in education, training and leisure activities.

In summary, a number of trends are evident at an international level:

- changes in the demographic structure of Western societies, with a higher proportion of older people and falling fertility rates, resulting in a growth in dependency rates in society;
- a gradually improving care infrastructure for people with disabilities;
- greater participation by women, the main traditional unpaid providers of care, in the formal labour market.

These changes mean that issues relating to the role of carers and the nature of care are moving from the private sphere of the home/family into the public policy arena. International policy responses to these trends have occurred at different levels but all emphasise a need for greater integration across relevant institutions and a need for recognition of, and enhanced support for, the carer role.

2.3 Context for Carers in Ireland

While care giving in Ireland has traditionally existed largely in a family/home context, the international trends described above are also visible in Ireland.

Demographic changes:

A 2007 study by the Central Statistics Office showed that the number of people in Ireland aged 65 and over had increased by 54,000 in the ten years to 2006. The report forecast that the old dependency ratio (population aged 65 and over as a proportion of the 15-65 age group) will increase from 16% in 2006 to 25% in 2026. (CSO, 2007)

Changes in family structure:

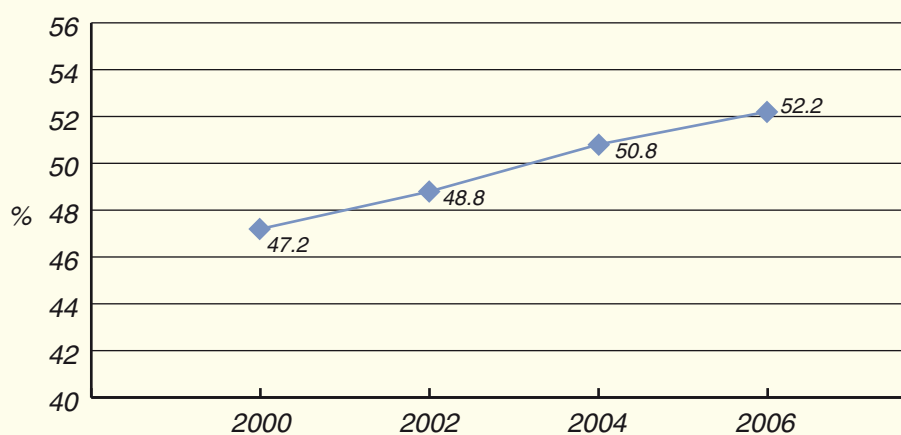
Patterns of household formation point to changes in the structure of the family across the OECD. This is due to greater mobility, a desire for greater independence, higher disposable incomes, fewer children per family, more lone parent families, more couples with no children, more one-person households, and family break-up. Irish census data shows these trends also happening in Ireland, i.e. an increase in household types which may be more likely to require external carers in future years.

Female labour force participation:

Figure 2.2 shows the increase in Irish female labour force participation in recent years.

Figure 2.2:

Rate of Female Participation in Labour Force, 2000-2006



Source: OECD, 2002 and 2006

The trend in Figure 2.2 is expected to continue and a mid-2007 report by FÁS and the ESRI (Lunn et al, 2007) forecast that, by 2012, 44.4% of Irish workers will be female (up from 42.4% in 2005). The rise in women working outside the home has a short term implication for care (as women who might be working as unpaid carers are in paid employment) and long term implications (as younger women who might have become unpaid carers at a later point engage in other careers).

Number of People with Disabilities:

Census data from 2006 shows that some 9.3% of the population (393,785 people) had a disability (up from 322,700 people in 2002). Of the population as a whole, some 9% of males and 9.6% of females had a disability. The likelihood of a person having a disability is linked to age. For example, 4.9% of people aged 15-19 years had a disability in 2006, compared to 11.3% of those aged 50-54 years and 42.3% of those aged 80-84 years. This indicates a link between the requirement for carers by older people and the requirement for carers by people with disabilities⁴.

The 2002 Census showed that 87% of people with disabilities lived in private households in that year, of whom 20% lived alone.

In response to these different trends, there has been more state recognition of the role of carers in recent years, especially through financial support. However, the role of unpaid carers, and of the voluntary sector as an advocate for carers, remains strong.

2.4 Paid and Unpaid Carers in Ireland

A 2005 Equality Authority report, Implementing Equality for Carers, identified four main types of paid carers in Ireland.

Table 2.1:

Main Types of Paid Carers in Ireland

Home Help	Provided in all HSE areas, either directly by the area or through arrangements with voluntary organisations. Services across Ireland vary in scope and amount of service available. They are usually free for medical card holders – charging practice for others varies by area.
Family Support	Provides assistance to families in disadvantaged areas in need of support.
Health Care Assistants	Becoming a core part of the nursing team in the new structuring of Healthcare Education and Training. These carers support the existing staff of a hospital or nursing home with practical nursing care and welfare of patients.
Personal Assistant	Working within voluntary organisations through either their local HSE area or through a CE scheme, these provide an individual service to those who are housebound and in need of assistance (e.g. a person with a disability).

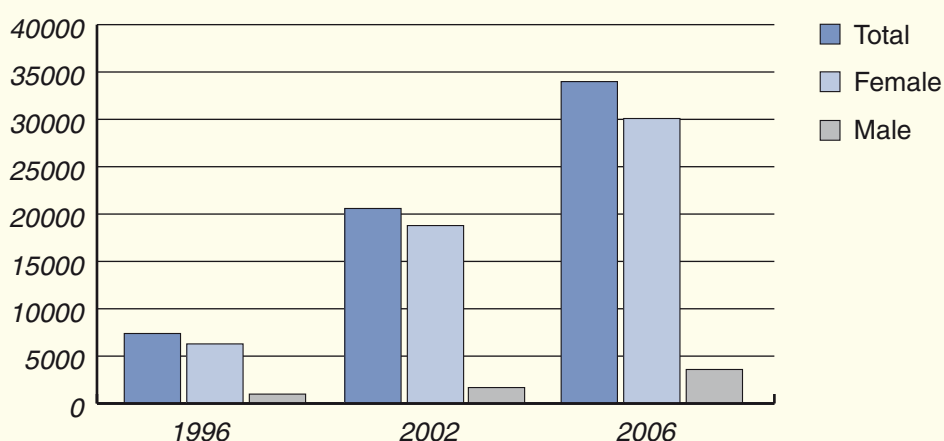
Table 2.1 refers to paid carers. Reports by Garavan et al (2001) and Bacon (2001) found evidence that the demand in Ireland for all four of the above paid types of carer exceeded supply. The Bacon report stated that services needed to increase significantly in quantity and quality. The Equality Authority (2005) stated: “Home care and community care services in Ireland are underdeveloped and demand exceeds supply in most cases”.

⁴ This is particularly true for those in institutional care. A February 2007 study showed that almost 90% of residents in nursing homes have a disability, compared to 30% of those over 65 years of age living in the community. (Irish Times Health Supplement, 20th February 2007)

Under the occupation category of 'Care Assistants and Attendants', Irish census data shows a rapid increase in the number of paid carers in Ireland in the decade to 2006. As Figure 2.3 shows, there were 7,549 people who recorded their occupation as a care assistant or attendant in 1996. This figure more than tripled, to 20,249, in the six years to 2002. By 2006, the figure had increased a further 66%, to 33,711 people. The figure in 2006 was 4.5 times the figure of 1996.

Figure 2.3 also provides a gender breakdown of those people with occupations as care assistants and attendants. It shows that, in 2006, the proportion of those recording their occupation in this way which was female was 90%, compared to 91% in 2002 and 82% in 1996. Thus, while there has been an increase in the number of both male and female carers, the heavily female nature of the occupation has remained unchanged.

Figure 2.3:
Rate of Female Participation in Labour Force, 2000-2006



Source: OECD, 2002 and 2006

Census 2006 asked the following question on unpaid care work: "Do you provide regular unpaid personal help for a friend or family member with a long-term illness, health problem or disability?" The respondent was asked to include problems due to old age. Personal help was defined as including help with basic tasks such as feeding or dressing. People were asked to say how many hours per week this work involved.

The results (CSO, 2007) showed that some 160,917 people aged 15 and over defined themselves as unpaid carers in response to this question. This was 4.8% of the population aged 15 and over. Of those providing unpaid care in 2006:

- Some 100,000 were women and 61,000 were men. This implies a higher proportion of male unpaid carers compared to male paid carers, although men still account for a minority of unpaid carers.
- Women tended to provide somewhat more hours of unpaid care per week. Some 60% of the male unpaid carers provided care for 1-14 hours per week compared to 57% of female carers. Some 23% of male unpaid carers provided care for 43 or more hours per week, compared to 27% of female unpaid carers.

The data on unpaid care work in Ireland shows the very large amount of unpaid work that takes place. Given the trends already discussed, it is likely that the proportion of care work which is unpaid will decrease over time, and the proportion that is paid, and in the formal economy, will increase.

2.5 Policies and Organisations related to Care in Ireland

The provision of care has implications for multiple areas of policy, including the health sector, employment and training agencies, and social welfare payments. There is also an important role played by the voluntary sector, including organisations such as the Carers Association of Ireland, Caring for Carers Ireland, Care Alliance, Crosscare and Age Action Ireland.

In relation to health, the Health Strategy document *Quality and Fairness* (Government of Ireland, 2001) emphasised the importance of the health and wellbeing of carers and care recipients as well as the delivery and uptake of social services, particularly through partnership between carers, the community and the State. The strategy adopted a community care approach and aimed to build a sustainable, integrated system of care in the community while providing support via social welfare payments and more short-term respite periods.

In relation to employment policy, the White Paper on Adult Education in 2000 highlighted the importance of lifelong learning, skill development and back to education incentives for care workers, addressing in particular how education and care commitments can be combined. Awareness of caring as a profession has begun to increase, e.g. through more information for people deciding on their career path.

By 2006, FETAC had accredited a number of care related courses at Level⁵ certificate level. Students are expected to undertake a period of work experience to fulfil course requirements and on completion, certification can be a stepping stone towards diploma and degree based courses. These courses are facilitated by a growing number of educational centres across Ireland and complement schemes such as Youthreach and the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)⁶.

⁵ Research commissioned by the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project on FETAC care-related courses, and on progression options to third level courses, has been published separately by the project

Table 2.2:

Main FETAC Accredited Care-related Courses (2006)

<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Basic Course Units</i>
Care Provision and Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Provision • The Care Worker • Care Practice
Health Care Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Client Care • Using Equipment • Assisting Skills
Care of the Older Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relating to the client • Reflection and Development • Working with others • Working in Care
Care of People with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing Process • Working with the Older Person • Caring for the Older Person with specific needs
Mental Illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of mental health and illness • Working with people suffering with mental illness • Caring for people suffering with mental illness • Environments of care
<i>Source: www.fetac.ie</i>	

FÁS, as the main state training agency, facilitates FETAC certified courses. It also facilitates non exam based traineeships - participants receive a certificate on completion. The main relevant traineeship is Care Assistant (Care for the Elderly), based on a day-time and part-time structure, which adopts a holistic approach to care, looking at personal and professional development as well as wider career planning.

Social welfare payments and benefits are available to Home-based Carers and Health Care Assistants. These include three forms of payment for home-based carers:

- The *Carer's Allowance* is a means tested payment targeted mainly at carers on low income who care on a full time basis.
- The *Carer's Benefit*, introduced in 2000, is a social insurance payment for those who leave employment to care for a person needing full-time care.
- The *Domiciliary Care Allowance* is paid to the carers of children who live at home and who have a severe disability. It is assessed on the means of the child as opposed to the carer.

Within these schemes, there is support through Carer's Leave and the Respite Care Grant. The former, introduced in 2001, allows a worker to leave work on a temporary basis to care for a person needing full time assistance.

⁶ Back to Education Initiatives (BTEI) targets young people and adults who may not have completed secondary education. Extra BETI courses are facilitated under Youthreach, PLC, Traveller and VTOS

In general, social welfare benefits for carers have increased by above-inflation amounts in recent years, and carers have been given more flexibility in relation to part-time working.

2.6 Changing Legislative and Policy Situation in Ireland

A number of pieces of legislation and policy initiatives in recent years have related to care and carers.

As regards legislation, the *Carers Leave Act 2001* allowed carers to provide care in the home without affecting their employment position. The *Employment Equality Acts of 1998 and 2004* had a broader remit in that they aimed to combat discrimination (on nine grounds) in the labour market. Primary care falls under the family status ground although other grounds can be relevant in terms of equality of treatment, protection from gender discrimination and harassment, indirect discrimination, and discrimination based on age.

Under the *Sustaining Progress* national social partnership agreement, a *National Framework Committee for Work-Life Balance* focused on the need to maintain a balance between work and other commitments outside of work. Under this initiative, carers were identified for their commitments outside of formal employment. This was supported by IBEC and ICTU. Also under *Sustaining Progress*, a *Special Initiative on Care* recognised that a 'strategic approach to providing an infrastructure of care services should seek to achieve the proper balance between the respective roles of families, the State, the private sector and voluntary organisations' (Government of Ireland, 2003). This work included a review of longer-term issues relating to care, exploring different models of care (including providers, regulatory and standards issues etc.), addressing manpower and physical infrastructure issues and identifying options for longer-term funding of care provision.

In its report, *NESC Strategy 2006: People, Productivity and Purpose*, the NESC reiterated the importance of an efficient infrastructure of care, to involve:

- a sustainable system of care accessible for all,
- state financial support for carers in an equitable manner,
- wider cultural changes towards carers and the caring role to encourage a more gender-balanced approach to caring responsibilities and
- greater public investment in support of carers as part of a 'social wage'.

Implementing Equality for Carers (The Equality Authority, 2005) argued that the state continues to maintain a residual response to the role and support of carers and care is therefore still primarily seen as a family responsibility. The

Authority said that a more systematic, supportive approach was needed by the State. There should be a higher status for carers, identification of carers and referral to services, access to respite care, care management, health promotion, information, training and education and addressing of gender issues.

The **National Economic and Social Forum** (NESF, 2005) report, *Care for Older People*, referred to the importance of informal carers in providing long-term care for older people at home. *Drawing on a Strategic Policy Framework for Equality Issues* (2002), the NESF concluded that the overall aim in achieving equality to care was to 'develop a public focus in care, design supports to enrich caring and respond to the needs of carers and dependents' (NESF, 2005).

As part of **Towards 2016**, the 2006 Social Partnership Agreement, the government agreed to develop, by end-2007, a National Carers' Strategy, to focus on supporting informal and family carers in the community. Further commitments include

- improved training for carers through the coming together of the Dept of Social and Family Affairs, FÁS and the Dept of Enterprise, Trade and Employment,
- a structured policy consultation process facilitated by the Dept of Social and Family Affairs, involving carer groups, relevant departments and agencies,
- an increase in income limits for the Carers' Allowance and the grant rate for the respite care,
- a continuation of the work of the National Framework Committee for Work Life Balance Policies to facilitate work and family life,
- further review of the Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit and Respite Care Grant while considering the recommendations of relevant policy reports such as the Equality Authority Report, 'Implementing Equality for Carers',
- the possibility of improving carer support services and economic and social inclusion supports for carers who have completed their caring duties and
- continuation of support for awareness and information campaigns.

The June 2007 **Programme for Government** states the following:

"In the next five years, the Government will:

- further increase eligibility for the Carer's Allowance;

- double the non-means-tested Respite Care Grant to €3,000 per person cared for;
- extend the National Fuel Allowance Scheme to cover eligible carers;
- ensure a National Carers' Strategy focusing on supporting informal and family carers in the community will be developed by the end of 2007. There will be appropriate consultation with the social partners."

Chapter 03:

Organisation and Transnational Work of Project





Pictured: Members of CoFE attending the Transnational meeting in Tallaght

An innovative feature of the EQUAL programme is that projects are implemented, not by one organisation, but by a group of organisations coming together in a 'Development Partnership'. The European Commission says that a DP should "bring together interested actors, with relevant competence, who will co-operate to develop an integrated approach to multi-dimensional problems". This emphasis on partnership as a way of implementing the pilot actions is intended to create 'joined-up' approaches to finding solutions to challenges from the start.

The 21 members of the Tallaght EQUAL Assists DP were listed in Chapter 1. One indication of their commitment to the project was a good, and sustained, level of attendance at the two-monthly DP meetings, with an average of 12-15 DP members attending each meeting.

To investigate the issue of partnership further, a specific e-mail survey of DP members was undertaken in Spring 2007 by the independent evaluator. A total of 12 questionnaires were returned and the responses are shown in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. In both tables, the following legend applies:

- 1 = Very poor, very negative
- 2 = Has been problematic, broadly negative
- 3 = Good aspects and Bad Aspects
- 4 = Has been good, broadly positive
- 5 = Very good, very positive

Table 3.1:

**Views of Tallaght EQUAL Assists DP Members on Partnership –
No. of Partners choosing each possible response**

	1	2	3	4	5
What is your view on the information you receive in relation to the ongoing work of the project?				3	9
What is your view on the organisation and running of the meetings of the DP?				1	10
What is your view on the opportunities you receive to feed in the views of your organisation into the ongoing work of the project?			1	4	6
To what extent has the DP managed to create a genuine sense of co-operation and partnership between different organisations?			2	4	6
To what extent do you feel the Tallaght Equal Assists project will be of benefit to your organisation and its work?			1	7	4
Given your experience in the project, would you consider being part of another DP in the future?			2	1	9
<i>Note: Not all respondents answered all questions</i>					

Table 3.2 shows the results of Table 3.1 in percentage form.

Table 3.2:

**Views of Tallaght Equal Assists DP Members on Partnership – % of Partners
choosing each possible response**

	1	2	3	4	5
What is your view on the information you receive in relation to the ongoing work of the project?				25%	75%
What is your view on the organisation and running of the meetings of the DP?				9%	91%
What is your view on the opportunities you receive to feed in the views of your organisation into the ongoing work of the project?			9%	36%	55%
To what extent has the DP managed to create a genuine sense of co-operation and partnership between different organisations?			17%	33%	50%
To what extent do you feel the Tallaght Equal Assists project will be of benefit to your organisation and its work?			8%	58%	33%
Given your experience in the project, would you consider being part of another DP in the future?			17%	8%	75%
<i>Note: Percentages are rounded which may mean they do not total to 100% in each case</i>					

A number of respondents supplemented their responses to the above questions with further comments about being part of the Tallaght EQUAL Assists DP:

- “The project is real co-operation and partnership in action.”
- “We enjoy working with the Tallaght DP – it is a great experience.”
- “A really good working relationship has been built up among the DP members.”
- “The core DP group has worked very well, the meetings have been well run and that information is circulated to all members. Co-operation between organisations seems a bit limited but perhaps in the future the connections made will be of value and expertise in various organisations will be utilised.”
- “There is huge value in enhancing inter-connectivity between organisations and the DP does this very well.”

These comments, and the findings in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, indicate a very positive attitude among DP members to the DP and to the principle of partnership.

A factor which was perceived to have been very successful in the operation of the project was the use of structures below DP level, i.e. sub-committees which got on with the work in relation to various aspects of the project. For example, active sub-groups were established in relation to the project’s training courses, in relation to publicity and awareness, in relation to transnational work, and in relation to the feasibility study on a care brokerage. This allowed for the DP itself to focus on more strategic issues at policy level. As with the wider DP, the success of the sub-group structures was dependent on good attendance by the relevant members of the groups.

A partner which was not listed originally as a DP member but which became important to several aspects of the work of the project was Greenhills College, based in Dublin 12, close to Tallaght. In relation to the training courses undertaken and in relation to the general discussion of the learning arising from the project, Greenhills College was perceived to have played an important role.

DP members interviewed also praised the work of the Project Coordinator during the life of the project and emphasised her centrality to delivering the objectives of the project given how busy the DP partners were in their own organisations.

3.2 Project Expenditure

Table 3.3 shows actual project expenditure up to the end of the third quarter of 2007, with the final projected spend also shown.

Table 3.3:
Tallaght EQUAL Assists – Project Expenditure (€)

	Transnational Costs	Dissem. and Mainstreaming	Implem. (all other costs)	Total
Total Planned Project Spend 2005 to End-2007	79,675	96,260	541,861	717,796
Actual Spend to End-2006	34,681	57,401	253,905	345,987
Actual Spend to Oct-2007	23,060	47,813	205,378	276,251

In October 2007, the project estimated that it would spend about 92% of its total original allocated budget by end-2007, i.e. the end of the project.

Reasons given for this partial under-spend were as follows:

- A saving on the transnational budget as compared to the original planned budget, due primarily to a saving on the travel costs
- The appointment of the Project Coordinator did not take place until the project had been operational for several months
- Careful management of project costs

3.3 Transnational Dimension of Project

3.3.1 Transnational Partners and Work Undertaken

All projects funded under the EU EQUAL programme had a transnational dimension. At the outset of the EQUAL Programme in 2000, a European Commission brochure⁷ explained the transnational dimension of EQUAL as follows:

“Transnational co-operation is not an ‘added extra’ in EQUAL. Working with other countries is crucial to the Initiative’s success. It helps partnerships to look beyond national boundaries for inspiration and to learn from experience in other European countries rather than reinventing the wheel. Not only can partnerships learn from different ways of doing things, but transnational co-operation can also provide a source of encouragement when trying out something for the first time.”

The transnational partners of the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project are shown below.

⁷ European Commission (2000), DG Employment and Social Affairs, EQUAL – New Ways of Tackling Discrimination and Inequality in the Field of Employment

Table 3.4:

Transnational Partners of Tallaght EQUAL Assists

<i>Location of Partner</i>	<i>Objective of Project</i>
Milan, Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looked at how a networking strategy can support employees in a social care system. Particular focus on migrant workers in Italy.
Belfast, Northern Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employability access project which looked at differences in the labour market, focusing on healthcare.
Castilla la Mancha, Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looked at the labour market inclusion of a range of target groups, including people with disabilities; migrant workers, lone parents, former drug users and others.

The transnational work of the project was organised around four exchange trips, each with a 'working theme'. The dates, and the themes, were:

- October 2005 (hosted by the Spanish partner), with a theme of comparing labour market policies on integration of the unemployed, and entry-level jobs, including in social care, across the four partner countries;
- May 2006 (hosted by the Italian partner), with a theme of comparing approaches to matching the supply and demand of labour across the four partner countries, with a focus on the role of public authorities;
- November 2006 (hosted by the TEA project), with a theme of comparing approaches to motivation, qualification and accreditation;
- May 2007 (hosted by the Belfast partner), with a theme of comparing strategies for effective welfare to work transition.

The four exchange visits were organised around three types of activities:

- Presentations from the four DPs and their member organisations in relation to specific topics linked to the above themes;
- Site visits to organisations and projects of interest, arranged by the host DP;
- Meeting of the Steering Group for the transnational work.

3.3.2 Transnational Outputs

The Spanish partner had the responsibility of creating a Co-operation for

Employment (C.o.F.E.) website under the Information and Dissemination Strategy of the Transnational Co-operation Agreement (TCA). However, due to technical difficulties, it was agreed that each partner would post information on transnational progress and outcomes on their individual project websites.

The Co-operation for Employment produced two main documents from its partnership activities:

- Comparative Critical Analysis of Public Policies regarding Labour Market
- Re-Integration; and
- Employability Good Practice Guide.

The *Comparative Critical Analysis of Public Policies regarding Labour Market Re-Integration* (with the subtitle 'With specific reference to entry level jobs, including those in social care) was published in March 2006. It contained contributions from all four DPs and was coordinated by the Irish partner. The report looks at five main areas: labour market experience and policies in each partner country; entry level jobs and the labour market (Northern Ireland, Italy and Spain); barriers to entry level jobs; existing support for job seekers; and a short description of Spanish and Italian stakeholders who support job seekers at entry level positions. The report concludes by stating:

'future policy approaches should concentrate on supporting entry-level jobs including those in the care area' (pp. 22).

The *Employability Good Practice Guide* was launched in August 2007 and was compiled from individual Good Practice Guides produced by each partner. The final Guide includes input from all four DPs and was coordinated by the Italian partner. The Guide aimed to provide a useful resource for the partners and other organisations and presented models of good practice derived from the partnership. The report had three parts: Matching the Demand and Supply of Labour; Approaches to Motivation, Qualification and Accreditation; and Welfare to Work Strategies: Responses to Assist Unemployed/Marginalised People into Employment. Each part presented models of good practice from the four DPs.

3.3.3 Views on Transnational Dimension of Project

In discussing the transnational dimension of the project's work for this evaluation, the view of the partners involved in Tallaght EQUAL Assists was that it had worked well in terms of information exchange and building contacts but that it was hard to move to a higher level of co-operation (e.g. development of joint actions or exchange of trainees) due to the different contexts of the different projects.



The view was that the partner project closest in objective to Tallaght EQUAL Assists was the Italian project, which also worked on care issues. However, the care infrastructure in Italy is less developed than that in Ireland, e.g. more undocumented migrant labour, more voluntary input and less accreditation for training courses. While there was valuable learning from the site visits in Italy, it was felt that these structural factors limited the overall learning from the Italian partner project.

Positive feedback was received as regards the exchange trip hosted by the Irish DP in November 2006. DP members saw it as a very worthwhile learning experience and said that it was useful in making strong links with the partners from Northern Ireland (see next section). One DP member observed that relationships developed between the partners over time. This was partly due to improved translation and interpreting facilities over time, the lack of which limited the effectiveness of the first two exchange visits.

In July 2007, Williamson Consulting produced an evaluation report on the work of the transnational partnership. The report examined the impact of the transnational partnership on the four DPs and their partner organisations, and assessed the extent to which the objectives of the Transnational Co-operation Agreement were achieved. The evaluation concluded by stating: 'the transnational partnership has been very successful... all targets have been met and the partnership has produced a number of very positive outcomes. The exchange visits were very successful and are a model of good practice in how to ensure that these events are effective and successful'.

3.4 Belfast-Dublin Partnership



Pictured: Students for the part time & full time training course attending an exchange visit to belfast

Not all Irish EQUAL projects have partners from Northern Ireland. However, during Round 2 of EQUAL in Ireland, this North-South dimension was encouraged for Irish EQUAL projects by the National Support Structure for EQUAL and the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project endeavoured to put special effort into this relationship.

The contact through the transnational partnership with the Belfast project led to a number of bilateral exchange contacts being formed. In September 2006, a delegation from the project travelled to Belfast to explore options for possible cooperation. Following this trip a number of options were presented to the Tallaght DP:

- Trainee/Worker short placement in work or training environment;
- Joint work on migrant/immigrant care worker issues in Belfast and Tallaght (including issues of multi-culturalism);
- Joint work on Active Labour Market Programme;
- Joint work in relation to Early School Leavers and care work.

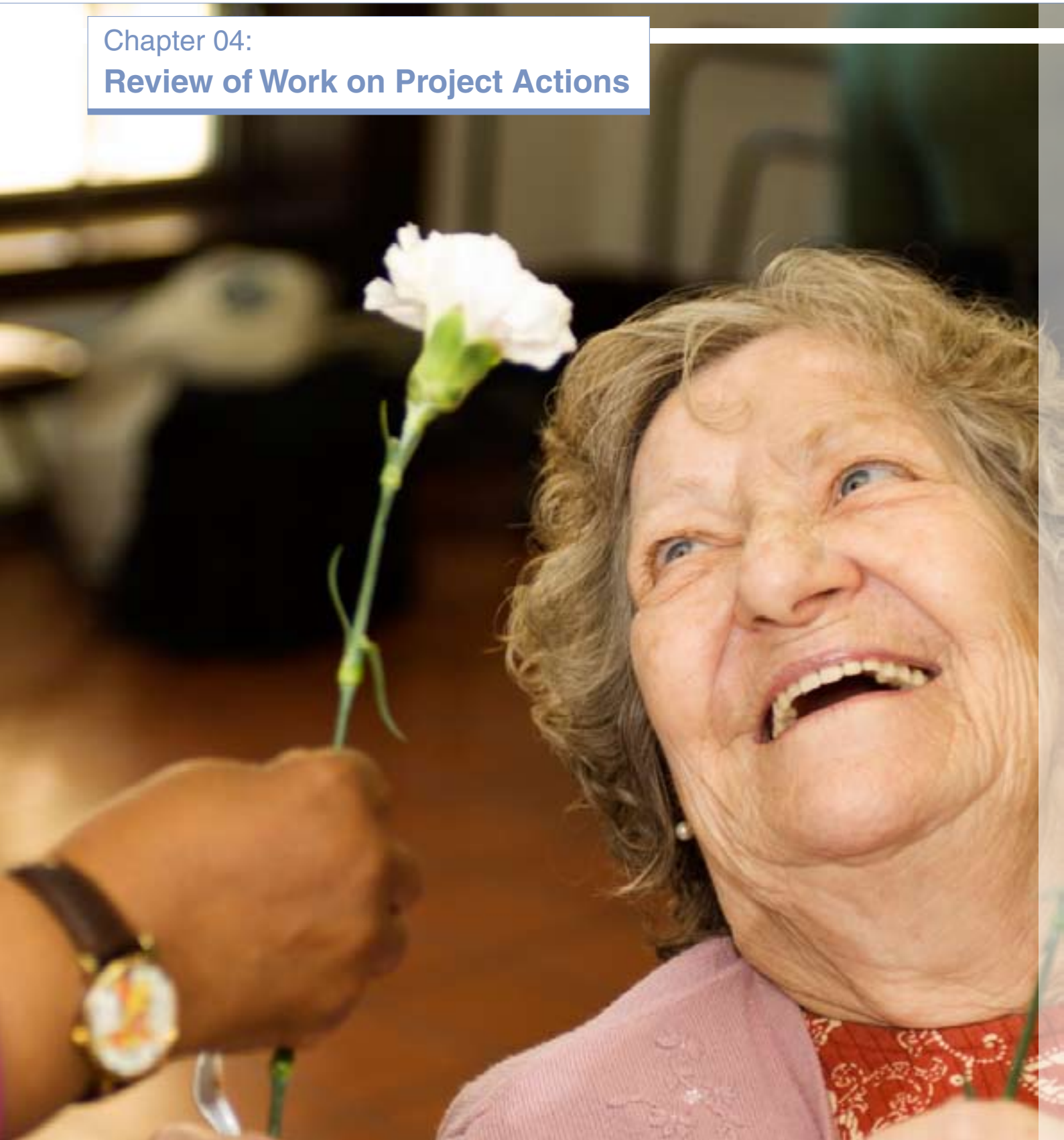
In May 2007, the Tallaght Partnership brought 20 trainees to Belfast on a structured, two day educational visit. During this time, the group visited three care organisations (Carlisle Day Centre, Chestnut Grove and the Mater Hospital), meeting care assistants and patients. The group consisted of full- and part-time trainees and included 16 women and 4 men. Trainees were given an opportunity to view care-related working conditions and facilities and felt the trip had been very beneficial, both in relation to learning about a different set of care approaches and in terms of personal confidence building.

⁷ European Commission (2000), DG Employment and Social Affairs, EQUAL – New Ways of Tackling Discrimination and Inequality in the Field of Employment

The work of Tallaght EQUAL Assists in relation to establishing a social care brokerage (see Section 4.5) also gained from the project's Dublin/Belfast relations. Key inputs to the feasibility study undertaken by the project on this issue were received from the Bryson Group, a charitable group based in Northern Ireland, which provides services to over 400,000 people each year. At the end of 2007, several of the DP members said that they envisaged further cooperation with the Bryson Group after the project ended. There were also plans for an exchange visit by retired people (senior citizens) between Belfast and Dublin, with possible further cooperation also being discussed as regards this target group.

Chapter 04:

Review of Work on Project Actions



4.1 Overview of Project Actions

The project Action Plan, completed in mid-2005, contains four objectives (as previously outlined), with a number of sub-objectives for each, as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Project Actions and Objectives

Action 1: Increase the status and profile of "caring" as a career option

- 1.1 Engage in scoping exercise to gather information on existing provision and identify gaps and models of good practice.
- 1.2 Initiate contact with relevant unions and employment bodies.
- 1.3 Develop transition year module on voluntary "caring" with local schools.
- 1.4 Conduct an awareness raising/publicity campaign.
- 1.5 Engage in on-going work with relevant local agencies and organisations.

Action 2: Develop routes to occupational qualifications for people working as carers

- 2.1 Design delivery approach to FETAC Level 5 Healthcare Support Certificate.
- 2.2 Provide additional literacy/language/study skills support to participants as required.
- 2.3 Ensure quality work experience for participants.
- 2.4 Work with CE supervisors and participants to attract potential trainees.
- 2.5 Work with local Home Help Service to facilitate involvement of existing staff.
- 2.6 Support delivery of two Healthcare Support training courses at FETAC Level 5 Certificate.

Action 3: Develop entry routes into care work for school leavers; increase the participation of men in care work; increase participation rates for ethnic minorities (Traveller community and immigrant population)

- 3.1 Make information available to senior cycle students about courses relevant to care work including Healthcare Support Certificate.
- 3.2 Link to work of Early School Leavers Strategy to ensure information on care work training and access options is promoted to support providers and early school leavers.
- 3.3 Ensure training module is appropriate to needs of all target groups.
- 3.4 Disseminate through local channels, especially through the annual local careers exhibition.
- 3.5 Set up an expert sub-group as regards male participation in care work
- 3.6 Develop and pilot a pro-active recruitment policy for young people, male trainees, members of the Travelling community and ethnic minorities.
- 3.7 Ensure the awareness raising campaign has a pro-active focus on the promotion to men of positive career options and progression opportunities in care work.
- 3.8 Form an expert sub group incorporating representation from ethnic minority groups including Travellers.
- 3.9 Provide additional literacy / language services in conjunction with local VEC literacy services.
- 3.10 Support development of anti-racism campaign to promote equality in the work place, targeted at care sector and particularly focusing on recruitment and induction of care workers.

Table 4.1 (Cont')

Action 4: Explore potential for social enterprise brokerage

- | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4.1 | Establish a committee to explore the potential for a social enterprise brokerage. |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Table 4.1 shows that the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project set itself four ambitious objectives, some having multiple sub-objectives (in some cases loosely related). Sections 4.2 to 4.5 review the work undertaken in relation to each of the four objectives in turn, and Section 4.6 describes work undertaken to influence the agenda at a national level, based on the work of the project.

4.2 Action 1: Increase Status of Care Work as a Career Option

4.2.1 Objective of this Action

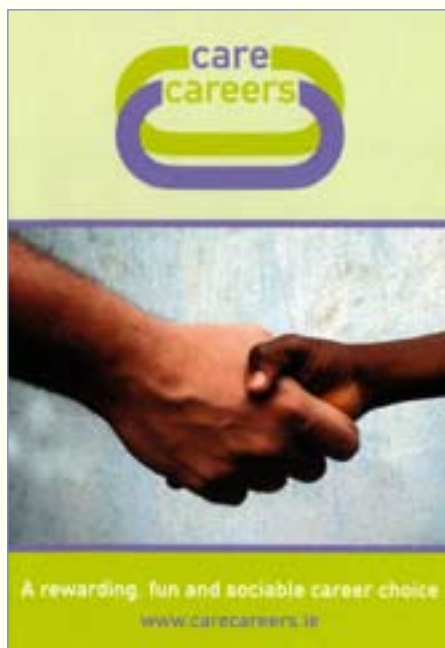
At the outset of the project, there was no material to provide information to young people (and others) considering a career in caring. This action aimed to remedy this situation. Other sub-objectives also supported the raising of the profiling of care work through the involvement of different organisation in the project work, and building basic information on care work in Tallaght.

4.2.2 Work Undertaken under this Action

A scoping study was completed in September 2006 by a researcher, Phyllis Murphy, which provided information on the provision of care in Tallaght, identifying gaps and models of good practice. The study received information from 28 organisations. The report presents background information on the organisations; a profile of carers employed in these organisations; training needed and received; examples of good practice in relation to care work in organisations; and views on gaps in care service provision. The section on profile of carers revealed that the majority of carers were female, aged between 20-30 years and Irish, although one organisation had over 60% non-Irish care staff.

In relation to the DP, a number of local organisations relating to care did become involved with the project and the project acted as a vehicle to promote cooperation between them. As such, it provided a forum in Tallaght for care issues to be discussed on an inter-organisational basis (and including statutory and community organisations) for the first time. The project also had an active involvement from SIPTU.

The Young People's Campaign was launched in October, 2006. The Campaign involved the production of three products: a website www.carecareers.ie; a DVD and workbook; and promotional material e.g. a wallet card and pen. This work was partly funded by Comhairle.



The aim of the DVD and workbook was to promote caring as a rewarding career choice. The DVD, which includes male and ethnic minority carers, is 12 minutes long and is designed for a 45 minute class to incorporate use by the teacher and students of the attached workbook. Individuals could request a copy (or further copies) of the DVD through the website.

The Irish Times newspaper printed an article on Care Careers in December, 2006, which resulted in a number of schools requesting copies of the DVDs. The DVD package, aimed specifically at Transition Year/Career Guidance Classes, was distributed in early 2007 to seven schools in the Tallaght Partnership area: St. Aidan's Community School, Killinarden Community School, St. Mark's Community School, Old Bawn Community School, Tallaght Community School, Firhouse Community College, and Jobstown Community College.

In all, 50-60 copies were distributed. Prior to watching the DVD, there was general agreement among recipients that information on caring as a career was needed in the educational sector.

A questionnaire and evaluation form was included with the production. The questionnaire, with an attached handout of information about care work and care work training, examined students' general perceptions on care work; asked if they had considered caring as a career choice, and whether the DVD encouraged them to think more about caring as a career choice.

Table 4.2:

Views of Young People in relation to Project DVD

	Yes	No
Had you previously thought about caring as a career choice?	67%	33%
Did the film encourage you to think more about caring as a career choice?	94%	0%

Table 4.2 (based on 18 responses) indicates that most of the students in this sample who viewed the DVD already had at least some interest in care work. The 94% figure indicates that the DVD provided a good image of care work, and its potential, to the young people involved.

The evaluation form asked teachers and students for their opinion on the content of the DVD, and how the DVD helped them in understanding the work of care workers. Some 23 completed evaluation forms were returned:

- 17 from 'other students' (other than secondary school student)
- 4 from 'other' (included project worker, youth outreach worker, job advocate, youth co-ordinator)
- 1 from 'other teacher' (other career guidance teacher)
- 1 from a secondary school student

Of these respondents, 19 (83%) found the DVD 'excellent' in helping to understand the work of a care worker while the remaining four people (17%) found the DVD 'good' in this regard.

In relation to the quality of the information, eight respondents (35%) said that in comparison to other information on care work, this DVD was 'the best source of information'; seven (31%) rated it 'at about the same level as other information', while eight (35%) said that the DVD was the only information that they had seen on working as a carer.

Almost all respondents (96%) felt the DVD was 'about the right length', while 83% said the DVD seemed 'professionally made'.

The following are comments from respondents on aspects of the DVD (and pack) that they most liked/enjoyed:

'It spoke at a level everyone could relate to'

'It contained personal experiences from people who have done course'

'It allowed us to listen to the participants speak'

'It showed all different people giving information, on how they liked their job and what they had to do'

Overall, it appears that respondents were happy with the content of the DVD. Comments made about the DVD included the following:

'I feel this is a great source of information for young people'

'I will definitely be showing this DVD to my students'

'A career as a carer comes across as a tough but very enjoyable and very rewarding career through the DVD'

In September 2007, DVDs were distributed to secondary schools in the Tallaght area. As opposed to being included on the DVD, the workbook was attached in booklet form, making it more accessible to recipients. In November 2007, a further batch of DVDs were produced and distributed to secondary schools in the County Dublin VEC area.

Feedback from those DP members that had used the DVD was also positive, with one member commenting that the DVD helped people to think about their approach to care work, and gives them ideas in this regard.

Promotional wallet cards with details of the website www.carecareers.ie were also produced. Relevant local agencies and organisations were sent a copy of the DVD.

There was radio publicity for carecareers (interview by the Tallaght EQUAL Assists coordinator on RTE's *Outside the Box* programme) and, as mentioned, coverage in the Irish Times in December 2006. In November 2007; Tallaght EQUAL Assists presented the project at the Careers Opportunities Fair in Tallaght.

4.2.3 Comment on this Action

The project achieved all five of its sub-objectives in relation to this action. For the first time, information was gathered on care work in Tallaght and the DP succeeded in involving a range of relevant organisations, including employers and trade unions.

The fact that that the DVD was produced in 2006 (ahead of schedule) meant the project was able to pilot it in a range of schools in 2007. Feedback from the DVD, insofar as it was available, seems very positive, from both students and teachers. As such, given the lack of resources for young people thinking about care work, there would seem to be a strong case for using this DVD and

workbook, and the feedback collected on them, as a basis for development of a similar national resource for young people considering a career in care work.

4.3 Action 2: Training Courses for People Working as Carers

4.3.1 Objective of this Action

The Tallaght EQUAL Assists project aimed to deliver part-time and full-time courses leading to the Healthcare Support Certificate, which is accredited at FETAC level 5. In addition to running these courses, the project organised 'taster courses' for specific target groups in 2007. A feature of the two certificate level courses offered was the provision of additional supports by the project to participants.



Pictured: Participants from St. Basits who participated in the taster course

The large rise in the number of people working in care has generated, and will generate, growing demand for accredited courses leading to care qualifications. For example, in August 2007, the Health Information and Quality Authority published Draft National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People – A Consultation Document. Draft Standard 24.2 states: "All newly recruited care staff commit to undertake appropriate training to FETAC Level 5 or equivalent within one year of taking up employment." Experienced staff should also be encouraged to undertake training to FETAC Level 5, according to the draft standards.

The pilot actions of Tallaght EQUAL Assists in relation to training were designed to lead to learning in the context of this growing demand for care workers with accredited qualifications.

Content of Courses

Course content was the same for the part time and full time courses. It had been planned that the modules should contain the following eight FETAC accredited modules: Care Skills, Care of the Older Person, Care Support, Health and Safety at Work, Communications, Social Studies, Equality and Disability and a work experience module. However, the Social Studies module was replaced by 'Introduction to Nursing', as it was felt that 'Introduction to Nursing' would be less theoretical and more practical.

Five of the eight modules were assignment based while the other three were exam based. The prevalence of assignment based modules was partly due to the desire of participants not to have to go through an examination process, as some had had negative experiences of such processes in the past.

Part-time Training Course

This Healthcare Support Certificate course commenced in May 2006 and ran until April 2007. It aimed to prepare students to work as Healthcare Assistants/ Attendants in care settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, home help support, day care centres or in the client's own home. The course was also designed to prepare students who wished to progress to a further recognised qualification in pursuing a career as a carer or in the broader health sector.

Prior to the course, flyers and information were sent to care organisations and potential employers in the Tallaght area. An information session was held in March 2006. No specific educational requirements were required but potential students were expected to have some experience in care work and a proficient level of English.

Potential trainees were invited to detail where they had heard about the course. Examples given included:

- Information leaflet sent to a workplace
- Through FM-Weapon (female intercultural project) in Tallaght library
- Through Tallaght Hospital
- Through Tallaght Welfare Society
- Through 'word of mouth' from friends working in hospitals and nursing homes

From 21 applications, 19 were selected to participate in the first part time training course (see Table 4.2). Of these, 13 were of Irish nationality. As shown, 14 of the 19 participants completed the course.

Table 4.3:
Information on Number of Part-time Course Participants

	<i>Started</i>		<i>Dropped out</i>		<i>Completed</i>	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Part-time Course	2	17		5	2	12

Participants attended classes every Thursday (9.30 to 4.30) in Tallaght Partnership.

In addition to the classes, each participant was obliged to obtain a Garda Clearance Certificate and expected to undertake a six week work experience placement – these were made available by DP members, including:

- Adelaide and Meath Hospital, Tallaght
- Firhouse Day Activity Centre
- Tallaght Welfare Society
- Centre for Independent Living (CIL)
- St. Brigid's Home, Crooksling
- E.V.E. Ltd. (Eastern Vocational Enterprises)
- Irish Wheelchair Association
- Cheeverstown Centre
- Enable Ireland
- Rehabcare
- St. John of Gods
- Two Nursing Homes

Students were given a list of potential work placement sites and were responsible for contacting relevant organisations. DP members were aware that they would be contacted by students seeking work experience.

Ten of the 15 students on the part-time course submitted all of their assignments by the due date. The remaining five students received extra support, funded by FÁS, which allowed them to graduate with their classmates in November 2007.

Full-time Training Course

A full time course, run in association with Greenhills College, was organised from September, 2006 until May 2007. Prior to the course, an information day was held in Greenhills College in August 2006. A total of 16 people were offered a place on the course, of whom 14 accepted. Details of participants are shown below.

Table 4.4:
Information on Number of Full-time Course Participants

	<i>Started</i>		<i>Dropped out</i>		<i>Completed</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
Full-time Course	5	9	1	2	4	7

Classes took place on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9am to 2pm. Assignments and extra work were completed on Mondays and Fridays. Full time students started work experience in December 2006 (as did the part-time trainees). As with the part-time course, there were two students who did not submit their assignments by the due date but, again, extra supports ensured they did so later and they also graduated with the wider class.

A graduation ceremony for both courses was held in November 2007 in the Tower Hotel, Tallaght. The project organised academic gowns for all those graduating and an official photographer, and the students were encouraged to invite family members to attend. The ceremony aimed to celebrate the achievement of all participants, many of whom would have had negative previous experiences with the educational system.



Pictured: Students from the part time and full time training course receiving their Certificate in Healthcare Support, FETAC Level 5.

Taster Courses in Summer 2007

As a way of showing people what a career in care would involve, the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project decided to organise three 'taster courses' in 2007. These targeted three specific groups: early school leavers, Traveller women, and men. On completion of the sampler course, participants received certificates for modules completed and a token payment of €100. Over the course of 20 hours, students learnt about the Healthcare Support Certificate, and completed an introductory module leading to a Certificate in Manual Handling.

The first taster course was attended by 11 female students from the Traveller community and took place in St. Basils Education Training Centre for Travellers. The second course consisted of eight female early school leavers, aged 17-20 years, who were recruited from a local Youthreach Centre. Due to a lack of interest from participants, the third course, targeting unemployed men, was not held.

The project had a different experience with the two sets of participants engaged. The Traveller women were very interested in the course and several expressed an interest in progressing to the Healthcare Support Certificate course (which would be run by Greenhills College in Tallaght, starting in September 2007, outside the project). However, the full-time course was impractical for these women and the structure of the relevant training allowance meant that they would have been financially worse off if they had undertaken the part-time course. As such, a 'welfare to work' trap prevented them from progressing from the taster course.

The early school leavers did not show a serious interest in progressing to the certificate course, whether they were too recently out of the education system or for some other reason.



Pictured: Participants from Youthreach who participated in the taster course

Extra Supports Provided to Course Participants

As stated, an innovation of the work of the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project was the provision of 'flanking supports' to students. Firstly, a financial contribution was made to students who incurred additional costs, e.g. relating to childcare or travelling under the work experience module. Secondly, extra learning support was made available, outside of normal course hours.

Twelve students, of whom one was male, received additional support and tuition. During the sessions, the learning support tutor focused on the following:

- General guidance on aspects of their coursework
- Note taking skills
- Organisational skills (time management)
- Writing essays (structure) layout, referencing and plagiarism) and reports (planning and production).

'One to one' feedback was also provided to students, including on assignments. In addition, the learning support tutor ensured students had a proper understanding of the assignment requirements.

One DP member, who had encouraged two participants to get involved in the courses, said that she believed they would never have completed the courses if it had not been for the 'flanking supports' provided. Many people have a kind of 'course phobia', she said, and these supports are critical in enabling people to overcome these fears. Another DP member noted that, in normal circumstances, such supports are often provided by teachers in their own time, but this means they are generally not provided to the same extent.

4.3.3 Views of Participants on Training Courses

The views presented in this section were obtained by Hibernian Consulting through two focus groups held in the first quarter of 2007, i.e. when the part-time and full-time courses were both well underway.

Full-Time Course (8 participants in focus group):

Respondents found the tutors on the full-time course to be very good, friendly and helpful. One student commented that "*they [tutors] are very encouraging and don't judge you*". This may be reflected in the fact that course attendance was generally very good and participants stated that if they missed a class, it was easy to catch up as participants helped each other out.

There was agreement amongst the group that if they had any problems which they felt the need to address, the tutors were approachable and their views would be taken on board. For example, at the beginning of the course,

participants requested that a class scheduled for each Friday be moved to another day and this was done.

In terms of work placements, all participants were consulted as to where this took place. Participants had positive things to say about this aspect of the course and believed that it was very valuable.

All students were of the view that the course would help them to find work. Some also said that they were gaining good “life experience” from the course, e.g. in mixing with people of different nationalities.

Part-Time Course (13 participants in focus group):

As regards the part-time trainees, feedback was again positive as regards the course content, the pace of the course and the trainer. Specifically, participants said that:

- They found that one day per week was adequate for this course as they also had course work and assignments to do.
- The work experience module was difficult at first, e.g. they found dealing with older people who require care a challenge in terms of their frailty etc. They said that they got used to it however.
- The fact that there was a low emphasis on exams was seen as positive, with written assignments required for most modules. Participants' skills in the workplace accounted for 60% of marks in certain modules, making the course very skills focused.
- Participants said that the fact that the course can be a stepping stone to nursing was also positive, providing an alternative (less academic) route for people who might have many of the required practical skills needed for nursing.

Part-time course respondents generally found the tutors to be good and stated that they “*speak a language that [students] can understand*”. Some participants indicated that they felt that one instructor sometimes seemed to reluctant to help them with queries but they found the coordinator of the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project helpful in this regard.

Participants received extra support on Saturday mornings which they said helped them enormously in terms of how to complete assignments. Many participants stated that if this support was not provided, they may have left the course.

Although students were given a list and asked to choose their preference for work placements, there were delays as participants had to get Garda clearance which they were unaware of before starting the course.

As with the full-time course, attendance was generally very good and participants stated that, if they missed a class, it was easy to get notes and catch up quickly. Participants felt that the course would be valuable in terms of finding work.

4.3.4 Comment on this Action

The original core objectives of the project in relation to training were fulfilled. Two FETAC Level 5 Certificate courses were organised and delivered. There was a relatively low drop-out rate and 25 people completed these courses and graduated in November 2007. Of these, nineteen were women and six were men.

Extra supports were provided to participants under a number of headings, including assistance with issues such as childcare and transport, and extra supports in relation to the course, e.g. with assignments, literacy issues etc. Twelve of the participants availed of the course/learning related supports offered.

Excellent cooperation from DP members meant that good work experience modules were organised for all trainees. While some trainees already had part-time employment, the work experience was felt by all to have been very valuable.

A number of learning points emerged from the implementation of the courses:

- It helps if trainees undertaking the Healthcare Support Certificate have had prior experience of working in the care sector.
- A number of participants expressed difficulty in reaching the FETAC Level 5 standard; it was felt that a course at FETAC Level 3 or 4 might have been more appropriate. However, very few such modules existed in 2006 or 2007, indicating a gap in provision at this level. (A module developed by the Carers Association is planned for 2008; see also Section 4.6.3.)
- It was also identified that there are limited progression routes for students who want to achieve a higher standard of qualification on completion of FETAC Level 5. However, there are some avenues here for students and the Institutes of Technology in particular have made progress in recent years in providing progression routes for people from FETAC courses.

Taster courses were also organised for groups of Traveller women and early school leavers. The former showed a good level of interest in progressing to a care training course but there appeared to be a 'welfare to work' trap for them. The latter did not show much interest in progressing at this point, perhaps because they had recently left the formal education system, many having had negative experiences.

4.4 Action 3: Attracting Under-represented Groups

4.4.1 Objective of this Action



The objective of this action was to develop entry routes in employment into 'caring' for early school leavers; and to increase the participation of men, members of the Traveller community and non-Irish people in care work. Some of the sub-objectives under this objective, e.g. relating to information provision in schools and the taster courses for early school leavers and Traveller women, have already been described.

4.4.2 Work Undertaken under this Action

Male Participation in Care Work

The project decided not to establish an expert sub-group on this issue but instead worked with the LES in identifying men interested in care work. A further route which emerged during the project, and which proved quite successful, was to contact the spouses of female nurses in Tallaght hospital, especially those who had moved to Ireland in recent years. As the previous section showed, while a minority, there were six men who completed training under the project and achieved FETAC Level 5 certification (of whom five were non-Irish).

Tallaght EQUAL Assists also organised two focus groups with men already involved in care work to discuss with them issues relating to attracting and retaining men in the care sector. The first group involved three men from India aged between 30 and 40 years who had undertaken one of the courses organised by the project. The second group involved four men working as carers to people with intellectual disabilities, via the Eastern Vocational Enterprises (EVE) Ltd. Three of these men were Irish and the fourth was English; all were aged between 19 and 24 years. A report⁸ arising from the groups was circulated to the DP in July 2007.

The report presented the experiences and opinions of both groups on issues including training, current job status, and how to attract more males into the care sector. A key message was that, to attract more men, the perception of care work in Ireland would need to change. For example, there should be a greater use of accreditation, salaries should be standardised, there should be greater organisation of care workers (e.g. via a trade union) and there should be more progression routes for care workers. The use of images in relation to the sector was also mentioned, with the need to show men in carer roles. One participant said that many people do not appreciate the range of carer roles that exist and therefore more education would also be useful on care work.

It was also appreciated that care work is still largely viewed in Ireland as 'women's work' and the data on the gender breakdown of paid carers in the 2006 Census (see Chapter 2, shows that 90% of care assistants and attendants are women). As such, as with other occupations (e.g. nurses, but also electricians, plumbers etc.), there is a longer-term process needed to change attitudes.

In relation to the work of the project, men were represented on the DVD that was produced, and the DVD was distributed to both boys' and girls' secondary schools. In terms of attracting men onto the courses, information leaflets were posted in employment centres, local training centres, and health centres. As stated, it proved difficult to attract Irish men onto the courses. Also, a taster course planned for unemployed men in September 2007 had to be cancelled due to a lack of interest.

Early School Leavers

In advertising the two FETAC Level 5 courses, the project was conscious of trying to attract young people who had left school early onto the courses. However, this proved difficult and one person who did begin one of the courses attended only two classes.

As already mentioned, a taster course was held in July 2007, with eight young women attending. However, these did not show an interest in progressing to a full FETAC Level 5 course.

The project's experience with early school leavers mirrored that of another project with which Tallaght Partnership had been involved, the Learning at Work project, which was funded by FÁS and the Department of Education and Science. This also found it very difficult to attract people aged under 21 back to education, and it was only as people moved into their mid-20s, and perhaps assumed other life responsibilities, that people regretted leaving school early and became interested in returning in some way to education. The younger early school leavers were more interested in work and earning money in the short-term.

Travellers

Two members of Tallaght Traveller Community Development Project completed the part-time course at FETAC Level 5. One member subsequently gained employment with the Community Development Project while the other continued to provide care at home for a child with disabilities.

The Tallaght EQUAL Assists project found the Traveller community easy to reach and engage, and there was an interest in care work. Care work therefore appears to offer an interesting option in terms of tackling the chronic levels of unemployment in the Traveller community.

There was a need for some extra learning supports to be provided to the Traveller participants due to a previous lack of formal education. However, once these supports were provided, the participants successfully completed all course assignments and graduated with their classmates.

Non-Irish People

The project worked with an existing female intercultural project of Tallaght Partnership, FM WEAPON, to attract non-Irish people to the training courses. As previously mentioned, it also circulated information to staff working in Tallaght Hospital, who may have known people interested in the training.

Some 16 of the 25 people who completed the courses were non-Irish, with a breakdown shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Profile of Non-Irish Participants (n=16)								
Gender		Nationality		Age				
M	M	Non-EU/ EEA national	EU/EEA national	Under 18	18-25	26-34	35-34	18-25
6	10	14	2	2	4	2	7	1

The table shows that almost all the non-Irish participants were from outside the EU/EEA with a good mix of genders and ages.

Tallaght EQUAL Assists also contributed to an anti-racism week organised by Tallaght Partnership.

4.4.3 Comment on this Action

The project had mixed results in terms of attracting under-represented groups into care work:

- In relation to men, there was good success in terms of attracting non-Irish men, with the spouses of existing health care workers, especially nurses,

being particularly interested

- There was a low level of interest from Irish men and focus groups held showed that care work is still seen as women's work in Ireland
- There was low engagement with young people who had left school early
- There was a positive engagement with the Traveller community with two women successfully completing the FETAC Level 5 certificate courses and others expressing interest in care work
- There was a strong engagement with people who were born outside Ireland, especially with people from outside the EU/EEA zone

While not directly linked to the project's actions, discussions at DP level also noted that a minority of people being cared for in Ireland would have racist attitudes. This is an issue that needs to be addressed both in training carers and by care organisations as regards what kinds of behaviour are unacceptable.

4.5 Action 4: Potential for a Social Enterprise Care Brokerage

4.5.1 Objective of this Action

This objective was to explore the potential demand for a Care Agency in Tallaght, through the establishment of a Social Enterprise Care Brokerage. Any such agency would facilitate qualified carers to access carer work and provide a high standard of quality home care to meet different care needs.



Pictured: Local Comedian June Rodgers is pictured with Carmel O'Connor, Peggy Bowen and Marion Halpin at the launch of a call by Tallaght EQUAL Assist to establish a carers agency in Tallaght.

4.5.2 Work Undertaken under this Action

A Brokerage Sub-group was established by the project in January 2007. The group decided to commission a feasibility study on the establishment of a brokerage and Partas was contracted to meet this objective. The methodology for the research involved consultations with the following:

- Members of the DP;
- Sample of Carers;
- Potential customers of a care agency;
- Franchise operators; and
- An EQUAL funded organisation in France (to explore 'franchise network' models)
- The Bryson Charitable Group in Northern Ireland, which manages a successful social enterprise care model.

The methodology also undertook market analysis of care providers in the Tallaght area to compare services and costs and reviewed relevant UK models.

The research studied the feasibility of three options: creation of a new social enterprise care agency; feeding into an existing care agency; and becoming part of a franchise group providing care services.

The first option, creation of a care agency, involved reviewing the feasibility of establishing a new social enterprise agency focusing on home care in the Tallaght area and its environs. The second option explored the suitability of feeding into an existing agency; merging or subsuming the services proposed by a new care agency with the services of an already existing service provider. Exploration of the third option identified two franchise type operations in Ireland: Home Instead Senior Care, and Comfort Keepers, with the aim of establishing a franchise licence for a new agency. Each option is examined in detail in the report.

The research found that there would be ample demand for home care services in the Tallaght area and that the potential existed for a home care model to be developed within Tallaght and Dublin South West, with the potential for funding from HSE-subsidised and non-HSE subsidised clients.

Of the options reviewed, the report favoured the second option, i.e. feeding into an existing care provider, provided an agency could be found with a social ethos, which would be committed to the development of a strong and

⁹ These were prepared for the project by Hibernian Consulting

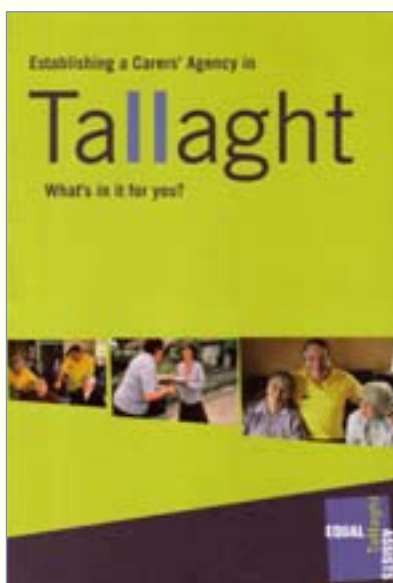
high quality social enterprise model. If such an organisation could be found, then working with it would mean the avoidance of several start-up costs and the ability to draw on existing expertise. Moreover, the report states that this option is unlikely to mean that any other existing social enterprise care providers in the Tallaght area will be diluted.

While the second of the options mentioned was the preferred option, the report noted that Option 1 could be viable in the context of support from FÁS via Community Employment and from social finance. If this option was preferred, negotiations at local, regional and national level could ensure that a similar approach be adopted to that adopted by the Drugs Task Force or childcare providers, with a certain number of CE places ring-fenced for carers, with upskilling built into work placements.

Irrespective of which model were chosen, the research undertaken by the DP's Brokerage Sub-group identified a number of characteristics which should form part of any care agency:

- Viability should be built into the mission of the organisation
- Management structures should be professional
- Decision making should be fast and effective
- There should be a commitment to quality and innovation
- There should be a commitment to social entrepreneurship and risk taking
- Strong leadership would be needed at management and board level, to drive the organisation forward
- The organisation should be large enough to benefit from economies of scale
- The organisation should grow over time, perhaps through franchising
- Customers should be involved in strategy determination and service design

In late-2007, Tallaght EQUAL Assists was



determining how the idea progressed, e.g. whether the HSE would be prepared to allow organisations such as any care agency developed to provide care services on its behalf (as happens, for example, in Northern Ireland, where tendering processes are used in this regard).

reviewing the options and working to identify parties who may wish to take forward the idea of establishing a care agency in Tallaght. The project was willing to share its research report with any genuinely interested party. It was working with a PR company to publicise summary results of the feasibility research and there were plans to gain publicity for the idea at a national level. The project was also planning to engage in discussion with members of the Oireachtas Committee relating to health issues, which was expected to be appointed before the end of 2007. The attitude adopted by the HSE to the idea of a care agency in Tallaght was expected to be important in

Comment on this Action

This was a longer-term project objective compared to the first three objectives. However, the project achieved its aim of undertaking a feasibility study in relation to the brokerage and of undertaking the first level of analysis for any care agency for the Tallaght area.

The conclusion of the feasibility study was that working with an existing care agency represented the best model for the area, if an existing agency could be found with a social enterprise ethos. By end-2007, the project was working to progress this idea.

4.6 Dissemination and Mainstreaming Work

4.6.1 Different Kinds of Dissemination and Mainstreaming Work

Chapter 1 noted that the EQUAL programme is “a laboratory to develop new ways of tackling discrimination and inequality in the labour market”. Key to the purpose of EQUAL is that lessons deriving from projects are disseminated to organisations that can incorporate this learning into their policies and practices.

Work of the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project in this regard is described below.

4.6.2 Working through DP Members to Influence Policy Agenda

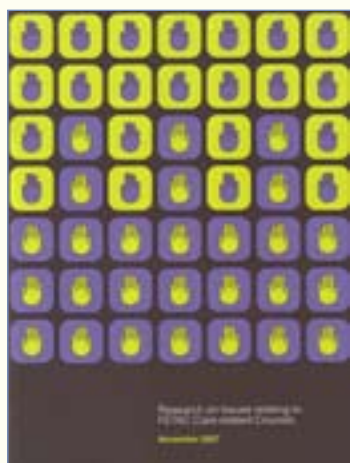
Perhaps the primary way in which the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project disseminated its learning was via the Development Partnership. Chapter 3 noted that the project's DP was very active between 2005 and 2007, with good participation by organisations including the Health Services Executive, FÁS, the Adelaide and Meath Hospital, Incorporating the National Children's Hospital, SIPTU, Tallaght Welfare Society, Greenhills Community College, Tallaght Partnership and others. These organisations have an ongoing involvement with the care sector or with providing training and employment to care workers. As such, practical learning could be taken back on an ongoing basis from DP meetings and from the wider project work. DP representatives also provided a conduit to transfer learning to higher levels of their organisations.

For example, SIPTU was an active DP member throughout the life of the project. In 2007, the union decided at national level to commission a report which would look at issues and policies relating to the training and upskilling of carers in Ireland. In preparing this report, the SIPTU representative from the DP fed in

directly the learning which she had gained from the different actions of the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project.

4.6.3 Production of Research Papers

A second dissemination strategy used by the project was to commission research papers for a wider audience. During its life, the project commissioned two such papers⁹.



The first, published in May 2007, was a discussion paper entitled: Care Works – A discussion paper on new approaches to train carers and provide care in the community. This is an expanded version of Chapter 2 of this report and sets out the wider policy context for the changes occurring in relation to care work in Ireland. While issues relating to care have moved up the policy agenda in recent years, there had previously been a lack of material setting out the background to these changes. Copies of the paper were distributed widely to organisations working with care issues.

Feedback received by the project in relation to the paper was very positive, with a number of organisations (including the HSE) requesting further copies for staff members.

The second paper arose from the FETAC Level 5 training courses provided by the project. Two sets of issues arose from these. As some participants had found the Level 5 course difficult, why did more care-related courses not exist at FETAC Levels 3 and 4? Secondly, for people completing Level 5 care-related certificate courses, what progression options existed?

In relation to the first question, FETAC pointed out that Level 5 is the standard level of training for occupational/vocational courses and levels below this aim to give a more rounded education. However, modules do exist at Levels 3 and 4 in relation to childcare so a gap did exist in that no module focused on the care of adults. FETAC said that a Level 4 module was expected to come on stream in 2008 in respect of caring in the home, and also that a new 'standards development' system should ensure in the future that gaps in provision of FETAC modules do not exist.

In relation to progression options, the research showed that universities and Institutes of Technology had gradually opened up to FETAC graduates in the decade to 2007. The ITs were more open in this regard. Work by FETAC through its Higher Education Links Scheme expanded the options for FETAC graduates and a pilot scheme in place since 2005 allowed for the 'translation' of FETAC results directly into CAO points, with students then entitled to apply for places on many courses in ITs (and some other colleges, but not including universities) through the standard points system. The research indicated that a broader understanding of the FETAC (NFQ) system was still required by some third level institutions.

This second research paper, dealing with issues relating to FETAC and third level colleges, was published by Tallaght EQUAL Assists in November 2007.

4.6.4 Other Dissemination and Mainstreaming Work

In addition to the work mentioned above, key actions in relation to publicising and disseminating the work and learning of the project included the following:

- Official project launch in October 2006, attended by a range of organisations from the Tallaght area, and covered by local newspapers
- Launch event for the DVD targeted at young people. Some 60 copies of the DVD were produced initially for local schools with a further 100 copies distributed in September 2007
- Media coverage in relation to the DVD, including slot on the main RTE Radio 1 disability programme and an article in the Health Supplement of The Irish Times

- Launch of the project's Annual Report for 2006 in May 2007
- Strong presence by the project at a national EQUAL mainstreaming event in October 2007
- Graduation awards ceremony for the 25 people who completed the FETAC Level 5 Healthcare Support Certificate courses with the project. This event, in November 2007, was held in the Tower Hotel, Tallaght and attended by the DP organisations. The event was chaired by Anna Lee, Chairperson of Tallaght EQUAL Assist. Adrian Charles, Local Health Manager, Dublin South West presented the certificates to the students. Raymond Fenton, Regional Manager EVE Ltd. also spoke at the graduation on the importance of training and qualifications from an employer perspective. The graduation provided an opportunity for the project to publicise all aspects of its work.
- A "round table" discussion with members of Tallaght EQUAL Assists and the SKILL project team took place in December 2007. Findings from the research report on "Research and Issues relating to FETAC Care related Courses" were presented as well as a number of recommendations and findings from the project.
- An information event for care providers and social entrepreneurs who were interested in the establishment of a Carers Agency in the Tallaght area took place in the Tower Hotel, Tallaght during November 2007. This event was attended by representatives from the Carers Association, Peamount Hospital, Tallaght Hospital, Comfort Keepers, HomeInstead, Emerald Home Support, Alzheimer's Society, etc.

As such, the project undertook a range of work to disseminate the learning arising from the project.

Chapter 05:
Conclusion and Project Learning



Chapter 1 noted that EQUAL projects were required to incorporate a number of 'principles' in how they were structured and managed. To what extent did Tallaght EQUAL Assists incorporate these principles?

In relation to **partnership**, Chapter 3 showed that the Development Partnership for the project worked well. It brought together almost all of the key players in relation to care issues in Tallaght and South West Dublin, including the HSE, the VEC, FÁS, Tallaght Hospital, SIPTU and Tallaght Partnership. Through meeting every six weeks as part of the DP, and via the sub-DP structures, these organisations built up good relationships in relation to care issues, which has led to cooperation outside of the project. In general, there was good attendance at DP meetings and sub-committee meetings. As such, the approach of managing the project on a partnership basis added considerably to the work of the project.

The project was funded under the Employability pillar of the **European Employment Strategy**, which aims to "facilitate access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market that must be open to all". In terms of access to the labour market, the project's work with schools and with young people (e.g. the project's DVD and the associated pack) attempted to provide more information to people considering a career in the care sector. Efforts were made to reach out to a number of marginalised groups and to interest people from those groups in care work. Furthermore, the provision of additional supports on the FETAC Level 5 training courses broadened access to those courses, both for people outside the labour market and for those in employment. This fits with wider HSE efforts to provide carers with opportunities to gain accredited qualifications. As Chapter 4 noted, the draft quality standards published in 2007 in relation to residential care settings for older people place an emphasis on care workers having achieved at least a FETAC Level 5 care-related qualification. On a wider basis, the growing demand for care in Ireland means new options are needed for care provision, and this was addressed by the project in relation to the social care brokerage.

In relation to **innovation**, each project action attempted to do something new in its area of activity. The DVD and its associated pack was a new source and type of information for young people in relation to a career in care. The campaign was underpinned by a dedicated website. The training courses were not new in themselves but targeted people from groups that had traditionally not gained formal qualifications, including existing care workers without qualifications, immigrants, and Travellers. The project provided a range of practical, educational and personal supports to course participants, which are not normally provided on these courses. The feasibility study in relation to the possible establishment of a care agency or brokerage in Tallaght was

perhaps the most strategic project action and allowed the project to consider innovative actions in this regard, including the option of a social enterprise/ third sector solution.

In relation to **empowerment**, the European Commission has stated: “In practice, this will mean that those involved in the implementation of activities should also take part in the decision making.” In relation to Tallaght EQUAL Assists, there was consultation with teachers and young people in preparing the DVD for schools and evaluation of the DVD through the collection of the views of teachers and young people. In relation to the training courses, trainees were consulted as regards the modules to be undertaken and their input led to changes in this regard (see Chapter 4). Focus groups with participants indicated that they felt their views were taken into account on the courses and that they felt able to express views they had about the courses.

Chapter 4 described some of the work of the project in relation to **dissemination and mainstreaming**, including the work via DP members, the production of two research papers on particular care-related topics, and wider dissemination work. A round table learning event, bringing together key players as regards care in Ireland, was planned for December 2007.

The project engaged with enthusiasm in the **transnational** dimension of the project. Overall, there was good information exchange and building of contacts but different projects and contexts meant it was difficult to move to deeper cooperation. The exception was in relation to the Belfast partner, where a number of bilateral exchanges occurred, including of young care workers, and where contacts have been made that are likely to outlast the project.

The project therefore worked well in terms of the incorporation of the different EQUAL principles into its work.

In relation to the specific objectives of the project as set out in 2005:

- Excellent progress was made regarding the status and profile of caring as a career option, with the DVD finalised ahead of schedule in 2006 and significant follow-up with schools in Tallaght, and beyond, in 2007.
- In relation to the training courses, two FETAC Level 5 Healthcare Support Certificate courses were organised and delivered, as planned, with 25 people graduating from the courses. A number of these were existing care workers without any prior care-related qualification.
- The project made efforts to recruit people from non-traditional backgrounds into caring, with mixed results by group. Of the four groups targeted, it proved (relatively speaking) easiest to recruit people from non-Irish

backgrounds and the project was very successful in this regard. The project made some progress as regards recruiting men, although it was difficult to recruit men from Irish backgrounds. There was some success with members of the Traveller community although 'welfare-to-work' traps were identified in moving to part-time courses. There was less success with young early school leavers, who did not show much interest in returning to an education or training course.

- A substantial feasibility study was undertaken in relation to the Social Enterprise Care Brokerage, with three options reviewed and a preferred option identified. This option was being pursued in late-2007.

As such, the project also worked well in terms of achieving the specific objectives it set itself in its 2005 Action Plan.

5.2 Taking Forward the Project Learning

Projects funded under the EU EQUAL programme have a defined lifespan and, in December 2007, the EQUAL programme as a whole comes to an end. As such, while Tallaght Partnership will continue to exist and to disseminate learning arising from the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project as opportunities arise, there is a responsibility on mainstream organisations to take forward learning arising from the project.

Table 5.1 shows possible learning in relation to the pilot actions.

Table 5.1: Potential Learning and Possible Target Organisations for Mainstreaming	
<i>Outputs and Potential Learning Points</i>	<i>Mainstream Organisations with Possible Learning Opportunity</i>
Objective 1: Increasing the Status and Profile of Caring as a Career	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DVD in relation to pursuing a career in care work developed and used in schools in Tallaght and in the wider South Dublin VEC area, and with young people outside of school settings • Information available on the views of teachers and young people to the DVD and pack • Information on associated website as a tool to provide information to young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept. of Education and Science – for possible distribution to all second level schools, to courses for early school leavers and to other lifelong learning courses (perhaps having revised the DVD to reflect the national picture) • VECs • Organisations working with young people • FÁS, to provide information for people seeking work or re-skilling • Local Employment Services • Health Services Executive • Carer organisations or organisations representing people who require care

Table 5.1: (Cont')	
Outputs and Potential Learning Points	Mainstream Organisations with Possible Learning Opportunity
Objective 2: Developing qualification routes for people working as carers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to deliver the FETAC Level 5 Healthcare Support Certificate on a full-time and part-time basis, with extra supports for participants • Information on setting up work placement modules as part of course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VECs and colleges which offer FETAC Level 5 certificate courses • Dept. of Education and Science • Health Services Executive • FÁS and Local Employment Services • Carer organisations or organisations representing people who require care • Dept. of Health and Children • FETAC
Objective 3: Attracting a diverse group of people into care work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Techniques and approaches to reach under-represented groups in relation to care-related training, especially non-Irish workers; men; and members of the Traveller community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FÁS and Local Employment Services • Groups working with immigrants and with Travellers • VECs and colleges funded to run FETAC Level 5 courses • Organisations running courses that aim to train people to become carers • Health Services Executive
Objective 4: Setting up a social care brokerage	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues in establishing a social care brokerage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept. of Health and Children • Health Services Executive • Dept. of Social and Family Affairs • Carer organisations or organisations representing people who require care • Politicians/political parties representing people who require care • Politicians/political parties

Table 5.1 indicates that learning exists for a wide range of organisations arising from the work of the Tallaght EQUAL Assists project. Further information on all of the areas mentioned in the table is available from Tallaght Partnership.

As well as the outputs and learning arising from the project, a range of issues arise from the work of the project

1. The project indicates that the information being provided by the careers service in second level schools is lagging behind the requirements of the

Irish labour market. Given the explosion in the number of care workers, and the emergence of progression options for care workers over time (e.g. into supervisory positions or into nursing), there is a need for more information on careers available for people in care work.

2. The training courses provided extra 'flanking supports' for participants and the feedback from participants and others was that these supports were crucial in enabling certain participants to complete the courses successfully. This raises the question of how to include such supports more widely. The mix of supports (language skills, literacy skills, study skills, exam skills, practical help) will vary by course and by person so flexibility at course level is required. Can the funding of such supports be built into the cost of FETAC Level 5 courses as a proportion (e.g. 10%) of the overall course cost? Or can another model be developed to provide support for these participants?
3. The project showed reluctance by Irish men to become workers. Given the growth of employment in the sector, and the growing requirement for carers for both women and men, there is a need to challenge stereotypical views of care work as women's work. This could perhaps be accompanied by a campaign to increase unionisation in the sector, to improve pay and conditions over time and to ensure that workers in community and private sector care organisations receive remuneration equivalent to HSE care workers.
4. While the project did not have extensive engagement with the Traveller community, its engagement suggests that care work offers a potentially important opportunity to combat Traveller unemployment, while also addressing needs in the community and improving health outcomes. One issue to be examined is the apparent existence of poverty traps for people returning on a part-time basis to work or train as carers.
5. An issue which arose from the project work, but which could not be addressed by this project, was the existence of racist attitudes on the part of a minority of people receiving care services. This needs to be addressed as part of the training of carers. Guidelines are also needed as to what constitutes unacceptable behaviour on the part of a care recipient, while ensuring that rights as regards the receipt of care are also respected.
6. The training part of the project indicated a gap in the provision of care-related courses accredited at FETAC Levels 3 and 4. While one module is due to come on stream in this regard (at Level 4) in 2008, further modules may be required in this rapidly growing employment area.
7. There appears to be a basis for the continued opening up of third level options for people with FETAC Level 5 accreditation, with the universities

in particular doing more to create progression routes for students with good Level 5 qualifications. The pilot FETAC scheme allowing for the direct 'translation' of FETAC Level 5 grades into CAO points appears to be a major step forward in this regard (although not yet adopted by the universities).

8. The project's research in relation to different possible models of care provision, in the context of a possible care agency or brokerage for Tallaght, raises issues about the future of care provision in Ireland. As present, it is not clear that there is an overarching framework as to how care provision should evolve over time, taking into account the respective roles of the private, public and social enterprise sectors.

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Notes:

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