



Press Release

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EU INVESTS €47.5 MILLION TO IMPROVE HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE ON A CROSS-BORDER BASIS

Approximately €47.5m worth of EU INTERREG VA Programme funding has been offered to eight innovative cross-border health and social care initiatives that will improve the lives of tens of thousands of people.

The funding will be used to reduce health inequalities, transition health services from an institutional to community-based setting and increase efficiencies through increased use of e-health technologies, on both sides of the border.

Match-funding for the projects is provided by both the Departments of Health in Ireland and Northern Ireland alongside the Scottish Government.

A number of the projects will be led by the Health Service Executive on behalf of the CAWT Partnership, alongside Health and Social Care NI (made up of the Health and Social Care Board, Public Health Agency, Southern and Western Health and Social Care Trust) and NHS 24 (Scotland).

Recognising the importance of the funding Northern Ireland's Health Minister Michelle O'Neil MLA, said: **"This investment will strengthen cross-border working and I look forward to seeing communities across Ireland sharing in the benefits which it will bring. The programme will facilitate the development of more joined-up health and care services in areas of particular need, focusing particularly on remote and rural communities and socially isolated, vulnerable and older people.**

"This EU funding is a welcome boost at a time of considerable pressure on our health and social care resources," she continued.

Welcoming the funding Ireland's Health Minister Simon Harris TD, said: **"CAWT has an excellent track record in delivering INTERREG Projects and I am pleased that they have been successful in securing funding for these projects. Implementation of the projects will make a difference to people's lives and importantly will demonstrate real collaboration in achieving the project aims. These projects are also important in the context of continued North/South co-operation in the health area."**



Commenting on the funding Scotland's Health Secretary Shona Robison said: **“Health and social care integration is one of the government’s most ambitious programmes as we look to put people at the centre of care and support decisions, and our system has received praise from many countries across the world.**

“We welcome this funding from the European Union to further our efforts and the opportunity to work across borders and share knowledge and expertise is one that will have wide ranging benefits for patients and their families,” she continued.

Underlining the importance of the funding announcement, Gina McIntyre CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), which manages the INTERREG VA Programme, said:

“The large investment by the European Union in support of this diverse range projects is a testament to their high quality and potential impact. Each project represents a unique partnership that will result in greater synergies within the delivery of essential cross-border health and social care services. They will also have a positive transformative effect upon the lives of thousands of people and families,” she continued.

- ENDS.

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Notes to Editor:

The following projects will be supported under the EU’s INTERREG VA Programme.

- €1.8 million has been offered for the ‘Need to talk’ project that will provide cross-border counselling services and confidence building programmes for people affected by sight loss who live in Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland. The project will be delivered by the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) in Northern Ireland and Scotland in partnership with Fighting Blindness in Ireland. It will address the social isolation and emotional distress which is often experienced by people with sight loss; which can be exacerbated in rural isolated areas where people are reliant on very limited public transport services to access support.



- €8.8 million has been offered for the 'Cross-Border Healthcare Intervention Trials in Ireland Network' (CHITIN) project. The initiative will implement ten Healthcare Intervention Trials (HITs) specifically designed to enhance health and social care for people living outside of major population centres. Delivered by the Public Health Agency the project will bring together the Health and Social Care Research & Development Division (HSC R&D), the Public Health Directorate Northern Ireland and the Health Research Board Ireland (HRB).
- €7.9 million has been offered for the 'mPower' project to meet the health and social care needs of ageing populations living within Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland. The project will deliver a personalised approach to the needs of older people (and those that care for them) by effectively integrating health and care services, citizen empowerment and e-health technologies to support independent living. The main objective of 'mPower' will be to increase the number of older people living independently within their communities. It aims to provide 4,500 e-health interventions and 2,500 wellbeing plans to older people at home.
- €2.6 million has been offered for the cross-border 'Changing Lives Initiative' which will provide new cost effective, community based services for families with children aged 3 to 7 years who have emotional or behavioural difficulties associated with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). It will develop information, screening and early intervention services for children experiencing hyper kinetic disorders who are likely to progress to having an ADHD diagnosis. Delivering the service primarily within disadvantaged communities the project will be led by Archways, an all-Ireland organisation specialising in the delivery of support programmes for children and families experiencing behavioural difficulties.
- €8.8 million has been offered for the 'Acute Services' project to enhance access to high priority medical and surgical interventions for people living far from regional hospital centres. The project will modernise acute services provision through the use of new and innovative technologies such as surgical robots and e-health solutions. It will also help reform surgical procedures by, where appropriate, moving to less invasive interventions. Remote patient interaction will also be supported through the use of consultation by videoconferencing technology.
- €5 million has been offered for the 'Children's Services Cross-Border Early Intervention' project to help vulnerable children and families who are most at risk from multiple adversities in their lives. The initiative will devise and implement a cross-border framework for the assessment and identification of vulnerable children



and families at risk from multiple adverse experiences and deliver a programme of tailored support interventions to minimise the impact of adversity.

- €7.6 million has been offered for the 'Cross-Border Recovery College Network' project to develop a more collaborative approach to working with people suffering from mental illness, where they become partners in their own recovery process. It represents a radical shift from a medical model of treatment of people who have experienced mental health issues towards a more social model of help and has a target of supporting up to 8,000 people, on both sides of the border. E-health solutions will also be used in the delivery of the project to enable continuation of the mental health recovery process.
- €5 million has been awarded for the Community Health Sync (CoH-Sync) project which will 'synchronise' the efforts of the community, voluntary and statutory health sectors in order to impact positively on the health and well-being of individuals and communities. It aims to improve health literacy of the target populations; break down the barriers between the statutory and community sectors by creating locally based health and well-being Community Hubs; develop the local health and well-being Community Hub to become the touchstone for the community's health and well-being; and explore and utilise novel approaches to health behaviour change especially for deprived populations, thereby reducing health inequalities.

SEUPB

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.
- The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
- The INTERREG VA Programme has a value of €283 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu