

Re: Changes to Training Allowance Eligibility Criteria for Participants on our Education Programme

Dear Colleague

Southside Travellers - in partnership with its partner Traveller organisations throughout Ireland and community and voluntary organisations throughout Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown - is calling on government to reassess the particular impact of changes to eligibility criteria for women participating in the Local Training Initiative facilitated by VEC Tutors.

Essentially, these changes will have a particular and excluding impact on Traveller women who are considered, for social welfare purposes, dependent spouses and who have not sought individuation. In addition to the impact of the withdrawal of the training allowance - a relatively small amount which facilitates women to pay childcare, travel and meal costs - the fourteen women on the programme in Southside Travellers face the prospect of being denied continuing progression through the FETAC accredited courses they are currently completing. The Director of Southside Travellers, our Education Programme Manager and programme participants will attend a meeting in the Irish Traveller Movement on Wednesday next, to prepare delegates who are meeting Minister O'Cuiv to discuss this issue.

We would appreciate if you would raise this issue with your colleagues and partners and stress the importance of ensuring that within the current economic climate we do not lose sight of the importance of educational equality for Travellers. I have attached a note outlining our current campaign – including the log on details for our on-line petition and you tube video of women on our programme speaking about the importance of their participation.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Morley

Director ([catherine@southsidetravellers.ie](mailto:catherine@southsidetravellers.ie))

## **County-Wide Campaign re: Changes to Criteria for LTI Allowances**

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Essentially, these changes will have a particular and excluding impact on Traveller women who are considered, for social welfare purposes, dependent spouses and who have not sought individuation. In addition to the impact of the withdrawal of the training allowance - a relatively small amount which facilitates women to pay childcare, travel and meal costs - the fourteen women on the programme in Southside Travellers face the prospect of being denied continuing progression through the FETAC accredited courses they are currently completing. The Director of Southside Travellers, our Education Programme Manager and programme participants will attend a meeting in the Irish Traveller Movement on Wednesday next, to prepare delegates who are meeting Minister O'Cuiv to discuss this issue.

### **Media**

1. You Tube Video (available at [www.southsidetravellers.ie](http://www.southsidetravellers.ie))
2. Press Release – Irish Times, Irish Independent
3. On-line petition (available at [www.southsidetravellers.ie](http://www.southsidetravellers.ie))

### **Partners**

1. Meeting with Co. Dublin and Dun Laoghaire VEC's
2. Letters requesting support from Local Elected Representatives
3. Letters requesting support from Partners:
  - a. Integrated Community Development Group
  - b. Southside Partnership
  - c. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Board
  - d. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Community Forum
  - e. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Co. Development Board
  - f. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Social Inclusion Unit
  - g. Loughlinstown / Shanganagh RAPID Programme

### **National**

Active participation in ITM campaign and lobbying Minister O'Cuiv