

Begin Together Fund provides €500k in funding to 116 projects

Bank of Ireland reveals 116 charity and community groups across the island of Ireland are beneficiaries of the Begin Together Fund.

Financial literacy, social inclusion, mental health, social isolation, disability, addiction services and cancer support are among the projects being supported by the [Begin Together Fund](#).

Some 116 projects in these areas across the whole island of Ireland will receive €500,000 in funding under the Begin Together Fund.

The fund is part of a wider €1m Bank of Ireland support for local enterprise and community groups to be pledged over the second half of this year.

The grantees announced today come from all over the island of Ireland and will each receive up to €5,000 to support a range of projects and initiatives spanning financial wellbeing, mental health, disability, addiction, cancer support, social isolation, social inclusion, and sport.

Making an impact

Bank of Ireland is working with The Community Foundation for Ireland, which is administering the fund, and a number of expert partners – the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Sport Ireland, Action Mental Health and Sport NI – who assisted in developing the fund’s focus and social impact objectives.

Other projects receiving funding include a charity that provides professional attire and mentoring to help women secure employment, an initiative to help children aged 5-12 cope with cancer in their family, a wheelchair basketball club and a rehabilitation service for those addicted to drugs or alcohol.

“The aim of the Begin Together Fund, launched back in February which seems a lifetime ago now, is to support charities and community organisations that are making a real difference to the financial, physical and mental wellbeing of their communities,” said Henry Dummer, chief marketing officer, Bank of Ireland.

“As society begins to open up again it’s important to remember that charities and community groups have seen their income severely impacted by Covid-19 but the work they do is more important than ever. For that reason I’m delighted that the Begin Together Fund is providing this

timely support to more than 100 projects right across the island of Ireland.”

The awarding of funding for the 116 projects was welcomed by Denise Charlton, chief executive of the Community Foundation for Ireland.

“The Covid-19 pandemic, its economic impact and recovery is causing great uncertainty for people, families and communities across the country,” said Charlton.

“Bank of Ireland’s Begin Together Fund, administered by The Community Foundation for Ireland, is a perfect example of partnership which can deliver real supports for people who have seen their home and work lives severely impacted by Covid-19. While this is a period of huge challenge, The Community Foundation for Ireland remains absolutely committed to working with its partners for a fair, caring and vibrant Ireland with thriving communities.”

The full list of projects that have received support can be accessed [here](#)

Enabling communities to thrive

In February, Bank of Ireland launched a three-year €3m all-island Begin Together initiative to improve the financial, physical and mental wellbeing of Ireland’s communities, while supporting the underlying local economies.

[The initiative](#) consists of three key annual strands: the €500,000 Begin Together Fund, the €200,000 Begin Together Awards and the €300,000 Begin Together Colleagues component.

In recent weeks Bank of Ireland launched its 2020 Begin Together Awards, an initiative that will support towns across the island of Ireland as they reboot and recover from the impact of Covid-19.

With a total prize fund of over €200,000, this year’s Awards were fast-tracked to provide funding to the winning towns and urban villages by the beginning of October and directly assist their COVID-19 recovery. There will be 21 awards up for grabs, with the overall winner receiving €50,000 and the title of Ireland’s ‘Most Enterprising Town’. This award was won by Kilkenny in 2019. Now in its second year, there is also a prize of €20,000 for the winner of the ‘Rising Star’ award, which was won by Castlebar last year.

Pictured at top (from left): Ellie Iveagh (aged 16) from Citywise Education, a Bank of Ireland Begin Together Fund grantee, and Angelica Santander from Clowns Without Borders Ireland, also a grantee, along with Henry Dummer, CMO, Bank of Ireland. Picture: Conor McCabe Photography

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