**Good Practice**

My Name is Tomas Murphy I am here to tell you about my personal experience of working and what Ireland does to support people to get a job.

I graduated in 2011 from Trinity College and after I became a volunteer in my local parish. During that time I was sending CVs to companies. I met someone during an event at Trinity College who told me she could help me. She was HR in a company. I sent my CV there. I worked 3 months there in the facility department: setting rooms, working in a post room helping out. They had to let me go with other employees at the time because the economic situation was bad.

After that, I restarted to send my CVs. And I met one person who is an ambassador from my course at Trinity. After my meeting with him, I got an email from a company named A&L Goodbody to invite me for an interview. They offered me a job in the company, a 3 months rolling contract. After a year, I was informed that my time was nearly up. So I went to my head of department to say how much I loved working at the company. Few weeks later, I got a permanent position.

As time goes by and more people with disabilities are seen in the workplace working alongside their co-workers bringing their gifts and talents to their job, the margin between those with disabilities, will become part of the norm.

Ireland has a commitment of 3% of employees with disabilities in the public service at the moment and has made a promise of 6% by 2024. Ireland has a Comprehensive employment strategy to make things better for people with disabilities in Ireland. There are 6 priority areas of the strategy

* building skills, capacity and independence;
* providing bridges and supports into work;
* making work pay;
* promoting job retention and re-entry into work;
* providing co-ordinated and seamless support;
* engaging employers.

Progress in these areas are happening, even if it is slow, it will make a difference. In 2017 A Make Work Pay report set out the key things needed for people with disabilities to be in work and earn money but also have the support they need. Now the situation around benefits, like disability allowance and working as well as having other benefits has improved. There is still more work to do.

**Good projects**

Ability at work is a supported employment service for young people with disabilities funded by the Irish Government and the European Union. Job coaches provide training and on the job support to job seekers to enter the labour market and to stay there. Ability@Work at Cope Foundation in Cork is one of the services.

Another simple example of good practice is the Job Shadow Day each year when people with disabilities can join someone in their workday to learn about what they do. This encourages people to think about careers and also engages employers in a very meaningful way.